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Politics, its Science, and the Prevention of Wars

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Abstract

Majority voting and majority rule – in a word, majoritarianism – have been a cause of division in both parliamentary votes and binary referendums, and sometimes, subsequently, in societies as well. Indeed, at worst, such binary decisions have led to violence and war. Other, more inclusive voting procedures have been developed over the years, as often as not first used in Asia, and their adoption worldwide could lead to decisions, which more accurately reflect the common good. Furthermore, if decisions were based on a methodology which identified, not the more popular of just two options, but the most popular of a few – the option with the highest *average* preference – governance by a single party or a majority coalition could give way to that which is advocated for conflict zones: all-party power-sharing. Indeed, if such were the norm, consensus in international gatherings could more effectively be achieved, and maybe many violent conflicts could be at best prevented and at least resolved peacefully.

Keywords: All-Party Power-Sharing, Consensus, Modified Borda Count MBC, Preferential Decision-Making

1. Introduction

Today's war in the Middle East is exacerbated by Israel's most extreme right-wing *majority* coalition. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 followed the *majority* vote referendums in Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk eight years earlier. In the Balkans, "All the wars in the former Yugoslavia started with a [*majority* vote] referendum," (*Oslobodjenje*, Sarajevo's famous newspaper, 7.2.1999). In 1994 in Rwanda, the *Interahamwe* launched their genocide with the slogan, "*Rubanda nyamwinshi*," 'we are the *majority*'. A major cause of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland, 1969-94, was the practice of *majority* rule. In 1964, Máo Zédōng declared, "We must win over the *majority*, oppose and smash the minority." And in 1919, nineteen Russians declared (incorrectly), "Мы – Большевики," (*mwe – bolsheviki*), 'we are the *majority*'.

A more detailed account of these events follows in Sect. 3; suffice for the moment to say that, common to all is the word 'majority'. In some instances, a binary vote was taken; in others, a majority was sometimes, perhaps mistakenly, assumed. Throughout, it seems, a majority opinion was considered to be democratic, by at least the given majority if not by others as well. It is as if the world is mesmerised by "the mystique of the majority,"

(Dummett 1997: 71). It is in business, politics and law, in democracies, theocracies and autocracies; it's even enshrined in North Korea's constitution, in Article 97.¹ (Juche 2017: 22.)

Accordingly, this article considers the origins of binary voting and its inherent weaknesses. It is a critique, not of majority rule – no, that principle is fine – but of majority voting, the notion that, even in a multi-option debate, a majority opinion can be identified in one majority vote, or in a series of majority votes, each a choice of only two options. The article then compares this methodology with some of the other more sophisticated voting procedures devised over the centuries, and concludes with a description of a more consensual polity.

2. A Binary World

The world, it seems, is binary. Land and sea; flora and fauna; night follows day; tides ebb and flow; hands and feet are left and right. The pairs continue: facts are true or false; theories are correct or mistaken, and so on. But not everything is black or white, and not every pair consists of two opposites. Indeed, a male and female couple cannot be (pro)creative unless both complement, compliment, and at best love each other!

In like manner, this article argues, democracy is for everybody, not just a majority. It is for Hutu *and* Tutsi, Arab *and* Jew, black and white, left-wing and right-, and so on. Democratic decision-making should therefore not divide people, 'these' against 'those'. Rather, it should try to identify the *common* good.

Furthermore, Covid and Climate Change are telling everybody that we must work *with* each other. We can't do that very well by taking decisions ('for' or) '*against*' each other. Maybe a preferential voting procedure could enable everyone to talk *with*, and then vote *with* each other, each stating in their order of preference not only what they wanted but also their compromise option(s). In such a voting procedure, people may vote 'yes' to something or, in their order of preference, 'yes' to a few things... but nobody votes 'no'.

Secondly, most of the world's professions use precision instruments: doctors' thermometers read temperatures, not as 'high' or 'low', but in degrees; pilots' speedometers are not binary, 'fast' or 'slow', and velocities are measured in kms/hr. Politicians however use a blunt tool: decisions are made in a binary, or a series of binary votes, and opinions are summated, 'yes' or 'no'. More precise measures are calibrated in preferences.

2.1 A History of Binary Voting

As is well known, democracy was first devised in Greece, some 2,500 years ago. A couple of centuries later, majority voting was also used in China. In both settings, only men were involved, but otherwise it worked quite well. In the former, "sovereign power was held to reside in the Assembly, and was exercised by majority vote, by counting hands." (De Ste Croix 2004: 75.) In the latter, in 'the Court Conference of the Former Hân Dynasty (202 BCE-23CE), decisions were based on the opinions of the majority regardless of the position or rank of the individuals on either side. As a rule, [these decisions] were accepted by the Emperor." (Wang 19698: 176.)

Considerable progress was made in Greece, where all the male citizens could go to the forum to debate the issues of the day, and there too, matters were resolved by majority votes. There were no political parties in those days, so individuals could vote with each other on one day, and against on the next, without falling into parties locked forever in opposition.

What's more, serious efforts were made to understand the complexities which can and do emerge whenever persons with different viewpoints meet to make a collective decision. According to Pliny the Younger, those concerned learned "the powers of the proposer, the rights of expressing an opinion... when to give way and when to stand firm, how long to speak and when to keep silence, how to distinguish between conflicting proposals and how to introduce an amendment, in short, the whole of senatorial procedure." (McLean and Urken 1955: 67).

There are, of course, two types of majority voting: a singleton offering just one option is of the "Option X, yes or no?" variety; while a pairing offers a little more choice, "Option X or option Y?" With singletons, on very

¹ Article 97 stipulates that decisions in parliament shall be taken in simple or weighted majority voting, but Article 92 says that parliament shall meet only once a year.

contentious topics, it may be that there is a majority against everything.² With pairings, however, even if a decision requires the casting vote of a chair, there will always be a definite answer.

Unfortunately, in those days of yore, only one voting procedure was known: majority voting. So the Greeks devised a procedure based on pairings. If and when a problem occurs, some may move a motion, others could propose amendments, and the procedure devised was – and still is! – as follows:

- + choose the preferred amendment:
- + adopt or reject this to get the substantive;
- + decide: either the substantive or the status quo.

Even though other more inclusive voting procedures have been devised over the intervening centuries, this ancient procedure is still used by many of today's politicians, and endorsed by many contemporary academics. Indeed, "there is a surprisingly strong and persistent tendency in political science to equate democracy solely with majoritarian democracy." (Lijphart 1999: 6.) Furthermore, "the method of majority voting [satisfies many] conditions when there are only two alternatives." (Arrow 1951: 46.) In a court of law, there might indeed be only two – guilty or not guilty? – but in politics, on any controversial topic, in any democracy aspiring to be plural, there are invariably more than two options 'on the table'... at least initially. All too often, however, policy aspirations are distilled and distorted into two supposed yet often artificial opposites: to take an extreme example, communism and capitalism are both creeds based on greed.

But maybe one political question is indeed dichotomous. "Which side of the road shall we drive on?" It's surely either 'left' or 'right'. Yet when put to the Swedish electorate in a referendum in 1955, there were not two but three options on the ballot paper: 'left', 'right' and 'blank'... so the committed democrat who on this particular topic was indifferent could still participate in the political process and, as it were, go with the (traffic) flow.

The conclusion, then, is stark: in politics, (almost) nothing should be binary. (Nearly) every vote should be multi-optional. And as this text will demonstrate, pluralism is possible.

2.2 The Multi-option Scenario

Consider then the scenario when a dozen citizens have different ideas as to what might be best: 5 want option *X*, 4 prefer *Y* and 3 choose *Z*; and let it be assumed that their preferences are as shown in Table 1. If their democratic decision is to be based on singletons, there may indeed be majorities of 7, 8 and 9 respectively against these three options. So singletons are inadequate.

Pairings can also be problematic. In this instance, there are three pairings – *X:Y*, *X:Z*, *Y:Z*. As shown in pink and yellow tints, (5+3) prefer *X* to *Y*, while 4 prefer *Y* to *X*, so *X* is more popular than *Y*, *X > Y*, by 8:4.

Table 1: A Voters' Profile

Preferences	Number of Voters		
	5	4	3
1 st	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>
2 nd	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>X</i>
3 rd	<i>Z</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>

In all,

$$X > Y = 8:4$$

$$Y > Z = 9:3$$

and

$$Z > X = 7:6$$

² A similar situation may occur whenever adults try to get a group of children to decide, democratically, which vegetable they would like for lunch. A vote on turnips would doubtless be rejected by a majority; a bigger number might oppose parsnips; while swedes and broccoli could be even more unpopular. Choosing a pudding, however – ice-cream, chocolate cake, blancmange – might also be a trifle difficult, with majorities in favour of everything. In a nutshell, binary voting on multi-option topics can be rather meaningless.

which means, of course, (Le Marquis de Condorcet’s famous paradox of binary voting):

$$X > Y > Z > X > Y \dots\dots\dots$$

and it goes round and round for ever. In this (and many another) instance, therefore, pairings are also inadequate.

If the status quo, option *S*, is now included, the profile might well be as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Another Voters’ Profile

Preferences	Number of Voters		
	5	4	3
1 st	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>
2 nd	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>S</i>
3 rd	<i>Z</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>X</i>
4 th	<i>S</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>

Accordingly, the original Greek – and today’s! – procedure of decision-making shall be:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & \mathbf{Y} & & & & & \\
 & \vee & = & & \dots & & \\
 & \mathbf{Z} & & & \vee & = & \dots \\
 & & & & \mathbf{X} & & \\
 & & & & & \vee & = \dots \\
 & & & & & \mathbf{S} &
 \end{array}$$

or

$$\{(Y \vee Z) \vee X\} \vee S = \dots$$

Referring back to Table 2, the result therefore is

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & \mathbf{Y} & & & & & \\
 & \vee & = & & \mathbf{Y} & & \\
 & \mathbf{Z} & & & \vee & = & \mathbf{X} \\
 & & & & \mathbf{X} & & \vee \\
 & & & & & \mathbf{S} & = \mathbf{S} \\
 & & & & & \mathbf{S} &
 \end{array}$$

or

$$\{(Y \vee Z) \vee X\} \vee S = \{Y \vee X\} \vee S = X \vee S = S$$

So having decided initially, verbally, that they don’t like *S*, they then decide, democratically, that they like *S*.

If instead they had decided that *Y* was the motion with *X* and *Z* the two amendments, the procedure would have been:

$$\{(X \vee Z) \vee Y\} \vee S = \{Z \vee Y\} \vee S = Y \vee S = Y$$

or again

$$\{(Y \vee X) \vee Z\} \vee S = \{X \vee Z\} \vee S = Z \vee S = Z$$

In other words, whenever there’s a majority against everything, the chair can adjust the order of voting and get pretty well any outcome. And when there’s a majority for something which he/she doesn’t like, they simply introduce other variations, options *W* and maybe *V*, whatever, to split that majority, and adjust the voting procedure accordingly.

In a nutshell, majority voting is manipulable; some politicians are manipulative; majority voting is often manipulated; and “majority decisions... cannot be fair in a democratic sense because the imposition of binary alternatives is itself unfair.” (Riker 1988: 64.) Instead, “it must be demanded that there be some sort of consensus,” (Arrow 1963: 83), and a consensus cannot be identified in a process in which, while some vote ‘for’, others are ‘against’!

3. Tales of Woe

In democracies, the belief in majority voting often causes newly-elected parliaments to divide into two: a single large party or a majority coalition forms the government, and the others become the opposition. Hence the rather bizarre fact that open and transparent elections are often followed by the very opposite: the curtains are drawn, the door is closed, and the politicians go upstairs to negotiate... until eventually a majority government is formed.

In India, for example, in 1996, despite its use of the British style first-past-the-post FPTP elections – (which often leads to a two-party state, as in the UK and USA) – over 30 parties were represented in parliament. The number of majority permutations was huge, and it took 77 days to sort something out. Another election two years later led to a majority coalition of 41 parties. It then collapsed, whereupon a vote of confidence was taken – a majority vote, of course – and it lost, 269–270. The Bharatiya Janaja Party BJP then led a 15-party coalition, which lasted a full term! In 2014, it won an overall majority, and some would say India is now very divided.

3.1 *The Middle East*

Returning to the examples summarised in the introduction, Israel has a single-preference closed-list system of PR. The country is about 20% Arab so, in theory, for as long as ethnicity is of overwhelming importance, parliament should include about 20% Arab members; the current figure is of the order of 10%. With majority rule, in theory, any majority will do; as long as its MPs include 50% + 1 (as happened in 2015) or more of them, it shall be regarded as democratic. So Benjamin Netanyahu can form the most right-wing extremist government in their history, and it is still regarded as democratic. Democracy, as currently practiced, can be a cause of war.

3.2 *Ukraine*

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Moscow in 1985, western advisers promoted a polity based on majority voting and majority rule, in a word, majoritarianism, (despite the fact that in Russian translation, the word is ‘bolshivism’ *большевизм*, from ‘bolshinstvo’ *большинство* meaning ‘majority’). Six years later, the same advice was given to the newly independent Ukraine. Viktor Yushchenko won the 2004 presidential election, albeit by a whisker, and he was pro-West. So that was ok. But in 2010, he who had lost the binary run-off six years earlier, Viktor Yanukovich, was now victorious, again by a whisker. Alas, in majority rule, a whisker can win. There followed the riots in Maidan. In 2014, the West changed its advice: democracy was no longer majority rule, no no, it was now power-sharing. A delegation rushed over to Kiev. Too late. It arrived on the very day Yanukovich ran into exile.

Vladimir Putin doesn’t like losing. So he organised a referendum in Crimea (with little ‘green men’ and so on). Back in 1991, a majority had voted in favour of Crimean independence, albeit by a whisker, but they had now changed their mind, apparently. Referendums followed in Donetsk and Luhansk. When Ireland opted out of the UK, Northern Ireland opted out of Ireland; when Georgia opted out of the USSR, Abkhazia opted out of Georgia; and when Bosnia opted out of Yugoslavia, Republika Srpska tried to opt out of Bosnia. In 1991, Ukraine opted out of the USSR. In 2014, Donetsk tried to opt out of Ukraine, but part of Donetsk tried to opt out of opting out and get back into Ukraine: Krasnoarmiisk; (it is bigger than Northern Ireland); of nearly three million people who voted, 69.1% chose Ukraine. This vote was ignored.

2014 was also the year of Scotland’s referendum, and the word ‘Shotlandiya’ *Шотландия*, Scotland, was used by Russian separatists in Luhansk.³

3.3 *The Balkans*

“I hope I do not live in exciting times,” an old Chinese proverb warns. In 1985, with the collapse of the old Soviet Union, the times were indeed exciting. It started to go wrong in August 1988, with the first ethnic clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh... whereupon the headline in a Moscow newspaper read, “Вот наш Ольстер,” ‘Vot nash Ulster,’ This is our Northern Ireland. The excitement of 1985 soon changed to wars in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Likewise in the Balkans: in Bosnia, the 1990 election (or sectarian headcount)

³ The author, a Russian speaker, was an OSCE election observer in 2014, his sixth such deployment in Ukraine.

divided the country 40:30:20, Orthodox:Muslim:Catholic, so there was no majority! Following referendums and then wars in Slovenia and Croatia, it was obvious that Bosnia would be next. Despite all this, the EU's Badinter Commission advised, and the EU then "insisted" (Woodward 1995: 271) on a referendum. On the day of the vote, "barricades were thrown up [in] Sarajevo," (Glenny 1996: 166).

Kosova also held a referendum, in 1991, and a huge majority voted for independence. It was not recognised. Eight years later, with tensions rising, the western powers met in Rambouillet and called for a referendum. Slobodan Milošević refused to sign. The war started. Russia intervened. The referendum clause was removed. Milošević now signed, and the war ended.

3.4 Rwanda

In 1960, when the "winds of change" were blowing in Africa, the colonial powers in Rwanda, like others elsewhere in Africa, replaced a form of minority rule by imposing the opposite. Earlier, the Belgians had issued ID cards to classify everyone as either Tutsi or Hutu (and a third group, the Twa, was just ignored). The distinction was based on the binary question, "Are you tall or small?" and, for those of average height, there was a further query, "Do you have ten or more cows, yes or no?" The 'tall' and 'yes' people were classified as Tutsi, and they were the middle class; 'small' and 'no' folks were the Hutu, the workers; (Reader 1998: 616), while the upper class were the colonials. Then, after independence, the losers of yesterday could become the winners of tomorrow. Majority rule – a most unAfrican polity – was imposed. And the *Interahamwe* used the slogan, "*Rubanda nyamwinshi*," 'we are the majority', (Prunier 1995: 183), to launch their genocide.

3.5 Northern Ireland

According to the law, if two people want to live together, both must consent. In contrast, according to the Belfast Agreement, if two communities are to live together, only the bigger one need consent.

For years, people here have been fighting over the question, "Are you British or Irish?" Today, the same question is now 'peace-ful', apparently. For reasons unstated, the authors of the peace agreement decided, while everyone in democratic elections should be able to cast their preferences on a range of candidates, that in democratic decision-making, the choice should be a stark 'either/or'; other options, apparently, like a compromise, are just not allowed!

3.6 China

Article V of the Chinese Communist Party statutes stated, "The whole Party must obey a uniform discipline; the individual must obey the organisation; the minority must obey the majority," (Schram 1969: 329). Later, when the CCP was in control and then in power, "opinions within the party were resolved through discussion in which the minority ultimately submitted to the majority." (Yang 2008: 488.) Then, in 1959-60 in what was a very binary process, "some 3.6 million party members were labelled or purged as rightists," (Dikötter 2011: 102). It got worse. In rural assemblies in many villages, which everyone "had to attend," (Chang and Halliday 2006: 385), "the violence was carefully orchestrated as the poor tallied their votes to decide who should die." (Dikötter 2017: 73-4). "One by one, potential names were read and votes were tallied." (Su 2011: 65.) It was all so horribly binary.

4. Multi-option Voting

One of the first to realise at least some of the limitations of majority voting was the same Pliny the Younger, quoted earlier. In a murder trial in Rome in the year 105, the jury had three options on the table: *A*, *B* and *C*, acquittal, banishment or capital punishment. Yet again, there was a majority against everything. If asked, "Is the accused innocent, yes or no?" the *A* supporters would be outvoted by the combined forces of *B* and *C*. If, "Should the prisoners be executed, yes or no?" *A* and *B* would oppose *C*. Hence the new voting procedure of plurality voting, and Afranius Dexter's manservants were banished to an island... which is what Pliny the Younger had wanted.

4.1. Plurality Voting, Approval Voting and the Condorcet Rule

The first government to use plurality voting was Chinese. In 1197, the Jurchen Jin Dynasty felt threatened by its northern neighbours, the Mongolians. The question was war or peace. But the ballot offered three options: ‘attack’, ‘defend’, or ‘alternate between the two’, and the 84 government officials voted 5:46:33 respectively.⁴ (Franke and Twitchett 1994: 266.). Alas, the peace did not last long: in 1206, a Mongolian assembly or *Khuriltai* elected Chingis Khan whose grandson, Kublai Khan conquered all of China... but then adopted the authoritarianism of the emperors.

At this time, Europe was emerging from the Dark Ages. In 1268, approval voting was used for the election of the Doge in Venice; in this procedure, there are no preferences as such: persons may vote for an option (or candidate) if they think it is brilliant, good or maybe just tolerable; and in the analysis, the option with the most ‘approvals’ is the winner.

The Spanish Catalan Ramón Llull was the first to talk of preferential voting, in 1299, and he proposed the forerunner of today’s Condorcet rule – a multi-option vote which analyses all the pairings to see which wins them all.

4.2 The Modified Borda Count MBC

Cardinal Nicholas Cusanus then devised that which is now called the Borda Count BC, another preferential vote but this one is a points system. “[B]elieve me,” he wrote, “no more perfect system can be found.” (Sigmund 1963: 212.) He was almost right. In 1770, Jean-Charles developed the Modified Borda Count MBC.

Apart from the Chinese in 1197, other governments have sometimes resorted to multi-option voting. The first such referendum was in New Zealand in 1894. One of the best was in Guam in 1982, a ballot based on the two-round system TRS. This constitutional plebiscite offered the voters a choice of six options, while another option was blank; so anyone(s) with a different proposal could (campaign and) vote for that. Too complicated, some might complain; the invalid vote was a mere 0.85%.

In New Zealand in 1992, an independent commission received submissions, held public hearings, issued press statements... and eventually drew up a ballot paper of five options for another TRS referendum. In the second-round majority vote, the winner of the first-round plurality vote (multi-member proportional MMP) was set against, not the runner-up but the status quo, FPTP, which MMP won on an 83% turnout.

But back to the MBC; it works like this. In, say, a five-option ballot:

- + he who casts just one preference gets his favourite only 1 point,
(he says nothing about the other options, so they get nothing);
- + she who casts two preferences gets her favourite 2 points,
(and her 2nd choice 1 point);

and so on; accordingly,

- + he who casts all five preferences gets his favourite 5 points,
(his 2nd choice 4, his 3rd 3, etc.).

So the system encourages the voter to cast a full ballot; to state not only her favourite but also her compromise option(s); and if (nearly) everyone does that, it will be possible to identify the collective compromise, everyone’s most acceptable option, the winner, the option with the most points. At best – i.e., if everyone does cast a full ballot – it is the option with the highest *average* preference. And an average, of course, involves *every* voter. The MBC is inclusive, literally.

Technically, in a ballot of n options, a voter may cast m preferences, and in an MBC, points are awarded to (1st, 2nd ... last) preferences cast according to the rule:

$$(m, m-1 \dots 1). \quad (1)$$

Unfortunately, even during Jean-Charles’s life time, this was changed to what is called the BC: either

⁴ This result suggests, perhaps, that the use of better decision-making processes may well lead to better decisions.

$(n, n-1 \dots 1),$ (2)

or

$(n-1, n-2 \dots 0).$ (3)

There is no difference, mathematically, between the social choices and rankings of these two n rules; but there’s a huge psychological difference between giving your last preference one point, and giving it nothing. The MBC allows the voters to do exactly as they please, without any advantage one way or the other. A voter’s (x) th preference always gets 1 point more than her $(x+1)$ th preference, regardless of whether or not she has cast that $(x+1)$ th preference.

For any one party, success in a five-option ballot may depend not only on a good number of 1st preferences, but also a fair degree of 2nd and 3rd preferences... and very few 4th and 5th preferences. In other words, just as the alternative vote AV electoral system prompts Australian parties to cooperate a little, so too the MBC encourages parties to work together with their ‘political neighbours’. In so doing, every party will want its own supporters to submit full ballots, so parties will be enticed, when campaigning, (not so much to issue promises, but) to declare their preferences.

Furthermore, unlike the blunt binary ballot – “option A , yes or no?” or at best “ A or B ?” – this instrument gives the voters more choice:

+ with 3 options, there are six different ways of casting a full ballot:

$A-B-C, A-C-B, B-A-C, B-C-A, C-A-B$ and $C-B-A$.

+ with 4 options, 24 different opinions or nuances may be expressed;

and

+ with 5 options, with 120 possible permutations – or 14 different single-peaked sets (sect. 7) – those concerned may relish in the diversity of our species. The MBC is a precision instrument.

5. A Comparison

To compare the MBC with other voting procedures, which also include ranked choice voting RCV,⁵ consider Table 3. There’s an increasing degree of voters’ choice on the x-axis, while increasing inclusivity is displayed on the y-axis.

Table 3: Decision-making

		CLOSED QUESTIONS		SEMI-OPEN QUESTIONS		OPEN QUESTIONS	
C O U N T	All prefs					MBC	
						Condorcet	
	Some prefs					Approval voting	BC ⁶
						AV, PV RCV, STV	
1st prefs only	Weighted majority EU, Finland	Power-sharing NI, Belgium			TRS Norway, NZ		
	Simple majority Ireland, UK	Twin majority Switzerland	Plurality Denmark				
		1 of 2 options	1 of some options	1 or some of several options	1 or some or all of all options		
		1 st preference only		Preferential			
		BINARY		MULTI-OPTIONAL			
		VOTERS’ CHOICE					

⁵ Also known in Europe as the single transferable vote STV and in Australasia as preference voting PV. It is often used proportionally in multi-member constituencies as PR-STV, most notably in Ireland and Tasmania. In decision-making, it is the same as AV.

⁶ The BC is rarely used in political decision-making, but it is used in Slovenia for electing minority representatives. It is also used in elections in Papua New Guinea with a unique points system – when a voter casts five preferences, points are awarded, not 5-4-3-2-1, but 1-1/2-1/3-1/4-1/5.

To compare the accuracy of them all, consider the voters' profile shown in Table 4, now with 6 options and 21 voters.

Table 4: A Third Voters' Profile

Preferences	Number of Voters					
	6	5	4	3	2	1
1 st	<i>A</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>
2 nd	<i>B</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>
3 rd	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>C</i>
4 th	<i>D</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>
5 th	<i>E</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
6 th	<i>F</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>

The topic is controversial. 6 people have preferences *A-B-C-D-E-F*, and the next largest grouping of 5 has the very opposite. Option *A* is very divisive, with 6 thinking it is the best while 12 regard it as the worst! Option *F* is not much better. So maybe the option which best represents the collective will is in the *B-C-D-E* set; nobody regards any of these as the worst, while options *C* and *D* don't even get a 5th preference. So maybe *C* or *D* should be the fair answer.

The analyses of the Table 4 profile are shown in Table 5 and depending on the voting procedure used, the outcome could be anything at all: *A* or *B* or *C* or *D* or *E* or *F*!

Table 5: The Analyses

Voting System	Social Choice	Social Ranking					
		First	second	third	fourth	fifth	sixth
Plurality	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i> -6	<i>F</i> -5	<i>B</i> -4	<i>E</i> -3	<i>C</i> -2	<i>D</i> -1
TRS	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i> -12	<i>A</i> -9				
AV, PV, RCV, STV	<i>E</i>	<i>E</i> -15	<i>A</i> -6				
Approval	1 st -2 nd	<i>B/D</i>	<i>B/D</i> -10	<i>E</i> -9	<i>A</i> -6	<i>F</i> -5	<i>C</i> -2
voting	1 st -3 rd	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i> -16	<i>D</i> -15	<i>E</i> -11	<i>B</i> -10	<i>A</i> -6
BC/MBC	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i> -89	<i>C</i> -83	<i>E</i> -80	<i>B</i> -79	<i>F</i> -56	<i>A</i> -54
Condorcet	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i> -5	<i>C</i> -4	<i>E</i> -3	<i>B</i> -2	<i>F</i> -1	<i>A</i> -0

In plurality voting, the winner may have, not majority support, only the backing of the largest minority, as here with option *A* on a score of 6.

TRS ensures that the winner does have majority support: if nothing gets a majority in the first-round plurality vote, a second-round majority vote is held between the two leading options – here *A* and *F* – and if everyone's preferences stay the same, option *F* now wins on a score of 12... which is a majority.

RCV – a knock-out series of plurality votes – also ensures the winner has a majority in favour. After each round, the least popular option is eliminated and its votes go to its 2nd or subsequent preference. In this example, option *D* is out, and its 1 vote goes to *E*. Next out is option *C*, but its two votes can't go to *D* because *D* has been eliminated, so they go to *E* instead. And so on, until one option does get a majority: *E* on a score of 15.

In this voters' profile, the TRS social choice majority is not the same as the RCV majority winner. Maybe one of these methodologies is therefore inadequate. Maybe both are capricious.

Approval voting can be analysed in different ways: either by assuming all 1st and 2nd 'preferences' are approvals, or all 1st – 3rd 'preferences', or whatever. But if the analysis is different, so too might be the outcome. As seen in orange, in the 1st/2nd analysis, the least popular option is *C*; with 1st/3rd 'preferences', *C* is the winner!

Of the methodologies listed, the BC/MBC and Condorcet are the only procedures which take *all* preferences cast by *all* voters into account, *always*. They are the most accurate. What's more, their social ranking – *D-C-E-B-F-A* – is the exact opposite of the plurality vote social ranking – *A-F-B-E-C-D*. So, if the MBC and Condorcet are accurate, in this and many another profile, plurality voting is wrong and couldn't be more wrong!

The MBC and Condorcet procedures may be compared to a sports league. The champions, the team which wins the most matches (or pairings – the Condorcet winner) is usually the team with the best goal difference (or points – the MBC social choice).

6. Partial Voting

In majority voting, the majority votes because they know they can win. While the minority is inclined to abstain or even boycott the ballot... or in the worst instances, some of which are shown in Table 6, to resort to violence. Virtually the only time that there is a high turnout is when the vote is very close, as was the case in Quebec in 1995, where the vote ‘for’ independence was 49.4% and ‘against’ 50.6, whereupon the indigenous Cree Indians, whose aspiration was not even listed, were blamed by the losers.

Table 6: Majority Vote Referendums

YEAR	JURISDICTION	The Minority	The Result
1973	Northern Ireland	Catholics	Boycott. The Troubles continued.
1991	Yugoslavia: ‘Krajina’ and one week later, Croatia	Catholics Orthodox	War
1991	Kosova	Orthodox	Not recognised.
1991	The Soviet Union	Numerous	6 of 15 Republics boycotted. 78% voted to keep the USSR, which then collapsed.
1992	Bosnia	Orthodox	War
1994	Nagorno-Karabakh	Muslims	War
1999	Abkhazia	Georgians	War
1999	East Timor	Muslims	Violence, and independence in 2002.
2006	South Ossetia and Akhgori	Georgians S Ossetians	War
2014	Ukraine, Crimea	Ukrainians	War
2014	Ukraine: Donetsk and Krasnoarmiisk	Ukrainians & separatists	War
2022	Ukraine: Donetsk, Luhansk		War

With the MBC, however, everybody is encouraged by the mathematics of the count to participate fully in the democratic process which, as noted, can identify the *average* opinion. And that *average* social choice/ranking will more accurately reflect the *common* good if everyone – majority, minorities, everyone – participates.

Consider then what might happen if the 4 option *B* supporters decide to abstain, or to cast just a 1st preference only, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: A Voters’ Partial Profile

Preferences	Number of Voters					
	6	5	4	3	2	1
1 st	<i>A</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>
2 nd	<i>B</i>	<i>E</i>	-	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>
3 rd	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	-	<i>C</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>C</i>
4 th	<i>D</i>	<i>C</i>	-	<i>B</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>
5 th	<i>E</i>	<i>B</i>	-	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
6 th	<i>F</i>	<i>A</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>

The Borda analyses are shown in Table 8. If the four *B* voters abstain, then option *B*’s points total – all the points received from the other voters – is 55 (shown in orange). If they do submit a partial vote of just their four 1st preferences, then in an MBC they will get their favourite option just 4 points, for a total of 59 (in light green). With the BC, however, they would get 6 points for each 1st preference, without giving any other points to any of

the other options, so that would be a total of $55 + 24 = 79$. So their intransigence would bring them victory (light blue).

This is not what Jean-Charles de Borda wanted! His hope was that every voter would cast a full ballot. “My scheme is only intended for honest [voters]” he declared! (Black 1987:182.) And what should happen, as shown in pink in the bottom row, is a repeat of the MBC row in Table 5.

Table 8: The Fortunes of Option *B*'s Supporter

Voting System	Option <i>B</i> supporters	Social Choice	Social Ranking					
			first	second	third	fourth	fifth	sixth
BC/MBC	abstain	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i> -69	<i>E</i> -68	<i>C</i> -67	<i>B</i> -55	<i>A</i> -50	<i>F</i> -48
MBC	a partial vote	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i> -69	<i>E</i> -68	<i>C</i> -67	<i>B</i> -59	<i>A</i> -50	<i>F</i> -48
BC	a partial vote	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> -79	<i>D</i> -69	<i>E</i> -68	<i>C</i> -67	<i>A</i> -50	<i>F</i> -48
MBC	a full vote	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i> -89	<i>C</i> -83	<i>E</i> -80	<i>B</i> -79	<i>F</i> -56	<i>A</i> -54

7. An Inclusive Polity

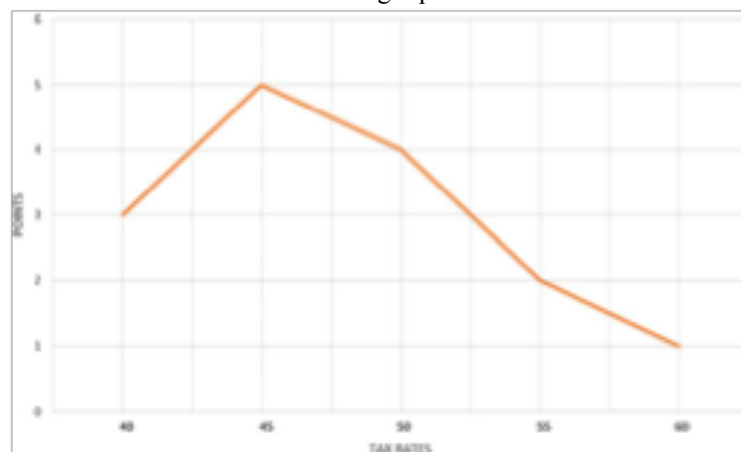
Given that democracy is for everybody (and not just a majority); given that decisions in any parliament or referendum should be based on an average opinion, and that governance should therefore be (non-majoritarian and) inclusive, it is time to establish a few criteria, based on the way the MBC works.

As noted, it encourages the voters to cast a full slate of preferences. If the subject is complex, the number of options on the ballot paper should normally be from 4–6, a balanced list representing the entire range of valid proposals expressed in debate. Consider the simple example of higher tax rates: if the options proposed varied from 40–60%, then maybe the best range of options would be 40-45-50-55-60, but it could just as easily be 40-44-48-52-56-60.

If, however, because many high and very few low rates had been proposed, a range of 40-54-56-58-60 were suggested, such would obviously be unfair. The MBC result on such a choice would almost inevitably be in the high 50's.

So let's return to the balanced scenario of 40-45-50-55-60. In such a choice, he who had a 1st preference of 60, would probably have a 2nd choice of 55, a 3rd of 50, and so on. In like manner, she whose 1st preference was 45 would perhaps have a 2nd choice of 50, a 3rd of 40, and so on. Indeed, in all such instances where the options can be arranged in a spectrum – from ‘high’ to ‘low’, ‘cheap’ to ‘expensive’ or whatever – voters will probably have single-peaked preferences, as they are called. The set – 45-50-40-55-60 – is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: A Single-peaked Curve



Suffice to say, very few persons would have a twin-peaked curve such as 45-55-40-60-50. Indeed, if a member of parliament did vote in this way, the constituents might well have some questions to ask, let alone any journalists.

7.1 The Joys of Science

If (nearly) every voter does cast a single-peaked set of preferences, the collated set – the collective will – will also be single-peaked. Always. Pluralism is not only possible. It can be an accurate measure of the common good. What's more, with the MBC, with every member of parliament's voting pattern in the public domain, it would be very difficult to manipulate. The MBC, however, does have a weakness: it is prone to an irrelevant alternative. Let us recall Table 2, here repeated as Table 10.

Table 10: Another Voters' Profile

Preferences	Number of Voters		
	5	4	3
1 st	X	Y	Z
2 nd	Y	Z	S
3 rd	Z	S	X
4 th	S	X	Y

Option **S** is always less popular than option **Z**, so it could be regarded, mathematically, as irrelevant. In an MBC analysis however, Table 1 gives the result of **X/Y**-25, **Z**-22, whereas, in Table 2, the scores are **X**-30, **Y/Z**-34, **S**-22. In effect, a joint winner in Table 1, option **X**, is a loser in Table 10.

The good news is that the MBC does not suffer from a paradox, while the Condorcet rule is not vulnerable to an irrelevant alternative. So maybe the best answer is to conduct a combined MBC/Condorcet analysis, and if both social choices coincide, all concerned may have complete faith in the accuracy of the result.

7.2 The Debate

Mindful of the MBC's qualities, it is possible to establish some guidelines for the conduct of the debate.

- + any party may move a motion;
- + anyone(s) with a different aspiration may propose (not an amendment to this or that section, but) a complete package, in the manner of a German 'constructive confidence' vote; (the original text may be used, with any differences highlighted), and all options may be shown on a dedicated webpage;
- + if they comply with the United Nations' Charter on Human Rights, all suggested options will be allowed 'on the table' and, in summary, on a computer screen;
- + as the debate proceeds, proposals may be tweaked, amended, composited or even deleted, but only if the original proposer agrees to such a change;
- + accordingly, the number of options 'on the table' may vary. Indeed, if it comes down to just the one, it's a verbal consensus. More frequently perhaps, differences will remain, whereupon the Speaker may draw up a balanced ballot of about 5 options to represent those options still in contention. If all concerned are assured that their particular proposal has been accepted – verbatim, in composite, or as amended – the Speaker may call for a vote.

7.3 The Analysis

Assuming the 12 voters submit a full ballot, in a 5-option ballot, the top score will be a dozen 1st preferences, which is $12 \times 5 = 60$ points. The bottom score, all the 5th preferences, will give a result of $12 \times 1 = 12$ points. And a mean score – all 3rd preferences, or an equal number of 2nd and 4th preferences, whatever – will give a total of 36 points.

Now some voters may cast a partial ballot, and it is always possible that one option gets no preferences at all, from anyone. (This is highly unlikely, of course, because the said option would not be on the ballot paper if no-one had proposed it.) But the absolute minimum score is of course 0.

Because some people may cast partial votes, and because in some ballots the number of voters is very large, a different measure is used, the consensus coefficient CC . For any one option A say, it is defined as follows:

$$CC_A = \frac{\text{option } A\text{'s MBC score}}{\text{The max possible MBC score}}$$

Accordingly, assuming that everyone has submitted a full ballot:

$$CC_{MAXIMUM} = \frac{\text{The maximum MBC score}}{\text{The max possible MBC score}} = 1.00$$

$$CC_{MINIMUM} = \frac{\text{The minimum MBC score}}{\text{The max possible MBC score}} = \frac{12 \times 1}{12 \times 5} = 0.20$$

$$CC_{AVERAGE} = \frac{\text{The average MBC score}}{\text{The max possible MBC score}} = \frac{12 \times 3}{12 \times 5} = 0.60$$

Therefore, before the vote takes place, the Speaker may rule that if

0.60	<	CC_{WINNER}	\leq	0.70	there is no consensus and no decision shall be taken; if however
0.70	<	CC_{WINNER}	\leq	0.80	this is the best possible compromise; or if
0.80	<	CC_{WINNER}	\leq	0.90	there is consensus; and if
0.90	<	CC_{WINNER}	\leq	1.00	this can be termed the collective wisdom.

Again, the joys of science.

8. An All-party, Power-sharing Cabinet

A coalition cabinet could best be formed democratically, that is, in an election. Accordingly, an open and transparent general election could be followed, a week or so later, by another equally democratic contest by which the newly elected members of parliament elect their cabinet.

Together, they will need to choose the best for each of several ministries. A two-dimensional ballot paper is therefore required, a simple example of which, for the election of five ministers, is shown in Table 11. The member of parliament first chooses five candidates and enters their names, in order of preference, in the shaded column. Next, the member shall decide in which ministry he/she wishes each of these nominees to serve: one \checkmark in each column, and one in each row.

Table 11: A Matrix Vote

Preferences		Ministries				
	Names	Prime Minister	Foreign Affairs	Finance	Climate Change	Education
1 st	Jean				\checkmark	
2 nd	Jane		\checkmark			
3 rd	Jim					\checkmark
4 th	Joan	\checkmark				
5 th	John			\checkmark		

The analysis is in two parts. The data in the shaded column is counted by PR to see who are the most popular candidates. Next, the matrix is analysed: the preferences are converted into points, by MBC, and in descending order, candidates are appointed to those ministries for which they get the most support.

Now PR-RCV prompts parties to nominate only as many as they think can get elected. In the above scenario, a party with 40% of the seats in parliament could expect two cabinet posts; so there would be no point in nominating others, lest the quota is split and only one or maybe none get elected at this stage. At the same time, the MBC used in the matrix encourages the members to submit full ballots. Overall, therefore, everyone is incentivised to vote across the party divide – an essential quality, it is argued, of any power-sharing polity.

9. Conclusion

Will it work? The US electoral system is divisive, and the US is now divided. As noted, Australia's system – AV – encourages some inter-party cooperation. The system in Papua New Guinea – AV with the proviso that, to be valid, a vote must consist of at least three preferences – ensures the vote is less tribal (Emerson 2012: 131.) The Lebanese system is an excellent adaptation of FPTP: (*Ibid*: 80): in any constituency where there are, let's say, 30% Shi'a, 30% Druze and 30% Maronite, three (or a multiple of three) representatives shall be elected, one of each, and any party wishing to contest the election has to have a triplet of candidates, again, one of each.

Politicians can and do adapt. All that is needed is the political will to change from an adversarial to a more consensual polity. This paper recommends the MBC in decision-making; a PR form of the MBC in elections in a system called the Quota Borda System QBS (Emerson 2022: 41-5); and all-party power-sharing, i.e., *real* majority rule.

If this were the international democratic norm, there would be no more binary referendums on matters controversial, be they in Baluchistan, Catalonia, Ireland, *Republika Srpska*, Scotland, Xinjiang or anywhere else. Elections would be both preferential and proportional, and the fairest of these systems is the multi-preference PR-list system used in Switzerland, or PR-RCV(STV) as in Ireland and Tasmania, or best of all, QBS.

And lastly, governance. If politics remains as majority rule, it will sometimes mean that an extremist is in total power: the likes of Bolsonaro, Modi, Netanyahu, Putin, Trump... the danger is existential.

As in Switzerland since 1959, however, every cabinet could be a form of all-party power-sharing. This could mean that extremists – Ireland's Sinn Féin, Germany's Alternative für Deutschland, The Netherlands' Party for Freedom PVV, the USA's Trump, India's BJP, and so on – would be at most, partners in government, taking decisions in consensus, by MBC. Consensus is a pre-requisite of our collective survival.

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Political Otherness of the Bihari Community in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The Bihari community in Bangladesh, consisting of de facto stateless individuals, has long been excluded politically, socially, and economically. This article explores the nature of the political otherness of the Bihari people, who have been the victims of divisive politics. The Bihari people are deprived of a series of fundamental rights, including citizenship status, voting rights, political representation, access to government facilities, freedom to participate in elections as a candidate, as well as access to passports, banking accounts, and insurance. This article investigates how political factors have contributed to the historical and contemporary forms of othering of the Bihari community. Based on six months' fieldwork in three Bihari camps in Dhaka—Geneva Camp (Mohammadpur), Murapara Bihari Camp (Mirpur), and Kurmitola Bihari Camp (Mirpur), we inquire into the nature of such political otherness. Building on the theoretical insights from Robert Park, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Ruth Levitas, we identify the reasons underlying statelessness and explain the otherness of the Bihari community. Survey and interview data are collected from primary sources, supplemented with data from published and unpublished sources. We find that the Bihari people have neither political power nor access to political participation at the local or national level as electoral candidates due to their identity, residential location, lack of active citizenship status, and limited access to voting rights. Moreover, the Bihari identity and residence in Bihari camps are the principal obstacles to access to a passport, government services, bank accounts, and insurance facilities. This article concludes that the people of the Bihari community in Bangladesh are the victims of severe political exclusion, and such exclusion is responsible for the “otherness” of the Bihari people.

Keywords: Bihari Community, Othering Identity, Political Exclusion, Social Exclusion, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Social exclusion has been a central focus of many classical and contemporary studies in sociology. From a micro perspective, social exclusion refers to a condition by which an individual fails to become a part of mainstream society. The idea of “otherness” in the present study emerges under a theoretical understanding of exclusion. We define “otherness” as a political discourse by which the state or the majoritarian group identifies a minority

community as a distinct section of the population to whom social goods and services are distributed unequally. This article examines how the identity of the “other community” is constructed by taking the Bihari community of Dhaka city as a case of empirical investigation. The Bihari community is a marginalized ethnic minority community in Bangladesh. This community consists of Urdu-speaking Muslim migrants who migrated from India and Pakistan and settled in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) after the partition of British India in 1947 (Bashar, 2006; Khan & Samadder, 2011; Khan, 2015). Though most of this population live in India and Pakistan, many reside in Bangladesh. After the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, the community received a different name: “Stranded Pakistanis” (Yasmin, 2004; Lynch & Cook, 2006; Sattar, 2013; Khan and Samadder, 2007). A wide range of studies have shown that Biharis in Bangladesh were stateless until 2008 (Farzana, 2008; Hussain, 2009). Subsequently, they secured a small number of legal rights following a judgment by the Dhaka High Court. One such right is that those born in Bangladesh were offered Bangladeshi citizenship, while those considered adults in 1971 could not obtain Bangladeshi citizenship (BBC, May 19, 2008; Hussain, 2009).

After reviewing a large variety of writings on minority exclusion and the historical background of the Bihari community, we discover that the nature and degree of the otherness of the Bihari community have received insufficient attention from a sociological point of view. Attempting to fill this research gap, this study explores the construction of “otherness” of the Bihari community in urban Bangladesh from a sociological perspective. It explains the construction of political otherness by exploring the forms, extent, and incidence of political marginalization among the Bihari community of Bangladesh. The most salient forms of political marginalization among the Bihari community include a crisis of identity, denial of legal rights, civic isolation, lack of political rights, territorial segregation, victim blaming, and police violence.

This article explores the construction of an “othering identity” among the Bihari community in urban Bangladesh and its relation to political factors. It examines how the majoritarian group constructs an “othering identity” of a minority community called “Bihari.” The central research question is as follows: How do political factors contribute to the construction of the Bihari community’s historical and contemporary forms of othering identity? We also investigate the nature of political otherness among the Bihari people by considering various important indicators, such as citizenship status, voting rights, political representation, participation in elections as a candidate, inadequate government facilities, access to a passport, banking account, and insurance. Based on the theoretical insights of Robert Park, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Ruth Levitas and using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative), we find that the lack of access to the abovementioned major political factors and resources is increasing the vulnerability of the Bihari people. The most significant finding of this study is that the Bihari community of Bangladesh are victims of varied levels of political exclusion, which creates a condition of “political otherness” among the camp-based Bihari people.

Through extensive empirical surveys and the application of sociological theories, this article conducts a thorough and detailed examination of the Bihari people in Bangladesh, revealing how a majority group constructs an “othering identity” for a minority group. We collect data through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and find that intergenerational differences in the Bihari community are a direct result of socio-political exclusion and a lack of necessary government support. In addition, this study makes a significant contribution to the literature on political marginality and labor-market exclusion by providing a multidisciplinary examination of the discrimination and crisis experienced by the Bihari minority in Bangladesh. This study helps to develop a deeper understanding of the diverse historical background and multiple forms of exclusion faced by the Bihari community in urban Bangladesh.

This article is divided into seven sections. The first section deals with the study objective and research question. The second section discusses the historical background of the Bihari crisis. The third section discusses relevant theories and literatures on otherness. The fourth section clarifies the research methodology. The fifth section details the findings. The sixth section consists of a discussion, and the final section draws conclusions.

2. Historical Background of the Bihari Crisis

The Biharis are a distinct ethno-linguistic and cultural minority. Urdu-speaking Muslim people migrated to former East Bengal (later East Pakistan) from unstable areas of Bihar. Many also moved to what had been known as Pakistan (both East and West Pakistan), searching for better life opportunities following India's partition in the 1940s. In Pakistan, these refugees were known as Muhajirs, and in Bangladesh, they were referred to as Biharis. In 1947, the Biharis moved from East Pakistan to West Pakistan, becoming part of the West Pakistani civil-military-bureaucratic aristocracy (Zaheer, 1994; Kozlowski, 1996; Ilias, 2003; Redclift, 2011). They viewed themselves as superior to Bengali Muslims, who were considered "lower-caste Hindu converts." Most Biharis opposed Bangladesh's creation and worked with the Pakistani government during the Liberation War of Bangladesh. They allegedly aided and abetted the Pakistani army's atrocities in 1971 and participated in crimes against humanity. As a result, they were shunned and rejected after Bangladesh became independent on 16th December 1971 (Paulsen, 2006; Haider, 2016).

The legal status of the Urdu-speaking Bihari community of Bangladesh is unique and remains controversial (Arif, 2018; Rahaman, 2019). Their status does not conform to any specific social group including ethnic minority, refugee, emigrant, or diaspora (Farzana, 2009). According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Article 1A (2), the Biharis are not refugees. Haider argued that "the Biharis are not refugees, because they have not fled the country of their residence" (Haider, 2016). Some scholars (Bashar, 2006; Hussain, 2009; Arif, 2018) have considered the Bihari people to be "stateless." Under the 1954 "Convention Relating to the Status of the Stateless People," the Bihari people are de facto stateless because their citizenship is ineffective and they are ineligible for Bangladeshi citizenship under Bangladeshi law. A person shall not be entitled to be a citizen of Bangladesh if he or she "owes, affirms, or adheres, expressly or by conduct, allegiance to a foreign state" according to the Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provisions) Ordinance 1978. Being stateless, the Bihari people do not enjoy state protection from Bangladesh. They are unable to demonstrate their de jure statelessness and are subjected to prolonged security and human rights violations.

Many legal and non-legal authors have contributed to the global citizenship debate. Carens (2000: 161–2) refuted the notion that citizenship is merely a legal position or membership in a nation-state. Similarly, Bauböck viewed citizenship as a complicated interplay between the individual and the state (Bauböck, 1999). Post-colonial South Asian nation-states have utilized excessive power to diminish the ability of ordinary people, particularly members of minority populations, to resist discriminatory official policies. Bangladesh's Biharis are one such community, subjected to state actors' exclusionary powers (Haider, 2018). Biharis are categorized as "stranded Pakistanis," left behind by Pakistan (Ahsan & Hussain, 1990; Paulsen, 2006). Pakistan was unwilling to repatriate the Biharis following defeat in the liberation war of Bangladesh, subsequent political crisis, and poor economic conditions (Sen, 2000; Arif, 2018), resulting in their settlement and uncertain status in Bangladesh. The Biharis thus became the victims of two conflicting types of nationalism (Bangladeshi and Pakistani) stoked by the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 (Hashmi, 1998).

Initially, the government of Bangladesh promised to offer citizenship to the Bihari community, but the promise of citizenship remains unfulfilled. Article 2 of the Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provisions) Order (President Order 149 of 1972) offers them citizenship like it does to the Bengali people. Some Biharis accepted citizenship and integrated into Bangladeshi culture, while others refused citizenship and instead opted for repatriation to Pakistan (Haider, 2018: 32). This group was disqualified from attaining Bangladeshi citizenship and subsequently became camp dwellers (Redclift, 2013). The Bihari culture and the Urdu language strengthened their segregation. This period marked the starting point of their identity crisis. Since then, the Bihari people have held a distinct cultural identity and have been labelled as "war criminals" (Redclift, 2010). The repercussions of their "betrayal" of the country may explain why they are continually victimized institutionally and discriminated against in present-day, independent Bangladesh (Redclift, 2011).

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation of Bangladesh, requested The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) involvement in the repatriation of the Bihari people. UNHCR registered the names of those who wanted to repatriate with the assistance of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent

Society (ICRC) (Haider, 2018: 33). ICRC enlisted 540,000 Biharis wishing to repatriate in the post-war period (Noor, 2005) and established 66 camps throughout Bangladesh for temporary settlement and protection (RMRRU, 2007). Following Bangladesh's independence in 1971, one million Biharis (non-Bengalis) were repatriated from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. After President Zia-ul- Haq's death in 1988, the repatriation effort was halted. The Pakistani government has since showed no renewed interest in reuniting the Biharis with their families. The Biharis claim to be Pakistanis because the formation of Pakistan would have been impossible without their involvement. An estimated 100,000 Biharis have crossed the border illegally into Pakistan, while another 250,000–300,000 remain in Bangladesh. However, out of 534,792 Biharis who opted for repatriation through the ICRC, a total of 178,069 returned legitimately to Pakistan (Haider, 2016). The most significant hurdles to the Biharis' social integration are linked to history, specifically the negative image formed following the betrayal in the liberation war of 1971 (Chowdhury, 1998).

3. Otherness: A Central Idea of *Sociological* Analysis

In this section, we discuss why the synthesis of various theories is required to understand the otherness of the Bihari community. The present study considers "otherness" as a social condition where individuals do not partake in the fundamental accomplishments of society. This article relies on major classical and contemporary theories of marginality, otherness, and exclusion to develop a research framework, collect data, and ultimately explain the research findings.

Rogers Brubaker's prominent writing is a key pillar in the study of ethnicity, race, and nationalism. Brubaker reconceptualized ethnically framed conflict as something that extends beyond the conflict between ethnic groups. By shifting the systematic attention from identity to identifications, from groups as entities to group-making projects, from shared culture to categorization, from substance to process, he showed that ethnicity, race, and nationalism are worldly perspectives: ways of seeing, interpreting, and representing the social world. Thus, ethnicity, race, and nationhood only exist through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, categorizations, and identifications (Brubaker, 2004).

Fredrik Barth's writing is key in understanding the notions of ethnicity and ethnic groups, introducing a new arena of enquiry into the sociological and scientific study of ethnicity. Barth's view is that ethnic identity is created and sustained through interactive processes of inclusion and exclusion. He considered anthropological notions of cultures as bounded entities and ethnicity as primordial bonds. Barth elucidated three basic assertions that fundamentally challenge the established anthropological conceptions of ethnicity. First, ethnicity is not defined by culture, but defined explicitly by social organization. The second is the ascription and self-identification of ethnic identifications, which are situationally dependent and can be transformed. The final assertion relates to social boundary and dichotomization, which views ethnicity as a product of types of inter-group relations. The ethnic boundary is a social boundary whose formation and continuation are dependent upon interaction with "Others" (Barth, 1969).

"Othering" is a situation in which individuals or communities are defined and considered "outcasts" according to the principles of a community or social group. This phenomenon involves saying that others "are somehow different from the mainstream people." In other words, **"othering"** can be defined as a series of dynamics, procedures, and constructions that produce marginality and insistent inequality across any number of the wide range of human differences on the basis of group identities. Othering and marginality can happen both at the individual and group levels. This state incorporates different terminologies of prejudice based on group identities and offers a descriptive framework that exposes a set of common procedures and situations that promulgate community- or group-based inequality and marginality. **"Otherness"** is the outcome of a discursive procedure by which a leading in-group (i.e., "Us," the Self) constructs a single or several dominated out-groups (i.e., "Them," the Other) by stigmatizing a difference – actual or imaginary – presented as a denial of identity and therefore a purpose for probable discernment. Thus, "otherness" is an inferior social position that can lead to marginalization and social exclusion.

Having unequal access to the opportunities and services required to live a respectable, comfortable, balanced, and happy life is a form of social exclusion. A discriminating or "othering" process based on cultural, social, economic, or racial identification is another form of social exclusion, and such discrimination can lead to potent exclusionary processes. In this context, "otherness" is viewed as a theoretical concept that includes any symbolic representation of "others" (phenotypically as well as in philosophy, beliefs, customs, and practices). However, it also encompasses the heavy burden of preconceptions that lead to division, conflict, hostility, stigmatization, and even violence. Thus, "otherness" is a form of intersubjective social exclusion.

This study uses three relevant theories of otherness offered by Robert Park (1928), W. E. B. Du Bois (1903), and Ruth Levitas (2005) to identify the reasons for statelessness and explain the dynamics of exclusion and otherness among the Bihari community. These theories help us to define the underlying dimensions behind the construction of "political otherness" among the Bihari community of urban Bangladesh.

Robert Park's (1864–1944) concept of the marginal man has been the catalyst for a large body of work in American sociology over the past eight decades. "Marginal man" theory, a sociological concept first developed by Park, a prominent sociologist of the Chicago School, and later analyzed by Park's student, Everett Stonequist (1901–1979), explains how a person is influenced and assimilated into two different cultural groups and strives to establish an identity. According to "marginal man" theory, Park (1928) proposed that multiracial persons remain isolated on the margins of society as they do not fit into a given monoracial cluster. Park argued that multiracial persons have a unique, ambivalent social psychology that leads not only to psychological agony but also to greater levels of social enterprise compared to monoracial persons (Cheng and Lively, 2009; Goldberg, 2012). In extending Park's theory, Stonequist (1935, 1937) proposed three stages of identity formation: preparation, crisis, and resolution of the identity crisis. During the preparation period, multiracial people acquaint themselves with different cultures. In the crisis period, multiracial persons understand their precarious social status and consequently feel conflicted about their multiracial tradition. Resolution of the identity crisis takes one of three forms, i.e., assimilation into the dominant culture, assimilation into a minority culture, or the formation of a new multiracial cluster. One of two firm identity outcomes is presumed: recognition of either a single racial cluster or both racial clusters. Initial theorists agreed that refusing to settle firmly on a single category of racial identity is a tension-filled phase on the way to accepting a steady, and thus entirely developed, racial identity (Stonequist, 1961). In this way, the concept of the "marginal man" is used to explain how an individual suspended between two cultural realities may struggle to establish an identity. This theory is relevant to the controversial identity of the Bihari community because almost every person in the Bihari camp conceals their identity and dwelling place from others when outside of the camp area.

Double consciousness refers to the central conflict experienced by subordinated or colonized groups within an oppressive social structure. This concept was first introduced by the African American intellectual and political figure W. E. B. Du Bois in his autoethnographic work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, in 1903, where the author explained the African-American experience of double consciousness, including his personal experience. Double consciousness is a struggle that is faced by African Americans for remaining true to black culture while simultaneously adjusting to the dominant white society. Initially, double consciousness was precisely the psychological challenge that African Americans experienced: "always looking at oneself through the eyes" of a racist white society and "measuring oneself by means of a nation that looked back in contempt" (Du Bois, 1994). Du Bois claimed, "It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness...one ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (Du Bois, 1994).

The concept of double consciousness is important because it illuminated the experiences of black people living in post-slavery America, and correspondingly, it provided a framework for understanding the position of oppressed people in an oppressive world. At present, double consciousness is no longer limited to the survival of African Americans; rather, many ethnic Americans experience this in their consciousness while trying to amalgamate to particular cultural traditions often defined by the standards of the dominant white society. This theory has laid a strong foundation in the fields of marginalization, race, gender issues, colonialism, and exclusion.

In this study, we used this theory to explain the identity crisis of the Bihari community in Bangladesh. The Bihari Muslims of Bangladesh remain aloof from the idea of a Bangladeshi Muslim community. Consequently, people of this community experience a double consciousness of being both Bihari and Muslim.

Ruth Levitas, a famous British female sociologist and scholar, extensively studied social exclusion, otherness, and marginalization. She tried to discover the fundamental trends of sociopolitical change in the causes of social exclusion and marginalization, with a particular focus on UK society. Levitas stated that there are three discourses of societal exclusion and otherness. The principal one is known as the redistributionist discourse (RED). This discourse argues that people's lack of exclusive privileges to citizenship rights weakens their well-being conditions, producing scarcity, otherness, social exclusion, segregation, alienation, discrimination, poverty, and marginalization. She argued that RED has a close association with the ideas of socio-political, cultural, and economic citizenship, representing a distinct form of the critique of inequality and exclusion (Levitas, 2005: 14). The subsequent discourse is known as the moral underclass discourse (MUD), discussing the fate of omitted, deprived, and excluded individuals. This approach centers on the dependent activities of the excluded and disadvantaged people who lose skills and ability through reliance on others for well-being. This discourse views otherness by focusing on the cultural dimension of exclusion instead of the material clarifications of poverty (Levitas, 2005: 21). Levitas's final discourse is a social integrationist discourse (SID). This discourse studies social exclusion, otherness, and marginalization through connection with the labor market. Moreover, this approach highlights discrimination among remunerated workers, principally wage discrimination and economic inequalities in gender outlines (Levitas, 2005: 26; Jane Mathieson et al., 2008: 18).

Under the theoretical viewpoints of Levitas, we argue that the Bihari people are not considered Bangladeshi citizens. The government of Bangladesh is reluctant to categorize the Biharis according to the different categories of citizenship because people of this community are regarded as “stranded Pakistanis.” However, the government is not interested in offering full citizenship status to this community like the Bengali community for various reasons. Bihari people have no access to active citizenship status, political participation, civic amenities, employment, bank accounts, insurance facilities, and the business sector because they belong to an “outsider Muslim” minority community in the eyes of Bangladeshi people. Therefore, people of the Bihari community have become “de facto stateless individuals” and are constantly deprived of multiple civil rights and amenities, representing a clear sign of “otherness.”

In light of the relevant theoretical perspectives of Park, Du Bois, and Levitas on the social exclusion, vulnerability, and marginalization of ethnic minority communities, the present study develops the following analytical framework to explain the multiple instances of exclusion and otherness of the camp-based Bihari community in Bangladesh (Please see Figure 1).

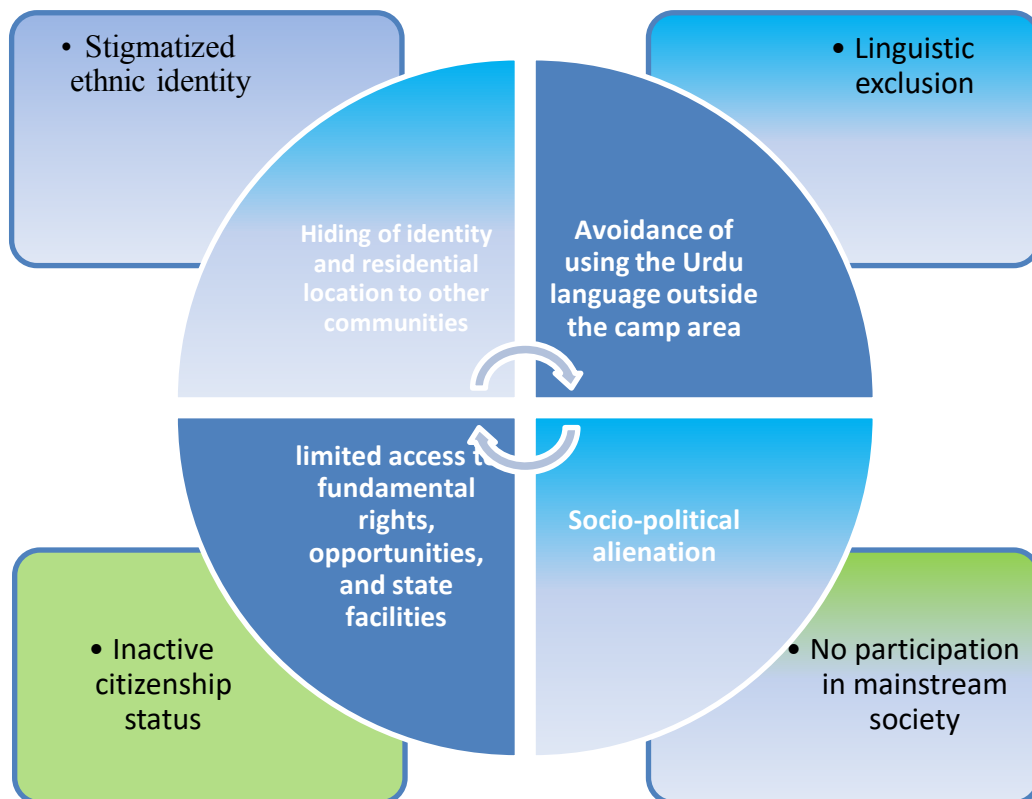


Figure 1: Analytical Framework

Based on the theoretical perspectives, in this section, we analyze the situation of the Bihari community and find that the Bihari community is not only excluded from formal citizenship rights but also discriminated in the labor market. They have no access to civil society participation and also suffer from multiple exclusions from the social arena. Therefore, the lack of access to these four significant variables is responsible for the social exclusion and otherness of the Bihari community in Bangladesh. People of the Bihari community are treated differently by the majority population of Bangladesh and, as a result, are denied full citizenship, political involvement, social amenities, job opportunities, banking and insurance services, income-generating activities, and access to the commercial sector. The lack of access to these basic services and amenities makes the Bihari people a “marginal community” in Bangladesh, reflecting Park’s “marginal man” theory. In addition, these factors indicate the “otherness” of this minority group.

We link the situation of the Bihari community in Bangladesh to the theoretical viewpoint of Levitas and argue that the “de facto stateless individuals” belonging to this minority group may be considered “other” like the minority communities of Bangladesh. Their obedience to the country is questionable as the government’s stance on this community remains unclear. As a result, they are continually excluded from multiple social privileges, economic amenities, and civic rights, which is a crucial indicator of “political otherness.” Du Bois’s theory of double consciousness is pertinent to understanding the confrontational identity, political marginality, and socioeconomic exclusion of the Bihari community since most of the Bihari camp dwellers conceal their identities and residential areas from other communities when outside of the camp area. Consequently, this community has become the victims of the “othering identity” and faced multiple challenges over the past 52 years, making them a “defenseless and vulnerable minority” group in contemporary Bangladesh.

We attempt to establish a causal link between our research findings and relevant theories. This provides context for the Bihari issue in Bangladesh and highlights the contributing factors. The views of the aforementioned scholars (Park, Du Bois, and Levitas) help us to develop a conceptual understanding of the overarching pattern of social marginalization and exclusion among the Bihari people living in the Mohammadpur Geneva camp, the Murapara Bihari camp, and the Kurmitola Bihari camp. This conceptual understanding connects the findings of the study to the actual predicament of the Bihari people. In illuminating the larger context of marginalization,

otherness, and social exclusion, we find that these theories are consistent with the findings of our own research, which supports their validity. In particular, the political circumstances that have led to the marginalization and exclusion of the Bihari community in Bangladesh are examined, discussed, and evaluated in light of the study findings.

4. Methodology and Data

This section focuses on the research methodology of this study, which guides the structure of the article.

4.1. Research Design

We followed triangulation or a mixed method approach to conduct this study. This study used mixed methods to fill the gap in the quantitative data and support our arguments. Mixed methods are essential in sociological research because they provide three important elements: the voices of the participants, comprehensive analyses of phenomena, and enhanced validity of findings. For these reasons, we relied on mixed methods in this study.

4.2. Techniques of Data Collection

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to collect data. The technique under the quantitative method is the survey, and the techniques under the qualitative method are FGD (focus group discussion), KII (key informant interview), and IDI (in-depth interview). The survey method is highly representative, precise, cost effective, and convenient in gathering data from a large population. FGD is often used as a qualitative technique for gaining an in-depth understanding of social issues. This method is helpful in understanding respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and reactions, while other methods are inappropriate. KII are qualitative in-depth interviews that help to collect data from an extensive range of people—including community leaders, residents, or experts—who have actual knowledge about the particular society or community problem. IDI is an unstructured personal interview between a single respondent and a highly skilled interviewer. This method helped us understand respondents' underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings on specific social issues. The main benefit of in-depth interviews is that highly comprehensive data can be obtained. We used these methods in this study because they allowed us to understand the contradictions between quantitative results and qualitative findings. Although the study used mixed methods, it emphasized the survey data and in-depth interviews.

4.3. Selection of the Area and the Respondents

We conducted this study in Dhaka city (the capital of Bangladesh). First, among the major Bihari camps (Dhaka, Khulna, Jessore, Syedpur, Nilfamari, Narayanganj, and Mymensingh) of Bangladesh, we selected the Dhaka metropolitan city. The reason for selecting Dhaka city is that this area is the easiest to visit frequently and collect data. Then, from the Bihari camps in Dhaka metropolitan city, we selected three Bihari camps through a random sampling technique, namely Geneva Camp (Mohammadpur), Murapara Bihari Camp (Mirpur), and Kurmitola Bihari Camp (Mirpur). We then conducted research through continuous fieldwork in these three Bihari camps. This study took the Bihari people as the study population. Following purposive random sampling, we selected the respondents of this study. We interviewed 32 Bihari people aged 18–72 years old, conducted four FGDs with 10 participants each, conducted five key informant interviews, and surveyed 304 people who were currently living in these three Bihari camps. The study encompassed both empirical and explanatory research.

4.4. Data Collection Period

We collected data from June 28, 2021, to December 4, 2021. Quantitative data were collected through a semi-structured survey questionnaire. We collected the qualitative data through 4 FGDs, 5 KIIs, and 32 IDIs and also used recorders and field notes for qualitative data collection purposes. We conducted face-to-face IDIs using an interview schedule. Each interview took approximately one hour to complete. In addition, we invited 10 participants to each focus group session, lasting around 50 minutes. Secondary data were required to explain the

research problem and to select the study area. We collected secondary data for this study through the literature and publications available in national and international reports, documents, journal articles, websites, etc.

4.5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using STATA (Version-13) and Microsoft Excel. We also analyzed the qualitative data by reviewing field notes and recorders. Qualitative data were transcribed into text. Accordingly, transcriptions and expanded notes were recorded in Microsoft Word.

4.6. Statistical Analysis

We collected data on socio-demographic information, citizenship status, voting rights, political power, participation in elections, passport issues, bank accounts, insurance facilities, and inadequate access to government facilities. We mainly performed descriptive statistics to observe the “otherness” status of the Bihari community. In addition, this study considered the citizenship status of this community as one of the key indicators for determining “otherness.” Univariate and bivariate analyses were performed to observe the association between exploratory variables and citizenship status. Moreover, we conducted a multivariate logistic regression model including the variables with a $p < 0.25$ to identify factors. “Citizenship status” was considered as the outcome variable and “demographic characteristics” (e.g., geographic area, sex, age, marital status, education, religion, household size, household income, and expenditure) were considered as the dependent variables for this analysis. We performed a multivariate logistic regression using a generalized linear model. The variables with a p -value < 0.25 in the bivariate model were included in the multivariate model.

4.7. Ethics

When conducting any research, the researcher must consider ethical issues (Neuman, 2006). We tried to maintain ethical standards in every phase of this study. We warmly welcomed the respondents and cordially requested them to answer the questions. All respondents were asked before the interview, and informed consent was taken before participation in this study. Moreover, we maintained confidentiality and ensured the privacy of the respondents. All respondents were assured that the information collected would remain confidential.

5. Findings

5.1. Demography

A total of 304 persons participated in the survey from three Bihari camps in Dhaka city. We found equally distributed samples from the Mohammadpur Geneva Camp: 34% (104/304), Murapara Bihari Camp (Mirpur): 33% (100/304), and Kurmitola Bihari Camp (Mirpur): 33% (100/304). Among the respondents, 32% (95/304) were aged 31–40 years, 55% were male (167/304), and 84% (255/304) were married. All respondents were from the Muslim community. Sixty-five percent (199/304) of the respondents had six and above family members. About half of the respondents, 47% (144/304), were illiterate. In addition, 37% (113/304) of the respondents were involved in day-to-day income-generating activities, while another 37% (111/304) of the respondents were not engaged in income-generating activities. Two thirds of the respondents, 75% (227/304), had a monthly family income of 5,000–10,000 BDT.

5.2. Political factors of otherness

5.2.1. Citizenship Status

The area ($P < 0.01$), age (< 0.01), and family size ($P = 0.01$) were found to be statistically significant in the bivariate analysis with citizenship status (please see Table 1). On the other hand, sex ($P > 0.05$), marital status ($P > 0.05$), occupation ($P > 0.05$), education ($P > 0.05$), and household income ($P > 0.05$) were not statistically significant (see Table 1).

Table 1: Bivariate analysis considering the "citizenship status" as a dependent variable.

Variable	%Yes(n/N)	%No(n/N)	P-Value
Area			
Mohammadpur Geneva Camp	19(20/104)	81(84/104)	0.05
Murapara Bihari Camp (Mirpur)	33(33/100)	67(67/100)	
Kurmitola Bihari Camp (Mirpur)	32(32/100)	68(68/100)	
Sex			
Male	30(50/167)	70(117/167)	0.39
Female	26(35/137)	74(102/137)	
Age			
0–20	25(2/6)	75(4/6)	0.06
21–50	31(66/210)	69(144/210)	
51–70	17(13/77)	83(64/77)	
70 and above	44(4/9)	56(5/9)	
Marital status			
Married	26(67/255)	74(188/255)	0.13
Unmarried	48(12/25)	52(13/25)	
Widowed	22(2/7)	78(5/7)	
Divorced	27(4/11)	73(7/8)	
Household size			
2–5 members	19(20/105)	81(85/105)	0.01
6 and above members	33(65/199)	67(134/199)	
Occupation			
Business	35(18/52)	65(34/52)	0.61
Day labor	27(31/113)	73(82/113)	
Unemployed	27(30/111)	73(81/111)	
Others	21(6/28)	79(22/28)	
Education			
Illiterate	28(40/144)	72(104/144)	0.97
Primary	29(32/112)	71((80/112)	
SSC and above	27(13/48)	73(35/48)	
Household income			
No income	0(0/3)	100(3/3)	0.75
5,000–10,000	28(64/227)	72(163/227)	
10,001–20,000	29(20/70)	71(50/70)	
20,001–30,000	25(1/4)	75(3/4)	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

We performed a multivariate logistic regression model with variables $p < 0.25$ to identify factors related to citizenship status. In the multivariate model, we found that unmarried people were 2.5 times more likely to have citizenship than married people (aOR: 2.50, 95% CI: 1.06–5.88, $P=0.04$), and that this association was statistically significant. Participants who had six or more family members had approximately twice as much citizenship as those with 2–5 family members (aOR: 1.92, 95% CI: 1.02–3.62, $P=0.04$). For the other participants in Mirpur, its value ($P=0.1$) was significant with the camp's citizenship status (see Table 2).

Table 2: Multivariate analysis of citizenship status

Citizenship status	Odds Ratio	P>z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Address				
Mohammadpur Geneva Camp	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Murapara Bihari Camp (Mirpur)	1.75	0.10	0.90	3.40
Kurmitola Bihari Camp (Mirpur)	1.49	0.27	0.74	3.01
Marital Status				
Married	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Unmarried	2.50	0.04	1.06	5.88
Widowed	1.01	0.99	0.20	5.22
Divorced	1.05	0.93	0.31	3.60
Household Size				
2–5 members	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
6 and above	1.92	0.04	1.02	3.62

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

From the qualitative fieldwork, we found that stranded Pakistanis or the Bihari community have lived in inhuman conditions across different camps in Bangladesh for several decades and are excluded from all of the fundamental necessities of modern human life. The camp residents face issues with housing conditions, and approximately seven to 10 people share a small (8 feet by 8 feet) room for living. Moreover, around 12–15 families must share one toilet and bathroom, meaning that women, children, and young girls face issues of privacy due to this inadequate sanitation arrangement. In this regard, one male married respondent aged 40 from the Kurmitola Bihari camp stated,

"I think the Bihari people have no access to the citizenship status of Bangladesh. They could form a political party and fight for their demands and rights if they had access. Unfortunately, Biharis are always used by the political parties of Bangladesh to fulfill their political interests. The government of Bangladesh has provided NID (National Identity Cards) cards to the Bihari peoples, so we are the citizens of Bangladesh. But the government is discriminating against us in all respects. We are not getting equal rights like the Bengali people, and sometimes getting proper justice as a citizen is a daydream for us. What should we do with this so-called citizenship status and NID cards?" (KII, November 6, 2021).

Findings also showed that the Bihari people have no political rights and participation. They are unable to raise their voices against injustices. In addition, the Bihari community has no political party and national representatives of their own; instead, their political life is always controlled by the local political leaders of the Bengali community. The Biharis have minimal access to citizenship status and voting rights due to their identity crisis. People of this community have no access to bank accounts, bank loans, passports, and insurance facilities like the Bengalis, and, as a result, they feel stateless.

5.2.2. Access to Government Facilities

This study investigated whether the state provides access to facilities to the camp-based Bihari people. Among the 304 respondents, only 35 (12%) respondents claimed that the state provides access to some facilities, but that those facilities are inadequate. On the other hand, 269 respondents (88%) claimed that the Bihari people do not have access to any facilities from the government. This political exclusion is responsible for the "otherness" of the Bihari community.

5.2.3. Types of Facilities

This study describes the types of facilities provided to the Bihari people by the state. Of 35 respondents, 19 (54%) reported having access to water facilities, 34 (97%) mentioned access to housing facilities, 17 (49%) mentioned limited access to health and sanitation facilities, 10 (29%) mentioned access to education allowance for children, 26 (74%) mentioned access to widow allowance, and 23 (66%) claimed access to old-age allowance. All 35 respondents claimed that the government did not provide access to pipeline gas facilities, cash assistance, and loans to the camp-based Biharis. However, electricity was provided.

5.2.4. Voting Rights

In this study, 35% (109/304) of respondents replied that they have voting rights in the Bangladeshi election. Of these, 44% are from the Mohammadpur Geneva camp, 41% are from the Murapara Bihari camp, and 22% are from the Kurmitola Bihari camp. In a bivariate analysis, we found only the camp area to be statistically significantly associated ($P < 0.01$) with voting rights (please see Table 3).

Table 3: Bivariate analysis considering "voting right" as a dependent variable

Variable	% Yes (109/304)	%No (195/304)	P-Value
Area			
Mohammadpur Geneva Camp	44(46/104)	56(58/104)	0.00
Murapara Bihari Camp	41(41/100)	59(59/100)	
Kurmitola Bihari Camp	22(22/100)	78(78/100)	
Sex			
Male	38(64/167)	62(103/167)	0.32
Female	33(45/137)	67(92/137)	
Age			
0–20	38(3/8)	62(5/8)	0.83
21–50	34(72/210)	(138/210)	
51–70	39(30/77)	61(47/77)	
70 and above	44(4/9)	56(5/9)	
Marital status			
Married	35(90/255)	65(165/255)	0.84
Unmarried	44(11/25)	56(14/25)	
Widowed	33(3/9)	67(6/9)	
Divorced	33(5/15)	67(10/15)	
Household size			
2–5 members	37(39/105)	63(66/105)	0.73
6 and above members	35(70/199)	65(129/199)	
Occupation			
Business	35(18/52)	65(34/52)	0.95
Day labor	35(39/113)	65(74/113)	
Unemployed	38(42/111)	62(69/111)	
Others	36(10/28)	64(18/28)	
Education			
Illiterate	35(51/144)	65(93/144)	0.87
Primary	38(42/112)	62(70/112)	
SSC and above	33(16/48)	67(32/48)	

Household income			
No income	33(1/3)	66(2/3)	0.87
5,000–10,000	35(79/227)	65(148/227)	
10,001–20,000	39(27/70)	61(50/70)	
20,001–30,000	50(2/4)	50(2/4)	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

About one-fourth of the study participants said that they have no clear idea about the employment of the Bihari people in political parties. However, a small number of IDI participants (2/32) shared their personal experiences of being involved with Bangladeshi political parties. One participant showed disinterest in replying to this issue. Participants from the FGD in the Geneva camp stated that Bangladeshi political parties employ the Bihari people with views aligned to their own interests. These parties usually employ the Bihari community during the election period. Mostly these Bihari people are engaged during the election campaign. In some situations, political parties consider the Bihari community as an effective vote bank. For this temporal involvement, parties provide financial incentives to the election campaigners according to five IDI participants. One of the male participants aged 38 from the Geneva camp stated,

"Since the Biharis have partial voting rights, the political parties come to our camps during the election only to demand that we vote. We are the 'vote bank' for them. No, we never get political assistance like the Bengali people when we need it. The Bihari people face discrimination in education, health, sanitation, language, culture, gender, etc. But we cannot protest against the discriminatory attitude of the state towards us due to our inferior status" (IDI, September 10, 2021).

In some situations, political leaders promise to give the Bihari community access to several facilities. However, generally, the political parties fail to meet the commitments made prior to the national or local elections. Respondents also revealed that they have not received any help during emergencies, e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic situation. One participant expressed his frustration by saying that the national identity card is nothing but a showpiece. On the other hand, one KII participant noted that politically influential individuals maintain communication with the Bihari community to use their name, thereby allowing them to receive money from several NGOs.

5.2.5. Possession of Bangladeshi Passports

The graph below illustrates the proportion of Bihari people with the right to own a Bangladeshi passport. Among the 304 respondents, only one respondent (0.33%) from the Murapara camp confirmed that he had a Bangladeshi passport, obtained using a fake address instead of his camp address. On the other hand, 303 respondents (99.67%) claimed that the government of Bangladesh never issues passports to the Bihari people, and for this reason, they have no legal access to the Bangladeshi passport. Thus, the camp-based Bihari people are treated as “others” in regards to access to a Bangladeshi passport.

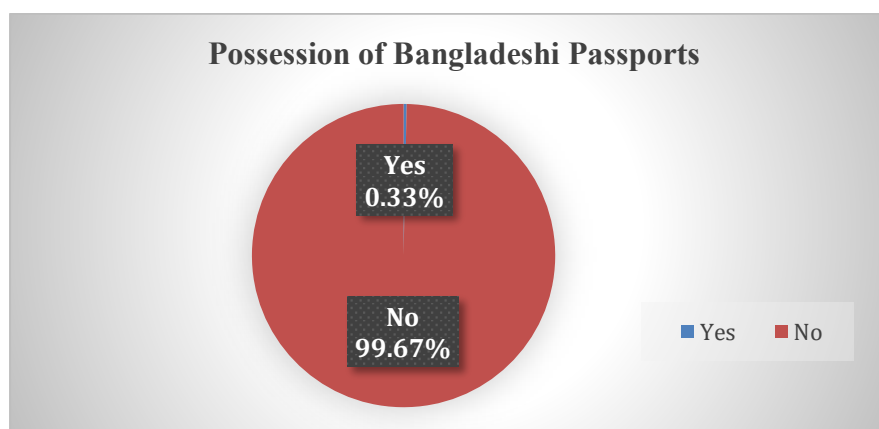


Figure 2: Possession of a Bangladeshi passport

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

5.2.6. Reasons for Not Possessing a Bangladeshi Passport

This study shows the given reasons why the Bihari respondents do not possess Bangladeshi passports. Among the 303 respondents, 100% reported having no access to Bangladeshi passports due to their Bihari identity. However, 292 (96%) respondents said that they are unable to access Bangladeshi passports because they reside in Bihari camps, which are considered restricted areas. A total of 222 (73%) respondents claimed that having a passport is unnecessary. Another 61 (20%) respondents claimed that the government of Bangladesh has a suspicious attitude towards the Bihari people. The government and the general public suspect that most Bihari people are closely linked to violence and illegal activities, and for this reason, the government is reluctant to issue Bangladeshi passports to the camp-based Bihari people. 231 (76%) respondents said that they have not received a passport because the government thinks that the Biharis are connected to criminal activities. This relationship between the Bihari people and the government constitutes a blame game. Finally, 64 (21%) respondents stated that they have no passport due to financial problems.

When asked whether the state is the core political institution responsible for making the Bihari people “other,” a significant number of the study participants avoided the issue by saying that they have no idea who is responsible for their present vulnerable condition. However, over half of the total IDI participants blamed the state for their “otherness” and vulnerability. Elaborating on this issue, one participant referred to the national identity card provided by government authorities by writing “*Atke pora Pakistani,*” which means “*Refugee.*” One of the married female respondents aged 35 from the Kurmitola Bihari camp stated,

“I think that we have no power to protest against the discriminatory attitude of the state towards the Bihari community because we are the minority. Due to our Bihari identity and social stigma, we never get any political help from the Bengali people. Moreover, Bengali people think that we are connected with Pakistan. For this reason, they are unwilling to give us political assistance. The government does not issue passports for us, and we have no access to bank accounts and insurance facilities due to our identity and residential location. We can only open bank accounts and get passports if we use a fake address instead of the camp address” (IDI, November 4, 2021).

In explaining their political vulnerability, one KII participant mentioned political inequality. Bihari leaders are also responsible for the marginalization of the wider community. Bihari politicians are dishonest and ineffective at raising issues on behalf of the community. One of the FGD participants related the historical context fueling the present situation. He identified the liberation war as the main cause of partition among the Bengali and Bihari communities. In stark contrast, another participant said the blame for the present condition lay with the community itself.

5.2.7. Exercising Political Power

This study investigated whether the Bihari people have the ability to exercise political power with the government or political parties. Among the 304 respondents, each one claimed to be unable to exercise political power like Bengali citizens. This suggests political exclusion. Due to this type of discrimination, the Bihari community is treated as “others” by the mainstream Bengali community.

5.2.8. Reasons for Not Exercising Political Power

The following graph illustrates why the Biharis are unable to exercise political power in the same manner as the Bengalis. Out of the 304 respondents, all respondents (100%) claimed that the Bihari identity is primarily responsible for the problem. In addition, 291 respondents (96%) believe that the cause of this problem relates to having a camp address. However, 217 respondents (71%) argued that the lack of citizenship status is responsible, and 72 respondents (24%) claimed that the government's attitude towards Biharis is questionable. Finally, 173 respondents (57%) indicated no interest in the political affairs of Bangladesh.

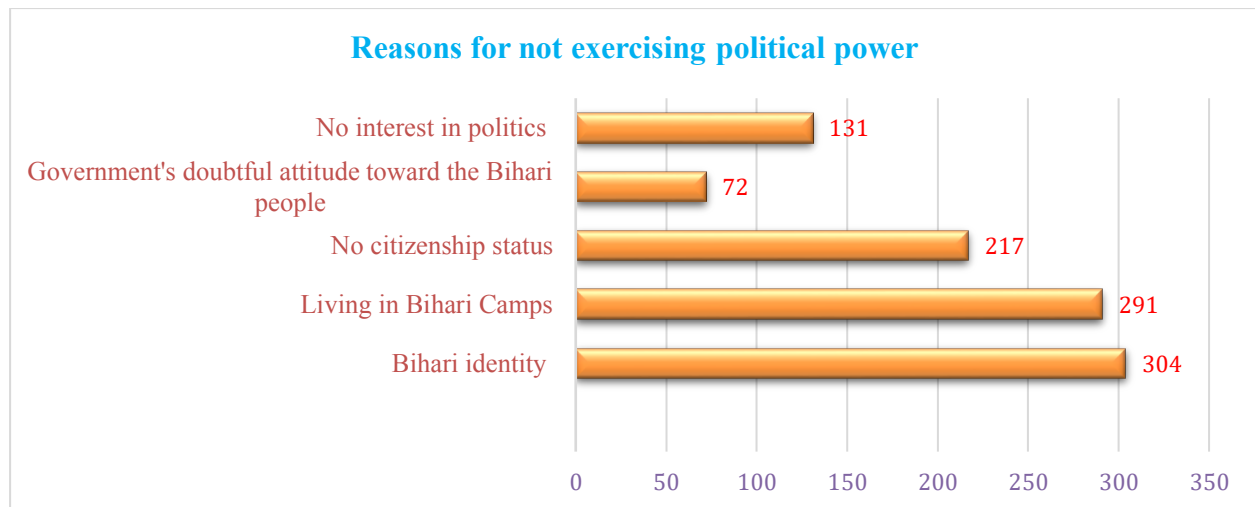


Figure 3: Reasons for not exercising political power

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

This study also found that none of the study participants had formal membership in any political party in Bangladesh. In terms of the reason for not possessing membership, the main focus was on individual barriers and the nature of existing opportunities in the political parties. Participants identified economic status, educational qualification, and gender identity as the main barriers to involvement in mainstream politics. One of the male participants aged 58 from the Murapara Bihari camp noted,

"We have no political representative from the Bihari community who can talk to the government about our problems. We have an organization named SPGRC, which is run by the Bihari leaders. But this is not a political organization. Our leaders always try to discuss our problems with the relevant authorities through SPGRC, but in most cases, their attempts are unsuccessful. We are the victims of political inequality, and I think politics is the only reason for our present situation. This is the reality of our life; every camp member has been facing this political discrimination for years" (IDI, July 20, 2021).

The limited number of political parties does not support engagement by the Bihari people. In the present system, the Bihari people experience little opportunity for involvement. However, some IDI participants (3/32) said that the Bihari people are secretly supportive of two major political parties in Bangladesh. However, the political allegiances were never revealed. The Bihari people mainly support the rolling parties in Bangladesh in a bid to ensure communal rights. In doing this, they also try to reduce their vulnerability. In some situations, the Bihari people seek to exercise power with partial exposure to political parties.

5.2.9. Participating in the Election as a Candidate

This study found evidence of the Bihari people participating in the national election of Bangladesh as electoral candidates. All respondents across the three camps claimed that the Bihari people have no right to participate in the national election of Bangladesh as electoral candidates. Those with voter identity cards are only able to participate in the elections as voters.

5.2.10. Reasons for Not Participating in the Election as a Candidate

The graph below describes the reasons for the Bihari people's non-participation in the national and local elections as electoral candidates. Many factors are responsible for this non-participation. Among the 304 respondents of the three Bihari camps, 221 respondents (73%) claimed that they cannot participate in any election because they had no citizenship status. However, 194 respondents (63%) said that they have no voting rights and, for that reason, are unable to participate in the election. In this study, 295 respondents (97%) argued that their Bihari identity is responsible for the problem, and 177 respondents (58%) stated that they were unable to participate in the elections because they were not included in the voter list. Finally, 109 respondents (36%) expressed disinterest in the elections in Bangladesh.

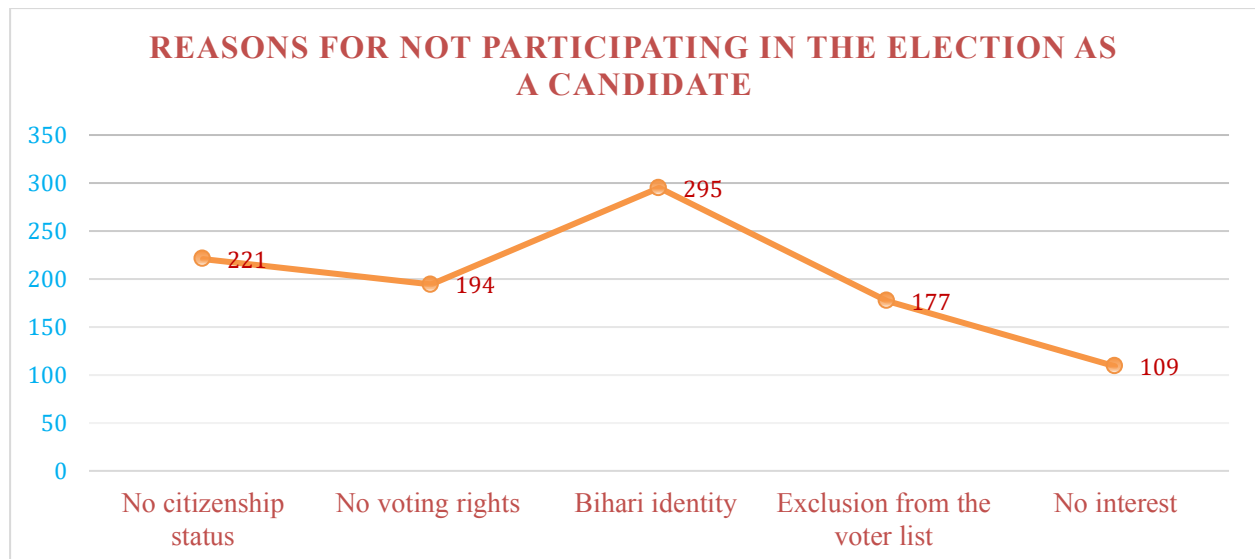


Figure 4: Graphical presentation depicting the reasons for not participating in the election as a candidate

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

More than three-quarters of the study participants said that they have no political leaders or representatives in their community involved in local political parties. Participants added that, due to the unavailability of Bihari political organization, there is no scope for this community to obtain a political representative. With this lack, the Bihari community struggles to raise their voice and secure rights. In this context, one of the unmarried female respondents, aged 20, from the Geneva camp stated,

"We cannot participate in any election of Bangladesh as a candidate due to our identity and lack of political representation from our community. I saw some Bengali political leaders and their fellows come to our camp before the election and take videos or photos with the camp people. They promised that they would discuss our problems with the government and help us if we vote for them. But after the election, they completely forgot our demands. The government is not worried about our suffering. Moreover, political parties use us only to 'vote' for them during the election" (IDI, August 21, 2021).

However, less than half of the IDI participants (12/32) conveyed that a non-political organization, SPGRC, is the main channel through which communication with political parties and higher authorities occurs. The chairmen and other members of this organization rely on personal communication to conduct communications. One FGD participant thought that this organization was not capable of adequately conveying the problems of the Bihari people to the authorities.

5.2.11. Development Programs

This study shows the extent to which the government or NGOs have development programs for the camp-based Bihari people. Among the 304 respondents, only 14 respondents (5%) claimed that some government development programs exist for the benefit of the Bihari people. On the other hand, 265 respondents (87%) claimed that NGOs conduct several development programs, which benefit the Bihari people.

Discrimination and deprivation are the most common issues for the Bihari people in their everyday lives. Almost every one of the IDI participants said that the Bihari community is the victim of discrimination by the government and political parties. Moreover, the reluctance of community representatives to speak out about their lack of rights provides space for discrimination by the authorities. One unemployed male FGD participant aged 32 from the Murapara Bihari camp stated,

"Due to the state's political system, we are now in this inhumane situation and living in a confined camp. The government and political parties have no sympathy for us. There is no one who can talk about our issues or solve our problems properly. Political leaders are reluctant to save us from this discriminatory life, even if they promise to help us. We do not get the same facilities as the Bengalis in the sectors of health, education, employment, loans,

housing, allowance, legal aid, etc. Moreover, we are socially, politically, educationally, economically, culturally, and spatially excluded. Sometimes we try to protest, but we cannot because we are stateless people. No one will listen to us, our plight, and our challenges. It is our destiny that the Biharis will face discrimination from generation to generation. Only Allah can save us from this dehumanized life" (FGD, October 12, 2021).

Another participant added that unexpected situations, e.g., Rohingya-related issues, have exacerbated the problem as the government is preoccupied with other issues. In explaining the forms of discrimination, study participants highlighted socio-political, educational, and health issues. The government is forcing the community to remain in overcrowded camps. In addition, the community receives national identity cards without any holding number. None of the study participants experienced assistance from the political leaders of leading parties, even in emergencies, e.g., during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, the Bihari community offers support to different leaders during national and local elections. Study participants said that those with good connections to the Bengali leaders may have the chance of gaining political assistance.

5.2.12. Types of Aid Programs

This study details the different types of government and NGO aid programs available for the development of the Bihari people. Among the 14 respondents, 12 respondents mentioned government educational allowance, whereas 13 respondents mentioned government health services. However, all 14 respondents cited government-funded old-age allowance. A total of 265 respondents received aid from NGOs. Out of the 265 respondents, only 1 respondent mentioned an NGO-provided housing loan, 1 respondent received a monthly allowance, 181 respondents received educational allowances, and 188 received an old-age allowance. However, 155 respondents claimed that NGOs offer legal aid, while 258 respondents claimed that NGOs provide healthcare aid, 196 respondents claimed that NGOs provide welfare aid, and 185 respondents claimed that NGOs provide community development aid for the Bihari people. Finally, 180 respondents mentioned the micro-credit aid program from the NGOs for the Bihari people.

5.2.13. Institutional Financial Activities

This study discusses the institutional financial activities of the Bihari people. Among the 304 respondents, only 1 respondent (0.33%) was able to open a bank using a fake address. Among the 304 respondents, 303 respondents (99.67%) claimed that as a Bihari they were unable to take out a loan from the bank when necessary because they could not open a bank account. However, 99.67% (303) of respondents mentioned that Bihari people have no access to insurance facilities from government or non-government organizations.

5.2.14. Reasons for Not Being Able to Open Bank Accounts

This study details why the Biharis are unable to open bank accounts. Out of 304 respondents, all respondents felt that they cannot open a bank account due to their stigmatized Bihari identity, whereas 254 respondents (85%) felt that their camp address was responsible for this problem. However, 219 respondents (72%) cited the lack of citizenship status, which creates many problems. Finally, two respondents (0.65%) indicated that they do not feel the need to open a bank account.

5.2.15. Reasons for Not Having Access to Insurance Organizations

This study explains why the Biharis have no access to government or non-government insurance organizations. Of the 304 respondents, 301 (99.34%) felt they have no access to government or non-government insurance organizations due to their stigmatized Bihari identity, whereas 290 respondents (96%) felt that their camp address is responsible for this problem. However, 233 respondents (77%) claimed that their questionable citizenship status creates many problems in this respect. Finally, six respondents (2%) do not feel any necessity to get access to government or non-government insurance organizations.

Some members of the Bihari community are actively involved in election campaigning. Through this, they are able to receive political support from mainstream leaders. Respondents mainly indicated that their stigmatized

identity is the principal reason for not receiving political assistance due to the ongoing association with Pakistan. More than half of the study participants felt that, as Bihari people, they have access to the police station and can file a complaint. However, many are concerned about discrimination by the police. Police usually do not prioritize complaints from the Bihari people. Three IDI participants said that after filing a case at the police station, the chance of receiving proper justice was limited. Another five IDI participants said that generally, people of this group avoid police stations to reduce the risk of issues with senior members of their native community, as well as with the chairman of the non-political organization, SPGRC. In some situations, community members avoid the police station after having previously experienced discrimination. Only one FGD participant stated that the Bihari people receive support from the police. In explaining the reasons for not receiving proper assistance from the local police, study participants mainly indicated that their identity as Bihari and their living locations are responsible. Most IDI participants (28/32) believed that Bihari people are unable to protest against discrimination by the state. One participant mentioned a lack of opportunity to protest. Yet Bihari community leaders continuously seek to protest against discrimination. Due to a lack of political leaders and unity among the community, the Bihari community remains unable to protest the authorities and the state widely. Some of the IDI participants (4/32) felt no need to protest as they believed that it would not benefit the community. The realities unearthed in the interview reflect the “political otherness” of the Bihari community in urban Bangladesh.

6. Discussion

Based on the triangulation method, this study found that Bihari community members cannot rent houses outside their camps because the Bengali people mistrust them due to their identity and residential location. The Bangladeshi government does not give the camp-based Bihari people in Bangladesh any aid or political opportunities. According to our findings, the Biharis have a higher rate of health issues than Bengalis due to lower access to government health services. Only a few NGOs offer healthcare, and the services available are woefully insufficient. The Biharis are continuously on edge due to the constant threat of arrest from the police. They are frequently arrested by the police, despite having no formal criminal records in most cases. By collecting a significant volume of empirical evidence, the present study argues that political exclusion and social marginalization are responsible for creating the “othering identity” of the Bihari community in urban Bangladesh. According to several pieces of research, many of the Bihari camps are not suitable for human habitation. The surroundings of these Bihari camps are filthy, contaminated, deplorable, unpleasant, offensive, obnoxious, unsanitary, horrible, unhygienic, uncomfortable, unclean, and unwholesome (Ahsan & Hussain, 1990; Yasmin, 2004; Noor, 2005; Khan and Samadder, 2007; Hussain, 2009; Sattar, 2013; Khan, 2015; Bhattacharjee, 2018). Our analysis aligns with the findings of previous studies, highlighting that the camp-based Bihari community resides in appalling conditions, deprived of even the most basic of necessities and rights, and their plight serves as a sobering example of social marginalization and “political otherness.” Our study focuses mainly on the identity crisis of the Bihari community and aims to explain how society is responsible for creating the “othering” identity of this community. Accordingly, this study applied the notion of “otherness” to an extensive financial, political, and socio-cultural background wherein the Bihari people exist to explore the nature of discernment, disparity, injustice, and dispossession.

The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) and Development Research Centre (DRC) on Migration, Globalization, and Poverty at the University of Sussex have conducted considerable research on the challenges faced by this economically disadvantaged and socially marginalized ethnic population of Bangladesh. *The Camp-Based Bihari Community: Perception of the New Generation* is a significant piece of literature published by the RMMRU in April 2003. The articles of this periodical described multiple challenges, issues, and complications faced by the Bihari people and placed emphasis on the historical origins of this problem. Several issues of the camp-based Bihari women and young girls were also addressed in different articles of this periodical with special references to “otherness” and other aspects of socioeconomic marginalization. Based on the content of this periodical, it has been shown that women of the Bihari community who reside currently in the Geneva camp are defenseless and unprotected. Bihari women and girls are subject to abuse and harassment both inside and outside of the camp area (RMMRU, 2003). In this context, our analysis demonstrated that Biharis are internally and externally leading an unprotected lifecycle. Despite the fact that the government of Bangladesh has recently offered “citizenship status” to members of the Bihari community, many Bihari men and women feel stateless

because they are socially excluded, politically alienated, and economically marginalized from the mainstream Bengali community of independent Bangladesh.

With regard to such understandings, we argue that ethnic minority exclusion from mainstream Bengali society is achieved through a variety of mechanisms. These include land grabbing, limiting income, unequal access to the business sector, discrimination in the agricultural sector, loss of land, limited economic freedom, lack of employment opportunities, jhum farming, insufficient monetary facilities, poverty, inadequate access to livelihood, discrimination of women, food insecurity, limited healthcare, insufficient water, improper sanitation facilities, and limited opportunities in education. Furthermore, individuals are excluded from matters pertaining to regional management, social services, security, communications, local administration, economic growth, and progress. The Bengali community, on the other hand, do not face any of these forms of discrimination. These realities demonstrate that the Bihari people are marginalized from mainstream Bengali society, and therefore, enjoy significantly less freedom compared to the local Bengali population. In this study, we argue that there is no effective government strategy to support the socio-politically deprived Bihari people. Thus, the political otherness of the Bihari community in Bangladesh is an example of ethnic minority exclusion in many respects.

In light of the current study, insights from sociological theories concerning otherness, social marginalization, and exclusion are clearly relevant given the empirical findings. From the empirical fieldwork, we found that the Stranded Pakistanis or the Bihari community have resided in inhuman conditions across several different camps in Bangladesh for several decades. They are excluded from all of the fundamental necessities of modern human life. Characterized by high levels of poverty and low social status, the Bihari camps in Bangladesh are extremely filthy, unsanitary, and ultimately harmful. The Bihari people are suffering in this country because they have no access to even the most basic rights. The camp-based Bihari individuals have insufficient financial means to support themselves currently. Bihari parents have a strong desire to provide a quality education for their offspring though they are unable to do so because of financial constraints.

This article also found that the rate of illiteracy is significantly higher among the elderly compared to younger generations. The younger generation is striving to access educational opportunities. However, they face widespread prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion from educational institutions, a clear sign of otherness. Bihari parents must lie about their identities and where they live to have their children admitted into lower-grade schools. They are unable to utilize the address of the Bihari camp. While at school, Bengali peers ridicule the Biharis about their identity. Due to the Biharis' lack of command over the Bengali language, teachers often pay little attention to Bihari students. In public settings, members of the Bihari community are not permitted to speak their mother tongue Urdu—a clear sign of linguistic exclusion.

We spoke with two local ward councilors, three NGO workers, and several Bengali people living near the three Bihari camps to gain a deeper understanding of the issues facing the Bihari people. While talking with the Bengali people living near the Bihari camps, we found that they are hesitant about establishing friendships with the Bihari people due to their stigmatized ethnic identity. Bengali people always maintain distance from the Bihari community as they feel that the Bihari people are connected to Pakistan. Local stakeholders stated that the problematic past of the 1971 liberation war underlies the current situation. In blunt terms, the Bengali people do not trust the Bihari people. The identity crisis is the primary issue that the Bihari people of Bangladesh currently face. Consequently, legal citizenship status alone will not enable their full inclusion in society. Many Bihari people of the older generation are eager to return to Pakistan, while members of the current generation view Bangladesh as their true home and are therefore strongly opposed to leaving. The younger generation is determined to succeed in independent Bangladesh, despite all its challenges. The question of repatriation represents a significant division between the two generations. All of these realities have led to the “othering identity” of the camp-based Bihari community in urban Bangladesh. The theoretical frameworks developed by Park, Du Bois, and Levitas provided support for all of these empirical observations.

7. Conclusion

The fate of the Bihari community has not changed considerably even after 52 years have passed since the end of the liberation war of Bangladesh. This study analyzed the contributing factors behind the “othering” identity of the Bihari community in urban Bangladesh. Based on the theoretical understandings and the triangulation method, this study examined how Biharis are treated as “other” by the mainstream Bengali community in several ways. The central research question of this study examined the multiple dynamics of political marginalization and societal exclusion among the Bihari community living in Bangladesh by highlighting the creation of otherness. It is evident from this study that many Bihari people are victims of nationalism and remain as strangers to the Bangladeshi people. People of this community have failed to assimilate into Bangladeshi society due to socio-political factors and their use of the Urdu language. Furthermore, the insecure and violent environment of the Bihari camps makes life miserable for these individuals. Those who reside in camps hold an inferior status and are often neglected by the people of Bangladesh, which in turn contributes to the problem of identity crisis and political otherness. We argued that the relationship between poverty, powerlessness, and resource constraints is responsible for the “political otherness” and identity crisis of the Bihari community living in three Bihari camps of the Dhaka metropolitan city.

Understanding the dynamics of political discrimination, multiple exclusion, and social marginalization among Bangladesh's Bihari people is the primary empirical contribution of this research. Our analysis tried to investigate the ways in which the Bihari people are being deprived of their fundamental rights, such as the right to housing, employment, healthcare, proper sanitation, education, political participation, and safety. In doing so, we hoped to uncover the answers to these problems. Furthermore, we analyzed (both theoretically and methodologically) the Bihari community's situation from a political and economic standpoint, finding that the problematic past of 1971 is a major contributor to their present-day socio-political marginalization. The theoretical implications of the study are many and are rooted in the discussion of the identity crisis and issues of otherness and exclusion faced by the Bihari community. Though the government of Bangladesh has recently provided them with citizenship and voting rights, citizenship and full rights are not yet a reality for the Bihari community.

In conclusion, this article proposes a policy recommendation to reduce the political otherness, social deprivation, and marginalization of the Bihari community in urban Bangladesh. We suggest that repatriation to Pakistan is an unrealistic ambition for the Bihari people and therefore recommend rehabilitation of the Bihari community. Therefore, the government of Bangladesh should take the steps required to rehabilitate the Bihari community to counter the “othering” identity. It is also recommended that the government of Bangladesh focuses on poverty alleviation among the Bihari community as per the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

This study contributes to the efforts to understand the historical backgrounds of otherness among the Bihari community in Bangladesh and quantitatively analyze the exclusion that they face. Our analysis contributes to the existing literature on the Bihari community in Bangladesh by offering an integrated analysis of the construction of political otherness, emphasizing the role of a crisis of identity. This research will be useful for future empirical studies on the Bihari community in Bangladesh by providing an overview of political inequality, poverty, labor-market exclusion, and socioeconomic disparity. This study should pave the way for additional in-depth empirical investigations on the different marginalized local communities of independent Bangladesh.

Author Contributions: The corresponding author developed and designed the study, drafted and amended the manuscript, and assumes liability in her capacity as guarantor. The co-author revised and reviewed the manuscript and provided the interpretation of the findings. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the article.

Ethics Approval: All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in this study.

Statements and Declarations: We hereby declare that the manuscript submitted herewith is our original piece of work and has not been submitted anywhere else for publication.

Conflict of Interest : The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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The Unique of Architectural Style and Tourist Attractions: The Development of Cultural Tourism in Karangasem

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Abstract

Provisions on spatial planning regulations and building regulations regarding the regulation of the development of local architectural potentials and characteristics. Traditional Balinese architecture is one of the many contributions of Indonesian architecture to the building sector. Bali has a diversity of forms and varieties of traditional architecture. Likewise, East Bali can display Balinese architecture and further enrich traditional architecture in Indonesia. An architectural work consists of various aspects such as mass composition, shape, proportion, scale, ornamentation, and other elements. Ornaments, better known as decoration, are one of the components of architectural work and are commonly used in traditional Balinese architecture. East Bali, part of the Karangasem kingdom (now Karangasem Regency) during the Central Bali era, has preserved several unique architectural masterpieces. The uniqueness of this ancient building in Karangasem is an essential component in developing world tourism and cultural tourism. By conducting field studies and identifying the uniqueness of historical buildings in Karangasem, this paper attempts to identify the unique characteristics of Karangasem architecture. In the future, this uniqueness will become one of the components of tourism attraction. Therefore, it is essential to learn more about the potential and quality of buildings, especially those related to their decoration, so that they can be used as a guide for creating new buildings in the East Bali region, especially Karangasem, as well as as a component of tourism development.

Keywords: Local Culture, Tourism, Maintaining, Ornament, Architectural Style

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Building architectural requirements include consideration of the balance between local socio-cultural values in the application of various architectural and engineering developments, as well as requirements for building appearance, balanced spatial layout, harmony and harmony between the building and its environment, and functionality. The provisions regarding building structures above reveal the application of local architectural

characteristics to buildings. In response to the provisions above, regions are expected to explore the potential characteristics and uniqueness of their regional architecture to show a region's identity.

Balinese architecture has a different character from other traditional architecture in Indonesia. Furthermore, it can be seen that the development and character of Balinese architecture, including its decoration, in each region has its characteristics (I. D. G. A. D. Putra & Wirawibawa, 2020, 2023; Wirawibawa et al., 2021), including Karangasem. With the increasing development of information and technology, the transfer of technology and information between regions is becoming more accessible, including in the field of architecture, where architectural styles in one area can easily be found in other areas. This condition can happen in an area whose architectural characteristics have yet to be adequately explored, making it easier for styles from other areas to be considered representative of local architecture, even though the area has its own style. If this continues, the architectural style of an area will likely be buried.

Karangasem, as one of the former great kingdoms in Bali, also has buildings that are noble and can represent typical Karangasem architectural works because they were built during the heyday of the Karangasem Kingdom, namely around the 18th century or before and have never been restored. There has yet to be a touch of restoration on some of these old buildings, making it possible to explore their characteristics to be used as a reference for typical Karangasem architectural works. These buildings are generally temples or castles, still scattered in several parts of the Karangasem area.

Seeing the spirit implied in the existing legislation, the diversity of traditional architecture in Bali, and the existence of the Karangasem architectural style, it is necessary to explore the distinctive character of Karangasem traditional architecture, especially its decoration, so that it can be used as a reference in the development of architectural works in the Karangasem area, which can further be maintaining architectural diversity in Bali and Indonesia. Furthermore, exploring this identity will enrich the diversity of architecture in Bali and serve as a tourist attraction in Karangasem by utilizing the typical Karangasem style in tourism facilities or typical Karangasem buildings as tourist attractions.

2. Method

This research was carried out in one stage within one research year. In this research, Karangasem architecture's cultural and historical characteristics were explored simultaneously with the physical aspects. Excavation of physical aspects takes the form of exploring the architectural identity of Karangasem, including studying proportions, mass, ornaments, and building materials. Physical aspect searches were carried out on architectural objects considered icons of Karangasem architecture and architectural objects designed by *undagi* and local Karangasem architects. Meanwhile, exploring nonphysical aspects in the form of historical, social, and cultural aspects, community activities, and local policies and knowledge that shape Karangasem's architectural identity. After the building ornaments were measured thoroughly and several buildings and ornaments were obtained that could represent the entire building and ornaments in each object, a more in-depth interview was conducted regarding the meaning and function of the building from a socio-cultural and religious perspective so that the character of the building obtained was not only physical but also nonphysical

3. Results

3.1. Decorative Forms and Variety in Architecture

Shapes consist of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional shapes. Two-dimensional shapes are created in a flat plane with line boundaries (Varoudis & Psarra, 2014), while three-dimensional shapes are limited by a flat plane, the wall plane and the roof plane surrounding it, which is called space. Meanwhile, the form is a term that has several meanings. Form can be related to the external appearance that can be recognized, such as a chair or the body of someone who sits on it (Ching, 2023). However, form can also be related to both internal structure and external lines and principles that provide overall unity. Shape is also described as shape, size, color, texture, position, orientation and visual inertia. Form as an architectural characteristic consists of various variables, namely

proportion, rhythm, dimensions, ornament and color (Isfan Noverizal & Mulyandari, 2022). Meanwhile, the variables of form are function, symbol, material and structure (Ismail & Zhaharin, 2017).

The decorations in Indonesia and Southeast Asia can be used as real models where various cultures can meet without losing their original culture. This is due to the character of the Indonesian nation which is always receptive, flexible and selective towards cultural influences from outside (Lenny Sunaryo, 2005). Meanwhile, the decorative variety that developed in Bali came from maender forms or whose motifs were closer to the decorative patterns of geometric (geometric) motifs (Gelebet, 1998). Apart from the patterns above, the decoration that developed in Bali also took the form of swastikas which became known in the Bronze Age. Apart from the motifs above, there are various types of decoration that have developed in Bali, such as the *punggel* pattern, where this decorative pattern has developed very prolifically until now and is widely used or carved to decorate buildings (Satria & Putra, 2020). There are many more various decorative models and motifs in Bali. From the explanation above, basically the decoration in Bali is expressed in the form of stylization, just like the decoration that develops in Indonesia in general, as follows: a. From the natural forms of the world of flora that stylize various forms of plants, leaves, flowers, stems or trees called *patra* (I. D. A. D. Putra, 2019). From the natural forms of the world of fauna in the form of stylization of various animal forms such as elephants, birds and so on which are depicted in such a way that they have a certain shape, which is generally called *kekarangan*. From various forms of fantasy from human forms, gods, engineering, monkeys, and others (Sudara, 1983). So it can be explained that the decoration in Bali is a stylization or distortion, both of flora, fauna and other forms that are fantastic and have positive external influences. From the description above, various groups of decorations in Bali can be described, namely: decorations with maender or geometric motifs, decorations with plant motifs (*pepatran*), decorations with coral motifs, decorations with animal motifs, decorations with natural object motifs and variety decorated with fantasy motifs of humans, gods and giants.

3.2. Architectural Heritage in Karangasem

The architectural development of a region cannot be separated from the dynamics that occur, including governmental (political), economic, social, natural and cultural events. This development ultimately provides value and characteristics to the richness of forms and variety of building designs that occur in accordance with the period of construction. One example in the Karangasem area that has become an iconic architectural object is the Besakih Temple. The construction of Besakih Temple cannot be separated from the arrival of the Maha Rsi from India, namely Rsi Markandya, around the 12th century AD (Wiwin et al., 2020). At that time, the characteristics of spiritual community life were very strong, so that the architectural objects that were built during that time were mostly in the form of hermitages and centers of Hindu Buddhist religious education.

Civilization and architectural development in Karangasem cannot be separated from the existence of Mount Agung. As one of the highest active volcanic mountains in Bali, Mount Agung not only has an impact on fertility for the people around Karangasem Regency but also has a negative impact when volcanic eruptions or volcanic earthquakes occur. This condition makes the Karangasem area one of the areas in Bali that is experiencing very rapid development of architectural periodization. This is because the occurrence of a disaster causes a rehabilitation and rebuilding process to be carried out, the rebuilding process will involve various experts who bring a variety of knowledge that gives color to the development of architecture.

One example of architectural development which is considered to be a blessing for the perpetrator is the widespread use of black stone/Selem stone. Selem stone is a material that comes from the lava of the eruption of Mount Agung, because the quality and quantity of the material is quite large, this material is widely used in buildings and architectural works today. If sorted, the development of architectural periods in Karangasem Regency can be divided into several periods. Based on several archaeological objects and findings in the Karangasem Regency area, the architectural divisions are divided into: a) Ancient Balinese period, b) Middle Balinese period, c) Colonial period, d) post-1963 Mount Agung eruption period, e) Modern period.

Throughout history, various myths have explained the existence of Pura Besakih, but from written sources such as *Usana Bali* in oral mythology (Hooykaas, 1959). According to this source, Sri Kesari Warmadewa, founder of

the Warmadewa dynasty that ruled Bali for centuries (Suada & Gelgel, 2018), is considered the first founder of the Besakih Temple complex. The existence of historical figures Mpu Kuturan and Mpu Bharadah is also often linked to the history of Besakih (Fox, 2011). Mpu Kuturan had a cult with Peninjoan Temple and was the architect for the construction of Besakih Temple (Figure 1). It is said that this place is the place where Mpu Kuturan became the highest starting point in planning the development of the Besakih Temple area.



Figure 1. The Main Gate of Penataran Agung Temple, Besakih Temple

Source: Terence Spencer/The LIFE Images Collection/Getty I, 1970

The existence of the Karangasem Kingdom under the Aryan Batan Jeruk dynasty was founded by I Gusti Pangeran Oka and inaugurated on June 22 1611. Simultaneously with the abiseka of Ida Anglurah I Gusti Nyoman Karangasem. Based on this, it can also be seen that the city of Karangasem was founded at the same time, marked by the locus of the new Karangasem empire at Puri Kelodan Karangasem (Dasih & Ratna, 2021). Abiseka in the Balinese leadership tradition is the procession of officially inaugurating a person (based on genealogy) to become king (Artistiari, 2017) and stay in a palace called *puri* (Figure 2).



Figure 2. The Main gate of Puri Agung Karangasem

Source: Bali Tourism, 2022

The Kingdom of Karangasem experienced regional expansion from the kingdom of Bali to Lombok. In Bali, the Karangasem Kingdom attacked Buleleng and Jembrana. In Lombok, the Karangasem Kingdom existed until the end of the 1915 century (Farram, 1997). After the end of Puputan Jagaraga in Buleleng in 1849, the power of the Karangasem and Buleleng and Jembrana kingdoms slowly began to be replaced by Dutch colonial rule (Pringle, 2004). The dynamics of the government system in Bali, especially in Karangasem, also occurred after Japan entered Bali in 1942. However, it seems to follow the definition of "indirect government," as was done by the Dutch East Indies government in the past (Nordholt, 1994). The king of Karangasem, tried to present the Karangasem identity by constructing many buildings including Taman Ujung Sukasada (Figure 3) helped by the dutch and china architect and also tradisional architect called *undagi* (Kohdrata, 2012).



Figure 3. Colonial Architectural Design at the Taman Ujung Karangasem Tourist Attraction

Source: www.nusabali.com, 2017

During the Dutch colonial period, the Kingdom of Karangasem became a subordinate territory, Kuta Negara Karangasem itself tried to expand according to its infrastructure needs. Even though the king of Karangasem (stadhouder) I Gusti Gde Jelantik (and also his successor I Gusti Bagus Jelantik) during the reign of the Dutch East Indies knew about the development of European cities through Dutch stories, he basically still adhered to the concept of traditional Balinese architecture. So there was acculturation between Balinese architectural designs and colonial-style architecture.

The existence of Karangasem architecture in the past which can still be enjoyed and used today is a very unique architectural cultural heritage (Aritama & Putra, 2021; I. D. G. A. D. Putra et al., 2020) and is the main tourist attraction of Karangasem district. All of these cultural attractions are the basic capital for developing cultural and tourism activities in Karangasem which can continue to be developed from time to time.

4. Architectural Heritage and Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism and historical protection are inextricably linked. Thus, a region's culture consists of material, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional components. The culture values regional performance and promotes self-awareness and motivation. However, human civilization develops in a manner comparable to biological systems. Tourism is often aimed at earning cash while fostering an understanding of a particular place and its culture. As a result, tourism is commonly acknowledged to have a considerable impact on a location's identity (Wang & Chen, 2015). It is usually said that a country's architectural and cultural legacy is a valuable resource for fostering

cohesion, vibrancy, and a sense of community. Preserving built history is critical because it allows communities to highlight their shared and distinguishing characteristics while retaining connections to their past. The significance level attributed to each legacy determines the effort invested in its preservation. As a result, it is critical to preserve and honour artefacts (Fredheim & Khalaf, 2016).

Enhancing property values is a fundamental reason for the importance of architectural heritage. While these designations may be based on personal beliefs, they limit the community's ability to participate in restoration activities. The preservation of architectural history is usually regarded as environmentally beneficial due to the low material requirements associated with repairing older structures (Senior et al., 2021). Cultural heritage includes architectural structures and historic urban areas (Tweed & Sutherland, 2007). Furthermore, architecture plays an essential function in enticing visitors. Preserving historical structures has gained traction in nations such as Thailand. The legislation governing ancient monuments, antiquities, art, and national treasures. There is a growing sense of civic obligation to preserve the historical and architectural gems of one's community. The root cause of this problem is a need for more understanding, attention, and skill in architectural history, which poses a severe threat to its preservation. As a result, it is evident in many cases that particular countries are losing their cultural legacy.

There is a significant relationship between cultural heritage and tourism. In modern times, there is a huge interest in historical events and objects from ancient civilizations. Cultural tourism's attractiveness is a crucial advantage. Today's tourists are increasingly drawn to destinations with rich mythology, ancient battlegrounds, archaeological sites, historical ruins, architectural icons, and fascinating natural vistas steeped with stories. The number of tourists visiting historic sites like Karangasem in Bali has increased dramatically during the last few decades.

Cultural tourism plays a vital role in today's globalized tourism industry. Cultural tourism entails learning about and admiring the local customs, surroundings, and unique traits that set a region apart. Because of its extensive historical past, it is regarded as a significant and generally known kind of tourism (Larsen et al., 2007). Tourism can raise various social concerns, including behavioural changes, cultural monetization, and economic inequality (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019).

Travellers see culture as a method to affirm their identity and way of life. Furthermore, it is the result of creative and intellectual endeavour. Participation in and appreciation for the visual and performing arts and attending festivals are essential components of cultural tourism (Sepe & Di Trapani, 2010). Cultural heritage tourism entails visiting historical sites like the Puri Agung Karangase district, where the king lived, or exploring landscapes like Taman Ujung and Tirta Gangga. Eco-tourism is intended to provide tourists with an immersive natural experience and a solid connection to the destination's historical value. Experience the regal ambience of Puri Agung Karangasem or see the breathtaking views from the park on the outskirts of Karangasem, which the royal family once frequented. Travellers interested in Karangasem culture can participate in local cultural events such as temple visits and Karangasem cuisine.

5. Conclusion

This consciously managed tourist environment is linked to a broader discourse regarding the preservation and presentation of local culture including ancient buildings. However, in the late 1930s, the intersection between scientific research and the tourist environment had quite different political implications. The same views that underlie anthropological research on culture were mobilized to justify imperial politics. Therefore, it is vital that the experience of "natives" in the tourism system is seen in relation to the racially motivated political discourse that has been incorporated into modern scientific practice – a discourse that views Balinese culture as an inevitable product of society. Viewed in this context, the presentation of indigenous culture in Balinese tourist architecture is more than just a precursor to the contemporary tourist environment. By directly re-presenting traditional forms of local buildings for the benefit of tourists, this is a confirmation of the politics of exclusion and the discovery of the identity of local architecture as a tourist attraction.

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Tracing Bhavna (Feeling/Emotion) and Vichar (Thought) in Indian and Western Poetics

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the nuanced concepts of *bhavna* (feeling/emotion) and *vichar* (thought) in Indian and Western literature and poetics. Drawing upon classical Indian writings of Abhinavagupta, Bhartruhari, Mamata, Bharat Muni and canonical poems by William Wordsworth, Coleridge, John Keats, Matthew Arnold, and Robert Browning, the paper analyzes how these two cultural traditions approach the portrayal and integration of emotion and thought in artistic expression. By examining representative excerpts from these Western poets alongside examples from classical Indian texts, this study aims to elucidate the similarities, differences, and unique characteristics of *bhavna* and *vichar* in shaping the aesthetic experience across cultural traditions.

Keywords: *Bhavna*, *Vichar*, Poetics, Imagery, Symbolism

1. Introduction

Bhavna and *vichar* represent fundamental elements of literary expression in Indian and Western traditions, encapsulating and transcending cultural boundaries and offering profound insights into human experience. While the terminology and theoretical frameworks may differ, the concepts of feeling/emotion and thought serve as pillars upon which literary works are constructed, conveying profound insights into the human condition. In Indian literature, *bhavna* encompasses a range of emotions, while *vichar* delves into intellectual inquiry and philosophical contemplation. Similarly, in Western literature, emotions and thoughts are intricately woven into canonical poems, evoking empathy and stimulating introspection. This paper conducts a comparative analysis of *bhavna* and *vichar* in Indian and Western literature, drawing upon classical Indian writings of Abhinavagupta, Bhartruhari, Mamata, Bharat Muni and canonical poems by Wordsworth, Keats, Arnold, and Browning to illustrate their significance and impact on the aesthetic experience.

1.1. *Bhavna* (Feeling/Emotion) and *Vichar* in Indian Literature and Poetics

Indian poetics is characterized by a rich tradition that intertwines *bhavna* (feeling/emotion) and *vichar* (thought) to create profound literary expressions. Through the works of eminent scholars and poets such as

Abhinavagupta, Bhartruhari, Mamata, and Bharat Muni, Indian literature has explored the intricate relationship between emotion and intellect, offering insights into the human condition and spiritual consciousness. This comparative analysis aims to delve into the contributions of these luminaries and examine how they conceptualize and portray *bhavna* and *vichar* within the context of Indian poetics.

1.2. Abhinavagupta

Abhinavagupta, a renowned philosopher and literary critic of the Kashmir Shaivism tradition, made significant contributions to Indian aesthetics through his commentary on the **Natyashastra** and other works. His holistic approach to aesthetics emphasized the integration of *bhavna* and *vichar* in artistic expression. According to Abhinavagupta, aesthetic experience involves not only the evocation of emotions but also the stimulation of intellectual contemplation and spiritual realization. In his commentary on the *Natyashastra*, he elaborates on the concept of *rasa*, the aesthetic essence derived from the harmonious combination of *bhavna* and *vichar*.

Abhinavagupta's concept of *bhavna* encompasses a wide spectrum of emotions, ranging from love and compassion to fear and anger. In his commentary, he emphasizes the importance of emotive responses in evoking *rasa*, suggesting that genuine emotional engagement is essential for the aesthetic experience to be fully realized. However, Abhinavagupta also emphasizes the role of *vichar* in refining and elevating emotional experiences. He suggests that intellectual inquiry and philosophical reflection deepen our understanding of the human condition and enhance the aesthetic enjoyment of literary works.

1.3. Bhartruhari

Bhartruhari, a philosopher-poet of the 7th century, is celebrated for his philosophical reflections on life, love, and human nature. In his renowned work, the *Vairagya Shataka*, Bhartruhari explores the transient nature of worldly attachments and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. Through his poignant verses, he delves into the complexities of human emotions and the quest for inner peace and fulfillment.

In Bhartruhari's poetry, *bhavna* emerges as a central theme, portraying the tumultuous nature of human emotions and the ephemeral nature of worldly pleasures. In verses such as:

"Like dew on a lotus leaf
Or a bubble on water,
I am and so is the world."

(<https://archive.arunachala.org/docs/vairagya-shatakam>)

Bhartruhari captures the impermanence of human existence and the fleeting nature of happiness derived from material possessions. His evocative imagery and emotive language convey a sense of existential angst and longing for transcendence.

Vichar, in Bhartruhari's poetry, manifests as philosophical reflection and introspection. Through his verses, he encourages readers to contemplate the deeper meanings of life and the pursuit of spiritual truth. In the same work, he reflects on the transient nature of human relationships and the illusory nature of worldly attachments:

"Life's pleasures last but a moment,
Like a flash of lightning or a dream.
Why then do we cling to them?"

(<https://archive.arunachala.org/docs/vairagya-shatakam>)

Here, Bhartruhari invites readers to engage in *vichar*, prompting them to question the value of worldly pursuits and seek lasting fulfillment in spiritual wisdom.

1.4. Mamata

Mamata, a Sanskrit poetess of the 10th century, is celebrated for her lyrical compositions that explore themes of love, longing, and devotion. In her verses, she portrays the depth of human emotions and the transformative power of divine love. Mamata's poetry reflects the bhakti tradition, emphasizing the emotional bond between the devotee and the divine.

In Mamata's poetry, *bhavna* is depicted through expressions of intense love and devotion towards the divine. Through her verses, she conveys the ecstasy of spiritual communion and the overwhelming joy of surrendering to the divine will. In one of her compositions, she writes:

“O Lord, I am but a humble servant,
Lost in the ocean of your love.
In your embrace, I find solace,
In your presence, I find peace.”

(Anonymous)

Mamata's emotive language and heartfelt expressions evoke a sense of reverence and awe, capturing the essence of *bhavna* in the context of devotional poetry.

Vichar, in Mamata's poetry, takes the form of philosophical contemplation on the nature of divine love and the path to spiritual enlightenment. Through her verses, she explores the inner workings of the human mind and the transformative power of faith. In another composition, she reflects on the mysteries of divine grace and the importance of surrendering to the divine will:

"Like a river flowing towards the ocean,
Let my thoughts merge with your divine will.
In your presence, all doubts vanish,
And I find refuge in your eternal love."

(Anonymous)

Here, Mamata invites readers to engage in *vichar*, encouraging them to reflect on the deeper significance of divine love and the spiritual journey towards self-realization.

1.5. Bharat Muni

Bharat Muni, the ancient Indian sage credited with authoring the *Natyashastra*, laid the foundations for Indian aesthetics and dramatic theory. In his seminal work, Bharat Muni elucidates the principles of *rasa*, emphasizing the importance of emotional resonance and aesthetic experience in theatrical performances.

Bharat Muni's concept of *bhavna* revolves around the idea of *rasa*, the aesthetic essence derived from the portrayal of emotions on the stage. According to Bharat Muni, the primary goal of dramatic art is to evoke *rasa* in the audience, eliciting a profound emotional response that transcends the mundane. Through his theoretical framework, Bharat Muni outlines the nine *rasas* or emotional states that form the basis of Indian dramatic expression, including love, anger, compassion, and fear.

Vichar, in Bharat Muni's aesthetic theory, is implicit in the process of *rasa-sadhana*, the cultivation of aesthetic experience through the performance and appreciation of dramatic art. While Bharat Muni primarily focuses on the emotive aspect of theatrical performances, his theoretical framework also suggests the importance of intellectual engagement and critical reflection in fully realizing the aesthetic potential of dramatic art. By delineating the principles of *rasa*, Bharat Muni provides a framework for understanding the interplay between emotion and thought in Indian poetics.

1.6. *Bhavna* and *Vichar* in Western Literature and Poetics

In Western literature and poetics, similar distinctions between emotion and thought can be observed, although the terminology and cultural contexts may vary. Emotions are portrayed with nuance and intensity, eliciting empathetic responses from readers and audiences. Thought, on the other hand, complements emotion by providing intellectual depth and philosophical inquiry, challenging conventional notions of reality and perception.

As such, Western poetics, spanning centuries of literary tradition, encompasses a rich tapestry of emotions, thoughts, and philosophical inquiries. Central to this exploration is the concepts of *bhavna* (feeling/emotion) and *vichar* (thought), which serve as foundational elements in shaping the aesthetic experience for both poets and readers. In this comparative analysis, we delve into canonical poems by William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Matthew Arnold, and Robert Browning to explore how these poets navigate the realms of emotion and thought within the Western poetic tradition.

1.7. William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth, a leading figure of the Romantic movement, is renowned for his celebration of nature, the individual, and the spiritual in his poetry. In his canonical poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," Wordsworth illustrates the profound emotional impact of nature on the human psyche. The poem begins with the speaker's solitary wanderings, feeling disconnected from the world around him. However, as he encounters a field of daffodils, his mood shifts dramatically:

"Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance."
(<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45521/i-wandered-lonely-as-a-cloud>)

Here, Wordsworth's use of vivid imagery and emotive language evokes a sense of joy and awe in the reader, as the speaker becomes enraptured by the beauty and vitality of the natural world. The poem captures a moment of sublime transcendence, where the boundaries between self and nature dissolve, and the speaker experiences a profound emotional connection to the daffodils and the landscape.

In terms of *vichar*, Wordsworth's poetry often reflects upon the deeper meanings and philosophical implications of human experience. In "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth reflects on the transformative power of nature and memory. He contemplates the passage of time and the impact of memory on the human psyche, pondering the enduring significance of moments of connection with the natural world:

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,"
(<https://poets.org/poem/lines-composed-few-miles-above-tintern-abbey-revisiting-banks-wye-during-tour-july-13-1798>)

Here, Wordsworth engages in philosophical reflection, exploring the transcendent and spiritual dimensions of human consciousness. Through *vichar*, he invites readers to contemplate the deeper meanings and existential questions that arise from the experience of nature and memory.

1.8. Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a contemporary of Wordsworth and a fellow Romantic poet, is best known for his vivid imagination and exploration of the supernatural in his poetry. In his canonical poem "Kubla Khan," Coleridge immerses the reader in a dreamlike realm of exotic landscapes and mystical visions. The poem begins

with the speaker's description of the pleasure dome of Kubla Khan, a fantastical palace surrounded by gardens and rivers:

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea."

(<https://www.enotes.com/topics/kubla-khan/critical-essays/kubla-khan-samuel-taylor-coleridge-78921>)

Coleridge's use of rich imagery and hypnotic language creates an otherworldly atmosphere, evoking a sense of wonder and enchantment in the reader. The poem unfolds like a surreal dream, blurring the boundaries between reality and fantasy as the speaker describes the sights and sounds of Kubla Khan's paradise.

In terms of *vichar*, Coleridge's poetry often explores themes of imagination, creativity, and the power of the human mind. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Coleridge grapples with questions of guilt, redemption, and the nature of evil. The poem follows the journey of a sailor who, after committing a heinous crime against nature, is cursed to wander the earth and tell his tale to others:

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

(<https://www.bookey.app/quote-author/samuel-taylor-coleridge>)

Here, Coleridge delves into moral and philosophical questions, reflecting on the interconnectedness of humanity and the natural world. Through *vichar*, he encourages readers to consider the consequences of human actions and the importance of compassion and empathy in navigating the complexities of life.

1.9. John Keats

John Keats, a prominent Romantic poet known for his sensuous imagery and lyrical language, explores themes of beauty, mortality, and the imagination in his poetry. In his canonical poem "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats reflects on the fleeting nature of human existence and the timeless beauty of art and nature. The poem begins with the speaker's lament for the transience of life:

"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk."

(<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44479/ode-to-a-nightingale>)

Keats' use of emotive language and vivid sensory imagery conveys a sense of melancholy and longing, as the speaker yearns to escape the constraints of mortality and merge with the eternal beauty of the nightingale's song.

In terms of *vichar*, Keats' poetry often explores the relationship between art, beauty, and the imagination. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn," Keats contemplates the enduring power of art to transcend the limitations of time and space. The poem meditates on the scenes depicted on the surface of an ancient urn, capturing moments of beauty and passion frozen in time:

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone."

(https://prezi.com/_jvixakt8kgy/ode-on-a-grecian-urn-by-john-keats/)

Here, Keats engages in philosophical reflection, pondering the nature of beauty and the role of art in preserving and immortalizing moments of human experience. Through *vichar*, he invites readers to contemplate the transcendent and timeless qualities of artistic creation.

1.10. Matthew Arnold

Matthew Arnold, a Victorian poet and critic, is known for his exploration of cultural and intellectual themes in his poetry. In his canonical poem "Dover Beach," Arnold reflects on the erosion of faith and the uncertainties of modernity. The poem begins with the speaker's description of the tranquil setting of Dover Beach:

"The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay."

(<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43588/dover-beach>)

Arnold's use of descriptive language and evocative imagery creates a sense of serenity and beauty, contrasting with the existential despair that follows. The speaker reflects on the decline of religious faith and the loss of certainty in an age of scientific scepticism and moral ambiguity.

In terms of *vichar*, Arnold's poetry often grapples with questions of culture, society, and the human condition. In "Dover Beach," he explores the tensions between faith and reason, tradition and progress, as he reflects on the changing cultural landscape of Victorian England:

"Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

(<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43588/dover-beach>)

Here, Arnold engages in philosophical reflection, contemplating the human condition and the search for meaning and certainty in an uncertain world. Through *vichar*, he invites readers to confront the existential challenges of modern life and to seek solace and connection in the face of adversity.

1.11. Robert Browning

Robert Browning, a Victorian poet known for his dramatic monologues and psychological insight, explores themes of love, morality, and the complexity of human relationships in his poetry. In his canonical poem "My Last Duchess," Browning offers a chilling portrait of a Renaissance duke and his relationship with his deceased wife. The poem is presented as a dramatic monologue, with the duke addressing an envoy who has come to negotiate his next marriage:

"That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call

That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands."

(<https://poemanalysis.com/robert-browning/my-last-duchess/>)

Browning's use of dramatic irony and unreliable narration creates a sense of tension and unease, as the true nature of the duke's character and his relationship with his wife are gradually revealed.

In terms of *vichar*, Browning's poetry often delves into the complexities of human psychology and moral ambiguity. In "My Last Duchess," he explores themes of power, control, and possessiveness, as the duke reveals his jealousy and resentment towards his deceased wife:

"Even had you skill
In speech(which I have not)to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop."

(<https://poemanalysis.com/robert-browning/my-last-duchess/>)

Here, Browning delves into the dark recesses of the human psyche, exploring themes of power, control, and toxic masculinity. Through *vichar*, he invites readers to confront the complexities of human relationships and the moral dilemmas that arise from issues of power and dominance.

2. Comparative Analysis

2.1. Indian Poetics

- **Bhavna (Feeling/Emotion):**

Natyashastra:

- Emphasizes portrayal of emotions on stage for rasa.

Abhinavagupta:

- Integral to aesthetic experience leading to rasa.
- Stresses refining emotional experiences.

Bhartruhari:

- Explores transient nature of human emotions.
- Reflects on worldly attachments and spiritual fulfillment.

Mamata:

- Expresses intense love and devotion towards the divine, conveying ecstasy and surrender.

Bharat Muni:

- Focuses on emotive aspect of theatrical performances.
- Aims to elicit emotional resonance in the audience.

- **Vichar (Thought):**

Natyashastra:

- Implicit in process of rasa-sadhana, suggesting intellectual engagement.

Abhinavagupta:

- Stresses role of refining emotional experiences and enhancing aesthetic enjoyment.

Bhartruhari:

- Encourages philosophical reflection on deeper meanings of life and pursuit of spiritual truth.

Mamata:

- Prompts readers to contemplate mysteries of divine love and spiritual enlightenment.

Bharat Muni:

- Suggests importance of intellectual inquiry and philosophical contemplation.

2.2. Western Poetics

- **Bhavna (Feeling/Emotion):**

William Wordsworth:

- Celebrates sublime beauty of nature.
- Evokes joy and awe through vivid imagery.

Coleridge:

- Creates dreamlike atmosphere through vivid imagery and emotive language.

John Keats:

- Reflects on the fleeting nature of human existence and timeless beauty of art and nature.

Matthew Arnold:

- Contemplates erosion of faith and uncertainties of modernity.

Robert Browning:

- Explores complexities of human psychology and moral ambiguity.

- **Vichar (Thought):**

William Wordsworth:

- Invites readers to contemplate deeper meanings and existential questions arising from nature and memory.

Coleridge:

- Engages in philosophical reflection on the nature of art, beauty, and imagination.

John Keats:

- Reflects on existential questions and search for meaning in an uncertain world.

Matthew Arnold:

- Explores timeless beauty of art and enduring power of artistic creation.

Robert Browning:

- Reflects on complexities of human relationships and moral dilemmas.

While both Indian and Western traditions explore the interplay between *bhavna* and *vichar*, there are notable differences in their conceptualizations and expressions. Indian literature often emphasizes the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions of emotion and thought, rooted in ancient philosophical traditions such as Vedanta and Yoga. Western literature, on the other hand, tends to be more introspective and psychological, delving into the intricacies of human consciousness and existential angst. In the canonical poems of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Arnold, and Browning, we see a convergence of *bhavna* and *vichar*, as poets explore the depths of human emotion and intellectual inquiry. While each poet approaches these concepts with their own unique style and thematic emphases, there are common threads that run through their works. Wordsworth and Keats, for instance, share a deep appreciation for the beauty of nature and the transcendent power of art and imagination. Coleridge and Browning, on the other hand, delve into the complexities of human psychology and moral ambiguity, creating nuanced portraits of human experience and emotion.

3. Conclusion

The exploration of *Bhavna* and *Vichar* across Indian and Western literary traditions reveals intriguing similarities and differences. In both traditions, emotion and thought are intertwined in the pursuit of aesthetic and philosophical insights.

In Indian poetics, scholars like Abhinavagupta, Bhartruhari, and Bharat Muni emphasize the integral relationship between *bhavna* and *vichar* in aesthetic experience, whether in the context of theatrical performances or devotional poetry. The transient nature of human emotions and the pursuit of spiritual fulfillment are recurring themes, inviting philosophical reflection and introspection.

Similarly, in Western poetry, luminaries such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Arnold, and Browning explore the depths of human emotion and intellectual inquiry. Nature, existential questions, and moral dilemmas serve as focal points for contemplation, leading to profound insights into the human condition.

Ultimately, whether in the ancient treatises of India or the canonical poems of the West, *Bhavna* and *Vichar* serve as guiding principles in the exploration of the human experience, enriching literature with their depth and complexity.

In conclusion, Indian and Western Poetics both reveal profound insights into the interplay between *bhavna* and *vichar*. Through vivid imagery, emotive language, and philosophical reflection, these Indian and western poets navigate the realms of emotion and thought, inviting readers to contemplate the complexities of human experience and the mysteries of existence. By exploring these themes in canonical poems, we gain a deeper understanding of the enduring significance of *bhavna* and *vichar* in shaping the aesthetic experience within the Western literary tradition. Thus, *bhavna* and *vichar* serve as integral components of literary expression in both Indian and Western traditions, as illustrated with examples from *Natyashastra*, Abhinavagupta, Bhartruhari, Mamata, and the canonical poems by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Arnold, and Browning. While the cultural contexts and philosophical underpinnings may differ, the universal themes of human emotion and thought resonate across boundaries, offering profound insights into the human condition. By examining key examples from Indian and Western literature and poetics, and conducting a comparative analysis, this paper has highlighted the nuanced interplay between feeling/emotion and thought, showcasing their universal relevance and significance in shaping the aesthetic experience across cultural boundaries.

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Telling Local Stories: Problems and Paths of Promoting Haining's "Chao Culture" in the Context of Culture and Tourism Integration

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Abstract

In the context of the deep integration of culture and tourism, it is urgent to systematically analyze and promote Haining's unique "Chao culture." Through investigation and analysis, it is found that the development of Haining's "Chao culture" faces a number of problems, such as the lack of authenticity of the content, insufficient publicity, unclear target positioning, and irrational allocation of resources. Based on this, three promotion paths are proposed: building a cultural tourism industry chain for large-scale ancient towns, exploring the "Internet +" ancient town model, and building an ecotourism demonstration area with the synergy of multi-party subjects. Through this, we hope to promote the deep integration of Haining Chao culture and tourism, realize the sustainable development of local tourism, and contribute thoughts and solutions to the dissemination and protection of local culture.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism Integration, Chao Culture, Problem Analysis, Path Exploration

1. Introduction

The 2020 Work Points of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Zhejiang Province emphasize the strengthening of the core of the "8-8 Strategy", which aims to further deepen the close integration between the culture and tourism sectors. In order to achieve this vision, Haining City has tapped into and inherited its unique "Chao Culture," which in turn has supported the continued growth of the local tourism industry and the socio-economy. Haining City is located on the Hangjiahu Plain in Zhejiang Province, which is rich in land resources and deep in history and culture. In particular, the "Chao culture," as a unique asset of this land, has gradually become a core driving force for the development of the local tourism industry.

Under the background of the current social and economic development, the culture and tourism industry is constantly rising, and the integration of culture and tourism has gradually become the inevitable development trend of the tourism industry. In recent years, research on the dissemination path of Haining's "Chao culture" and successful experiences at home and abroad have provided us with valuable references and inspirations. Wu Jialin (2022) analyzed the realization path of tourism development in Yanguan Town, Haining City, under the background of culture and tourism integration, and concluded that it should be based on regional cultural

characteristics, fully explore the potential of Haining's "Chao culture," focus on the innovation of culture and tourism products, enhance the attractiveness of tourist attractions, integrate the existing infrastructure and tourism resources, improve the quality of tourism, and meet the needs of tourists. To meet the needs of tourists. Liu Yihong (2022) researched from the perspective of visual image of the city logo, and put forward the design scheme of Haining city logo with the theme of "Chao culture", which provided new ideas for the promotion of Haining city image (Wu, 2022).

In the current social background of the deep integration of culture and tourism industry, the deep excavation of local cultural resources and the continuous inheritance of traditions have become particularly important. Haining City has learned from Wuzhen's successful practice of integrating culture and tourism, and combined it with cutting-edge technologies such as "Internet+" to continuously research and innovate cultural communication means, with the goal of strengthening the global dissemination of "Chao culture." Haining's "Chao culture" has received solid support from government policies, laying a solid foundation for its development. The "Implementation Recommendations on Promoting High-Quality Integration and Development of Culture and Tourism" emphasizes the importance of integrating culture and tourism standards in the Yangtze River Delta region, while the "Comprehensive Evaluation Approach for the Development of Culture and Tourism Integration IPs in Zhejiang Province" proposes fostering more integrated IPs for culture and tourism. The implementation of these policies provides a clear direction and solid support for the further development and promotion of "Chao Culture" in Haining City.

Under the current trend of integration of cultural tourism and tourism industry, it is particularly important to promote tourism-related promotional activities. In order to deepen the promotion of "Chao Culture," Haining City has implemented innovative strategies and proactive exploration in the tourism market, making full use of cutting-edge media and network technology and improving its competitiveness in the market through various ways and means. As a key path for the integration of culture and tourism, Haining City has carried out in-depth research and promotion of "Chao culture," integrating it into tourism products and services to provide tourists with unique cultural experiences, thus enhancing its tourism value and market competitiveness. Jin Sanmin (1995) conducted an in-depth study on the development of tourism resources in Yanguan, a tide-watching resort, and concluded that the development of tide culture tourism resources should seize unique attractions such as the tide bridge and the Yanguan tide-watching building, as well as various kinds of folk cultural activities (Liu, 2022). In addition, the development of tourism facilities and services centered on regional characteristics will give tourists more diversified feelings [4]. Wuzhen, as a successful example of international cultural tourism development, has rich historical and cultural connotations and unique regional characteristics (Zhou Xuerui et al., 2021).

Taking Wuzhen Theatre Festival as a case study, Yi Xiuzhu and Fan Hong (2023) analyze the branding strategy for shaping national image in international cultural tourism, and argue that the success of Wuzhen Theatre Festival is due to the effective integration of cultural and tourism resources, highlighting historical and cultural individuality, avoiding over-commercialization, and establishing a "scenario of cultural and tourism fusion and a modality of social welfare" (Yi & Fan, 2023). By exploring the symbiotic mechanism of tourism characteristic towns, Wu Wenwen (2020) proposed that in the integration of regional culture and tourism resources, the roles of the government, commercial organizations, and the general public should be brought into play in order to deeply implement the strategy of culture-tourism integration (Wu, 2020). Susan (2021) reveals a successful case of cultural and tourism integration by deconstructing Wuzhen Theater Festival, which provides a reference for other regions (Susan, 2021).

Through an in-depth analysis of Haining City's efforts and strategies in integrating culture and tourism, we can not only summarize its successful experience in this field, but also identify the current bottlenecks and shortcomings, so as to provide strong scientific support for future planning. Haining City has achieved remarkable results in promoting "Chao culture" and the integration of culture and tourism, but more exploration and innovation are needed in order to more deeply explore and inherit the unique culture of the city and to further promote the overall development of tourism and economy and society. Haining City is not only of far-reaching significance, it also provides valuable practical experience and inspiration for other regions to work together to promote the development and popularization of local culture in China.

2. Haining "Chao culture" cultural tourism promotion existing problems

2.1. Lack of authenticity of content

Some inherent lack of authenticity can be clearly observed in the promotion and growth of the cultural and tourism industries in Haining City. This is mainly due to the fact that part of the tourism industry fails to fully explore and inherit the original cultural landscape, or explore and pass on the local culture in depth, and occasionally draws on cultural factors that are not directly related to the local cultural context. Such behavior may damage the unique charm of Chao culture, thus reducing the experience of tourists (Zhou, Wang, & Xin, 2021). Some actual projects, such as the resort attractions developed in Yanguan Town, have neglected to pay attention to the authenticity of Chao culture, resulting in tourists not being able to truly experience the original charm brought by Chao culture during their visits. Similarly, when implementing Chao culture activities, the specific content of certain activities has misinterpreted the true connotation of the regional culture, overly pursuing commercial gains while ignoring the importance of cultural traditions and presentation, and this behavior tends to diminish the attraction brought by Chao culture.

In the face of this matter, we should think deeply about how to cherish the authenticity of Chao culture more in the progress of Haining City's cultural tourism industry. In the process of planning tourist attractions, first of all, we should attach great importance to the guardianship and deep excavation of the past culture to ensure that the cultural heritage maintains its original and beautiful appearance. Furthermore, when carrying out cultural activities, it is important to ensure that the activities are harmoniously integrated with the local culture, avoiding excessive commercial operations or the inclusion of irrelevant elements. With this set of strategic tools, tourists will be able to experience the unique flavor of tidal culture in a more in-depth manner, which will further enhance the attractiveness to the cultural and tourism industries. Moreover, adhering to and passing on this concept will help Haining City build stronger competitiveness in the growth of its cultural and tourism industry.

2.2. Insufficient publicity

In the case of Haining City's Chao culture in the promotion of cultural tourism, the challenge of lack of promotional activities was indeed encountered. In the early days, the degree of diversification of the various publicity strategies was not prominent, and most of them were limited to traditional methods such as paper media and outdoor advertisements, which to a certain extent limited the coverage and depth of their promotion. The purpose of publicity was not clear enough, which made it difficult for certain publicity content to precisely serve the target group. A combination of many factors has led to the lagging growth of Haining Chao culture in terms of public awareness and influence.

To truly address the shortcomings in the promotion of Chao culture, it is first necessary for Haining City to invest more resources in this cultural field and adopt a variety of methods to increase the public awareness of Chao culture and its scope of influence. The advantages of network technology and new media platforms can be utilized to expand the scope of information dissemination, and the combination of online and offline is emphasized to ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the dissemination process. Next, the promotion strategy should emphasize the unique features of Chao culture, its regional characteristics and contemporary flavor, and closely integrate it with the preferences and needs of tourists, so as to attract more audiences to participate in it.

In addition to this, it is committed to deepening cooperative relationships with cultural and tourism brands in other cities, drawing on their successful models and marketing strategies, with the aim of enhancing the brand promotion value of Haining's tide culture. Haining City can refer to the experience of Wuzhen Drama Festival and other cultural and tourism events in its publicity and promotion, presenting the deep charm of tide in its innovative and unique way. By optimizing and improving the content and methods of publicity, Haining City aims to further increase the impact of Chao culture and further promote the growth of the cultural tourism industry, making meaningful contributions to the inheritance and promotion of Chao culture.

2.3. Unclear targeting

In Haining City's promotional activities for Chao culture and cultural tourism, the challenge of ambiguous orientation and positioning was indeed encountered. Many cultural and tourism products are insufficient in terms of lack of novelty and uniqueness, thus leading to ambiguity in their market orientation. On the one hand, the fundamental significance and unique characteristics of the Chao culture have not been adequately demonstrated and widely shared because of the public's in-depth understanding of the Chao culture; on the other hand, the promotional activities have failed to accurately convey to potential tourists the unique attraction of the Chao culture due to the insufficient relevance of the selection of the target market and the dissemination of information.

To address the core issue of cultural tourism promotion, the first task is to dig deeper into the basic value of Chao culture and extract distinctive elements and features from it to give it a higher level of charm. Secondly, in order to increase the attention of a specific market, design marketing strategies that are more innovative and unique to Chao culture products. When studying Chao culture in depth, we will find its special connotation and values that are significantly different from other cultures. This makes it show its unique competitive advantage in the fiercely competitive cultural tourism market.

In the promotional activities, the unique charm of the Chao culture needs to be more precisely conveyed to the intended visitors. For example, a variety of promotional programs targeting various age groups and specific interest groups can be implemented to enhance the awareness and market impact of Chao culture in various industries. By establishing a clear marketing strategy, Haining City is expected to more effectively promote the growth of the cultural tourism industry and fully present the unique appeal of Chao culture to attract more tourists to experience it for themselves.

2.4. Unreasonable allocation of resources

In the process of promoting Chao culture and cultural tourism, Haining City does face the problem of uneven allocation of resources. Obviously, we can divide it into two aspects: the unbalanced development of tourism resources and the incomplete infrastructure. Places with profound tidal culture significance like the Yanguan Ancient City and Haining's tide-watching resorts may not have received enough attention and capital investment, which may have resulted in their cultural value and attractiveness not being adequately reflected. In addition, due to problems with infrastructure such as transportation, tour guide services and service equipment, all of these factors negatively affect the quality of the visitor experience and limit in-depth exploration of Chao culture and cultural activities.

In order to effectively address this set of challenges, the Haining municipal government and related departments should increase their financial investment in tourism and Chaozhou cultural resources in order to achieve a more balanced distribution of resources. Commit to providing tourists with richer and more diversified sightseeing options and cultural experiences through scientific and rational planning of tourism resources, as well as in-depth excavation and application of existing cultural resources. From a different perspective, the direction of diversification of Chao cultural tourism products is further spawned by strengthening and optimizing infrastructure development to enhance visitor experience. Considering the above factors, Haining City has decided to further reorganize its resource allocation to provide tourists with a higher-quality tourism experience, which will enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of Chao culture in the field of cultural tourism, thus promoting its sustainable and prosperous development.

3. Haining "Chao culture" cultural tourism promotion Path exploration

3.1. Building a cultural and tourism industry chain for large-scale ancient towns

In the process of integrating resources and comprehensive development, Haining City has drawn on the successful experience of Wuzhen, and is committed to creating a large-scale ancient town cultural tourism industry chain that incorporates elements of Chao culture. By integrating the resources of various scenic spots in the region, it has

formed a cluster of characteristic towns with Yanguan Town as the core, and created a comprehensive modern town integrating leisure and entertainment, catering and shopping. Firstly, Haining City has carried out all-round planning and design for key tourist attractions such as Yanguan Ancient Town and Haining Tide Watching Resort, implemented unified property rights and management and protection measures, and especially focused on the maintenance and restoration work of the original appearance of the ancient town. Secondly, traditional residential buildings and landscape resources have been integrated on the basis of digital technology. Following the principle of "protection first, repairing the old as the old, and preserving its authenticity," the authenticity and historical meaning of the Chaozhou culture have been demonstrated.

In order to create more jobs and increase the economic income of local residents, some local residents are hired to work in the tertiary sector. We are committed to promoting the development of tourism industries such as handicrafts with regional characteristics, gourmet foods, and folk cultural activities, with the aim of attracting more tourists to come and experience them. On this basis, we combine tourism with other related industries to form a diversified economic model. Taking Yanguan Ancient City as the object of study, its Yanguan intangible cultural heritage projects and tide-watching cultural activities are centered on tide culture, providing tourists with travel experiences rich in local characteristics, and thus shaping the unique cultural tourism industry chain of Haining City.

In order to prevent over-exploitation and commercialization, it is important to pay attention to the original characteristics of the Chao culture in Haining and to increase the economic returns of the cultural tourism industry in Haining through targeted publicity and promotional activities to raise tourists' awareness of the Chao culture. At the same time, the government also needs to increase support for the cultural industry and encourage enterprises to actively invest in the excavation and protection of Chao culture elements. For example, by organizing all kinds of tourism activities, festival celebrations and marketing promotions focusing on Chao culture, the Chao culture in Haining City will show its unique charm and traditional charms, which not only attracts more tourists to participate, but also further promotes the continued prosperity and progress of the cultural tourism industry.

3.2. Explore the "Internet +" ancient town model

Haining City is actively seeking to drive innovation, combining the cutting-edge technology of "Internet+" and traditional cultural resources towards modernization, with the goal of injecting new vitality into the future development of Haining's Chao cultural tourism.

Haining City has been actively utilizing online resources, official government websites and other diverse social platforms in the mass media and emerging information media to carry out a wide range of publicity and marketing activities. A new website for the word "sea" has been set up through Internet technology and promoted as one of the important contents. Through the dissemination of cultural stories related to tides, it can show the unique characteristics of the region's cultural activities, thus increasing the visibility of Haining's tide culture in the society. We also interact with the outside world through the Internet. We provide tourists with a wide range of information such as travel guides, daily activity schedules and food suggestions for places such as Yanguan City Wall and Haining Tidewater Watching Resort to ensure that tourists are able to obtain the latest information and services for their travels in a timely manner.

Through the combination of digital payment and online ticketing, the traditional Chao culture tourism experience in Haining City will become more convenient. On this basis, the publicity and promotion of the scenic spots as well as the cooperation with third parties are used to increase the popularity and reputation of the scenic spots. Through multifunctional services such as online ticketing and accommodation booking, travelers are provided with a more convenient travel experience. In order to provide visitors with more convenient and humanized access to tourism information, the platform launched a virtual tour guide application called "Haining Tourism," which provides immersive and real-time guided tours.

Finally, the selection of innovative strategies as a driving force has significantly advanced the development of the tidal culture tourism chain. By integrating cultural heritage materials such as intangible cultural heritage projects

and tide viewing activities in Yan Guan, Haining City, and utilizing advanced digital technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality, an innovative interactive experience is provided for tourists. It is also hoped to promote the sustainable development of the local tourism industry by utilizing the unique spirituality and aesthetic appeal of tidal culture. Starting from the deeper meaning of culture and with the core goal of serving the public, we hope to push the Chao culture tourism in Haining City to a new peak and find more innovative directions for the future development strategy of the ancient town.

3.3. Multi-party synergy to build an ecotourism demonstration area

With the growing global interest in and love for ecotourism, Haining City decided to create a model that integrates industry, education and research, with the core objective of creating an ecotourism demonstration area that showcases the region's unique ecology, Chao culture and folk traditions.

By maintaining close cooperation with major higher education and research institutions, it aims to deeply explore the rich tourism and cultural heritage of Haining City. Through synergistic innovation between universities, research institutions, museums and other relevant units, traditional skills are organically combined with modern technology to revitalize them, thus promoting local tourism. For example, tourist attractions like the Yanguan Ancient City and tide-watching resorts, as well as intangible cultural heritage items, are undergoing a process of development and preservation. In this process, we hope to promote the development of cultural industries in the region through the strengths of universities and research institutions. By taking advantage of the strong scientific research capabilities and specialized features of universities and research centers, we have conducted in-depth research on the ecological environment, geographic features, and history and culture of Haining City, with the aim of more accurately presenting the natural beauty and humanistic values of the region.

Subsequently, the guiding role of local governments has promoted deeper integration and innovative development with related industries. In this paper, we will take Haining as an example to study and analyze its tourism and economic synergy development and put forward some constructive suggestions. Our goal is to establish a co-growth strategy in a number of fields, including tourism, agriculture, handicrafts and local folk culture. By establishing a more complete cultural industry chain, the tourism industry of Haining City has been better enhanced and the regional economy has been further promoted. For example, diversified activities such as folk performances and handicrafts have been introduced in tourist attractions like the Tide Watching Resort and Yanguan Ancient City, which provide tourists with an opportunity to deeply experience the unique cultural atmosphere of Haining City.

Finally, the concerted efforts of many parties to create the Haining "Chao Culture" Ecotourism Demonstration Zone require the joint efforts of the government, market, science and technology, education and other aspects. Through policy guidance, market response, technological innovation and academic support, we can promote the sustainable development of Haining's culture and tourism industry, provide tourists with a richer and more distinctive tourism experience, and jointly promote the vigorous development of Haining's culture and tourism industry.

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Economic Hedging by Small-State Firms in Great Power Strategic Competition: The Case of Malaysian Rail Link (MRL) (2013-2020)

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Abstract

Existing research on how small (weak) states respond to the geopolitical rivalry of great powers often centers around the hedging strategy, where small states tend to maintain their diplomatic independence by taking non-explicit sides and stances to better safeguard their security and interests in the face of increasing external uncertainty. This paper, however, provides another powerful way of explaining this from the perspective of non-state actors through the changing attitudes and strategies of the Malaysian Rail Link (MRL) in the Malaysia-China East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project. This paper shows that due to the unique nature of firms, small state firms will choose to respond to external great power games with economic hedging, and performance legitimization and particularistic legitimization determine the strength of small states' economic hedging and when firms and the governments they represent choose performance as a way to enhance legitimacy, small state firms will choose to use economic soft hedging as their primary mode of response. Conversely, economic complex hedging is more pronounced when particularistic legitimization is used to enhance legitimacy. The findings of this paper also demonstrate that small state firms have a complex connection with the government. On the one hand, small state firms are the implement and influential representatives of the ruling government's foreign policy, inheriting the government's essential interest pursuits and expectations. On the other hand, the enterprise itself is also a vital interest organization. It will also formulate economic policy according to its own needs. However, the MRL shows that the Malaysian government firmly controls the tiny state firms and is an important tool and instrument for the foreign economic game of the small state government.

Keywords: Small State Firms, Great Power Rivalry, Economic Hedging, Legalization, MRL, China

1. Introduction

For many small and medium-sized countries in international politics, when faced with increasingly fierce geopolitical conflicts and competition among external powers, the hedging strategy has become an essential choice for the foreign policy of most small and medium-sized countries. It is reflected in the fact that the hedging strategy provides many small and medium-sized countries with a third path independent of bandwagoning and balancing and can effectively ensure the diplomatic autonomy of small and medium-sized countries. It can also prevent small

and medium-sized countries from falling into the dilemma of great power competition and adopting a non-clearly siding method to maintain their safety and interests. However, for many non-state actors, such as enterprises, as an essential part of the internal structure of a sovereign country, they also represent the country's will to a certain extent, especially enterprises in specific small and medium-sized countries, which are increasingly facing external powers. Will its strategic choices be the same as a country in fierce confrontation and conflict, or will they show differences? Moreover, what is its mechanism of action? In order to answer these questions, the author borrows the concept of "economic hedging" and constructs an analytical framework for economic hedging of small-state enterprises and takes the Malaysia Railway Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) response policy to the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project of the Malaysia-China "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" as a specific example to further answer these questions.

The research significance of this article has two aspects. On the one hand, the discussion of hedging strategies has shifted from political and security to economic. Most of the existing research on hedging strategies focus on the hedging of small and medium-sized countries in response to the security and politics of big countries. Few studies have focused on hedging from the economic field and other perspectives to analyze the operability and feasibility of hedging strategy in economic and trade cooperation. Especially as the interaction model of the relationship between small and medium-sized countries and big countries is increasingly transitioning from political security to frequent economic interaction, the concept and scope of hedging strategies are also quietly changing. Therefore, this article can better understand the practical application of hedging strategies in economics, improve and enrich hedging strategies' concepts and implementation conditions. On the other hand, by analyzing the implementation of the economic hedging strategy of the MRL in the BRI between Malaysia and China, this article can better examine the conditions and factors that affect the implementation of the economic hedging strategy and broaden the scope of existing research. The main research object has shifted from state actors in Southeast Asia to internal enterprises in Southeast Asian countries to explore further the differences in the interaction patterns between states and enterprises at different levels when small and medium-sized countries face games and competition from external powers.

2. Literature review

Regarding the policy choices of small-state enterprises under the strategic competition of big powers, more research focuses on the external choices made at the national level when facing competition from external big powers, especially around the discussion and analysis in the political and security fields. Currently, two main types of related research topics surround the external choices of different entities under the game of great powers.

2.1. Different strategic options at the national dimension

Great power games and competition are the main core topics in current international politics, which test different countries' coping and coordination capabilities when facing such situations. However, the choices they make when facing great power games are different for different types of national actors. For countries whose comprehensive capabilities are at the same level as those of competing major powers, their foreign strategies often manifest themselves in confrontation and cooperation. For example, according to the views put forward by realist scholars and liberal scholars, the state of a country can be either conflict and confrontation and also achieve cooperation and win-win (Keohane & Nye, 1973; Waltz, 1998; Mearsheimer, 2021). Due to the proximity of relative strength, major countries in competition will not cause greater security pressure and threats to third-party major countries, forcing third-party major countries to make corresponding concessions in foreign policy.

In contrast, third-party major countries can make corresponding concessions based on the status and development of competing significant powers, which can be used to adjust their foreign policies to maximize interests rationally. However, for small and medium-sized countries whose relative power gap is too large, their primary means of coping with the game between great powers are balanced diplomacy, which includes explicitly five coping methods: bandwagoning, engagement, hedging, alienation, and balancing (Bresser, 2002; Sun&Jin,2017; Wang&Zhang,2021; Teo&Koga,2022). In past studies, scholars often regard following and balancing as the main ways for small and medium-sized state actors to deal with the game of great powers. However, this dichotomy

analysis often ignores the initiative and independence of small states themselves. Therefore, some scholars propose the third path of "hedging" based on bandwagoning and balancing. "Hedging" was originally an essential concept in finance, which generally refers to the fact that in financial investments with higher risks, decision-makers will adopt hedging to reduce related risks in order to avoid risks and ensure their returns (Chen, 2021). Some international relations scholars have applied "hedging" in finance to actual international politics, emphasizing that there are dual risks and benefits when some small and medium-sized countries face competition and conflicts with external powers. They can choose to follow the big powers or obtain corresponding benefits but, at the same time, bear the severe consequences of failure to follow the big powers. Therefore, in order to achieve the above goals, small and medium-sized countries have adopted a relatively neutral path to achieve more benefits in their interactions with the big powers. Reduce small states' risks and pressures and ensure relative independence at the external level (Ciorciari, 2019).

Regarding the specific connotation of hedging, scholars primarily define the concept of hedging based on criteria such as risk transformation, strategic combination, and delayed bandwagoning. Although the classification standards are different, the common point is that hedging is regarded as a measure the state takes to reduce risks. A series of strategic combinations, specifically including engagement, enmeshment, prevention (fangfan), containment (qiangzhi) and balancing, which is an evasive behavior by the state in order to maximize interests (Chung, 2004; Shi, 2016; Wang, 2018; Tan, 2020; Jones & Jenne, 2022). In studying the implementation conditions and purposes of hedging, the mainstream view is to analyze under what circumstances a country will tend to adopt hedging policies from the dual dimensions of domestic politics and international politics, such as perceived threats and relative capabilities at the external level, institutional system, regional order, and political elite considerations and strategic perceptions at the internal level (Wang, 2018; Kuik, 2016a, 2016b; Jiang, 2023). When countries adopt a hedging strategy, the purposes could be more consistent. For example, Evelyn Goh believes that the primary goal of Southeast Asian countries adopting a hedging strategy is to avoid China or the United States' hegemony, the United States' withdrawal from Southeast Asia, and unstable regional order. At the same time, Wu emphasized three elements for "hedging" Southeast Asia, namely, the first is indirectness or soft balance, emphasizing cooperation with other major powers such as the United States as a way to curb China's increasing expansion of power in the region; the second is hoping that China When formulating China's foreign strategy, leaders can operate more by inherent international principles, avoid imposing more Chinese power on international cooperation, and use a constructive hedging to counter offensive Chinese dominance; It is to entangle more regional forces to maintain a stable regional order (Goh, 2007a, 2007b). Kuik proposed that the primary purpose of Malaysia's hedging is to avoid the risk of falling into conflicts between China and the United States, the uncertainty of the United States' long-term commitments, the risk of alienating recently rising powers, the danger of being attached to a dominant force, and the risk of domestic authority. Erosion (Kuik, 2010; Kuik, 2021)

In terms of the research on hedging countries, some opinions indicate that any country can implement a hedging strategy, such as the United States' hedging strategy against China. However, existing research still focuses more on the hedging strategies of small and medium-sized countries, especially Southeast Asian countries. Small and medium-sized countries in Southeast Asia are believed to be more inclined to choose hedging strategies because they guarantee a particular space and initiative for small countries to make foreign strategic decisions. Adopting an equidistant diplomacy model to interact with big countries can effectively maintain small states' national security and interests. The hedging strategy of small countries is caused by uncertainty, which indicates that the uncertainty of the main threats and primary support of small countries. Small countries not only hope to maintain effective interaction and exchanges between competing big countries to achieve stability gains but also want to avoid following or relying on neighboring major powers and losing diplomatic autonomy. This uncertainty about the future makes small countries more likely to use hedging (Kuik, 2021).

2.2. The role of Multinational Corporations (MNC) in International Relations

With the end of the Cold War, the role of non-state actors has begun to play an increasingly important role. As specific interest organizations, enterprises are growing more substantial in the trend of globalization and have an increasingly significant impact on today's international political and economic system. In the process of enterprises integrating into globalization, the birth and development of multinational corporations (MNC) play an increasingly important role in global politics. The general definition of multinational corporations refers to companies registered, operated, and scaled simultaneously in multiple countries/regions. Regarding MNC, existing research focuses on discussing and analyzing the role and functions of multinational corporations in international politics. For example, Joseph Nye believes that the three significant functions of multinational corporations are private diplomacy against the host country, solving a disagreement within a country, becoming a political and economic tool for the home and host countries to benefit themselves, and promoting the formulation of inter-country political agendas (Nye, 1974). In addition, some scholars also believe that the impact of multinational corporations has apparent duality, which includes positive and negative impacts coexist. The positive impact is reflected in multinational companies introducing capital and technology into underdeveloped countries through the global flow of capital, helping underdeveloped countries obtain the capital and technology they need and promoting their rapid economic development. However, the negative impact is also very prominent. For example, for some backward and poor developing countries, multinational corporations can use their solid economic capital power to influence the economic and political structure of the host country, exacerbating the host country's internal vulnerability and making it vulnerable to Multinational corporations have formed a long-term and deep dependence, and the wealth gap between multinational corporations and their home countries and these host countries has become broader and more comprehensive(Nye,1974). Especially with globalization's development, multinational corporations' negative impact has become more prominent. To a certain extent, multinational corporations have failed to promote the further development of regional integration and have exacerbated the wealth gap between countries in the global South and developed countries. These multinational corporations have corporate investment activities that are also regarded as a form of "neocolonialism" (Alger, 1972). Regarding the relationship between multinational corporations and the government, some scholars have proposed that multinational corporations, as a specific interest organization within a country, tend to use existing resources to lobby the government based on their interests, thereby affecting the government's foreign policy decisions and moving towards development in a direction conducive to multinational corporations. For example, to promote the development of enterprises, the political elites of multinational corporations may urge the government to lower tariffs and implement more open introduction policies to promote the overseas flow of multinational corporations (Tarzi,2002). In addition, multinational corporations often represent the will of the country (home country) to a certain extent. Part of the equity shares of some large multinational corporations are also in the hands of the home country government. The home country government can export the country's products through multinational corporations as an intermediary. Economic strength and influence can make the host country highly dependent on the home country through economic coercion or inducement, thereby striving for more interests and diplomatic initiative in international political competition (Dörrenbächer & Geppert, 2011). Some scholars have also interpreted the design of economic activities by multinational companies in multiple countries and regions as "business diplomacy. The economic activities of multinational companies are regarded as diplomatic behavior, not only to maximize the company's commercial profits but also to transcend commercial interests, realize the political role of enterprises in promoting social problems and governance gaps between underdeveloped and developed countries, and expand the responsibilities of enterprises in the global governance system (Rehbein et al., 2015). Researchers have also noticed the specific participation of enterprises in host countries. In the form of independent foreign-funded companies, most will participate in the production and construction of the host country. However, for some socialist countries, joint ventures will also be used to carry out related production activities (Nye, 1974).

In addition to the discussion of the home country of multinational enterprises, some studies also interpret the economic behavior of enterprises from the host country's perspective. Southeast Asian and African countries are the focus of analysis, especially regarding the investment activities of Chinese enterprises in Southeast Asian countries and African countries. The research tendency is that, on the one hand, the investment behavior of Chinese enterprises in these host countries has brought many benefits to the local areas. Employment opportunities effectively reduce the unemployment rate and promote improving the host country's infrastructure and economic development (Ravenhill, 2004; Klaver & Trebilcock, 2011; Yu, 2017). However, on the other hand, many host countries need a clear understanding of Chinese enterprises' investment behavior. In particular, many Southeast

Asian countries believe that the economic behavior of Chinese companies in their countries has posed a severe threat to their national security and harmed the actual interests of the host countries. In particular, China has formed a hostile relationship with the host country by allowing the host country China's economic solid dependence to affect and control the host country's internal political and diplomatic decisions. Therefore, the host country has a negative view and attitude towards China's investment based on this situation and remains relatively cautious and prudent attitudes in some economic cooperation processes with China. (Goh, 2007; Prajuli, 2013). Therefore, some scholars also call on Chinese companies from the perspective of international communication to do effective publicity abroad and establish a positive and good international image to promote the external economic development of Chinese companies.

In summary, the deficiencies in existing research are mainly reflected in two aspects through reviewing the relevant literature. First, although the discussion on hedging strategies has been vibrant, the analysis level of hedging strategies focuses more on the political and security fields, and less research has started from the economic field to explore the operability and implementation conditions of hedging strategies, especially comparative studies, especially in the difference between economic hedging and hedging in the political and security fields. Second, when studying the external behavior of multinational enterprises, most studies focus on the economic impact of multinational enterprises from large or developed countries or interpret the responses and cognitive attitudes towards multinational enterprises from the host country level. Few studies discuss small-state respond to the rise and competition of external powers from the perspective of small-state enterprises in the host country. Therefore, this article analyzes the challenges and competition of small countries' enterprises against external powers from the perspective of economic hedging, which will better enrich and improve the application and implementation of hedging strategies in the economic field. It will also expand the level of analysis of small countries' foreign strategies from the perspective of enterprises. It also provides a more complete understanding for analyzing enterprises' external behavior and decision-making in this context.

3. Foreign strategic choices of small-state enterprises

In current international politics, small countries are often in a relatively passive position when facing competition from big external powers. Not only is the gap in relative strength too large, and small countries cannot unilaterally compete with competing big powers, but also because small countries cannot unilaterally compete with competing big powers. Economically, they maintain a complex interdependence with big countries. Small countries need to rely on the markets and technologies provided by big countries to develop their foreign economies. For small country enterprises, the domestic market space of small countries is relatively limited, so the market and economic resource advantages of large countries can provide small country enterprises with a broader development space. Therefore, when small country enterprises face competition from big countries, their strategic choices are more special compared with those of other countries.

3.1. Concept definition and operationalization

The objects analyzed in this article are mainly enterprises in small (weak) countries. According to Joseph Nye's definition and explanation of multinational enterprises, the small-state enterprises in this article are usually headquartered in countries with relatively weak comprehensive strengths in the international relations system. In this country, Enterprises with certain economic status and advantages within the country can appear as multinational enterprises or joint ventures externally (Nye, 1974). Regarding economic hedging, this article believes that it mainly refers to a country or enterprise adopting a two-way economic interaction model when facing fierce economic collision and competition from external powers and maintaining full economic cooperation with competing powers and making full use of the economic advantages of the great powers to Feed back its economic development. At the same time, the independence and autonomy of foreign economic decision-making should be maintained during cooperation to avoid solid economic dependence on significant countries and maximize economic benefits (Yan, 2023).

There are complex connections and interactions between countries and enterprises in international relations. After the end of the Cold War, with the rapid development of globalization, non-state actors represented by enterprises

gradually became essential participants in international politics. They had a significant impact on the development of international relations. Compared with state actors, the interaction of enterprises in international politics relies more on their vast business networks and significant capital and technological advantages. When enterprises flow through the trend of globalization, their capital and technology flow to many other developed and developing countries. On the surface, underdeveloped countries have received financial and technical support from multinational enterprises. However, underdeveloped countries have formed a deep economic dependence on multinational enterprises, and multinational enterprises can take advantage of the deep dependence on the country to influence and control its foreign affairs and political decisions. Therefore, the external impact of enterprises is more reflected at the economic level (Keohane & Nye, 1998).

The relationship between the state and enterprises can generally be divided into two dimensions. On the one hand, enterprises represent the political and economic will of the home country to a certain extent. When it is inconvenient for the country to act as a national unit at the external level, multinational enterprises can be used to exert political and economic influence on the host country, making the enterprise a national As actors and representatives who implement corresponding foreign policies, countries use the significant advantages of enterprises to compete and compete with host countries in all aspects to achieve more profits (Xiong, 2019). On the other hand, although enterprises are often imprinted with the shadow of the country in their external actions, enterprises are still a specific interest organization. Especially when the enterprise has a high status in the home country, the political influence of the enterprise in the home country also increases. The core goal of an enterprise is to pursue maximized commercial profits. However, sometimes, a country's strategic decisions are not just to achieve commercial profits but also to achieve political and military interests and sometimes even to sacrifice economic interests in exchange for external political interests. However, this kind of behavior often damages the core value of the enterprise itself and brings about a direct conflict of interest between the enterprise and the country. At this time, the enterprise will take various actions to defend its core interests (Hirschman, 1980). Therefore, enterprises often have two sides: enterprises can act as intermediaries to carry out various operations and actions in international politics on behalf of the home country to win more benefits for the home country. However, at the same time, the enterprise itself is also a specific interest organization and often acts according to its interests. Interests to maximize their interests. Regarding enterprises, the specific relationship between the host country and the home country is shown in Figure 1.

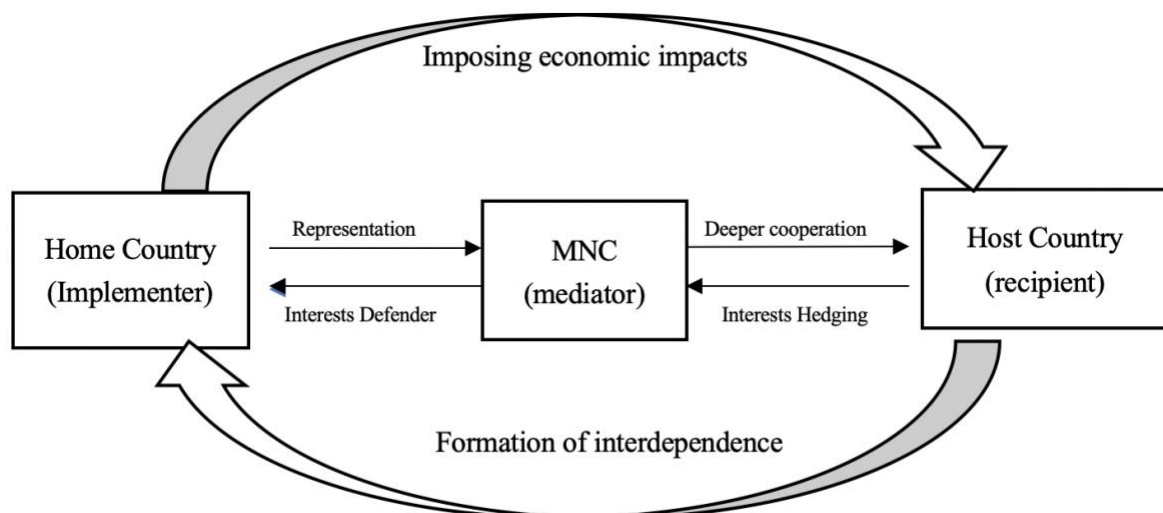


Figure 1: Three-dimensional interaction model between home country, MNC and host country

Source: Self-made by the author

3.2. Analytical framework: Economic hedging of small-state enterprises from the perspective of legalization

In political science, legalization is essential in analyzing the government's power concentration and legal basis to measure whether a government complies with norms. Similarly, enterprises, as a specific interest group, play an essential role in the country's internal political structure. Enterprise groups composed of many political elites also need to obtain corresponding legitimacy in internal and external political decisions to establish a good image and reputation, laying a solid foundation for the development of the enterprise (Weatherford, 1992). Especially as multinational enterprises in small countries (weak countries) have strong economic and political influence on the country, they are also integrated with the political party organizations within the small country. Under this joint effect, the country's political power is formed. Given this situation, this article borrows legitimation theory. It introduces the performance legitimation and particularity legitimation paths as the core explanatory variables. At the same time, the interest's pursuit is the primary intermediary variable of this article, and the economic hedging of small-state enterprises is the dependent variable. The specific interactive relationship is shown in Figure 2.

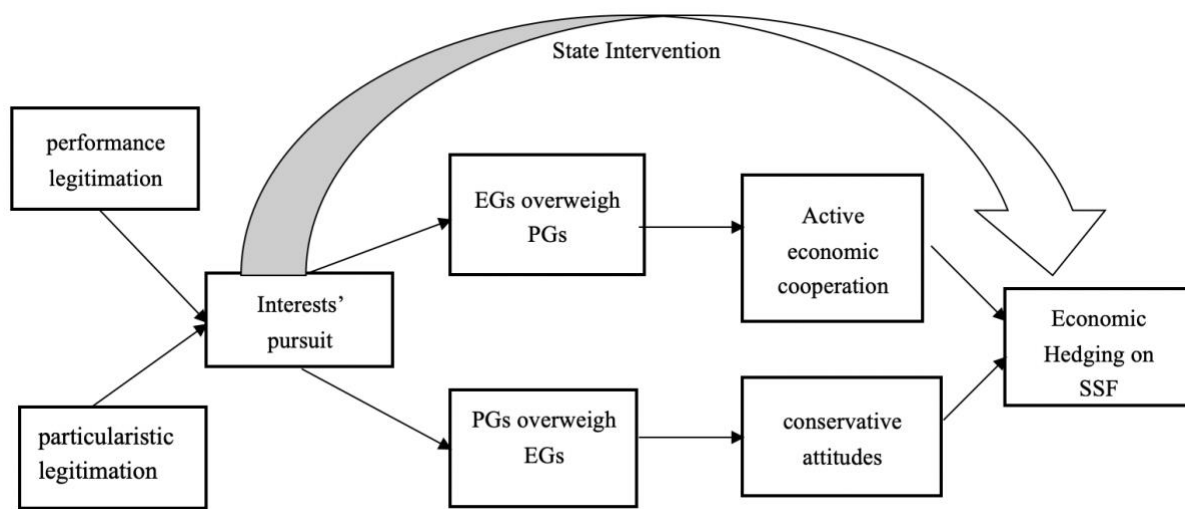


Figure 2: Legalization and economic hedging patterns of small-state firms

Note: PGs (Political Gains), EGs (Economic Gains)

When enterprises implement economic hedging in the game of great powers, two critical variables, performance legitimation, and particularity legitimation, simultaneously affect the external interaction model of small country enterprises. The first is performance legitimation, which refers to the country or government proving the authority of its rule through economic growth and well-being and using substantial economic gains as a specific indicator to clarify its legitimacy status (Dagher, 2018). For small countries, their performance significantly impacts whether elite groups can win the support and trust of the people. When leaders achieve the country's overall foreign economic growth and development by implementing strong economic policies, the people will also be affected by the interrelatedness due to the continuous development of the country's economy, such as the increase in people's income, the increase in employment opportunities and the improvement of public welfare. Therefore, the people will think that the economic measures of the leaders or the government are adequate and correct, and contributing to the country's long-term external prosperity and development. People will have more support and trust in elite groups, and the ruling foundation of the country or government will be consolidated to a greater extent (Cha & Lv, 2022).

On the contrary, when the country's elite groups cannot take effective economic measures to achieve positive economic growth, the country will not be able to fundamentally provide the people with broader economic results and public welfare, and the people will be dissatisfied with the government or political elites. Protests against decisions require elite groups to adopt practical policy options to promote the country's economic development. Once the domestic decision-making group fails to achieve the goals expected by the people or the contrast with the people's expectations is large, it will intensify the people's distrust of the government and trigger more serious social unrest. For enterprises, enterprises are often a particular elite group composed of many political and business elites. Political and business elites are also essential to the country's external decision-making. They often influence the Country's foreign policy according to their interests. The will of the state can also be expressed among the

people through enterprises. The state provides more development opportunities for the people by supporting the development of enterprises. At this time, the enterprises achieve the expected profit income, and the state also improves itself through performance legitimation (LaPalombara, 2019).

As an essential way of legalization, particular legalization mainly emphasizes political mobilization based on identity. The country selectively implements corresponding political mobilization and propaganda based on the identity characteristics of its internal people and takes specific measures to meet specific needs. The interests of a group of people stimulate the favorability and trust of this specific group of people in the country, thereby enhancing its legitimacy (Kuik, 2021). For some small and medium-sized countries, one of their prominent internal political characteristics is multi-ethnicity, and the country is composed of different ethnic groups. The state can take specific measures according to the needs of different ethnic groups to cater to their needs and thereby enhance their trust and support for the government. However, this is often a relatively complex and challenging process of decision-making because of the political characteristics of multi-ethnic groups. There are intense conflicts of interest among various ethnic groups. When the state selectively makes corresponding decisions to cater to the needs of individual ethnic groups, although the unique needs of that individual ethnic group can be met, it is also at the expense of other ethnic groups. It not only cannot achieve a dynamic balance between different ethnic groups but will further intensify the fierce conflicts and confrontations between ethnic groups, which is not conducive to the country's long-term stability. However, particularity is still essential transformation path for the country or leadership groups. (Ahmad & Kadir, 2005). In this process, enterprises can play the role of intermediaries. Enterprises can serve as representatives and concrete actors of the state, expressing the state's support and assistance to specific ethnic groups through the economic support of enterprises to this ethnic group. When an enterprise, as a symbol of the country, implements specific economic policies and measures, the enterprise can achieve effective communication and dialogue directly with different ethnic groups and pass the demands of different ethnic groups to the country through the enterprise. The enterprise is also a community of interests that includes certain members of different ethnic groups. At this time, the needs of the same dimension are unified and conveyed to the country through the enterprise organization, and the resources and status of the enterprise itself are used to influence the country's political decisions. in a direction that favors ethnic goals. Based on this situation, enterprises effectively connect the state with special ethnic groups, and the state can also realize its different needs through enterprises, thereby enhancing its legitimacy (Gomez, 2008). At the same time, when different ethnic groups cannot recognize specific country policies, different ethnic groups will have solid political dissatisfaction with the country, and companies, as specific executors, will become targets of attack by different ethnic groups. For the country, it disperses the political impact and pressure on the country to a certain extent. It is conducive to consolidating the relative stability of the government and its governance.

For a country, obtaining legitimacy can be one way or a combination of multiple paths. However, there is an obvious sequence for using multiple paths simultaneously, and enterprises can adopt multiple paths. To obtain appropriate legality. It is important to note that the essence of an enterprise is to maximize profits. For different legalization paths, the expected benefits achieved by enterprises are different. Performance and particularity determine the mutual game between enterprises' economic and political benefits, when performance is the main legitimation path, the enterprise's economic benefits will exceed political benefits and become the main profit target of the enterprise; when particularity is the main legitimation path, the enterprise's economic benefits will give way to political benefits. It has become the secondary revenue goal of the enterprise. However, no matter which legalization path is adopted, the enterprise's core purpose is to promote the pursuit of corporate interests and maximize its interests. Therefore, the joint action of performance legitimation and particularity legitimation determines the game and pursuit of interests within the enterprise, ultimately affecting small-country enterprises' economic hedging model.

Based on the above explanation, the main hypotheses of this article are as follows:

Hypothesis a: When faced with the game of external big powers, small-country enterprises will not tend to choose to bandwagon and balance but choose to use economic hedging as the primary strategic choice due to the nature of the enterprise.

Hypothesis b: When small-country enterprises choose performance legitimation as the main path, the economic gains of the enterprise are more important than political gains, and the enterprises will tend to carry out more active economic cooperation and interaction with competing powers.

Hypothesis c: When small country enterprises choose to particularity legitimation as the main path, the political benefits of the enterprise are more important than the economic benefits. The enterprises will be relatively cautious in maintaining economic cooperation with competing big countries and even show an economic level of hostile confrontation.

It should be noted that when enterprises choose actual legalization paths, they will not mainly focus on one legalization path alone but will choose to combine multiple legalization paths. Therefore, the research hypothesis of this article is based on the main legalization path of enterprises. Taking the legalization path as the core, the following uses the Malaysian Railway Connection Company as a specific case to verify the research hypothesis further.

4. MRL economic hedging against the competition between China and the United States

This article selects the **MRL** as the research object mainly for the following four reasons. First, Malaysia is one of the Southeast Asian countries with the most complex economic and political interactions with China. On the one hand, China is Malaysia's largest trading partner and target. The economic and trade volume between the two countries has exceeded 200 billion US dollars. Malaysia has a high degree of economic dependence with China. On the other hand, there are political tensions between Malaysia and China, and existing research rarely discusses Malaysia's economic hedging against China. Second, Malaysia actively participates in China's "Belt and Road" initiative cooperation. The East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) is one of the most important and representative projects in the "Belt and Road" cooperation between the two countries, while the MRL is the leading participating company of ECRL. Third, throughout its participation and performance in ECRL can reflect Malaysian government understanding and attitude towards Malaysia-China relations and the external game between China and the United States. By analyzing its participation in ECRL, we can better examine how small state-owned enterprises respond to geopolitical competition among major powers. Fourth, the research timeline is chosen from 2013 to 2020, mainly because China officially proposed the BRI in 2013. As one of the tiny Southeast Asian countries, Malaysia has actively participated in the economic cooperation between the two countries, and Malaysian local enterprises have also become important. Participants played an important role, but the change in the Malaysian government in 2018 influenced enterprises' attitudes towards ECRL. Therefore, examining the external changes of enterprises during this period will also provide more comprehensive thinking and understanding for the study of economic hedging of small country enterprises.

4.1. The active participation period of the MRL (2013-2018)

Since China officially proposed the "Belt and Road" initiative in 2013, Malaysia, one of the tiny Southeast Asian countries, has expressed strong interest and high enthusiasm for the "Belt and Road" initiative. The then Malaysian Prime Minister Najib expressed his enthusiasm for the "Belt and Road" initiative. He highly appreciates and supports the initiative and believes that the "Belt and Road" initiative will bring unlimited development to the future of Malaysia and the region. He also encourages Malaysian enterprises to actively participate in the "Belt and Road" initiative to create a more united and progressive country (MOC, 2016). Therefore, with the strong support of Najib, Malaysia and China have reached several cooperation on the "Belt and Road Initiative." Malaysia also uses the funds and technology provided by China's "Belt and Road Initiative" to vigorously promote the development of domestic enterprises and the economy. The economic relationship between Malaysia and China is, at this time, a new period has entered. As the flagship project of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative between Malaysia and China, ECRL is China's most prominent investment project in Malaysia and a landmark project in the entire Southeast Asia region. Najib expressed his high support and recognition for it because, as a large-scale infrastructure construction project, ECRL will effectively connect East Malaysia and West Malaysia, greatly facilitate the life and work of local people, and inject more economic development power into the poor East Malaysia region (Tat et al.,2018). Therefore, Malaysia established the Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL)to

consolidate ECRL's cooperation with China better. MRL is the owner company of the project by the Malaysian government. Although its equity is a joint venture company established with equal equity between MRL and China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), MRL wholly owns the ECRL project, and 80% of the joint venture's profits belong to MRL. Although MRL participates in the specific construction in the form of a joint venture, in essence, MRL not only has the official background of the Malaysian government but also represents the will of the Malaysian state to a certain extent, and because it is in partnership with Chinese overseas enterprises and capital forces. It symbolizes important product born of mutual integration, the cooperative development between MRL and Chinese enterprises, and also reflects the complex economic game between small-country enterprises and big countries.

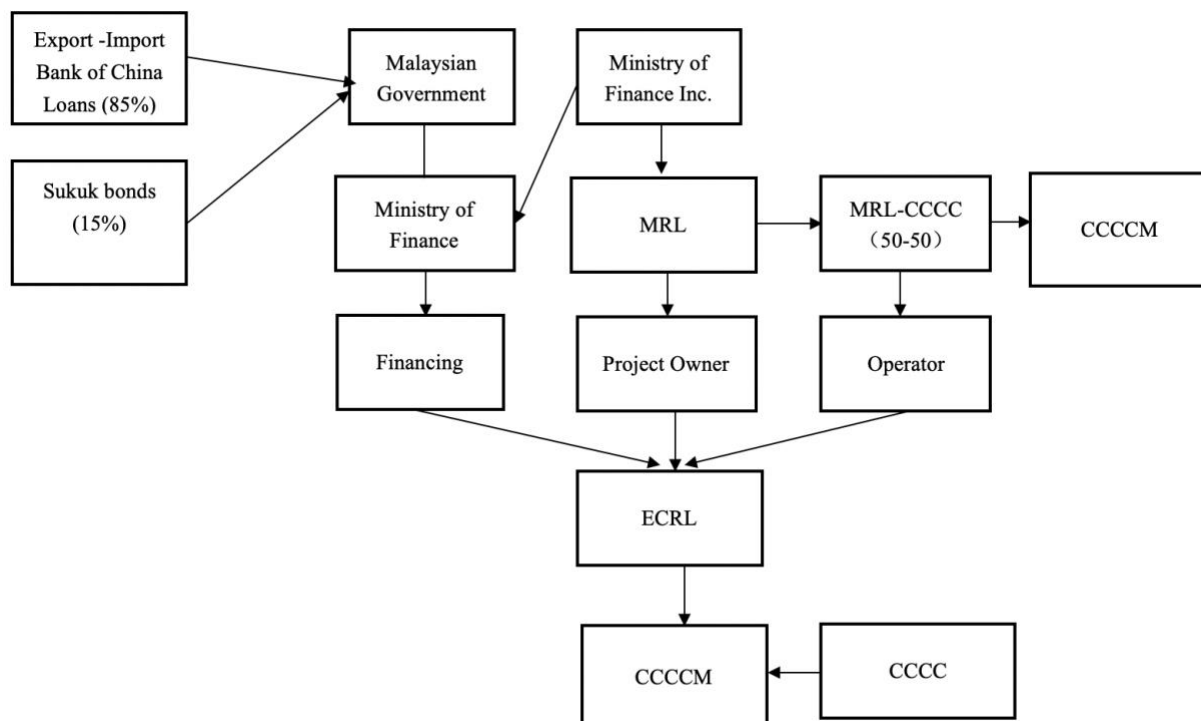


Figure 3: Project ownership structure of ECRL

Source : BRI Monitor, 2020

When MRL became the direct participant and executor of the Malaysian government's economic cooperation with China, MRL also conducted extensive and active interactions with China Communications Construction Company to discuss specific cooperation details regarding ECRL. MRL expressed strong support for the East Rail project and enthusiastic cooperation. Prior to the construction of the ECRL project, the Suruhanjaya Pengangkutan Awam Darat (SPAD) and East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC) conducted a market intention review on the agreed East Coast Rail Network on March 15, 2016, in order to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the East Coast Rail Link. However, the two essential implementation units did not disclose relevant information and investigation results. This triggered criticism and controversy from the Malaysian opposition parties and some politicians about Najib's administration's opaqueness and the transformation has laid the foundation for MRL's subsequent attitude (BRI Monitor, 2020). On October 21, 2016, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib formally approved the East Rail project in Parliament.

On November 1, MRL, representing the Malaysian government, officially signed the first phase with CCCC about ECRL for a total price of US\$13.1 billion (estimated RM55 billion) construction contract. Performance legitimization is decisive in influencing MRL's approach to economic cooperation with Chinese state-owned enterprises. The "Malaysia Development Berhad" (1MDB), founded by Najib, then the leader of Malaysia, 2015 was accused of embezzlement and corruption. In particular, Najib was considered by the opposition and some local political elites to be responsible for his internal and external decision-making. The opacity and illegal procedures have triggered strong criticism and accusations. Najib has been under intense pressure from the country

to govern, and Najib's legitimacy in power has been seriously challenged (Chin, 2010). For small multi-ethnic Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia, legitimacy is an essential prerequisite for whether political leaders or political parties can fully win the trust and support of multi-ethnic groups. If leaders cannot achieve legitimacy through relevant paths, their political status will be in danger. Therefore, when Najib could not enhance his political legitimacy through procedural legalization, performance legalization became the main path and method of implementation, by adopting solid economic measures and policies to stimulate the positive growth of the domestic economy and transform the economy. The growth has benefited a wide range of people in Malaysia, offsetting political dissatisfaction through performance growth, thereby enhancing people's support and trust (Ufen, 2022). For Najib, the East Rail project is the most critical performance growth opportunity. As a direct participant and executor of the Najib government's foreign policy, MRL's enthusiasm and friendly attitude toward economic cooperation with China, to a certain extent, relies on the foreign policy choices of Najib and his government, which is to express the Malaysian government's great importance to economic cooperation with China. Under the leadership of Najib and actively participating in cooperation with China on the East Rail project, and Malaysia obtained substantial capital and technology from China, driving the rapid growth of Malaysia's external economy (Lim et al., 2022). Although performance legitimation is the main influencing factor, particularity legitimation also plays a corresponding role. The Barisan Nasional, under the leadership of Najib, has the support of certain Malaysian Chinese political parties and Chinese chambers of commerce, so MRL's active cooperation with China also plays a corresponding role. This allowed many Malaysian and Chinese businessmen to benefit more from economic interaction with China. However, accordingly, Najib did not bring more benefits to the local Malays, which also became an essential factor in his subsequent resignation (Hrubý & Petru, 2019).

At the same time, as an enterprise, pursuing interests is one of the core goals of its external development. Although MRL represents the Najib government to a certain extent, the enterprise also seeks to maximize economic growth and interests, especially as a newly established company that needs to rely heavily on the financial support provided by China for its external development. Although Malaysia is not entirely dependent on China and still has a certain degree of political wariness towards China, companies have worsened their economic relationship with China to maintain national political security and it is not worth the gain for the enterprise's long-term development. Therefore, in political games and economic considerations, economic gains are far more critical than political gains. For a small Southeast Asian country that advocates economic pragmatism, enterprises serve as a collection of national interests. It can bring more diversified benefits to MRL through active interaction and participation in the economy of major countries. It can not only maximize corporate interests but also help Najib gain more public support and recognition and enhance his legitimacy with the government, so MRL's cheerful enthusiasm for China on the East Rail project is undisputed (Leifer, 2001; Kuik & Lai, 2023). However, it should be pointed out that MRL's economic cooperation and attitude towards China do not mean that Malaysia is entirely dependent on China but that it fully uses China's economic advantages and resources to ensure its relative independence.

While Malaysia and China have established a high degree of economic cooperation, Malaysia is also facing increasingly severe geopolitical tensions between the two major powers, China, and the United States. The Trump administration has always regarded China as a severe geopolitical threat and believes that it has harmed the economic interests of the United States, so it has taken relatively severe economic measures against China. This tense relationship makes Malaysia worried about whether it will affect its economic cooperation with China. Malaysia must adopt a hedging approach to avoid a dilemma between big powers. However, as a rationalistic small country (Chin, 2021), Malaysia understands China's East Rail Link project and the "One Belt, One Road" initiative behind it have brought considerable benefits to MRL and Malaysia as a whole that are unmatched by the United States. In addition, Trump's inappropriate remarks about Islamic countries since he came to power have worsened relations with many Islamic countries, such as Malaysia, triggered strong dissatisfaction, prompting Malaysia to choose closer economic cooperation with China emotionally (Xinhuinet, 2017).

Therefore, from 2013 to 2018, MRL, as an essential representative and intermediary under the leadership of the Najib government, used an economic soft hedging method to deal with the game and competition between China and the United States in its economic cooperation with China, manifested in maintaining a specific independent space of its own. Focusing on the East Rail project, MRL is more inclined to adopt a proactive, cooperative attitude

towards China and makes full use of the significant conditions of the Chinese economy to achieve Malaysia's domestic economic growth and thereby promote long-term development. With the change in Malaysian domestic government in 2018, MRL's attitude towards economic cooperation with China has also quietly changed.

4.2. Transformation period of MRL (2018-2020)

At the end of the fourteenth general election in Malaysia in 2018, Najib, who represented the Barisan Nasional (BN), lost the domestic election and stepped down. Mahathir, who represented the Alliance of Hope, replaced Najib as the new prime minister of Malaysia. And leaders. When the Pakatan Harapan (PH) led by Mahathir came to power, it announced a comprehensive review of large-scale infrastructure projects approved by Najib. The review aimed to understand Najib's personal corruption and corruption in these projects. In addition to the "1MDB" incident, Najib and his leadership group have been accused of severe corruption and embezzlement, especially Najib's alleged betrayal of Malaysia's national interests in exchange for China's economic bribery, which triggered strong dissatisfaction and protests from the Malaysian opposition parties and the people (Abadi, 2021). Based on this situation, after taking office, Mahathir announced that he would re-examine the economic cooperation projects between Malaysia and China during the Najib period. Mahathir also cited the East Rail and pipeline projects as "harming national interests" and they need to be suspended. On July 3, 2018, MRL instructed China Communications Construction Company to suspend all projects under the East Rail project's design, procurement, construction, and commissioning contract. MRL no longer treats cooperation with China Communications Construction Company as it did during the Najib period but became more conservative and cautious and even caused some conflicts of interest (Theedge Malaysia, 2018).

The change in MRL's attitude also shows that the Malaysian government's policy towards China has adjusted. Malaysia has become more cautious in reviewing its economic interaction with China, especially with the change of domestic government and the outbreak of the Sino-US trade war externally. The leaders' perception of China has also changed and China's threat to Malaysia has increased, and the direct pressure it has brought has also significantly increased (Yeoh, 2019). For the suspension of the East Rail project, one of the reasons given by MRL is that the cost of the East Rail project far exceeds the company's budget and the financial scope of the Malaysian government. The original cost budget of the Malaysian Ministry of Finance and MRL was 55 billion ringgits. However, after a construction period, MRL and the Malaysian financial department believe the final construction cost will be RM88 billion. This result has far exceeded Malaysia's budget range and will put massive pressure on Malaysia's finances (Malaysiakini, 2016). In addition, Mahathir believes that much of the content of the East Rail Project signed with China during the Najib period needs to be more transparent and fairer to Malaysia. Such content cannot be in line with Malaysia's national interests. It has also become an essential factor that forced the suspension of the East Rail project (Fan & Long, 2020).

Although Mahathir and the Pakatan Harapan government emphasized that the construction cost was too high, the fundamental factor that affected the change in MRL's attitude was the particularistic legitimation. During the Najib period, he hoped to enhance the legitimacy of his rule through performance. However, this economic growth only partially translated into substantial benefits for the people. Instead, it was criticized by some Malaysian political elites as necessary means for Najib himself plundering wealth and capital (Chin & Razak, 2016). When Najib was exposed to corruption, it triggered many people in Malaysia to protest and be dissatisfied with the poor governance of the Barisan Nasional (BN) and Umno. They condemned Umno for being unable to effectively solve the corruption problem of the country's internal political leadership groups, which also led to Umno The government is no longer able to attract the complete trust and support of the Malaysian people, which indirectly affected the Barisan Nasional's domestic elections in 2018 (IntelliSnap, 2020). Based on Najib's situation, how to re-enhance the trust and support of the Malaysian people in the government and consolidate its governing legitimacy has become a vital issue, and legalization is a critical path. For Malaysia, the core of legitimizing specialness means highlighting and defending the leadership and interests of the Malays, especially paying attention to the distribution of actual interests of the indigenous Malays in the country. However, Although Najib also emphasized maintaining the Malay leadership position during his period, his actual operations were more based on personal interests. Therefore, to regain the support and trust of the Malay indigenous people, Mahathir and the PH have made more efforts in the East Rail project, especially maintaining Malay value orientation and interest demands

have been carefully considered because. Some scholars believe that many economic cooperation projects with China benefit more Malaysian Chinese than the majority Malays. If things continue like this, the Malays will be dissatisfied with China's economic cooperation (Shamsuddin & Liaw, 2015). Based on these considerations, highlighting the particularity of the Malays has become an essential means to increase the legitimacy of the Mahathir government.

As for the Mahathir government and MRL, the relationship between them is complex and subtle. On the one hand, MRL, as a direct interlocutor and participant in the economic cooperation between the Malaysian government and China, shoulders the interest demands and expectations of the Malaysian government and political elites. MRL must maximize Malaysia's national interests in its economic games and interactions with China. At the core, MRL and the Malaysian government have become a complex community of interests. MRL is a crucial tool and means for the Malaysian government's foreign economic game, and MRL serves the diversified development of Malaysia's economic interests (Liu & Lim, 2020). On the other hand, MRL itself is also an independent enterprise. The core purpose of the enterprise is to maximize external interests. Therefore, MRL will retain a particular space and authority in its foreign economic decision-making. However, MRL must still be under the order of the Malaysian government and take corresponding actions and policies can be implemented.

Therefore, during Najib's period, because Najib himself paid more attention to the role of performance legitimation, he saw the enormous economic benefits that China's BRI brought to him and Malaysia. He actively promoted MRL's cooperation with China in order to achieve broader economic cooperation. Therefore, MRL actively conducted various friendly and positive interactions and consultations with China in the early stages of the East Rail project. This also shows that the Najib government attaches great importance to China's economic policy and is enthusiastic about it. However, when Mahathir came to power, the government groups served by MRL changed from the Barisan Nasional (BN) to the Pakatan Harapan (PH) because Mahathir and the Pakatan Harapan had specific criticisms and dissatisfaction with the East Rail project. This dissatisfaction was inconsistent with the criticism that cannot be expressed directly to China from the national level because, to a certain extent, it will damage the long-term friendly cooperative relations between Malaysia and China and cause dissatisfaction in China. So, Mahathir also skillfully changed this attitude towards China. MRL as an intermediary is conveyed to China, making China realize that cooperation with Malaysia needs to align with the interests, requirements, and expectations of the host country (Liu, 2019). When Mahathir and the Pakatan Harapan government believed that the East Rail project was not in line with the ruling interests of the current government, they required new policy adjustments for cooperation with China. MRL also needed consistency with the Mahathir government on the East Rail project. Corresponding transformations and adjustments will take place to cooperate with national-level actions to safeguard the leadership and interests of the Malays effectively and enhance the governing legitimacy of the Pakatan Harapan government. For MRL, although the pursuit of interests is diversified, including political and economic interests, economic interests are often the most important because enterprises need long-term development through profitability. This is the most significant difference between enterprises and the government. However, after Mahathir came to power, the Pakatan Harapan government remained relatively cautious in cooperating with China on the East Rail project. This also prompted MRL to choose between economic gains and political gains. Economic gains must give way to political gains because MRL, as a Malaysian national enterprise, cannot gain economic benefits at the expense of national interests, so in order to safeguard national interests and security, MRL must reconsider and formulate cooperation with China on the East Rail project, which is more expressed in a conservative and cautious attitude towards economic cooperation (Ngeow, 2022).

Therefore, MRL's choice to be particularistic legitimation determines that it must use economic hard hedging as its primary strategic choice in the East Rail project. This is also affected by the increasing tension in external Sino-US relations. With the Sino-US trade war outbreak in 2018, the economic game between the two major powers, China and the United States, has become more intense and tense. This is a severe challenge for many small countries that rely on the economic development of the two major powers, China and the United States. The economic impact on the global production chain is undeniable, and Malaysia has naturally been affected by this adverse impact. Former leader Najib's actions were considered too pro-China, which could have negative impact on Malaysia's neutrality in foreign policy. In order to prevent dissatisfaction from the United States and reduce economic dependence on China, Mahathir also chose to re-examine economic cooperation with China through MRL, thereby sending an essential signal to the United States and the world that Malaysia's close cooperation with

China is only for economic development. Malaysia will adhere to the neutrality of its foreign policy instead of taking sides, Malaysia will participate in the governance of significant global political affairs with ASEAN (Moeller, 2019; Chin, 2023).

Although MRL, under the leadership of Mahathir, has chosen to adopt a more challenging economic attitude towards ECRL cooperation with China, this does not mean that Mahathir or MRL does not attach importance to economic cooperation with China. As a leader who puts rationality and pragmatism first, Mahathir can see the enormous role of the East Rail project in leading and promoting the integrated development and economic coordination of Malaysia's east and west coasts, and Mahathir does not entirely reject all the BRI cooperation projects (Kuik, 2023). Only have complicated views and opinions on the East Rail project and the two pipeline projects, especially when Mahathir came to power, he still allowed other projects to continue. He visited China three months after taking office, visited China's Alibaba and Geely Automobile, and discussed "unfair transactions" and "loan issues" with the Chinese side. There are various signs that Mahathir is only dissatisfied with some cooperation, such as the East Rail project, and still expresses support and welcome for the overall BRI. This also stems from China's economy's significant advantages and importance over other countries. Therefore, after many negotiations and consultations with China, Mahathir announced on April 12, 2019, that the East Coast Railway project would resume, significantly reducing the construction cost compared with the original plan. More systematic coordination and communication on new construction cooperation have been re-launched between MRL and CCCC (Vietnamplus, 2022; Guowuyuan, 2018).

Table 2: Development of MRL's response strategies in the East Rail project

Phase	Influencing Factors	Expected return	Features	Specific performance	Response strategy
2013 — 2018	performance legitimization	main economic gains	Positive and enthusiastic	Represented the Malaysian government in the signing of a contract with China for the construction of the ECRL	Economic soft hedging
2018 — 2020	particularistic legitimization	main political gains	cautious and prudent	Suspension of the continuation of the ECRL; a new contract was renegotiated with CCCC and the ECRL continued to be built	Economic hard hedging

Source: Designed by author

In summary, through the change in MRL's attitude towards the Malaysia-China Eastern Railway project, it can be found that MRL has a complex interactive relationship with different Malaysian governments, and different legalization paths also determine the development of MRL's attitude when cooperating with China. On the one hand, MRL, as the policy executor and intermediary of the Malaysian government at the external level, represents the government's and the country's interests. The government's external interest considerations and specific actions need to be implemented through MRL. MRL's different perceptions and attitudes towards the East Rail project also reflect the Malaysian government's policy direction for economic cooperation with China. On the other hand, due to the legalization choices of different ruling groups in Malaysia, MRL has also adopted economic soft hedging and hard hedging strategies in the East Rail project, prioritizing the most important to the enterprise in the dual game of economic interests and political interests.

Table 3: ECRL project schedule

March 15, 2016	SPAD (Suruhanjaya Pengangkutan Awam Darat) and ECERDC (East Coast Economic Region Development Council) conducted market
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	interest gauging surveys to gain insight on views and ideas for the ECRL using a “Request for Information” (RFI).
October 21, 2016	Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak announces approval of the project during his speech to parliament on the 2017 budget.
November 1, 2016	The Malaysian government signs “framework finance deal and construction agreement” valued at 13.1 billion USD, with China Construction Communications Company as the “builder” for Phase 1 of ECRL construction.
March 2, 2017	SPAD grants conditional approval for the preferred route alignment for the ECRL and the plan for the proposed ECRL was displayed for public inspection for 3 months total at the SPAD head office and through a roadshow at 38 district office locations across the nation.
May 13, 2017	Prime Minister Najib Razak witnessed the signing of a “Memorandum of Understanding” for the second phase of the ECRL, supplementing the November 2016 EPCC agreement. The MOU was signed with Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd , China Communications Construction Company Ltd (CCCC), and China Communications Construction Company (M) Sdn Berhad .
June 2017	Approval of final alignment and start of the construction.
July 3, 2018	The Ministry of Finance, on the instruction from the Prime Minister, issued a suspension notice to all contracts related to the ECRL project. MRL had instructed its main contractor, CCCC, to suspend the EPCC contract on grounds of national interest.
April 12, 2019	After months-long negotiation process between the two state companies, Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd and China Communications Construction Company Ltd signed a Supplementary Agreements (SA) which paved the way for the resumption of the ECRL project. In addition, both parties agreed to form a joint-venture company to manage, operate and maintain the ECRL rail network. The SA covers Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Engineering, Procurement, Construction & Commissioning of the ECRL at a reduced cost of RM 44 billion.
July 25, 2019	ECRL officially resumed work.

Source: *BRI Monitor*, 2020

5. Conclusion

This article takes the Malaysian Railway Connection Company as the research object, uses legitimacy theory to analyze the economic hedging model of small-state enterprises in the context of competition among big countries, and provides essential enlightenment in three aspects.

First, when small countries face competition and conflicts between external powers, domestic enterprises in small countries often become the specific executors and participants of foreign policies of small countries. Small country enterprises will also carry the mother country's economic expectations and interest demands behind them. Compared with large countries, the interests of small-country enterprises and domestic governments will be more

intertwined, forming a closely connected community of interests. The economic choices and considerations of small-country governments for big countries competition will also directly affect the small-country enterprises specific behaviors and performances.

Second, legitimacy is of great significance to whether a small country's government can fully win the trust and support of the domestic people and enhance its political authority. When the government of a small country chooses to use performance legitimization as the primary method, the enterprises of the small country serve as the intermediary for communication and dialogue with the big countries, and the importance of economic gains is higher than political gains. Therefore, the small countries mainly focus on economic soft hedging. It shows active catering and support for economic cooperation between major countries. When small country governments mainly choose to particularity legitimacy, political and security interests will become the priority goals of the country and enterprises. At this time, economic gains need to give way to political interests. Small country enterprises mainly use economic hard hedging as the primary mode, manifested as economic caution, prudence in cooperation, and even conflicts of economic interests.

Third, judging from the actual performance of the MRL in the ECRL project with China, MRL has complex interests and connections with different ruling parties in Malaysia, from Najib to Mahathir, from the Barisan Nasional(BN) to the Pakatan Harapan, with the change of the domestic government in Malaysia, MRL's attitude and policies towards economic cooperation with China are also undergoing transformation and adjustment, from the original economic soft hedging to hard hedging, and the primary purpose is to achieve the priority of political gains or economic gains. The case of Malaysia also shows that when faced with economic investment activities from state-owned enterprises in large countries such as China, rationality and pragmatism play essential roles in prompting small-country enterprises to choose to carry out all economic interaction and cooperation with large countries. However, the specific performance is complex. It is a complex economic hedging model that is largely different from bangdwagoning and balancing, and on the premise of maintaining the relative independence of small countries and enterprises, making full use of large countries' economic advantages and resources to drive their economic development. However, when small enterprises and countries face the risk of conflicts between external powers, they tend to give up part of their economic gains to maintain their political security and avoid getting involved in fierce conflicts with great powers.

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Ethical approval: All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent: This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

Data Availability: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

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Analyzing the Characteristics of the 1968 Spring General Offensive and Uprising in the South Central Mekong Delta, Vietnam

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Abstract

The spring Mau Than general offensive in the Central Southern Delta went through 3 attacks. In all three attacks, the army and people of the entire region attacked many important key locations in cities, towns, and townships, contributing to a significant loss of enemy forces, causing shocked situations for the controlled apparatus in most provinces, districts and communes, contributing to the overall victory of the entire region. The general offensive and uprising in the delta provinces of the Central Southern region has a number of unique characteristics that need to be studied to contribute to summarizing the theory and practice of the general offensive and uprising in the 1968 spring, that is the problem of force preparation and organization not ensuring a large scale general attack, combat plans are not consistent with local realities and lack of flexibility, and the work of launching and preparing the ideology for the masses is not good.

Keywords: General Offensive, Uprising, Spring Mau Than, Delta Region

1. Introduction

The 1968 Mau Than Tet event in Vietnam (Vietnamese books and magazines often refer to it as the 1968 Tet Offensive and Uprising) was a general attack and mobilization of the masses to rise up to seize power on the occasion of the 1968 Tet Mau Than by the Liberation Army of the South Vietnam. The campaign took place in most urban areas in the South, hitting key areas of the US military and the Republic of Vietnam regime. This is one of the largest military campaigns, having a role and consequence that is a turning point in the Vietnamese people's resistance war against the US for national salvation.

The Central Southern Mekong Delta (CSMD) region includes the provinces of Long An, Tien Giang, Dong Thap, Ben Tre, and An Giang. At the time of the spring Mau Than general offensive and uprising (1968), the CSMD region corresponded to the provinces of Long An, My Tho, Go Cong, Kien Tuong, Kien Phong, Ben Tre, and An Giang. This is the area of commanding revolution and resistance war of Military district 8 of the Vietnam People's

Army (War zone 8 was established in December 1945 the liberation of the South, War zone 8 War zone 9 merged into the current 9th Military Region) (HCMR, 1996). Since entering the resistance war against America for national salvation, the CSMD has been the place where the armed struggle movement and revolutionary armed forces were born earliest in the Southern. The beginning was to take advantage of the sectarian conflict to form "anti-robbery" teams to protect the Party organization and protect the revolutionary movement in Long An and Kien Tuong from 1955 – 1959 (LAVCP, 2005). After the resolution 15 of the Central Committee of Communist Party was issued, the CSMD was the place initiating and also the hottest place of the "uprise together" of the masses to break the restraint and take control in communes and hamlets. From the "detonator" in Ben Tre, the uprise together movement quickly spread throughout the Central Southern, the Southern and the South, forming a revolutionary storm that agitated the Saigon authorities and the entire United States. The CSMD was also the place where the Ap Bac battle took place - a large-scale battle in the early stage of the war between Vietnam and the United States, resulting in the first major victory of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam's guerrillas against the regular army of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam commanded by American advisors (TGVCP, 2011). The CSMD is also the first place where a two-legged (politics, army) and three-pronged (politics, military, military proselyting) strategic model appeared, which has been summarized into an important theoretical lesson in the resistance war against America for national salvation. Regarding the general offensive and uprising spring Mau Than (1968), what role did the CSMD region play, and how did it impact the general offensive and uprising spring Mau Than in the entire South and what theoretical lessons did it leave behind in the revolutionary war in Vietnam? This article presents the force preparation process, combat plans, developments, results and characteristics of the 1968 Mau Than spring general offensive in the CSMD. The article will further contribute to clarifying the theory and practice of the largest general offensive and uprising in South Vietnam in 1968.

2. Document Overview And Research Methods

2.1. Overview Document

In recent years, the 1968 Tet Mau Than Offensive and Uprising in Vietnam has remained an attractive topic for historical researchers. In the scientific documental literature, there are always new publications that study this event in more depth annually. Vu Thien Binh (2017) outlined the historical marks of the General Offensive and Uprising in the Spring Mau Than 1968, affirming the victory of Vietnamese bravery and intelligence, lessons, and historical significance for the current efforts to construction and defense the Vietnamese Fatherland and foreign assessments through the 1968 General Offensive and Uprising in the Spring of Mau Than. Ly Viet Quang (2018), presenting decisions of the Party, President Ho Chi Minh, Central Military Party Commission, Central Office for South in leading and commanding the General Offensive and Uprising; the participation of forces, military branches and the masses in the attack; the publication also analyzes the historical significance, causes of victory and valuable experiences of the 1968 Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising. Ngo Minh Oanh (2018), collected many articles by lecturers and officials, postgraduate students in the process of teaching, researching and learning about outstanding events in the resistance war against the US for national salvation, about the historical stature, the process of general attack and uprising and memories about the 1968 Tet Mau Than. Thu Phuong (2023), presented conferences, documents, telegrams, letters during the 1968 Tet Mau Than Offensive and Uprising to the main developments of the Tet Mau Than Offensive and Uprising 1968. Ho Khang (2018) presents and analyzes the formation process of the 1968 Tet Mau Than Offensive and Uprising Plan, the strategic diversions of the headquarters, leaders and chief of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the battlefield; at the same time, it introduces the developments of the General Offensive at major cities in South Vietnam and the multi-dimensional impacts of the 1968 Tet Mau Than Offensive. Some authors have exploited special aspects of the Tet Mau Than General offensive and uprising during the Tet Offensive. Multiauthor Books (2003), presenting the historical context and struggle movement of youth – students in Saigon – Gia Dinh 1966 – 1967, armed attack between Saigon and memories of the 1968 Mau Than General Offensive. Ha Minh Hong (2018) collected in-depth research on the battlefield of the Saigon – Gia Dinh key area, the most special and unique battlefield form during the resistance war against America for national salvation when carrying out the general offensive and uprising in the spring of Mau Than 1968. Nguyen Van Tau (2022), truthfully and vividly records the actions, thoughts, courage, intelligence, resolute actions and self-sacrifice of real characters and fictional characters (intelligence, corps, commandos) during the years of resistance, specifically is Saigon in the Spring of Mau Than 1968. Bui Van

Nam (2019) evaluates the leadership and command of the Party and the Ministry of Public Security during the 1968 Spring Mau Than General Offensive and; the role and contribution of the People's public security and South Vietnamese security forces in the General Offensive; Saigon – Gia Dinh Front during the General Offensive and Uprising in 1968; values, meanings and lessons learned. Nguyen Quoc Bao, Nguyen Thi Yen Thu, Tran Than My (2019) selected articles, memoirs, and compositions of many South teachers and students who directly participated in the 1968 Spring Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising; thereby, recreating a heroic period of South education.

Inheriting the research direction of projects above, this article uses related documents published in projects of the 9th Military Region High Command (1996), The Organ Of Dong Thap Province's *Vietnam Communist Party (VCP)* (1997), The Organ Of An Giang Province's *VCP* (2007), The Organ Of Ben Tre Province's *VCP* (2003), The Organ Of Long An Province's *VCP* (2005), The Organ Of An Giang Province's *VCP* (2007), The Organ Of Tien Giang Province's *VCP* (2011).

2.2. Research Methods

The article uses historical research methods, specializing in the History of the Vietnamese Communist Party (MOET, 2021). By applying the Party history major, the article complies with the principle of presenting historical events according to the context, policies, and leadership methods of the Vietnamese Communist Party, and the Liberation Army of South Command, Party Committee of War zone 8; state the developments, results, meaning and characteristics of the event; helps recognize the process of the Party Committee of War zone 8 and local party committees grasped and applied objective rules in the process of planning guidelines and practically directing the revolutionary struggle movement of the locality and region merged with the Vietnamese revolutionary movement in a specific period, a specific revolutionary struggle movement.

3. Results

3.1. Preparing forces and combat plans in the CSMD

At the end of 1967, the Standing Committee of the the Party Committee of War zone 8 received a resolution from the Politburo on shifting the South revolutionary struggle to a period of decisive victory, urgently mobilized the highest efforts of the entire Party, the entire people, and the entire army to carry out a general uprising throughout the South. At this time, in the Central Southern region, there were two major military concentration location of the Saigon government: My Tho city and Ben Tre town. In My Tho, the Saigon government arranged 1 battalion of the 7th Infantry division, 1 ranger corp battalion, 1 US army brigade, 1 armored battalion, 2 artillery battalions, 1 river brigade. The general force of My Tho province is about over 20,000 troops, including over 3,000 American soldiers. As for My Tho town, the Saigon government arranged security companies to occupy important positions, closing all intersections (TGVCP, 2011). On January 31, 1968, President Nguyen Van Thieu returned to My Tho during Tet, the government of the Republic of Vietnam reinforced the 32nd ranger corp battalion are stationed in field in a number of key positions and added 3 reconnaissance companies of the 7th Infantry Division into the city center; besides, there are also armored and artillery forces in Dong Tam sub-zone (TGVCP, 2011)). In Ben Tre town, the Republic of Vietnam force consists of 4 battalions of the 10th regiment, 7th Infantry division, 9 security companies, and 1 artillery battalion. In total, Ben Tre province has over 13,000 troops (BTVCP, 2003). In Go Cong, there are forces from the 4th battalion, 12th regiment and other security and people's self - defense forces. In Kien Tuong, the Saigon government arranged 1 infantry battalion of the 7th Infantry division, 9 security companies, 25 civil defense platoons, 2 commando platoons, 1 reconnaissance platoon, 2 artillery platoons and 1 boat (TGVCP, 2011). In Kien Phong, there is an infantry battalion belonging to the 9th Infantry division, along with security and civil defense forces, police, artillery, and armor (LAVCP, 2005). In An Giang, the Republic of Vietnam army focused on guarding the target of Chau Doc town and Long Xuyen town with about 20,000 troops. For the Chau Doc town has 2,000 troops as well as many armored vehicles and boats (AGVCP, 2007).

To prepare forces for the general offensive and uprising, the Central Office for South commanded the transfer of areas and redeployment of the Central Southern region battlefield. Long An province was assigned to the Central

Office to combine with the Saigon - Cho Lon area to attack the center of Saigon. Separate the two districts Go Cong Dong and Go Cong Tay of My Tho province to establish a new province, Go Cong. My Tho town was identified as the first key location and upgraded from a town to a city. The second key location is Ben Tre town. After redeploying the area, Party Committee of War Zone 8 established a Front line High Command and quickly built up its forces. Localities urgently recruited more recruits, partisans, supplemented troops to the armed units of the region, province, and district and strongly developed commune and hamlet guerrillas. Regarding the main troops of the war zone, according to the command of the Central Office, the Central Southern region must hand over to the Regional Command 3 main infantry battalions (265, 267, 269). Therefore, within 1 month, under conditions of absolute secrecy, the region hastily mobilized forces from the provinces and mobilized all officials from the civil - political - party sectors to take guns to the front. From the strength of the localities, the Regional Party Committee decided to build three new battalions: 261B, 265B and 267B. My Tho province moved to 1 battalion region (514A). The entire new army combined with the two old battalions, 261A and 263B, organized into two combat groups. For the provinces, after moving troops to the war zones, they focus on building battalions. Ben Tre is the province that mobilizes the largest number of troops, including 4 battalions. The provinces of Go Cong, Kien Tuong, Kien Phong, and An Giang all have at least 1 battalion. Each district has at least one company, maximum district has 3 companies. Strong communes have 1-2 platoons. Each hamlet has 1-2 guerrilla squads. Towns and towns have 1-3 rangers corp squads. My Tho alone is the first key area, so 3 rangers corp companies are assigned (BTVCP, 2003).

After basically forming the force for the general attack, the Regional Party Committee assigned and arranged forces in each area cluster to be ready to receive combat orders. At key location 1 (My Tho city), the Regional Party Committee arranged 6 infantry battalions divided into 2 combat groups: combat group 1 includes battalions 261A, 261B and 514A, combat group 2 includes battalions 263B, 265B, 267B, 1 mortar company 120, 2 mortar platoons 82; the army of My Tho city has 3 infantry companies, 3 rangers corp detachments and 1 mortar company 82; each district has 1 secret guerrilla squad, each communes have 1 to 2 guerrilla squads; The Party base in the city has 4 party cells, 20 party members, 50 core members; in communes, each party cell has from 10 to 25 party members and 10-30 young workers; mass forces were mobilized and organized into large teams; Logistics assigned each family to prepare 20kg of rice, while mills prepared from 1,500 to 3,000 Gia of rice. At key location 2 (Ben Tre town), the general attack force is arranged including 4 infantry battalions (516, 2, 3, 4) of the area in coordination with the province's units, all of those formed into 1 regiment; Ben Tre town has 1 infantry company and 1 rangers corp platoon; The province brought in 7 battalions, guerrilla militia and rebel forces expected in about 10,000 people; Mo Cay and Giong Trom districts each have 1 infantry battalion (lack); other districts have companies; each district has 2 guerrilla militia battalions; the masses mobilized about 22,000 people throughout the province. In Go Cong province, the regional force has battalion 514B; each district has 1 local company and 1 rangers corps unit; Ben Tre town has a secret self-defense team; each commune has from 2 squads to 1 guerrilla platoon. In Kien Tuong, after the province supplemented its troops, the command area force had battalion 504, 3 commando companies, 1 rangers corp platoon; the province additional built an information platoon and 1 frontline worker platoon; Female officers and soldiers in Kien Tuong made up the majority. In Kien Phong, the Regional Party Committee commanded to take a part of battalion 502 and mobilize officers, employees, and district soldiers to form the battalion 2 and 1 fire company; each district builds from 2 platoons to 1 local company; Cao Lanh town has a commando platoon. In An Giang, a part of battalion 512 was mobilized to coordinate with an armed security platoon and district soldiers to form battalion 2; mobilize the district's army force and mobilize the staff of provincial agencies and overseas Vietnamese-Cambodian youth to form battalion 3; mobilize people and overseas Vietnamese along the border to actively support the revolutionary financial (AGVCP, 2011).

Regarding the combat plan: In key location 1, in the first 30 minutes, the artillery will fire 1,200 shells at a number of targets; two combat groups from the northeast and northwest will move in to capture four targets, including the 7th Infantry Division High Command, My Tho sub-region, the workplace of the American advisor, and the provincial security union; after solving the main objectives, one part was responsible for controlling the supply route from Saigon, the remaining part cooperated with the rebel people to control the area. At key location 2, the main force from the south will attack the center of the province; the main target is the provincial chief palace. In Go Cong, the combat plan is to attack with mortars to oppress the main targets, surround the targets outside, wait for a favorable opportunity to attack the provincial center next time. In Kien Tuong, the goal was to decisively

attack the town, launch the mass uprising to liberate the countryside and ensure the corridor from the war zone to the areas. In Kien Phong, the attack target was Cao Lanh province. In An Giang, Chau Doc town was chosen as the main target (LAVCP, 2005).

3.2. Developments and results of the 1968 Mau Than Spring Offensive in the CSMD

On January 29, 1968, Party Committee of War zone 8 issued an order for a general offensive and uprising, the official time was 0:00 a.m on February 1, 1968. At key location 1 (My Tho city), on the night of August 31, only combat group 1 and battalion 265B of combat group 2 (i.e. 2/3 of the force) arrived at the gathering point on time. In addition, by 0:00, the civilians had not yet had time to deliver 1,200 artillery shells to the location. Therefore, the plan to fire 1,200 artillery shells at 0:00 could not be implemented, instead, at 1:00 a.m., we could only fire 20 mortars 82 at the Cau Quay police station. The rangers corp unit quickly occupied the police station, took control of Cau Quay and expanded to Kham Duong. The fighting in Kham Duong was fierce. The rangers corp shot and burned 1 V100 vehicle and 1 Jeep vehicle, killing 10 policemen. By morning, due to lack of support, the rangers corp unit sacrificed 5 people so they had to withdraw towards My Phong, on the way out, two soldiers still died (TGVCP, 2011).

The second direction of Battalion 514A attacked the 32 Rangers corp Battalion. The fighting took place extremely fiercely on many routes, but faced with very strong resistance, we could not master the intended targets. On the morning of February 1, 1968, the remaining part of Combat group 2, including Battalions 263B and 267B, arrived, at this time, the enemy had very tight defenses so we could not attack the 6th Armored Division base and Hung Vuong training center. Also on the morning of February 1, 1968, a helicopter took Nguyen Van Thieu from My Tho to Saigon. On February 2, 1968, fighting in the inner city of My Tho was still tense, with neither side mastering the area. On the morning of March 3, 1968, the 3rd Brigade (9th US Division) and the entire 11th Regiment (7th Division) with strong armor and artillery support entered the inner city to sweep. The fighting raged from morning until afternoon, burning over 100 houses, our battalions suffered heavy damage and had to withdraw to the outskirts. Coordinating with the main forces to attack in My Tho city, the districts of My Tho province also mobilized thousands of people to coordinate with guerrillas to destroy National Route 4 (National Route 1), collapse a number of bridges to cut off contact and traffic. In the outskirts, the withdrawn force continued to fight, causing some damage to the enemy. A typical example is the battle on February 10, 1968 of the 514C battalion against a battalion of the 7th division of the Republic of Vietnam in Tan Hoi, killing 100 soldiers and destroying 5 M113 vehicles (TGVCP, 2011).

In early February 1968, the Central Office of the South command War zone 8 to continue organizing forces to attack My Tho city. Implementing the policy of the Central Office, Party Committee of War zone 8 reorganized its forces, whereby the 2 main combat groups were redeployed into 2 regiments. Regiment 1 includes battalions 261A, 261B, 265B; Regiment 2 includes battalions 263B, 267B, 514A. Although efforts were made to prepare, the simultaneous attack plan had to be canceled at the last moment due to the enemy strengthening its forces and defending very tightly. Instead, the forces of the two regiments only carried out a few single battles. On the night of February 17, 1968, battalion 514A attacked the eastern defense line, destroyed the Cau Quay blockhouse, burned an M113 vehicle, a ship on the Bao Dinh river and destroyed a corner of the power plant. At the same time, in Cai Lay, battalion 514C attacked the sub-zone, captured a number of areas and then withdrew. Since the end of February 1968, the army of the Republic of Vietnam counterattacked strongly in the suburb, most notably the communes of Dao Thanh, My Phong, Thanh Binh, My Tinh An... The regular army of War zone 8 actively attacked and cause some damage. During the sweeps and raids by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, many houses were burned and a number of civilians died causing great indignation among compatriots and some civil servants and soldiers of the Republic of Vietnam. That's why the political struggle movement took place enthusiastically. People from suburban communes flocked into the inner city, all the way to the provincial chief's palace and the 7th Infantry Division Command of the Republic of Vietnam to protest. In the rural areas of My Tho, Cai Be, Cai Lay, and Chau Thanh districts, the masses supported guerrillas to rebel and destroy garrisons. In February 1968, My Tho had 12 communes completely liberated, a large number of soldiers of the Republic of Vietnam left their guns and returned home (TGVCP, 2011).

At key location 2 (Ben Tre town), on the night of January 31, 1968, all units of Ben Tre arrived at the gathering point. At exactly 1 o'clock on February 1, 1968, at the same time as My Tho, the firepower group in the main direction shot at the Command center of the 10th Regiment, the 7th Infantry Division and the Provincial Security Group of the Republic of Vietnam. The water commando platoon immediately attacked Dinh Tien Hoang camp, destroyed 6 armored vehicles and held the bridgehead for battalion 516 to cross the river to attack the governor's palace. The regular army destroyed a number of tent posts and blockhouses, and severely damaged security company 289 and the civil defense platoon at Ca Loc bridge. The roads leading to the governor's palace are defended with very strong firepower. Battalion 516 had to disperse into platoons, squads, taking advantage of the terrain to fight. A battalion of the 7th Infantry Division of the Republic of Vietnam from My Hoa mobilized to relieve the governor's palace was also blocked and attacked at Cai Ca bridge. The soldiers took control of some areas but could not capture the governor's palace. A local guerrilla unit whose mission was to contract combat with Battalion 516 to enter the inner city was also almost completely sacrificed. At 5:00 a.m., fellow attackers opened fire on the headquarters of the 10th Regiment (7th Infantry Division) of the Republic of Vietnam. The commando company completely occupied the command headquarters, killed the regimental lieutenant colonel, destroyed 3 military vehicles, and captured 1 combat engineer lieutenant colonel. On February 2, 1968, American gunboats from Ham Luong River and Binh Duc base (My Tho) fired heavily into the inner city, bombers and helicopters bombarded and destroyed Ben Tre market, killing more than 300 compatriots. Sacrifice. Battalion 516 had to retreat to the outskirts. On February 3, 1968, in the inner city, armed police forces and secret guerrillas remained at the base, hunting down and destroying henchmen and villains. Battalion 516 reorganized its forces to continue attacking the provincial security group, destroying the gun depot. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam used aircraft and artillery to destroy many locations. On February 4, 1968, helicopters carrying American soldiers from My Tho came to coordinate sweeps in many locations. Fierce fighting took place throughout February 4th. Both sides' troops suffered heavy losses. While the regular army attacked key positions, on the outskirts of Chau Thanh town and district, guerrillas combined with the masses to pressant a number of garrisons, take control of many areas, and cut off inter-provincial road 6A from Ben Tre town to My Tho. In Mo Cay town, local soldiers and district commandos destroyed a number of garrisons, took control of the defense line outside the sub-zone, and took control of Mo Cay market. The masses and guerrillas barricaded roads and built mounds on the trunk roads leading to the sub-zone. In Cho Lach, guerrillas and the masses attacked and destroyed the garrisons, destroyed the system of hamlets and communes, completely liberating 4 communes and 25 hamlets (BTVCP, 2003).

Go Cong Province take order at 12:00 pm on February 31, 1968 about a general attack. The provincial soldiers urgently deployed a plan to attack the provincial governor's palace, controlled the security battalion, the provincial governor fled. Rangers Corp Unit 207 combined with internal forces to destroy prison camps and free 200 political prisoners (TGVCP, 2011).

In Kien Tuong, at 4 a.m. on February 2nd, 1968, the attack on the town in the east destroyed a number of military garrisons, approach the provincial governor's palace and the civic center. However, the Western division who had a long journey and acrossing the Vam Co Tay River, they could not reach the target to coordinate with the Eastern division. At dawn, the Republic of Vietnam army counterattacked strongly. Most of the commando unit sacrificed their lives. Trying to fight until 10:00 a.m., the remaining forces had to retreat. Due to the unfavorable military blow, the politics and agitation remained dormant. The people in the liberated area organized forces to go to the provincial center, but the situation was unfavorable so they retreated (LAVCP, 2005).

In Kien Phong province, the mainly force arrived at the assembly location on time. By the morning of February 1, 1968, Kien Phong destroyed Cai Vang post, liberated Nhi Binh commune. On the night of February 1, 1968, the liberation army attacked the district chief's palace and the prison area but could not occupy. The majority of the main force remained in communes on the outskirts of the province to support the uprising masses to pressant the outposts, liberate the commune. In 9 days (from February 1-9, 1968), Kien Phong defeated 20 military outposts, killed 600 soldiers, and liberated the communes of Nhi Binh, An Binh, My Ngai, Hoa An, Tan Thuan Tay, and Tinh Thoi. However, the level of casualties is also quite large (DTVCP, 2003).

In An Giang, at 2:31 a.m. on February 1, 1968, armed forces attacked Chau Doc town. After several hours of fighting, the armed forces took control most of the town. The governor of An Giang province could not return to his palace; Captain, on behalf of Chief of staff, trapped in Cao Dai temple. On the morning of February 1, 1968, the armed forces still occupied many important positions in the town. At noon, the campaign military headquarters received news that the situation in the area was becoming complicated. The attack targets in My Tho and Ben Tre were not achieved as planned. On the afternoon of February 1, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam sent the 21st Infantry Division with support aircraft to fiercely bombard the area. On the night of February 1, the campaign Military headquarters decided to withdraw. Despite having to withdraw to the outskirts, An Giang armed forces still organized many attacks throughout January 1968 (AGVCP, 2007).

In April 1968, the Political Bureau of the Party of Central Committee decided to launch a second attack. The goal was to continue to mobilize the entire Party and entire people to continue a comprehensive attack, resolutely made the enemy weaken and disintegrate until unable to get up, won a decisive victory. The specific request is to continue to attack urban areas, create a permanent crisis situation, mobilize the masses to take control of the countryside.

The Central Southern Delta provinces enter the second stage in a very difficult situation. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam greatly reinforced its main forces and war vehicles to continuously counterattack. The armed forces of the region and localities, after the losses in the first stage, only had enough strength to stick to the outskirts, trying to reduce losses to wait for orders to attack cities and towns, there were no longer any support forces for the vast countryside behind it.

On the night of May 4, 1968, War zone 8 entered the second stage of the attack. In My Tho city, the rangers corp attacked many positions: American housing project, police station, 6th Armored base; Engineering forces divided Route 4; guerrillas in Binh Trung, Long Hung, Song Thuan communes; Binh Duc ring road guerrillas destroyed an American unit; Battalion 514C stood at Cai Be to destroy a number of posts in Hoi Cu, Hau My, My Thien... In Gon Cong, battalion 514B destroyed Son Quy post and pacification and counterattack groups of the Republic of Vietnam in Binh Lac, Binh Phu, Binh Nhi, Dong Tho... By the end of May 1968, My Tho and Go Cong consumed over 2,000 soldiers of the Republic of Vietnam (including 398 American soldiers), destroyed 70 military vehicles and 4 artilleries. However, subsequent counterattacks by the Republic of Vietnam army pushed the liberation armed forces far away from the city and standing key areas.

In Ben Tre, on the night of May 4, 1968, the second stage of the general offensive began with the battle of Phu Hung post, with the intention of pulling the 10th Regiment of 7th Infantry Division of the Republic of Vietnam to the rescue but could not pull it. Next, in 6 days and nights from May 5 to 11, 1968, the main force of the war zone organized 6 battles against many targets in Ben Tre town and suburbs. On February 5, 1968, the main force of the war zone divided into two directions and advanced through the Phu Hung – Huu Dinh field to surround the local Chau Thanh company the fighting raged for 14 hours. The US had to send a battalion to the rescue, but they were caught in an ambush by the liberation army, 100 US soldiers were destroyed. On the night of May 11, 1958, the commandos continued to attack the town, destroying two posts in Thanh Phu. On the morning of May 12, the Republic of Vietnam army launched a counterattack. The liberating army still fought, causing some damage to the enemy. Although the Army of the Republic of Vietnam was clearly weakened after the battles, the liberation forces of the region and locality were not capable of completely taking over the town. By July 1968, Ben Tre gathered units into bases at Luong Phu, Thuan Dien, Long My (Giong Trom district) to strengthen its forces. On the night of July 22, 1968, there was a major raid by American troops got into Giong Trom, the liberation army and local guerrilla forces fought back fiercely (BTVCP, 2003).

On the Kien Tuong battlefield, in the second stage, the liberation army had to both prepare to attack and resist a very strong counterattack by the Republic of Vietnam army. On April 4, 1968, provincial soldiers intercepted two security companies from My An that raided Tan Ninh, killing and capturing 75 soldiers. On April 24, 1968, the main force of the region and Dong Thuan guerrillas fought against raids in Thuy Dong, killing 64 soldiers and shooting down 4 planes. On April 31, 1968, provincial soldiers attacked ships at Phung Thoat canal, Nhon Ninh commune, sinking 2 ships. Battalion 263B of the area attacked 1 battalion of the 10th Regiment, 7th Infantry

Division of the Republic of Vietnam, sweeping at Trai Lon, killing 80 soldiers. On May 10, 1968, the 504th battalion of the region destroyed most of the “Crazy Buffalo” commando battalion at Nguyen Van Troi canal, Hung Dien commune, then attacked Cai Doi post, defeated the 86th coast guard rangers corp battalion and 2 reconnaissance platoons in Vinh Dai commune, killed over 100 soldiers. At the end of May 1968, the regional headquarters directed War zone 8 to assign Kien Tuong province the task of attacking Tan An town (Long An province). This is a new area, the defense of the Republic of Vietnam army is very strong. Kien Tuong province urgently reconnoitered, researched and mobilized battalion 504 to march from the Cambodian border to Chau Thanh district (Tan An). On May 20, 1968, the battalion began to attack but did not have enough force to attack key positions directly and had to attack from the outside. The battalion stuck to Tan An town, fought a few small battles, did not meet the target requirements and had to withdraw (DTVCP, 2003).

In An Giang province, in stage 2, the region and province commanded to stay and mobilize the masses in My Duc, Khanh Hoa, Vinh Te, Da Phuoc areas. According to the plan, the provincial soldiers coordinated with guerrillas from Hong Ngu cross the Tien River through Long Son and Phu Lam. However, the main force of the area only reached Long Son and stood there for 3 days before withdrawing. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam mobilized 3 battalions and armored vehicles to intercept attacks in My Duc, Khanh Hoa. We resisted the raid for 3 days and nights, both sides suffered heavy losses. An Giang armed forces could not continue to hold on and had to withdraw to base B2. On the way out, a part of the group did not have time to cross the Vinh Te canal before dawn, encountered helicopter bombardment, and suffered some more casualties. In Tri Ton district, district soldiers and commune guerrillas also organized a number of sieges on military posts. A typical example is the siege of Cay Cay post and Bang Trao post on May 5, 1968, killing and injuring a number of local soldiers... On May 20, 1968, we attacked Ba The market (Hue Duc district) failed to win and had to withdraw their troops. This is also the ending battle of stage 2 in An Giang (AGVCP, 2007).

In August 1968, the Central Southern region entered the third stage of the attack. During this attack, it targeted a number of locations in My Tho, Ben Tre, Go Cong, Kien Tuong, of which Kien Tuong returned to Ben Tre is the priority direction of the main force of the region.

In Kien Tuong, the 504th Battalion followed Tan An town, along with the town’s rangers corp unit attacked the security barracks, the pacification group, and the American commandos in Binh Tinh, killing and wounding over 50 soldiers. In the direction of Moc Hoa, soldiers and guerrillas blocked waterway traffic, forcing a brigade of the US 9th Infantry Division to move back to operate from Moc Hoa to Thu Thua. Coordinating with Tan An direction, the provincial soldiers and guerrillas actively operated in the areas of Binh Chau, Chua Noi, Cai Doi, dispersed forces, and launched deep raids into the center of Kien Tuong town. In September 1968, Battalion 504 intercepted and attacked a battalion of the 7th Infantry Division of the Republic of Vietnam in Binh Hiep, and the soldiers of Cai Doi post fled. On December 14, 1968, Battalion 504 coordinated with commandos to ambush at Hong Minh intersection (Binh Phong Thanh), destroying 2 boats and killing 80 soldiers. On December 28, 1968, we attacked a train running on the Vam Co River in Tuyen Binh (LAVCP, 2005).

In Ben Tre, the water commando company coordinated with battalion 516 to ambush, sink and burn 17 ships carrying the 3rd brigade and 9th US Infantry Division when raiding the Giong Trom base. On November 15, 1968, water commando shot down a boat and sank 15 ships at Ben Tre river estuary.

In My Tho, on the night of August 24, 1968, the main force of the area attacked the Giao Duc sub-zone. The infantry occupied the battlefield, but the coordinated mortar firing team mistakenly fired at our formation, causing heavy casualties, so they had to retreat. In Go Cong, Battalion 514B raided and destroyed a commando company at Ca Chot, raided Vam Giong post, and destroyed 2 vehicles on Hoa Dong Route (TGVCP, 2011).

3.3. Discuss some characteristics

Regarding to force preparation and organization work, it is not yet guaranteed for a large-scale general offensive. The process of preparing forces for the general offensive of the Central Southern region took place within only 1 month, under conditions of absolute secrecy, only the Standing Party Committee of the Region knew the plan of

the general offensive. At the remaining levels, units are only assigned the task of preparing for a major battle, without knowing the specific goals. Meanwhile, in all three attacks, the Central Southern region had to transfer a part of the main force to the regional army, so in fact, even though there was more mobilized, it was still very thin compared to the requirements of a large-scale attack. The preparation of forces and organization in an extremely difficult and rushed situation led to an unplanned and inconsistent attack time in all areas, even in key areas. On January 29, 1968, the Regional Party Committee issued an order of offensive, but the element of surprise was no longer there because on the night of January 30, 1968, several provinces in the Central region shooed, the Republic of Vietnam ordered a alert throughout the South. Right in the war zone, the specified time G is exactly 0 o'clock, all units will simultaneously shooed and attacked. However, at the My Tho key location, it took until 1 o'clock for the soldiers to fire the first artillery rounds – not to mention due to errors in transportation, artillery shells were not delivered in time, the plan was to fire 1,200 artillery shells but only fired 20 mortars 82. At Kien Tuong, due to the long march, it was not until 5:00 a.m that the attackers opened fire. In Kien Phong, the shooting time was at 4:00 a.m. February 1, 1968. In Go Cong, it was not until January 30, 1968 that the Provincial Party Committee Secretary received the order to attack and it was not until the morning of February 1, 1968 that the attack was organized.

Regarding the combat plan, in stage 1, ranges corp units and main forces attacked key locations in cities, towns, and townships, achieving initial results. After that, the coordination and cooperation process was not carried out as planned. In some areas, coordinated units did not arrive on time. In some areas, according to the plan, after the military attack takes control, the masses will be mobilized to rebel and take control, but when the military force takes over the battlefield, coordinated forces are not present to support. When the enemy counterattacked, resulting in great casualties. In the second stage, the element of surprise was no longer there, the military spearhead attacked the city from the active position but due to the thin force, it was not strong enough to occupy and master the battlefield. When faced with a strong counterattack, the attacks changed from an active position to a passive position, having to take a position of weakness, isolation, being surrounded, divided in the inner city and confronting the overwhelming strength of the Republic of Vietnam army. Therefore, when trying to hold cities and towns, the force suffered more casualties. Later on, the number of troops decreased. Immediately after the first stage, the area's forces (both regular army and guerrillas) were heavily depleted due to sticking to the outskirts and having to fight fierce counterattacks from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. The number of troops decreased, the morale of officers and soldiers, and the belief in victory also decreased. In stage 2, some leaders of regions, provinces, and armed units proposed changing the campaign's attack direction. Instead of focusing our forces on cities and towns, we should arrange a part to stick to the suburbs to hold the enemy back, while the majority turn to liberate the countryside. The Standing Party Committee of the war zone 8 also found that the proposal was appropriate and proposed to the Regional Commander that instead of sending the 1st regiment to Long An, they would focus on attacking and liberating the Kien Tuong countryside. This proposal of the region was not approved by the Regional Command. The Standing Party Committee of the Region must continue to carry out the attack on My Tho city and its towns and cities. Most of the armed forces of the region, province, and district still had to stay in the suburbs to carry out attacks on the center, so they suffered many losses in the enemy's counterattacks.

The work of promoting ideology and preparing the masses is not good. Most of the people were not prepared in terms of ideology and organization, they did not understand what they would do during the general offensive and what the situation would be afterward. The goals, directions, and specific actions of the masses have not been clearly outlined and are not appropriate to the situation. In all three attacks on cities, towns, and townships, support from local popular forces for the uprising was very weak. This situation caused the enemy to recover from the initial shock and organize a very fierce counterattack. Especially after the second stage, the communes we liberated in the first stage were recaptured and even encroached deeply into the communes of the old liberated areas. By the end of 1968, our forces were weaker and weaker, taking advantage of that opportunity, the Republic of Vietnam launched the "speedy pacification" program, making the situation even more serious.

5. Conclusion

The gunfire of general offensive and uprising during the Tet Mau Than in the delta provinces of the Central Southern region broke out at 1:00 a.m. on August 31, 1968 and lasted throughout 1968, going through three stages. Right from the first stage, the entire region concentrated its forces on two key areas: My Tho city, Ben Tre town and most towns. As a result, we have not been able to completely destroy any cities, towns, or towns, but we have liberated more than 21 communes. In stage 2 and stage 3, the entire region continued to carry out a number of attacks on important key locations of the army and the clamping apparatus of the government of the Republic of Vietnam. In all three stages, the Central Southern region did not have battles that turned the situation around as required, tasks, and goals of the general offensive set out, but they significantly depleted the enemy's forces, causing experienced shocking situations in the ranks, contributing to the overall victory of the entire region, creating a glorious victory for the army and people of the South in the resistance war against America for national salvation. Through the developments of the Mau Than general offensive and uprising in the Central Southern region, it is possible to point out a number of characteristics that can contribute to the theoretical and practical summary of this important historical event.

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The Jordanian Role of Consumer Protection Association in Defending Consumer Rights in Business: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The National Society for Consumer Protection in Jordan is a non-governmental organization seeking to educate the public on consumer problems. The objective of this paper was to elucidate the role of this association and the challenges it faces in the absence of courts for consumers and the failure to activate the role of the Consumer Protection Association in defending consumers. The purpose of this study was to elucidate the role of this association and the challenges it faces in the absence of defending the rights of consumers and pleading before the courts on their behalf. This research has been achieved by adopting numerous study techniques and methodologies. In this study, numerous methods are employed; the online questionnaire method (survey online), and doctrinal method. the researcher has also conducted online questionnaire. The purpose was to get responses from laymen in Jordan about the consumers' awareness of consumers pertaining to Consumers Association in Jordan. The aim of this method was to support and achieve the objectives of this study and to get feedback from consumer in Jordan particularly on the issues regarding to the role of Consumers Association in Jordan. The main objective of this paper is to given the Consumer Protection Association in Jordan the legal stand in defending the rights of consumers, as it was found through the result that the Jordanian legislator did not give the association the legal authority to defend consumers. Thus, this study also gives suggestions to the private agency such as legal committee of Consumers Association to strengthen its power legally and formally in Jordan.

Keywords: Consumer, National Society for Consumer Protection Association, Jordan, Consumer Right

1. Introduction

Many countries around the world have promulgated consumer laws, and set out the role of the Consumer Protection Association. For instance, Consumer Protection Law in UK (1987), the Australian Consumer Law (2001), the Malaysian Consumer Protection Act (CPA1999), the Syrian Consumer Protection Law 2015 and the UAE Law 2006 of Consumer Protection.

The media has a major role to play in developed countries as it is the pillar of a civilized and democratic structure; the role is to back up consumers in their dilemma with the fast growing economy (Ramsay, Iain.. 2012). Media can act effectively against misleading advertisements and may sometime prevent the publication of such advertisement. For example: In the United Kingdom, the media has involved in the process which gives the consumer an advance and effective tools for immunity against law breaking traders. This step was necessary because of the growing influence of the mass media on public opinion in line with the rapid development of information and communication technology. Thus, the media in the UK has a strong interest in informing and educating consumers and was supported by court decision (Yeung, Karen, 2005).

In Jordanian context, the National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP) started the first attempt to develop the first legislation on consumer protection when it held a seminar on legislation and consumer protection in 1993. In this seminar, NSCP reviewed the agendas submitted by experts specialized in several legal areas covering all areas of attention of Jordanian consumers (Obeidat, Ahmad, 1998).

Consumer Protection Association is a non-governmental organization established mainly to educate the public on consumer problems, (Werker, Eric, and Faisal Z. Ahmed. 2008) but recently, this organization started utilizing text messaging (SMS) in order to directly and speedily reach the consumers. This allows the consumers to make better decisions on their everyday purchases while saving time and money (Jordan, Responsible Competitiveness, 2009).

Consumer Protection Association became an NGO in 2001 and this body has been involved in the yet to be endorsed draft law preparation. Accordingly, the Economic Dialogue Committee Report of May 2011 highlighted the need to intensify the tools of consumer protection and speed up the endorsement of the Consumer Protection Law.

Consumer Protection Association is responsible for establishing the foundation, principles, and guidance in creating policies and laws that relate to consumer welfare, especially when it comes to consumer protection. NCP also underpins all consumerism activities undertaken by consumer associations, governmental and non-governmental bodies, and private sector. This facilitates the enhancement of consumerism culture and sustainable production.

There is no law that allows the Consumer Protection Association to defend on their behalf due to the absence of legal interest in pleading before the courts; (Alhusban, Ahmad, 2014), this weakens consumer confidence in the role of Consumer Protection Association in defending their interests.

This research paper tried to study the role of Consumer Protection Association in Jordan regarding the absence of a particular law for the consumer. On the other hand, the study tried to benefit from several countries that allow Consumer Protection Association to defend the interests of consumers.

2. Consumer Protection and Competition

Both the Competition policy and the Consumer Protection policy are characterized by a deep regulatory influence on the running of markets. The competition law aims to preserve and improve the competitive structure of markets for the purpose of provision of goods and services. In relation to this, perfect competition facilitates the consumers obtaining of goods/service prices at their real cost (Fernando Gómez Pomar, 2002).

For instance, the legal motives document that enacts the competition law in Jordan includes multiple aims that are of economic and social nature. The basic objectives of which are to protect competition, realize a competitive market structure, safeguard the entire market players with the inclusion of consumers, promote competitiveness in national enterprises and assist small enterprises (Qalyoubi, Ruba, 2008).

Protection competition is a term that refers to the striking and the prevention of private restrictive practices that may prevent or stop the competitive activities in the form of anti-competitive cooperation between the players in

the market, and to protect against the misuse of market power (Qalyoubi, Ruba, 2008).

The primary aims of competition policy converge with that of consumer protection policy to some extent. The former attempts to bring about efficient market functioning, while the latter guarantees that consumers are enabled to make effective decisions concerning their selections and that the seller fulfills his promises concerning the offered products/services (Daniel Agustino, 2006).

Consumer protection policy is a complementary policy to its counterpart - the competition policy (Kovacic, William E, 2007) as competition policy, on its own, is incapable of safeguarding the interests of consumers. There is no benefit in lowering prices and having quality products in the market if the products are unsafe to consumers. This goes the same for a wide choice for consumers if the consumers are incapable of making a well-informed choice owing to the lack of information regarding price on the shelves or sufficient labeling on the products, or misleading advertisements by sellers that mislead consumers in their choice-making (Seventh Global Forum of Competition, OECD Paris, France, contribution from Malta, 2008).

The consumer protection program's primary contribution is to provide consumers the confidence to trust the marketplace that is free of fraud. In regards to this, false advertisements and deceptive marketing activities can lead to damaging the business of honest merchants as this would stop potential consumers' patronage. Individuals that fear being cheated in ordinary transactions will be more cautious in their purchases and they purchase less (Kovacic, William E, 2007).

The primary aim behind the consumer protection policy is to prevent sellers from maximizing their sales through the misleading information of their products or through unfair practices (e.g. unilateral breach of contract/unauthorized billing) (Daniel Agustino Competition, Consumer Protection, and Objective of Competition Law Commission for the Supervision of Business Competition "KPPU" Indonesia, August" 2006). Hence, there are several issues that have to be considered by regulations and official procedures like warranty abidance and other services offered after sale. (Daniel Agustino Competition, Consumer Protection, and Objective of Competition Law Commission for the Supervision of Business Competition "KPPU" Indonesia, August" 2006). including the origin of information and item contents. Also, traders should be legally responsible to provide , It is also important to expand the right of access to information to other issues aside from prices, contracts to consumers that are clear and understandable, with suitable font size, sans unclear phrases/sentences that will negatively influence the conditions of the contracts (Daniel Agustino Competition, Consumer Protection, and Objective of Competition Law Commission for the Supervision of Business Competition "KPPU" Indonesia, August" 2006). Based on the above mentioned issues, the consumer policy aims to enhance the goods/services quality and ensure that sustainability of their production, the consumer's comfort, security and safety (Fernando Gómez Pomar, 2002).

Nevertheless, it is also crucial to note that what benefits the consumers does not necessarily satisfy everyone as it could take different forms (Fernando Gómez Pomar, 2002). Furthermore, while some consumer protection policies may enhance consumer outcomes, they may negatively influence competition (Lythgo-Marshall, Pariz. 2016).

This can be exemplified by price fixing and organizational supply of basic goods that affects competition although the price is government-set. In this case, some legislation opts to consider consumer interest rather than competition as they aim to steer clear of abusing basic goods for consumers. Added to this, it is required for providers to provide goods and services in a specific type and standard in order to satisfy the requirements of health and safety – and this requirement may limit competition. This may lead to raising the quality of products and services and will ensure that consumers benefit from them although it is also important to note that consumer often seeks quality as well as price.

3. Consumer protection in Jordan

The consumer protection law in Jordan therefore aims to protect consumers in three aspects as follows:

- 1- The monitoring of goods by government and civil society institutions to assuring that the stipulated standards are met.
- 2- The legislative aspect involving the review of all available consumer related laws.
- 3- The awareness aspect to sufficiently educate consumers on their rights and duties (Jordan Times, "Cabinet endorses draft consumer protection law", 2013).

In addition to the weakness of a consumer protection Act, in Jordan, there has not been any governmental agency that specifically caters to consumer protection, neither has there been any support provided to consumer protection associations, and in addition, links between competition and consumer protection issues, and builds consumer awareness regarding the products (Al Sharu.. Fauziah, and Rohana, 2019).

The Consumer Protection in Jordan was passed in 2017. In the review of the law provisions as the beginning step towards the future consumer protection law in this country, the overture of the law brings forth the key constituents of the law.

4. The Policy of Consumer Protection Association in Jordan

According to article (2) of the Jordan Consumer Protection Law: "the following words wherever mentioned herein shall have the meanings assigned to it hereunder unless the context otherwise requires: (Society): the consumer protection society established under the provisions of this Law." Further, Article (14) of the Law provides that:"

1. Consumer protection societies shall be established under the applicable legislations following the Minister's approval, 2. The Ministry shall oversee and follow up affairs of consumer protection societies under the applicable legalization."

The consumer protection law explains the works of the society to achieve the desired objectives of consumer protection. Article (15) of the Law provides that "to achieve its objectives, the Society may:

1. Maintain consumer's interests, educate the consumer and let him/her understand his/her rights and how to claim them.
2. Provide a consumer with advice and guidance,
3. Receive consumers' complaints, investigate such complaints and try to remove their reasons,
4. File suits related to consumer's interests and defend them after having the approval of the Consumer Societies Union,
5. Represent consumers before the official and non-official bodies as for consumer's complaints against providers,
6. Survey product prices and compare the quality of such products, and make sure that their data are correct, and inform the concerned bodies of the violations in this regard,
7. Provide concerned bodies with information on the problems related to consumer's rights and interests, and submit recommendations for a solution,
8. Provide assistance to affected consumers due to use or purchase of goods, or receive services in lodging complaints to the concerned bodies, and take necessary actions to protect their interest and rights,
9. Reinforce the relationship between a consumer and a provider and mediate for dispute settlement,
10. Design a database related to its work area, and conduct and publish studies and research" (Jordanian Consumer Protection Law of 2017).

As the domain of Consumer Protection Association is expansive, the Working Group on Competition Policy had proposed the establishment of an institution that would monitor the progress of the policy implementation. In view of that, there should be a small and compact Competition Policy Council consisting approximately 25 members that would function as advisor. This non-statutory and independent council should be led by a renowned non-official person and the members should comprise key officials from economic Ministries/Departments, as well as non-officials from the media, academia, and civil society. This Council would review the implementation progress of Consumer Protection Association, by reviewing the policies, regulations, and practices, while also evaluating

the competition impact of new laws, regulations, and policies (Protection, Consumer, "Consumer Protection and Competition Policy, 2021).

5. Consumer Associations in Malaysia

The programs of Consumer Associations and Organizations are available at both the state and district levels. Amongst these Programs are Consumers Association of Penang (CAP), the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (FOMCA), Malaysian Consumer and Family Economics Association (MACFEA), Malaysian Consumers Protection Association (PPPM), Muslim Consumers Association of Malaysia (PPIM) and Kuala Lumpur Consumers Safety Association (PKP).

In Malaysia, the consumer movement started with the formation of the Selangor Consumer Association in 1965. It was established to protect consumer's rights. A few years later, the Consumer Association of Penang (CAP) was formed with the same purpose, followed by other state associations. In 1971, the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations, or FOMCA was established, sponsored by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, consisting of separate state associations. Presently, the only state association which is not affiliated with FOMCA is CAP, which is the most active in registering complaints against advertising (Yahya, Azizul Halim, 2001).

Generally, FOMCA and CAP are the two Consumer Associations that are most active in consumer issues and outspoken about the advertising industry. For example, (Yahya, Azizul Halim, 2001), in 1982, CAP organized an anti-smoking campaign and opposed cigarette advertising and promotions in Malaysia. Due to this pressure, the government banned direct advertising and promotion on television and radio. In 1993, under similar pressure, but this time from the tobacco industry, the government once again changed the laws regulating cigarette advertising so that indirect cigarette brand name advertising was allowed.

Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA) FOMCA was established in 1971 as the umbrella body of registered consumer associations in Malaysia. It is a non-profit, voluntary, non-political and civic-oriented national non-governmental organization. FOMCA links consumer associations' activities in Malaysia and at the international level, and by way of lobbying, networking, representation, campaigning and education, FOMCA strives to reinforce consumer protection (Mr Marimuthu Nadason, The Global Voice For Consumers, 2015).

FOMCA focuses on consumer empowerment particularly for consumers in developing country with a rising consumerist society. FOMCA's is non-traditional in its consumer protection effort, that is, it does not uphold the "value for money" approach in protecting the consumer in the marketplace. Rather, this body supports a "value for people", "value for environment" and "value for money" paradigm in its endeavors (Mr Marimuthu Nadason, The Global Voice For Consumers, 2015).

By the early 1970s, a number of consumer associations were already established. These include the Consumer Association of Malacca, Consumers Association of Kedah, Consumers Association of Negeri Sembilan, Consumers Association of Penang, Consumers Association of Sarawak, Perak Consumer Association and Selangor Consumer Associations. The establishment of these associations has compelled the government to call for the formation of a federation for consumer associations for coordinating their support activities. In relation to this, FOMCA's primary objectives and roles include: (Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations "FOMCA").

- To coordinate, consult and advise its registered member consumer associations in Malaysia.
- To focus on and support the interest of consumer to promote consumer welfare.
- To solve consumer problems using policy development and support.
- To represent the member associations in government dealing.
- To communicate consumer information and educate consumer.

In addition to the above, FOMCA also represents the interest of consumer in policy making and implementation in numerous ministries and agencies for instance, the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance (Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations “FOMCA”).

Numerous complaints are made by the public and by market competitors. The complaints vary and are normally associated with religious offence (usually against Islam) sexual offence and deception. The complaints are mostly made about TV and newspaper advertisements but occasionally about those on radio. In 1998, there were 68 complaints forwarded to the three bodies, the Ministry of Information, ASA and FOMCA.

For example, the complaint against Kentucky Fried Chicken, or KFC. In the advertisement in question the authenticity of 'halal' chicken was questioned. The company was told that it could not advertise its product on Malaysian television until the accusation was removed. 'Halal' refers to the Muslim dietary restrictions whereby chicken and other food animals must be slaughtered in an Islamic way. Later, after all the necessary actions had been taken, KFC was allowed to advertise its products on television (See: Yahya, Azizul Halim, 2001).

Deception - Complaints of deception usually concern claims made about some of the products. “For example, a press advertisement for Dumex Full Cream Milk Powder stated that it was 'reinforced with Taurine' and that Taurine 'is a proven catalyst for intellectual development' and 'Taurine which is very good for my brains so I can grow up smart.' The complainant said that there was no hard evidence to support such a claim. The complaint was upheld as the scientific articles submitted by the agency and the advertiser did not conclusively prove the claims and the authority requested that the advertisement be withdrawn” (Yahya, Azizul Halim, 2001).

Analysing with Malaysia, it is pertinent for the Jordanian government to enact an independent consumer protection law as soon as possible and empower the NSCP legally to represent the consumer in the competent courts. Furthermore, it also needs to establish a government agency to be in direct contact with the society to control and monitor the market as well as warn the nations of these actions.

6 . Discussing the role of the Consumer Protection Association in Jordan and the challenges it faces

Consumer Protection Association which was launched in 1989, has been representing consumers in the National Codex Committee (NCC) since 1995, and since that year also, this body has been taking part in the administrative council of the Jordan Institute for Standards and metrology (JISM), and in all technical committees that are associated with food standards (Lamy, Pascal, 2009) As mentioned earlier, Consumer Protection Association encompasses a non-governmental body carrying the purpose of educating the public on the issues associated with consumer (Werker, Eric, and Faisal Z. Ahmed, 2008). At present time, this body has begun to provide direct and immediate assistance to consumers through text messaging (SMS), and this assists consumers in making better decisions on their everyday purchases while saving time and money (Lamy, Pascal, 2009).

Consumer Protection Association started the first attempt to develop the first legislation on consumer protection when it held a seminar on legislation and consumer protection in 1993. In this seminar, Consumer Protection Association reviewed the agendas submitted by experts specialized in several legal areas covering all areas of attention of Jordanian consumers (Obeidat, Ahmad, 1998).

Among the strategies laid down by Consumer Protection Association include: raising the living standard, enacting laws for safeguarding the consumers, stimulating/guaranteeing trade that is ethical and unbiased, making available to consumers education, sustainable consumption and mechanisms for compensation, arranging consumer forums involving the government, manufacturers, and consumers, and establishing international cooperation to discuss on issues relating to the consumer (Obeidat, Ahmad, 1998).

With Consumer Protection Association, consumers become well-informed, proactive, and responsible. Consequently, these consumers can protect themselves and impact the supplier's and manufacturers' activities. The consumers will also be sensitive in terms of their actions and behaviors that will affect the social and economic condition of the country.

Finally, with Consumer Protection Association, a community of trading that practices self-regulation, responsibility, honesty, and ethics can be established. This contributes to the well-being and welfare of the consumers. Therefore, Consumer Protection Association attempts to increase the awareness and comprehension of both traders and consumers of their rights and responsibilities while working together and playing active roles (Khasawneh and Hattab, 2012).

There is no doubt that this competence provided by the Jordan consumer protection law is essential. The consumer protection societies were not able to represent consumers before courts according to the general rules. The interest condition or the so-called dispute description should thus be available for society to represent consumers, file suits on their behalf against providers or advertisers in case of damage, and claim compensation for the misleading commercials (Khasawneh and Hattab, 2012). For this reason, the High Court of Justice refused in its decision to allow Consumer Protection Association to file a cancellation suit in the name of consumers due to the absence of interest or dispute (Khasawneh and Hattab, 2012). The court found that Consumer Protection Association does not have the *locus standi* to file the suit against the service provider for claiming compensation for damages in favor of consumers.

Section 14 of the Consumer protection Law 2017 in Jordan provides that the Consumer Protection Societies shall be established under the applicable legislation following the Minister's approval. However, the Ministry shall oversee and follow up affairs of consumer protection societies under the applicable legalization.

Jordanian consumer law in section (15) provides that to achieve its objectives, the Society may mention consumers' interests, educate consumers and let them understand their rights and how to make a claim, and provide a consumer with advice and guidance as well receive consumer complaints. The section also entreated to investigate such complaints and try to file suits related to consumer's interests and defend them after having the approval of the Consumer Societies Union.

In addition, Consumer Protection Association also can represent consumers before the official and non-official bodies as for consumer's complaints against providers. The society may also conduct a survey on product prices, compare the quality of such products, make sure that their data are correct, and inform the concerned bodies if there are any violations. Consumer Protection Association also reinforces the relationship between a consumer and a provider and mediates dispute settlement. In addition, Consumer Protection Association should design a database related to its work area and conduct and publish studies and research (Section 15, Jordanian Consumer Protection Law 2017).

Although so far there are yet cases and situations in which advertising claims involving deceptive practices aiming at misleading and cheating a consumer have been recorded, the practical reality is full of such cases which have passed without any provisions issued by the legislator thereon due to lack of express legal provisions on deception and fraud (Naji, Mula, 2000).

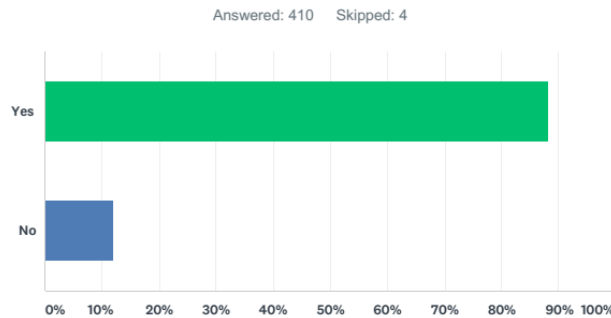
Moreover, in case of any practices that endanger the interests of a set of consumers, the Law 2017 gives Consumer Protection Association the right to file suits before the competent court to cease or change such practices. Accordingly, Consumer Protection Association will support consumers in taking judicial proceedings that may require financial, administrative, and technical capacities not available to the individual consumer. This can be observed in section 17, which provides that: "1. If a provider commits any practices contrary to any legislation affecting consumers' interest, the Society may file a case, complaint, or a request before the competent court to cease or rectify such practices. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other legislation, to this end, the Society shall be deemed a company in filing the case, complaint, or the request, 2. The consumers may jointly or severally authorize any society in writing to file any suits, complaints, or requests on their behalf against the provider if it violates provisions of this law and the regulations issued hereunder, including the suits related to claiming compensation for damage and recovering prices of goods or services."

This provision is good because, before this, consumer protection societies could not represent consumers before courts according to the general rules. The interest condition, or the so-called dispute description, should be

available for society to represent consumers and file suits on their behalf against providers or advertisers in case of damage and claim compensation for the misleading commercials (Khasawneh and Hattab, 2012). For this reason, the High Court of Justice refused in its decision to allow Consumer Protection Association to file a cancellation suit in the name of consumers due to the absence of interest or dispute where the court found that Consumer Protection Association does not have the locus standi to file the suit against the service provider for claiming compensation for damages in favor of consumers.

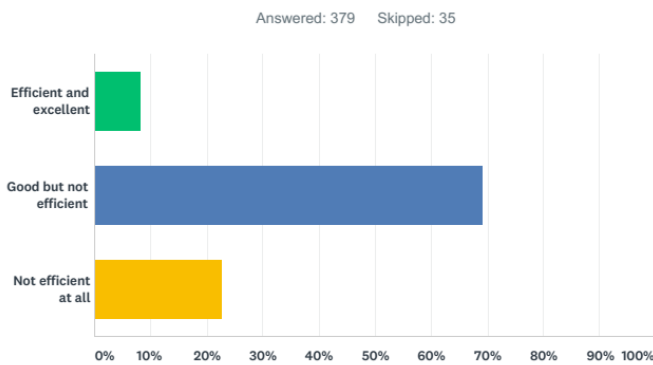
A survey online also has been used in this study through the survey monkey form. The purpose was to get responses about the consumers’ awareness of the Consumer Protection Association.

Analysis of questions 1 and 2: Do you know about consumer association in Jordan?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	88.05% 361
No	11.95% 49
TOTAL	410

If yes, what do you think about the consumers association in Jordan?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Efficient and excellent	8.18% 31
Good but not efficient	69.13% 262
Not efficient at all	22.69% 86
TOTAL	379

Both questions aim to get information on whether the respondents are aware of the existence of consumer association in Jordan and explore its level of efficiency. The majority stated that they know about the existence of consumer association. Still, it is not efficient, and few respondents claimed that it is not efficient at all. This may owe to the fact that the consumer association does not have a local standi to bring the case to the court to get a remedy.

7. Conclusion

In Jordan, Consumer Protection Association is an association established to educate customers and raise consciousness in people to empower them to deal with numerous phenomena, such as dishonesty, scam of goods, in addition to educating the consumers on the subjects of scam and fraud used by dealers. Regardless of all the hard work made by the association to promote customer awareness, it is the role of the Consumer Protection Association since the beginning of its involvement considering that the association also has a role in the situation (i.e., only to educate the consumers) (Barracough, Simon, and Phua Kai Lit, 2011). The researcher hopes to activate the role of Consumer Protection Association, allowing it a role that is more extensive and to let it focus on daily living issues such as the price and quality of products. (Yahya, Azizul Halim, 2001).

Another recommendation is that the Jordanian Consumer Protection law 2017 should provide locus standi to the Society of Consumer Protection in acting in lawsuits and conducting suitable procedures against a misleading advertiser. Jordan could also emulate similar consumer protection policies where a national level consumer complaint centres can be established to receive and act on complaints. The researcher recommends that such complaint centres can be established in Jordan for the following: General Consumer Products, E-commerce (Online Shopping), Telecommunications, and Automobile and Auto-Workshops, and Travel and Leisure.

In Jordan, the connotation was shaped to instruct customers and rise consciousness in people to empower them to deal with numerous phenomena, such as dishonesty, scam of goods to make public awareness among customers to notify them with means of scam and fraud used by dealers. Regardless of all the hard work made by the association to promote customer awareness, it is the role of the Consumer Protection Association ever since its underpinning as the Association has a partial part (i.e., only raising consumers' awareness). The researcher hopes to activate the role of the Consumer Protection Association allowing it a role that is more extensive and to give focusing on daily living issues such as the price and quality of product. In suggestion the researcher that the Jordan could benefit of lesson from Malaysia, that the Malaysian such Consumers Association Penang (CAP) has proven the efficiency and effectiveness in raising consumers' encouragement and awareness of consumers to claim their rights easily and more freely. As well, CAP is the most active in registering complaints against advertising (Yahya, Azizul Halim, 2001).

The researcher also opines that the Jordan could benefit from the experience of Malaysia through the National Consumers Complaints Centre (NCCC) where the NCCC attending to numerous cases involving online disputes between consumers and business providers. Consumers are encouraged to submit their complaints online and the NCCC will either direct the consumer to the appropriate body for settlement or even help in settling the disputes themselves (Barracough, Simon, and Phua Kai Lit, 2011).

Finally, could also emulate similar consumer protection policies where a national level consumer complaints center can be established to receive and act on consumer complaints.

The researcher recommends that such complaint centre can take practiced in Jordan:

1. E-commerce (Online Shopping)
2. General Consumer Products
3. Telecommunications
4. Automobile and Auto-Workshops
5. Travel and Leisure.

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The Urgency of Indonesian Golden Visa Policy: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The stabilized economic development can affect the long-term development growth and the implementation of Golden Visa policy is aimed to attract foreign investor to invest that will affect the state and immigration economy. The research method used is qualitative approach to literature review by collecting data from scientific journal, books and legislative product. The result of the research indicates that the implementation of the policies has a positive impact such as elevating the economy growth; meanwhile, the negative impacts are the social conflict and the rise of money laundry. The implementation of Golden Visa policy in several countries to elevate the economy has several differences in condition and provision in terms of the minimal amount of capital to invest, the validity period of the visa and the access gained by individual obtaining Golden Visa. The implementation of Golden Visa in Indonesia as regulated by law is valid for 5-10 years with the variety of minimal investment required depends on the Golden Visa classification. The conclusion of the research is that the implementation of Golden Visa by Indonesian government has several differences with similar policies in other countries.

Keywords: Golden Visa, Economy, Immigration

1. Introduction

Development achievements in Indonesia continue to experience increasingly significant changes that can influence stability through the National Long Term Development Planning 2005-2025. An increase in per capita income has an impact on the stability of the economy in Indonesia, which continues to experience growth. However, from 2019 to 2020, experienced a decline compared to the previous year since 2005, which tended to be stable to a percentage increase of around 5-6%. The decline occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the economy to experience a national recovery process through comprehensive monetary and fiscal policies. The implementation of this policy made economic changes return to stability in 2022. Moreover, the data presented by the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) shows that foreign investor investment in Indonesia will reach US\$43 billion in 2022, becoming a historical high compared to 2021 with an increase of 44% (Qolby et al., 2024)

The higher economic growth and increasingly rapid development, especially in globalization and technology, are unavoidable in the era of modernization. The impact of globalization that has made changes to the economy and development is related to the welfare of various countries in the world, including Indonesia. The influence of globalization has a broad impact on various aspects such as economic aspects, aspects of life, and the implementation of economic policies for society (Permana et al., 2023)

The implementation of the Golden Visa policy by various countries aims to attract foreign investors and individuals who are willing to work together to make significant contributions through investment exchange activities and being granted residence permits or changing citizenship. Permission given in the Golden Visa policy to reside in a country to make significant financial investments to increase the country's economic growth. The implementation of the Golden Visa policy is generally used to attract investors, individuals and businesses with large financial capabilities to be able to contribute to the development and economic development of countries that implement this policy (Marsya, 2023).

The implementation of the Golden Visa policy was formalized and ratified based on the legal basis contained in the Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 22 of 2023 containing Visas and Stay Permits and Regulation of the Minister of Finance Number 82 of 2023 which was promulgated on 30 August 2023. Implementation of this policy is aimed to gain profits in the long term, the estimate for the next five to ten years is adjusted to the applicable terms and conditions (Swandana, 2023). Meanwhile, according to the Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia Number 29 of 2021 concerning Visas and residence permits, Visa is defined as information presented in writing, either electronically or manually, given by government officials who are authorized individual to travel to Indonesian territory or other countries. Visas contain several related aspects including security aspects prioritizing granting visas intended for foreign citizens, and community service aspects, especially in the best service in immigration (Estheria et al., 2022). Immigration is the frontline guarding the gates in accepting foreign citizens as stated in statutory regulations to provide immigration services, state security and provide welfare for the community (Yepeese, 2023).

The Golden Visa is an offer by the Directorate General of Immigration, Ministry of Law and Human Rights with the concept of providing residence permits for foreign citizens who have influence and can make a significant contribution to the Indonesian state. Implementation of the Golden Visa which is intended for foreign investors by providing a minimum amount of capital investment (Tarigan et al., 2023). This research is supported by previous research by Sarsito et al. (2023) which shows that the implementation of the Golden Visa policy can be used to attract foreign investors in organizing the Indonesian Immigration Expo and Conference by integrating management and collaborative arrangements in a strategic and sustainable manner. Other research conducted by Estheria et al., (2022) resulted in the implementation of visa policy in Indonesia being compared with the implementation of visa policy globally with several other countries which continue to experience changes and transformations adapted to new paradigms to increase economic growth in a country. Apart from that, both negative and positive can be experienced in the implementation of visa policy so that it can provide an opportunity for the country to experience change and development in various aspects. The implementation of the Golden Visa policy is compared with various European and other countries to assess the chances of success and as a suggestion for implementation in Indonesia (Swandana, 2023).

Based on the background stated above, researchers are interested in identifying the urgency of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia by comparing the implementation of the Golden Visa policy in various countries to improve the economy from the immigration perspective. This research was conducted with the aim of identifying the implementation and impact of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia.

2. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach by examining scientific journals, books, concepts, laws and problems related to the research conducted. The research data source used as legal material is secondary data obtained from literature reviews and empirical reviews relating to the implementation and impact of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia. The method used in this research uses a literature review approach and carries out reviews tailored to

applicable solutions. Literature review obtained from several sources, namely scientific articles, books, laws related to the economy, Golden Visa policy in Indonesia, as well as immigration and investment. Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive qualitative analysis approach, aimed at analyzing the implementation and impact of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia, improving the economy from an immigration perspective, and comparing the Golden Visa policy with various countries.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 The Urgency of Golden Visa Policy in Indonesia

The Golden Visa policy has attracted attention as a mechanism to attract foreign investment and talent, often with the promise of citizenship or permanent residency in exchange for significant financial contributions. Although this policy is often debated in the context of political motives, economic motives tend to be stronger than political considerations in the adoption of the Golden Visa scheme.

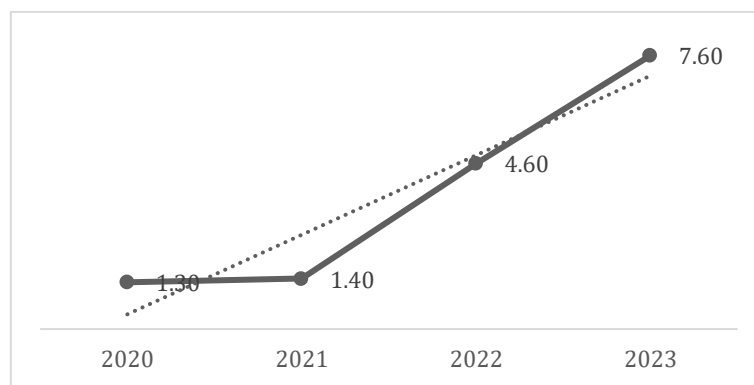


Figure 1. Realization of Non-Immigration Tax State Revenue (Trillion IDR, 2020-2023)

Source: Directorate General of Immigration, 2023.

The Directorate General of Immigration, as the determinant of the Golden Visa policy, plays an important role as one of the Ministries/Institutions that contributes to Non-Tax State Revenue (PNBP) through immigration services provided to the community. PNBP realization data shows an increase in immigration services from 2020 to 2023. This increase confirms that the policies implemented by the Directorate General of Immigration have made a significant contribution to supporting national economic recovery. Through more efficient and responsive immigration services, the Directorate General of Immigration is able to attract more foreign investors and entrepreneurs through the Golden Visa, which in turn will help increase investment flows and overall economic growth. Thus, the role of the Directorate General of Immigration in supporting national economic recovery becomes increasingly important and strategic. So, it can be concluded that the policies issued by immigration have an influence in helping national economic recovery.

The decision to implement the Golden Visa policy is predominantly influenced by economic factors rather than political considerations. Surak and Suzuki (2021) highlight that countries that initiate Golden Visa programs often experience economic slowdowns in the years before the policy is announced. This suggests that economic motives, such as the need to stimulate investment and increase growth, play an important role in driving adoption of the Golden Visa scheme. The correlation between Golden Visa applications and economic slowdown underscores the significance of economic motives. Countries experiencing stagnant growth and declining investment use the Golden Visa program as a strategic tool to flow capital into their economies. By attracting wealthy investors and entrepreneurs, these policies can inject much-needed funds into key sectors, stimulate job creation, and stimulate economic activity.

A comparative analysis of countries that have implemented the Golden Visa policy reveals a general trend in which economic necessity dominates its adoption. Countries struggling with economic challenges or seeking to diversify revenue sources often turn to the Golden Visa program as a way to strengthen their fiscal resilience. Moreover,

the spread of Golden Visa schemes across different geopolitical contexts underscores their appeal as a pragmatic response to economic pressures. While political considerations may influence the discourse surrounding the Golden Visa policy, it is the imperative of economic revitalization that fundamentally shapes its adoption. The association between the implementation of the Golden Visa and a pre-existing economic slowdown underscores the instrumental role of economic motives in driving this policy. Prioritizing economic imperatives, countries aim to leverage the Golden Visa scheme as a catalyst for growth, investment and prosperity in an increasingly connected global landscape.

3.2 *The Impact of Golden Visa Policy in Indonesia*

A Golden Visa is defined as a licensing tool used by foreign nationals to be given the freedom to stay longer. Generally, if you use a business visa, you are only given a period of up to 6 months which must be extended, whereas a Golden Visa can allow you to stay for 5-7 years. Implementation of the Golden Visa policy with the aim of making it easier for foreign investors to obtain residence permits during the process of planting a model in a country using the Golden Visa. Implementation of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia to increase interest and attract many foreign investors to invest so that it can help encourage economic growth and development in Indonesia. Based on the implementation of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia, which has had the following negative and positive impacts:

Table 1.3.2: The Impact of Golden Visa Policy in Indonesia

No	Negative Impact of Golden Visa Policy	Positive Impact of Golden Visa Policy
1.	Causing macroeconomic and fiscal risks, for example increasingly rapid economic fluctuations and property waves.	Increasing economic development and development growth in Indonesia due to investment provided by foreign investors in Indonesia.
2.	The influx of investment flows has an impact on the ease of investors in withdrawing investments that have been given to make investments in other countries.	Make it easier for foreign investors to obtain residence permits as long as their investment in Indonesia lasts for a certain period.
3.	Criticism has been aimed at buying and selling citizenship due to the implementation of the Golden Visa policy, which provides annual or long-term residence permits.	Increasing business capital for companies in Indonesia to expand sectors and business networks.
4.	This poses a threat to local MSMEs due to the large number of businesses founded by foreign nationals or investors from foreign countries.	Establishing regional cooperation with various countries to increase economic value through investment.
5.	Increasing money laundering, social conflict and other crimes.	Increasing the availability of employment opportunities and exchanging knowledge.

Based on table 1, by explaining the impact of the Golden Visa policy both negatively and positively in Indonesia from the literature analysis, the research found that the implementation of the Golden Visa policy must consider several things. Even though it can provide economic improvements and other aspects for the Indonesian state, it is important to pay attention to other things that can be considered to provide solutions that could have better potential in implementing the Golden Visa policy. The potential for greater negative impacts to arise is due to the implementation of the Golden Visa policy not being systematic and following developments in the situation globally, regionally and nationally, this is because the Golden Visa policy is dynamic and complex and aims to support and encourage the economy in Indonesia.

3.3 *Implementation of the Golden Visa Policy in Various Countries to Improve the Economy from an Immigration Perspective*

The role of immigration in foreign investment can encourage a country's economic development. Foreign investment is defined as international capital flows aimed at increasing the reach of company establishments widely. The increase in foreign investment that occurs will provide many benefits, such as foreign investment increasing technological development, knowledge exchange, implementation of the best management systems,

increased household income, competitiveness of local industry, and increased productivity. Opportunities provided by foreign investors to open up export opportunities, boost infrastructure development to support long-term growth, and increase the country's foreign exchange earnings. The presence of foreign companies entering Indonesia can provide a boost to efficiency; strengthen competition in the local market, and innovation that makes consumers feel benefited.

Based on World Bank data, Indonesia is currently ranked 72nd out of 190 countries included in the Ease of Doing Business category. The 2018 report data shows that investment in Indonesia shows that growth identifying foreign direct investment has increased significantly in Indonesia. The following is the implementation of the Golden Visa in various countries and in Indonesia to improve the economy:

Table 2. Implementation of the Golden Visa to Improve the Economy in Various Countries and in Indonesia

Countries	Implementation of the Golden Visa
Portugal	The implementation of the Golden Visa program in Portugal provides investors with several options regarding the investment amount before making a purchase, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The minimum property purchase is €500,000, while the minimum investment made in the financial sector is €1,000,000 or opening a foreign company with the aim of creating jobs. 2. Individuals who have a Golden Visa have access to public services including health care and education in Portugal. 3. The visa validity period is only 1 year but can be extended up to 5 years.
Spain	Implementation of the Golden Visa program in Spain, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requires investors to invest a minimum of €500,000 in state property. 2. Individual freedom to travel to Schengen countries without requiring an additional visa. 3. The visa validity period is one year and can be extended for two years.
Greece	Implementation of the Golden Visa program in Greece, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investments made by investors of at least €250,000 in state property. 2. Have the right to freedom of residence in Greece and have access to health care and education. 3. The validity period of the Golden Visa is five years and can be extended every year.
Turkiye	Implementation of the Golden Visa program in Turkiye, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investments are made by investors worth a minimum of €250,000 in state property, while finances are in banking deposits worth a minimum of €500,000, or opening a business as an opportunity to provide employment opportunities. 2. Individuals who have a visa are given the right to stay long-term in Turkey and the right to live in various popular cities in Turkey. 3. The visa validity period is one year and can be extended every year.
Canada	Implementation of the Golden Visa program in Canada, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This country does not apply a minimum investment amount given by investors when making a purchase, but the investment purchase amount is expected to create jobs. 2. Have the opportunity to have Canadian citizenship in the future. 3. Initially the visa validity period was temporary, then there was an update that this program was permanent.

Based on a comparison of the implementation of the Golden Visa policy implemented by several countries in Europe, namely Portugal, Spain, Greece, Turkiye and Canada. This policy continues to develop and adopted by several developing countries in the African and Asia Pacific regions with the aim of increasing promotion by attracting investment from foreign investors. The implementation of this program is adjusted to other factors in each country with the aim of increasing economic growth in various countries.

3.3 The Implementation of Golden Visa Policy in Indonesia

According to Minister of Law and Human Rights Regulation Number 22 of 2023, visas and residence permits are granted for longer periods of stay of around 5 to 10 years. The aim of implementing the Golden Visa policy is to improve the economy in Indonesia by making it easier for local companies to attract foreign investors to invest capital in companies in Indonesia. Therefore, in this effort, the Indonesian government provides privileges for

foreign investors who have influence to be granted residence permits to simplify the investment process. The Golden Visa policy, which is implemented as a residence permit or citizenship program, is aimed at individuals who will make large investments for economic growth in a country.

According to article 1 of Law no. 6 of 2011 concerning Immigration, immigration is defined as the movement of people to enter or exit Indonesian Territory and its oversight in order to safeguard and uphold state emergency. Immigration has four functions including state security, law enforcement, immigration services, and facilitating community welfare development. The regulations state that the validity period of a Golden Visa in Indonesia is 10 years if the applicable terms and conditions are met. Indonesia classify the Golden Visa policy in into several categories, one of which is given to figures who have international influence and can provide benefits to Indonesia. The facilities provided by Indonesia for individuals who have a Golden Visa include ease of entry and exit from Indonesia, having access to priority service and inspection facilities at the airport, having the right to stay longer in Indonesia, and having the freedom not to apply for an ITAS (Limited Stay Permit) to the immigration office.

Based on the implementation of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia according to Minister of Law and Human Rights Regulation Number 22 of 2023, it is stipulated that there are ten types of Golden Visas given to individual investors including global talent, ex-Indonesian diaspora, investors who do not establish a company, investors who establish a company, and digital nomads. According to Article 184, the classification of Golden Visas includes unlimited permits, permanent stay permits, re-entry permits with a certain duration, and limited stay permits. The validity period of the Golden Visa is five to ten years with the condition that the investor makes an investment worth IDR 38 billion for a validity period of five years and IDR. 76 billion for a validity period of 10 years. Meanwhile, investors who want to set up a company must fulfill the requirements by making an investment of IDR 380 billion for five years and IDR 760 billion for 10 years. In addition, investors who do not intend to start a company can make an investment worth IDR 5.3 -13824 for 5 years and IDR 10.6 billion for 10 years.

Table 3. The Types of Golden Visa Indonesia

Type	Implementation of Golden Visa
Former Indonesian Citizens	5-year visa for former Indonesian citizens without guarantor. Proof of immigration bond of at least US\$35,000.
Descendants of Former Indonesian Citizens	10-year visa for descendants of former Indonesian citizens without guarantor. Proof of US\$100,000 immigration bond.
Foreigners With Special Skills	Visa for foreigners with special skills. Requirements include a valid passport, proof of guarantee from the central government or cooperation with state institutions.
World Figures	Visas for world figures with similar conditions, including proof of guarantee from a central government agency or immigration guarantee.
Senior Foreigners	1 year or 5-year visa for senior foreigners. The option with a guarantor requires proof of monthly income of at least US\$3,000, while the option without a guarantor requires a commitment to deposit funds of at least US\$50,000.
Remote Workers	Visa for remote workers. Requirements include a valid passport, proof of immigration coverage with an annual income of at least US\$60,000, proof of living costs, a recent photograph, and a work contract with a company outside Indonesia.
Medical Treatment	Visa for foreigners who wish to undergo treatment in Indonesia. Requirements include proof of insurance, living expenses, recent photograph, and treatment plan documents.

Based on the Golden Visa program, the implementation of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia aims to attract investors to increase economic growth and development of the country's infrastructure. Apart from that, to collaborate with entrepreneurs in various countries to be able to invest in companies in Indonesia.

4. Conclusion

Based on the implementation and impact of the Golden Visa policy in Indonesia, as follows:

1. The implementation of the Golden Visa policy has negative and positive impacts on the Indonesian state when implementing the program so that anticipatory efforts are needed to overcome social conflicts and can

threaten community welfare, which affects local businesses, but this program has a positive impact on increasing economic growth and infrastructure development.

2. Implementation of the Golden Visa policy compared to various countries with the aim of improving the economy, which is carried out in several European countries such as Portugal, Spain, Greece, Turkiye, and Canada, each of which has minimum provisions for purchasing investments, access is obtained when individuals have Golden Visa, and the validity period of the Golden Visa.
3. Implementation of the Golden Visa in Indonesia, which has different terms and conditions from several European countries, which have 10 types, and various classifications that are adjusted to the investor's goals in deciding to invest in Indonesia.

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What Influences Pension Funds' Investment Decisions in Tanzania?

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Abstract

This paper aimed at examining the influence of political interference, investment guidelines and investment ethical guidelines on pensions investment decision in Tanzania. The structural equation modelling was employed to analyse primary data collected using five-point Likert scale structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions. The study reveals that political interference has a negative influence on investment decisions, indicating that increased political interference leads to a decrease in the quality of investment decisions. To ensure quality investment decisions, governance mechanisms should be strengthened, promoting independence and insulating investment managers from undue political pressures. The negative influence of political interference on investment decisions highlights the need for establishment of robust governance mechanisms to safeguard against undue political pressures. Conversely, investment guidelines demonstrate a positive influence, where following guidelines directives enhance investment decisions. This underscore the importance of well-defined and comprehensive investment guidelines that provide clear directions, criteria and restrictions. By establishing a framework for decision-making, investment guidelines can enhance the quality of investment decisions within pension funds. However, the study found no significant influence of ethical guidelines on investment decisions, suggesting that ethical guidelines do not play a significant role in shaping the investment decisions of pension funds in Tanzania. This finding raises questions about the effectiveness of ethical guidelines in ensuring quality pensions funds investment decisions. While ethical guidelines may not directly shape investment decisions, it is important for the funds to recognize the broader societal and reputational implications of their investment practices. Funds should consider incorporating ethical considerations into their investment frameworks.

Keywords: Investment Decision, Political Interference, Investment Guidelines, Ethical Guidelines

1. Introduction

Pension funds play a crucial role in providing financial protection to individuals throughout their lives, particularly in times of need such as retirement, disability or unemployment (OECD, 2019). The funds serve as a safety net, ensuring that people maintain a minimum standard of living and help reduce poverty rates (World Bank, 2020). By pooling resources and spreading risks across society, pension funds promote social cohesion and contribute to overall economic stability (ILO, 2017). Furthermore, these funds can stimulate economic growth by encouraging consumer spending, as beneficiaries are more likely to spend their benefits on goods and services (IMF, 2018). Pension funds can also enhance labor market efficiency by providing workers with the financial security necessary

to invest in education and training, promoting higher productivity and better employment opportunities (Barr, 2018). Additionally, pension fund systems contribute to gender equality, as they often include provisions that help to address the unique challenges facing women in the labour market, such as the gender pay gap and caregiving responsibilities (UN Women, 2015). By offering a stable source of income, pension funds not only improve the well-being of individuals and families but also contribute to the sustainable development of societies at large (United Nations, 2015).

One of the most important factors that determine the pension funds' performance is the viability of investment decisions. Investment decisions significantly impact the performance and sustainability of pension funds, as they determine the funds' ability to generate sufficient returns to meet their financial obligations to members (OECD, 2019). By making sound investment choices, funds can optimize returns, reduce risks and enhance long-term financial stability (World Bank, 2020). In addition, well-managed investments contribute to the credibility and trustworthiness of pension funds, reassuring members and policymakers of their reliability (Ambachtsheer, 2019). Furthermore, adhering to the principles of responsible investing can help funds align with investment strategies with broader social and environmental objectives, promoting sustainable economic growth and contributing to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNPRI, 2021). Investment decisions also influence the funds' ability to adapt to changing economic conditions, demographic shifts and evolve policy landscapes (Antolin, 2018). By diversifying their portfolios and proactively managing risks, pension funds can enhance resilience to economic shocks and ensure long-term sustainability (Turner & Hughes, 2018). Moreover, sound investment decisions can help pension funds to attract and retain members, while positively influencing public opinion and political support for the funds (Casey, 2020). Ultimately, prudent investment decision-making is critical to the ongoing success and sustainability of pension funds, safeguarding the financial well-being of current and future generations (OECD, 2021).

Recognizing the significance of investment decisions for the long-term sustainability of pension funds, numerous countries have undertaken comprehensive reforms to enhance the performance and resilience of their pension systems (OECD, 2019). These reforms encompass a range of measures, including the strengthening of governance structures, the implementation of robust risk management frameworks, and the promotion of diversification strategies in investment portfolios to achieve more sustainable and optimal returns (World Bank, 2020). Moreover, countries are increasingly integrating environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into their investment strategies, aligning them with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, in order to ensure the longevity and responsible nature of their investments (UNPRI, 2021). While these reforms have led to significant expansions in the coverage and operations of pension funds in developing countries, the long-term sustainability of these funds remains an ongoing concern, primarily due to the impact of investment decisions influenced by a multitude of factors.

Pension assets in developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), are relatively low compared to those in developed nations, constituting around an average of 20% of GDP in the last 5 years, as opposed to 92% ratio observed in OECD countries (United Nations, 2021). However, the distribution of pension assets varies significantly both within and across regions. In SSA, countries such as South Africa exhibit a higher concentration of retirement savings, with pension assets accounting for over 90% of GDP based on recent data. Namibia follows closely with a proportion of over 70%, while Botswana and Kenya have ratios of over 42% and between 12% and 14%, respectively. Nigeria, despite having a substantial value of assets in retirement savings plans, records a smaller proportion of total assets to GDP, with the highest ratio of 8% observed in 2020.

Pension assets in sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries are relatively small, and their allocation tends to favor equities, particularly in Southern African countries such as Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia and South Africa (RisCura, 2020). In contrast, countries like Nigeria and those in East Africa have a significant allocation towards fixed-income assets, primarily government bonds, driven by local regulations and limited alternative investment opportunities (AfDB, 2018; Juvonen *et al.*, 2019; RisCura, 2020). Various factors influence the asset allocation decisions of pension funds, including market trends, investment strategies, regulatory frameworks, governance structures, risk appetite, tax considerations and the availability of domestic assets (Juvonen *et al.*, 2019). The type of retirement scheme also plays a role, as asset allocation for defined benefit (DB) pension funds; for instance, it

may depend on factors such as scheme maturity, funding ratio and time trends (Zhao & Sutcliffe, 2021). The basis of asset allocation reflects factors such as familiarity with different asset classes, the development of local capital markets, and the range of investment opportunities available (RisCura, 2020). Some countries in the region have diversified their investments into various asset classes, including private equity, thereby expanding the alternative investment opportunities (RisCura, 2020).

In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), pension funds are observed to predominantly allocate their investments towards short-term assets such as short-term and saving deposits, rather than pursuing long-term investment opportunities (AfDB, 2021). This creates a mismatch between the funds' investment strategies and the long-term nature of the savings they hold, potentially hindering the potential for higher returns. This phenomenon of relatively low nominal investment returns on retirement savings plans in selected countries further compounds the issue by resulting into even lower real returns. The implications of these low return levels are particularly significant for contributory pension schemes, where pension incomes are directly influenced by both contributions made and interest earned over time. While regulations often prescribe guidelines for the distribution of pension schemes' asset holdings to safeguard retirement savings from risky investments, the challenge lies in finding a diverse range of attractive assets for investment that align with long-term goals (Gruneald, 2021).

Recently, Tanzania has made significant progress in political, economic and social space, and notable developments in various sectors have been notable, leading to improved living conditions and well-being (World Bank, 2021). Until February 2018, Tanzania had five government-sponsored pension funds, which were established through legislative acts passed by the Parliament. However, in February 2018, a significant transformation took place with the enactment of the Public Service Social Security Fund Act. This legislation paved the way for the consolidation of four pension funds into a unified scheme known as the Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF) (URT, 2018). The creation of PSSSF aimed at streamlining and enhancing the provision of pension funds benefits specifically for employees in the public service sector.

Despite the ongoing reforms and efforts undertaken by pension funds, the Tanzanian pension fund industry is experiencing some challenges. Over the past two decades, a significant portion (more than 18%) of pension fund investments in Tanzania has been allocated to real estate, which is relatively higher compared to international standards (Kailua & Kongela, 2020). The National Audit Office (2023) identified various challenges facing funds including a decline in investment returns, the presence of abandoned or incomplete projects, and non-operational investments. Furthermore, Lotto and Isaka (2020) have highlighted the substantial growth in actual pension expenditure in Tanzania, with projections indicating that pension expenditure exceeded members' contributions in 2020 and is expected to continue growing in the coming years. By 2025, pension expenditure is projected to surpass both contribution income and investment income, putting strain on the pension system. Their findings also suggest that pension system assets began to deplete in 2020, and this trend is expected to worsen by 2030 when the total pension debt is projected to surpass the level of pension assets. Contrary to studies by Chande (2016) and Mpinga & Westerman (2017) who focused on pension schemes before reform, this study will be conducted to provide current state of investment decisions at the forefront after reforms. Therefore, given the importance of pension funds in the economy, the importance of investment decision of pensions funds on their sustainability, this study was conducted to examine factors influencing investment decisions of pension funds in Tanzania.

2. Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Underpinning

2.1.1. Agency Theory

Agency theory was originally developed by Jensen and Meckling in the late 1970s as a framework for understanding the relationship between principals and agents and how conflicts of interest can arise between them (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). The theory assumes that agents act in their self-interest, and principals cannot observe their actions perfectly. Additionally, agents typically have more information than principals, which can lead to a principal-agent problem where the agents' interests may diverge from the principals' interests (Eisenhardt, 1989).

In the context of public pension funds, the theory suggests that investment decisions made by agents are influenced by various factors such as skills, political interference, and ethical considerations (Aluchna & Aluchna, 2019; Samaha, 2020). For instance, if employees lack the necessary investment knowledge, they may make suboptimal decisions (Berger & Hann, 2013). Similarly, if there is political interference, agents may be incentivized to make decisions that align with political goals rather than the fund's objectives (Jung & Kwon, 2017). Finally, ethical factors such as social responsibility may also influence investment decisions (Liu *et al.*, 2021).

Agency Theory has been widely applied in various fields, including finance, economics and management. In finance, it is used to understand the relationship between shareholders and management (Fama & Jensen, 1983). In economics, it is used to understand the relationship between employers and employees (Holmstrom, 1979). In management, it is used to understand the relationship between owners and managers (Eisenhardt, 1989). In the context of public pension funds, Agency Theory provides a framework for understanding factors that influence the investment decision-making process and the importance of aligning the interests of the agents with those of the principals. The agency theory suffers some criticisms that it oversimplifies the relationship between principals and agents and assumes that agents act purely in their self-interest (Milgrom & Roberts, 1992). Additionally, some argue that Agency Theory focuses too much on the conflicts of interest between principals and agents and does not consider benefits of the agency relationship (Eisenhardt, 1989).

However, despite these criticisms, agency theory remains relevant in understanding the relationship between principals and agents and how conflicts of interest can arise. It highlights the importance of aligning the interests of the agents with those of the principals and implementing appropriate governance mechanisms to ensure that the interests of the principals are protected (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gupta *et al.*, 2020). In the context of public pension funds, agency theory provides a framework for understanding the factors that influence the investment decision-making process and the importance of aligning the interests of the agents (employees) with those of the principals (members).

2.1.2. Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory was developed by several scholars in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It was originally proposed by Birger Wernerfelt (1984) and later developed and refined by Jay B. Barney (1991) and other scholars. The theory was initially developed as a strategic management framework that focused on the internal resources of an organization as the primary source of competitive advantage.

The RBV theory holds that resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) to create a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In the context of pension funds' investment decisions, employee skills, ethical issues, and political interventions can be considered as independent variables that influence the dependent variable and investment performance. Pension funds rely on their human capital, including skilled investment professionals, to make informed investment decisions. These individuals' expertise in asset allocation, risk management, and portfolio construction significantly impact the fund's performance (Barney, 1991). The RBV theory suggests that pension funds with highly skilled employees will have a competitive advantage, leading to better investment outcomes.

Ethical considerations such as environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, can influence pension funds' investment decisions. According to the RBV Theory, pension funds that effectively incorporate ESG factors into their investment decision-making process may have a competitive advantage over those that do not, as they can align their investments with the values and preferences of their members and contribute to a more sustainable future (Hart, 1995).

Political interventions such as regulations, tax policies and government incentives can have both positive and negative impacts on pension funds' investment decisions. On one hand, political interventions might constrain investment choices or force pension funds to prioritize politically desirable investments over those with better financial returns, potentially leading to poor investment decisions (Clark & Monk, 2012). On the other hand,

political interventions might encourage pension funds to invest in sectors or projects that have long-term benefits or align with societal goals, such as infrastructure development or renewable energy (Dixon, 2008).

The RBV theory has been applied in various contexts, including corporate strategy, human resource management and marketing, among others. Its importance lies in its ability to provide a framework for understanding how organizations can leverage their internal resources to achieve a competitive advantage. However, the RBV theory has its limitations and has faced several criticisms. One major criticism is its static nature, as it does not account for the dynamic and ever-changing business environment (Priem & Butler, 2001). Additionally, the theory has been criticized for being too vague in defining the concept of resources and the conditions that make them sources of competitive advantage (Armstrong & Shimizu, 2007).

Despite these criticisms, the RBV theory remains relevant and useful in understanding the role of internal resources in shaping investment decisions of pension funds. By considering employee skills, ethical issues, and political interventions, pension funds can better understand the interplay between these factors and develop strategies to optimize their investment performance.

2.2 Empirical Literature

Pension funds are responsible for managing the retirement savings of millions of individuals, and their investment decisions can have a significant impact on the financial well-being of these individuals. The investment decisions made by pension funds play a crucial role in determining their long-term sustainable capacity to finance pension claims by members. Investment decisions made by pension funds have been a widely discussed topic in empirical studies. Notably, Schäublin (2022) conducted a notable investigation into the interplay among technical discount rates, asset allocation and funding ratios within Swiss occupational pension funds, and found that pension funds with weaker funding levels tended to employ higher discount rates when evaluating their future pension liabilities. This observation raises concerns regarding the potential presence of euphemistic discounting practices. Additionally, these underfunded pension funds exhibited a reduced inclination to invest in equities.

Akomea-Frimpong *et al* (2022) conducted a study examining the relationship between corporate governance practices and the performance of pension funds in Ghana, and revealed that corporate governance practices played a significant role in influencing the performance of pension funds.

Mwakisisile (2018) conducted a study on Asset Liability Management (ALM) for Pension Funds in Tanzania, and revealed that the pension fund would face sustainability challenges in the long run due to the increased life expectancy of its members, and that in order to enhance the long-term sustainability of the Tanzania pension fund system, reforms were necessary in several areas such as contribution rate, investment guidelines, and the formulation of target levels (funding ratios) to assess the solvency situation. The study insisted that implementing such reforms would contribute to improving the overall sustainability of the pension system in Tanzania.

Bregnard and Salva (2019) conducted a study investigating the relationship between pension fund board governance and asset allocation in Switzerland, and revealed several interesting associations. Firstly, well-governed pension fund boards were found to be linked with greater international diversification, lower cash holdings, and higher investments in risky assets, particularly for small pension funds. This suggests that effective governance practices play a role in shaping asset allocation decisions. Furthermore, the study highlighted that comprehensive investment policies established by pension fund boards had a positive correlation with investments in equities, foreign assets, and lower cash holdings.

Mpinga and Westerman (2017) conducted a literature review to develop a comprehensive framework for studying the governance of pension funds, encompassing both the macro (regulatory) and micro (board of trustees) levels. The study emphasized the pivotal role played by the board of trustees in pension fund governance, and observed that the pension fund structure and mechanisms in Tanzania adhere to high standards.

Chansuchai *et al.* (2022) conducted a comprehensive study aimed at examining the factors that contribute to the sustainability of the Government Pension Fund (GPF) in Thailand, and the results indicated that high levels of good governance, management policy and management achievement significantly influenced the GPF's sustainability.

Andonov *et al.* (2018) investigated the impact of political representativeness on the investment/financial decision-making of public organizations, particularly in public pension funds of the United States of America, and found that pension funds governed by boards heavily populated by appointed and state-ex officio commonly invest in private equity (PE) that delivers lower net internal rate of return.

In their panel study, Zhao and Sutcliffe (2021) focused on examining the factors that influence equity allocation in UK pension funds, and reported that scheme maturity, funding ratio, and time trend had the most significant impact on the allocation of assets, particularly equity allocation.

Chepkoech *et al.* (2017) conducted a study to examine the factors influencing investment decisions of pension schemes in Kenya, and the findings indicated that the risk-return tradeoff had a significant influence on the investment decisions of pension schemes in Kenya, and that fund managers carefully balance the level of risk associated with investments to ensure optimal returns, while macroeconomic factors such as interest rates, performance of capital markets, and the rate of national economic growth playing a crucial role in shaping the investment decisions of pension schemes.

Wanjohi and Kariuki (2019) conducted a study in Kenya aiming at providing valuable insights to the government and stakeholders in the pension sector regarding the screening and adoption of appropriate investment policies and strategies to effectively enhance the wealth of pensioners. The findings revealed that asset allocation played a significant role in determining the fund performance of occupational pension schemes, and factors such as asset class timing, choice of investment manager, and security selection were identified as having an impact on scheme performance.

Bradley *et al.* (2016) conducted a study examining the factors contributing to local bias in state pension funds in the United States from a political perspective, and the results showed that the pension funds exhibited a 26% overweight allocation to local firms compared to the overall market portfolio, indicating the presence of local bias, which aligns with findings from previous studies. Moreover, the study estimated that state pension funds displayed a 23% overweight allocation to local firms that engaged in political contributions to local (state) politicians. Additionally, the funds exhibited a 17% overweight allocation to firms with significant lobbying expenditures, and generally such findings suggest that politics can have a significant impact on the investment decisions and performance of state pension funds.

Olulu-Briggs (2023) conducted a study to examine the impact of pension asset investments on the Nigerian economy, and results revealed that changes in government bond securities had a significant influence on changes in real estate securities. Additionally, changes in money market investments were found to have an impact on changes in government bond securities, and that when a shock occurred within the system, the responses tended to be more negative than positive.

Fadhil (2019) conducted a study to examine the factors influencing real estate investment decisions in the Zanzibar Pension funds, and the findings indicated the presence of a statistically significant long-term equilibrium relationship between real estate investment decisions and factors such as member contributions, return on investment and investment in government securities.

3. Approach and Data

3.1 Data

In this study primary data was collected using five-point Likert scale structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was developed in accordance with the study's objectives and was guided by literature review. To ensure content validity of a questionnaire we used a comprehensive literature review to determine the relevant constructs and variables to be measured as recommended by De Vellis (2017) [Refer to table 1]. Expert review was also conducted to ensure that the questionnaire items were relevant and comprehensive, and that the constructs being measured were valid as recommended by Wilson and Pan (2016). Also, the study conducted a pilot testing in ensuring content validity, which involved administering 15 questionnaires to a small sample of respondents and analyzing the results to identify any potential problems or issues with the questionnaire design or whether respondents had the same understanding of the question as recommended by Polit and Beck (2021). Pilot testing helped to identify ambiguous or confusing items, and ensured that the questionnaire was acceptable and understandable.

3.2 Variables and Measurements

The dependent variable of the study was investment decisions while independent variables were political interferences, investment guideline and ethical guidelines as shown in Table 1 below

Table 1: Variables and Measurements

S/N	Variable	Measurement	References
1.	Investment Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Long-term financial sustainability and beneficiary obligations ✓ Investment strategy aligned with risk tolerance for stable returns ✓ Analysis of market conditions, economic trends, and risk management in decisions, independent oversight, governance, transparency, and accountability. 	Andonov <i>et al.</i> (2018)
2.	Political Interferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Alignment of investments with political priorities and agendas ✓ Investment in politically favored projects despite financial risk or deviation from sound principles ✓ Sudden and significant changes in strategies coinciding with political events ✓ Politically connected appointments lacking relevant expertise ✓ Direct influence or pressure from political figures on investments. 	Andonov <i>et al.</i> (2018)
3.	Investment Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Diversified portfolio across asset classes per guidelines. ✓ Thorough due diligence for investment assessment. ✓ Emphasis on capital preservation and consistent income for long-term obligations. ✓ Regular performance reviews against benchmarks and adjustments as needed. ✓ Recognition of liquidity management importance, considering obligations and market conditions. 	Chinazam and Nnaemeka (2023) Aslan, (2023),
4.	Ethical Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Responsibility instilled through ethical guidelines ✓ Transparency and accountability culture in investment decisions, ✓ Integrity, professionalism, and ethical conduct promoted by guidelines ✓ Embracing role as ethical stewards of pension fund assets 	Musalem and Palacios (2019)

		✓ Considering broader impact of investment decisions on society, environment, and corporate governance.	
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3.3 Model Specification

The study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed, which is a statistical approach used to measure and analyze the relationships between both observed and latent variables while accounting for measurement error. This method is more powerful than regression analyses, as it accounts for measurement error in both independent and dependent variables and provides more accurate and reliable results. Furthermore, it allows for the simultaneous analysis of multiple interdependent relationships, and enables the exploration of latent variables, providing insights into unobserved phenomena. Finally, it can handle complex data structures, such as non-normal distributions and missing data, which traditional regression analyses cannot. The structural equation model was specified as follows:

$$\eta = \beta \eta + \Gamma \xi + \zeta$$

Where;

η is a vector of dependent or endogenous variables,

ξ is a vector of independent or exogenous variables,

ζ is a vector of disturbance terms.

β represents the regression co-efficient, linking the endogenous variables to each other, Γ represents the regression coefficients linking endogenous variables to exogenous variables.

4. Empirical Evidence

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis involves examining the central tendencies, variations and distributions of the responses. Means and standard deviations are calculated to determine the average values and dispersion of the data, while frequencies are assessed to identify the occurrence of specific responses or categories within the dataset. By analyzing the descriptive statistics, patterns and trends within the data can be identified. This provides a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives and provides insights into the variables under investigation. The descriptive statistics serve as a foundation for further analysis and interpretation, and facilitates the exploration of relationships. Table 2 prescribes the results of the descriptive analysis of this study.

The participants were requested to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements using a five-point scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 representing strong agreement. The scale utilized in this study had a uniform distance of 0.8 between each point, allowing for equal intervals across the range of 1 to 5. By employing this scale, the study aimed to capture variations in the participants' responses and enabled a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives. In accordance with the aggregation principle proposed by Sözen and Güven (2019), the scores obtained from the respondents' ratings were categorized into five levels of agreement. This categorization was based on predefined ranges of scores. Scores falling within the range of 1 to 1.80 were classified as "strongly disagree," indicating a significant disagreement with the statements presented. Scores between 1.81 and 2.60 were labeled as "disagree," reflecting a lower level of agreement. Moreover, scores ranging from 2.61 to 3.40 were considered as "neither agree nor disagree," suggesting a neutral stance or ambivalence towards the statements. Scores falling within the range of 3.41 to 4.20 were categorized as "agree," indicating a level of agreement with the statements.

Lastly, scores ranging from 4.21 to 5 were labeled as "strongly agree," signifying a strong alignment of the participants' views with the presented statement. The findings presented in Table 5 provide valuable insights into the factors influencing investment decisions of pension funds in Tanzania. Regarding the ethical guideline variable, the respondents' average mean of 3.36 indicates a neutral position suggesting that there is neither agreement nor disagreement among the participants regarding the influence of ethical guidelines on investment decisions. Regarding the investment guideline variable, the respondents strongly agree with an average mean of 4.70, that investment guidelines have good proposals for guiding investment decisions. This indicates that participants perceive the investment guidelines to be comprehensive and effective in providing guidance for making investment-related choices. In terms of political interferences, respondents exhibit a strong agreement with an average mean of 4.34, that political activities interfere with investment decisions indicating that external political factors have a negative impact on the decision-making process when it comes to investments. Lastly, investment decision variable reveals that respondents disagree with an average mean of 1.68, regarding the existence of good investment decisions. This suggests that participants do not perceive the current investment decisions to be satisfactory or effective.

Table 2: Descriptive Results of the Respondents' Opinions

Variable	Indicator	Mean	Average Mean	Interpretation
Ethical Guideline	Ethical Guide 1	2.55	3.36	Neither agree ethical guideline to influence Investment Decision
	Ethical Guide 2	3.68		
	Ethical Guide 3	3.93		
	Ethical Guide 4	3.35		
	Ethical Guide 5	3.28		
Investment Guideline	Investment Decision 4	4.45	4.70	Strong agree investment guideline consist good proposal on guiding Decisions
	Investment Decision1	4.73		
	Investment Decision2	4.72		
	Investment Decision3	4.74		
	Investment Decision5	4.88		
Political Interferences	Political Interferance1	4.98	4.34	Strong Agree Political Interference have negative influence Investment Decisions
	Political Interferance2	4.13		
	Political Interferance3	4.33		
	Political Interferance4	4.11		
	Political Interferance5	4.14		
Investment Decision	Investment Guide1	1.77	1.68	Dis-agree on existence of good investment decisions
	Investment Guide2	1.55		
	Investment Guide3	1.14		
	Investment Guide4	2.25		

4.2 Diagnostic Tests

The justification for using a Structural Equation Model (SEM) was approved after conducting several diagnostic tests, such as convergence validity test, divergence validity test, and collinearity test. These tests help to evaluate the quality of the data and the suitability of SEM for the analysis.

4.2.1. Multicollinearity Test

Multi-collinearity is a common issue in structural equation modeling (SEM) that occurs when two or more predictor variables in a model are highly correlated with each other. This can lead to unstable estimates of the regression co-efficients and inflated standard errors, making it difficult to interpret the results of the analysis. To

detect multi-collinearity in SEM, several diagnostic tests were used, including the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which measures the extent to which the variance of the estimated coefficients is increased due to collinearity (Hair *et al.*, 2017). VIF values greater than 5 indicate high multi-collinearity, while values between 1 and 5 suggest moderate multicollinearity as recommended by Kock (2015). The study conducted a collinearity test using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) which assesses how much the variance of an estimated regression co-efficient is increased due to the correlation among the predictor variables. The multi-collinearity test results in Table 3 indicate that all variables have VIF values below the commonly used cut-off value of 5, which suggests no serious multi-collinearity issue in the model.

Table 3: Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Indicator	Outer VIF	Inner VIF
Ethical Guideline	Ethical Guide 1	2.180	1.32
	Ethical Guide 2	1.747	
	Ethical Guide 3	1.959	
	Ethical Guide 4	1.505	
	Ethical Guide 5	1.493	
Investment Guideline	Investment Guide1	1.536	1.21
	Investment Guide2	1.602	
	Investment Guide3	1.220	
	Investment Guide4	1.249	
Political Interferences	Political Interferance1	1.829	1.55
	Political Interferance2	2.074	
	Political Interferance3	1.424	
	Political Interferance4	1.251	
	Political Interferance5	1.318	
Investment Decisions	Investment Decision 4	1.713	
	Investment Decision1	1.784	
	Investment Decision2	2.483	
	Investment Decision3	2.410	
	Investment Decision5	1.259	

4.2.2. Validity and reliability

The study conducted both convergence and discriminant validity analysis of the Structural Equation Model. Convergent validity was assessed by examining the factor loadings of the measurement items on their respective constructs, and by ensuring that the items have high levels of intercorrelations within their constructs. Generally, factor loadings of 0.5 or higher are considered acceptable as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2017). Also, for convergent validity the study used average variance extracted (AVE), to measure the amount of variance that is captured by the construct relative to the amount of variance due to measurement error. A value of 0.5 or higher is generally considered acceptable for convergent validity as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2017). The idea is that the construct should explain at least 50% of the variance in its indicators.

Regarding convergent validity, the study considered factors loading and average variance extracted tests. Factor loading refers to the correlation between the observed variables and the latent variable in the model. Therefore, it measures the extent to which each observed variable contributes to the measurement of the underlying construct. In terms of factors loading, the findings of the study, as per Table 4, indicate the following: For the *ethical guideline variable*, all five indicators demonstrate strong loadings, ranging from 0.723 to 0.856. These high factor loadings suggest that the indicators are good measures of the ethical guideline construct. Similarly, the *investment*

guideline variable shows strong factor loadings, with all five indicators ranging from 0.744 to 0.835 indicating that the indicators are reliable measures of the investment guideline construct. The investment decision variable also exhibits strong loadings for its four indicators, ranging from 0.710 to 0.891 suggesting suggest that the indicators effectively measure the investment decision construct.

Regarding *political interferences*, all five indicators demonstrate strong factor loadings, ranging from 0.708 to 0.869 revealing that the indicators are good measures of the political interferences construct. Overall, the factor loadings for all variables in the study are strong, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.5. This implies that the observed variables are reliable measures of their respective constructs. Consequently, the model employed in the study is likely to accurately capture and assess the underlying constructs of ethical guideline, investment guideline, investment decision, and political interferences.

In terms of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which assesses the amount of variance explained by the latent variable in the observed variables, the study findings as per Table 2 indicate that all the AVE values for the constructs in the model are above the threshold of 0.5 suggesting that the constructs adequately explain the variance in their respective indicators. Specifically, *the ethical guideline construct* has an AVE of 0.53, *investment guideline* has an AVE of 0.515, *investment decision* has an AVE of 0.539, and *political interferences* have an AVE of 0.602. Such AVE values indicate that the constructs are reliable, as they account for more than 50% of the variance in their indicators. Overall, the findings suggest that the constructs in the model have satisfactory convergent validity. This means that they are well-represented by their respective indicators, and the observed variables effectively capture the underlying constructs.

Table 4: Factor Loading and Average Variance Extracted

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading	Average Variance Extracted
Ethical Guideline	Ethical Guide 1	0.791	0.53
	Ethical Guide 2	0.723	
	Ethical Guide 3	0.856	
	Ethical Guide 4	0.800	
	Ethical Guide 5	0.842	
Investment Guideline	Investment Decision 4	0.744	0.515
	Investment Decision1	0.769	
	Investment Decision2	0.822	
	Investment Decision3	0.781	
	Investment Decision5	0.835	
Investment Decision	Investment Guide1	0.710	53.9
	Investment Guide2	0.891	
	Investment Guide3	0.745	
	Investment Guide4	0.821	
Political Interferences	Political Interferance1	0.708	0.602
	Political Interferance2	0.869	
	Political Interferance3	0.748	
	Political Interferance4	0.767	
	Political Interferance5	0.774	

On the other hand, discriminant validity was assessed by examining the correlations between the constructs and ensuring that they are not too high, which would indicate that the constructs were measuring the same thing (Hair

et al., 2017). For discriminant validity the study used the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations, which compared the correlations between the constructs to the correlations between the items within the same construct. The rule of thumb for HTMT is that values below 0.9 indicate discriminant validity as recommended by (Shiau *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, if the correlation between two constructs is significantly lower than the correlation between the items within each construct, then discriminant validity is supported.

The findings presented in Table 5 provide evidence of the discriminant validity of the measures. According to the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, the square root of the AVE for each latent variable is compared to the correlations between that variable and all other latent variables in the model. The results indicate that the AVE values for each construct are greater than the correlations with other constructs, demonstrating that the measures have stronger relationships with their respective indicators than with indicators of different constructs. This confirms the discriminant validity of the measures. Additionally, the HTMT values presented in Table 5 are all below the recommended threshold of 0.9. The HTMT ratio assesses the strength of correlation between measures of the same construct compared to measures of different constructs. The values obtained in this study suggest that the measures exhibit stronger correlations within the same construct, supporting the distinctiveness of each construct being measured.

Overall, based on the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT tests, the measures used in the study demonstrate good discriminant validity implying that the measures effectively capture the intended constructs, and can be considered reliable indicators of the underlying constructs. The findings provide confidence in the study's measurement approach and support the validity of the results and subsequent inferences drawn from the data.

Table 5: Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Fornell-Larcker Criterion				
	Ethical Guideline	Investment Decisions	Investment Guideline	Political Interferences
Ethical Guideline	0.729			
Investment Decisions	0.284	0.734		
Investment Guideline	0.175	0.472	0.674	
Political Interferences	0.490	0.549	0.416	0.664
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)				
	Ethical Guideline	Investment Decisions	Investment Guideline	Political Interferences
Ethical Guideline				
Investment Decisions	0.347			
Investment Guideline	0.285	0.801		
Political Interferences	0.673	0.676	0.587	

In terms of reliability the study used composite reliability (CR) test and Cronbach alphas test. Composite reliability (CR) is a commonly used measure of internal consistency reliability in structural equation modeling (SEM) and is calculated by dividing the square of the sum of the standardized loadings of the indicators by the sum of the squares of the loadings and error variances (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Generally, a CR value of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable for assessing the reliability of a scale as recommended by Abbasi *et al.* (2022). Cronbach's alpha is another measure of internal consistency reliability calculated as the average of all possible split-half correlations between items and provides an estimate of the extent to which all items in a scale measure the same construct (Nunnally, 1978). A value of 0.7 or higher is generally considered acceptable for assessing the reliability of a scale as recommended by De Vellis (2017).

The results in Table 6 indicate that all latent variables in the study demonstrate acceptable levels of reliability, revealing that latent variables have Cronbach's alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.7. This suggests good internal consistency of the measures, indicating that the items used to assess each latent variable ideally measure the same underlying construct, and are reliable indicators of that construct. The Rho_A values for all latent variables, which reinforce the findings from Cronbach's alpha, are also above the recommended threshold of 0.7. This indicates good internal consistency and reliability of the measures in capturing the constructs they intend to measure. Table 4 further shows that the composite reliability values for all latent variables are greater than 0.7 indicating good construct reliability. This further, suggests that the measures are likely to be reliable indicators of the underlying constructs. The composite reliability values corroborate the findings from Cronbach's alpha. Based on the results of the reliability analysis, it can be concluded that the measures used in the study are reliable indicators of the latent variables. The good internal consistency, as demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha and Rho_A, along with the satisfactory construct reliability indicated by the composite reliability values, provides confidence in the reliability of the measures.

Table 6: Composite Reliability, Rho_A and Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability
Ethical Guideline	0.778	0.824	0.848
Investment Decisions	0.786	0.799	0.852
Investment Guideline	0.829	0.735	0.765
Political Interferences	0.888	0.896	0.794

4.3 Regression Results

This study mainly aimed at examining factors influencing investment decisions of pension funds in Tanzania. To assess the importance of the relationships between the independent variables, a structural equation model was developed and subjected to rigorous testing. The structure model path coefficients are presented in figure 1 below.

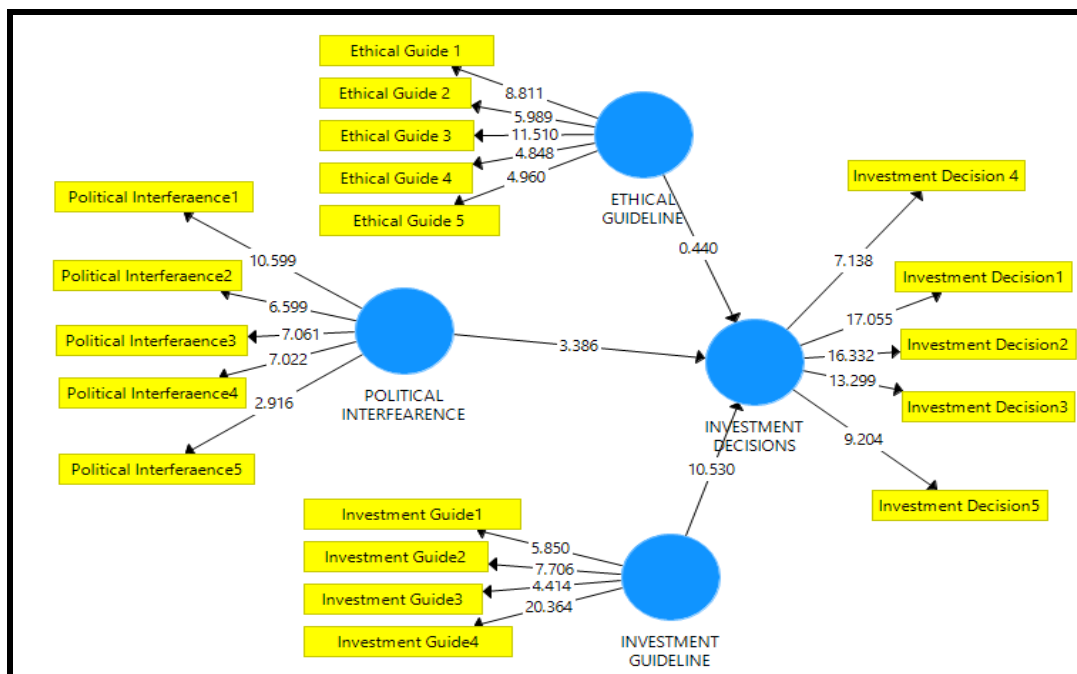


Figure 1: Structure Model Path Coefficients

To examine the significance of the model, the study employed *R-square* and *adjusted R-square* measures. Table 7 presents the results for the variables related to investment decisions. *R-square* values used to provide insights into the proportion of variance in investment decisions that can be explained by the explanatory variables,

including ethical guidelines, political interference, and investment guidelines. In the original sample, the R-square value for investment decisions is 0.540, indicating that 54% of the variance in investment decisions can be explained by the specified independent variables. On average, the independent variables explain 57.9% (sample mean R-square value) of the variance in investment decisions. The standard deviation of 0.059 suggests the proportion of variance explained by the independent variables varies to some extent across different samples.

Adjusted R-square also presented in Table 7 accounts for the number of independent variables in the model. The adjusted R-square value of 0.527 in the original sample suggests that after adjusting for the number of independent variables, 52.7% of the variance in investment decisions can be explained by the specified independent variables. On average, the independent variables perform slightly better, with a sample mean adjusted R-square value of 0.566. The standard deviation of 0.061 for the adjusted R-square values indicates some variability in the adjusted R-square across different samples. The findings reveal that the model is statistically significant as indicated by the P-values in Table 7. Both the R-square and adjusted R-square analyses show P-values of 0.000, which are below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the relationships between the independent variables (ethical guidelines, political interference, and investment guidelines) and investment decisions are not due to chance, but rather are likely to be meaningful and reliable.

Table 7: Model Significance

R Square					
	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Investment Decisions	0.540	0.579	0.059	9.098	0.000
R Square Adjusted					
	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Investment Decisions	0.527	0.566	0.061	8.612	0.000

4.3.1. Political Interferences and Investment Decision

The regression results presented in Table 8 reveals that political interference and investment decision are negatively related and the relationship is statistically significant at 1% significant level. The results show that political interference exhibits negative influence on the investment decision. The negative influence of political interference on investment decisions can be attributed to several possible factors. *First*, political interference may introduce biases and distortions in the decision-making process, as decisions may be driven by political motivations rather than sound investment principles or economic considerations. This can result in investments being directed towards politically favored projects or sectors that may not align with the long-term financial goals of the pension funds. *Second*, political interference may undermine the independence and autonomy of the decision-making bodies or investment committees responsible for managing the pension funds. When political actors exert influence or pressure on these bodies, it can compromise their ability to make objective and informed investment decisions based on rigorous analysis and evaluation of risks and returns. The results are consistent with agency theory as supported by Jung & Kwon, (2017) in a similar study highlighting that if there is political interference, agents may be incentivized to make decisions that align with political goals rather than the fund's long-term objectives.

The results of this study are also consistent with Clark & Monk, (2012) who insisted that political interventions might constrain investment choices or force pension funds to prioritize politically desirable investments over those with better financial returns, potentially leading to poor investment decisions. Likewise, the results are in line with Bradley *et al.* (2016) and Andonov *et al.* (2018) who reported a negative relationship between political interference and investment decision in USA pension funds. On the other hand, the results are contrary to Dixon, (2008) who reported a positive relationship between investment decision and political interference highlighting that political

interventions might encourage pension funds to invest in sectors or projects that have long-term benefits or align with societal goals, such as infrastructure development or renewable energy.

4.3.2. Investment Guideline and Investment Decision

The findings reported in Table 8 indicate that investment guideline has a positive relationship with the investment decision of pension funds in Tanzania. The relationship is statistically significant at 1% significant level. Several factors can be attributed to these results. *First*, investment guidelines provide a framework and a set of principles that guide the investment decision-making process. They outline the objectives, strategies and criteria for selecting investment opportunities, as well as risk management practices. By having clear and well-defined guidelines, pension funds can make more informed and structured investment decisions, considering factors such as asset allocation, diversification, risk-return trade-offs and alignment with their long-term financial goals.

Second, investments guidelines help to establish consistency and standardization in the investment decision-making process. They provide a common reference point for evaluating and comparing investment opportunities, ensuring that decisions are based on objective criteria rather than personal preferences or arbitrary factors. This helps to reduce subjectivity and potential biases in the decision-making process, leading to more rational and disciplined investment decisions.

Thirdly, investment guidelines promote transparency and accountability. The guidelines dictate the roles and responsibilities of the decision-makers, specify reporting and monitoring requirements, and establish mechanisms for evaluating the performance of investments. By adhering to these guidelines, pension funds enhance their governance practices, ensure proper oversight of investment activities, and maintain accountability to stakeholders. The findings are in line with agency theory's emphasis on clear objectives and guidelines. Based on agency theory investment guidelines serve as a principal tool to align the actions of agents with their interests, reducing agency conflicts. The study's results underscore the importance of well-defined and comprehensive investment guidelines that provide clear directions, criteria and restrictions. By establishing a framework for decision-making, investment guidelines can enhance the quality of investment decisions within pension funds. The results are also consistent with Bradley *et al.* (2016) and Andonov *et al.* (2018) who reported a positive relationship between investment guideline and pension investment decision.

4.3.3. Ethical Guidelines and Investment Decision

Table 8 shows a statistically insignificant positive relationship between ethical guideline and pension fund investment decision. This implies that ethical guideline has no or little influence on the investment decisions of pension funds in Tanzania.

Several possible reasons may be considered to account for such results, particularly in relation to political interference. *Firstly*, it is important to acknowledge that Tanzania operates within a political landscape where there may be a lack of stringent enforcement and oversight of ethical guidelines. Political interference or influence in the decision-making processes of pension funds could potentially undermine the implementation and effectiveness of ethical guidelines. In such cases, investment decisions might be driven more by political considerations rather than ethical concerns, leading to a diminished influence of ethical guidelines on investment choices.

Secondly, political interests and objectives could prioritize economic and developmental goals over ethical considerations within the investment decisions space of pension funds. Moreover, political interference can introduce favouritism or patronage into investment decisions, potentially overshadowing ethical considerations. This could result in investments being directed towards politically connected individuals or entities, regardless of their adherence to ethical guidelines. When political interests override ethical principles, it diminishes the influence of such guidelines on investment decisions. Furthermore, the absence of strong regulatory frameworks and mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency may contribute to the limited influence of ethical guidelines on investment decisions. In the absence of robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, pension funds may not feel compelled to prioritize ethical considerations when making investment choices.

Table 8: Regression Results

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Ethical Guideline -> Investment Decisions	0.040	0.091	0.440	0.660
Political Interferences -> Investment Decisions	-0.537	0.051	-10.530	0.000
Investment Guideline -> Investment Decisions	0.306	0.090	3.386	0.001

5. A Concluding Remark

This paper aimed at examining the relationship between pensions fund investment decision and political interference, investment guidelines and ethical guidelines employing structural equation modelling. The study reveals that political interference has a negative influence on investment decisions, indicating that increased political interference leads to a decrease in the quality of investment decisions. Conversely, investment guidelines demonstrate a positive influence, where sticking to investment guideline directives result in improved investment decisions. However, the study found no significant influence of ethical guidelines on investment decisions, suggesting that ethical guidelines do not play a significant role in shaping the investment decisions of pension funds in Tanzania.

The findings provide a several theoretical insights. *Firstly*, the negative influence of political interference on investment decisions aligns with Agency Theory's premise that external influences can compromise an agent's fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of the principal. The findings highlight the need to minimize agency conflicts caused by political interference. To ensure quality investment decisions, governance mechanisms should be strengthened, promoting independence and insulating investment managers from undue political pressures. Further, the negative influence of political interference on investment decisions highlights the need for funds to establish robust governance mechanisms to safeguard against undue political pressures. This entails ensuring independence in investment decision-making processes and minimizing external influences that may compromise the fiduciary duty to maximize returns for fund beneficiaries.

Secondly, the positive influence of investment guidelines on investment decisions supports Agency Theory's emphasis on clear objectives and guidelines. Investment guidelines serve as a principal tool to align the actions of agents with their interests, reducing agency conflicts. The results underscore the importance of well-defined and comprehensive investment guidelines that provide clear directions, criteria and restrictions. By establishing a framework for decision-making, investment guidelines can enhance the quality of investment decisions within pension funds. Also, the paper recommends funds to prioritize the development and implementation of clear investment guidelines that provide specific directions, criteria, and restrictions. These guidelines can serve as a framework for investment managers, promoting consistency, risk management and alignment with the funds' long-term objectives. Regular reviews and updates of investment guidelines will ensure their relevance and effectiveness in guiding investment decisions.

Thirdly, the insignificant influence of ethical guidelines on investment decisions presents an interesting theoretical implication within the context of Agency Theory. This raises questions about the effectiveness of ethical guidelines in mitigating agency conflicts. Further, further research is warranted to explore the mechanisms through which ethical considerations interact with agency dynamics and decision-making processes within pension funds. Examining the role of ethical guidelines from an Agency Theory perspective can provide valuable insights into how these guidelines can be better integrated into the governance structures of pension funds. While ethical guidelines may not directly shape investment decisions, it is important for the funds to recognize the broader societal and reputational implications of their investment practices. Funds should consider incorporating ethical considerations into their investment frameworks, including responsible investment principles and environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors. This can help to promote sustainable and socially responsible investment practices, aligning the funds with global best practices and stakeholders' expectations.

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Can the Potential of Restorative Justice Ever Be Fully Realised Within the Criminal Justice System?

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Abstract

This article will look at the context in which restorative justice emerged, analysing its main characteristics and examine how restorative justice differs from conventional models. While recognising its positive aspects, this article explores some of the criticisms that show how the potential of restorative justice cannot be fully realised within the criminal justice system. It is argued that the ideals of restorative justice do not seem suitable for all types of crimes, all societies and all cultures. In addition to that, restorative justice empowers individuals, weakening the State, presupposes voluntariness from people involved in the conflict, something that does not always occur, and has a barrier that is difficult to overcome, that is social expectations around criminal justice.

Keywords: Criminology, Restorative Justice, Criminal Justice, Alternative Models, Criminal Justice System

1. Introduction

The notion that the response to crime must be given through punishment as a result of a judicial process is common sense in the western world. Effectively living in a 'culture of control' (Garland, 2001), the response to crime has been increasingly surrounded by intolerance against the offender's person (Johnstone, 2011, p. 9). At the same time, conventional criminal justice models have also failed to provide assistance to victims and meet their wishes and needs (Hoyle, 2017). Restorative Justice (RJ) appears in a legal, political and social context as an alternative that proposes significant changes in the structures of the criminal justice system (Roach, 2000, pp. 250-254), more informal and promoting greater participation of the interested parties. Through restorative justice mechanisms, 'victims, offenders and communities of care come together and, with the aid of a facilitator, try to resolve how to deal with the offence, its consequences and its implications for the future' (Morris, 2002, p. 599).

A growing number of countries believe in restorative justice's potential as an innovative and efficient mechanism, incorporating it into their criminal justice system's (Van Ness and Strong, 2015, pp. 30-33; Rossner, 2017, pp. 967-968; Morris, 2002, p. 597). Restorative Justice attracts the attention and support of criminologists and politicians from across the spectrum and pleases both victim advocates and activists against mass incarceration.

Among other things, it promises to be less costly, reduce incarceration, provide more emphasis on the victim's needs and empower communities. In the words of Braithwaite (1999, p. 104), 'well-designed restorative justice processes will restore victims, offenders, and communities better than existing criminal justice practices'. Restorative justice, therefore, has very ambitious aims. As pointed out by Beven *et al.* (2005, p. 205), 'restorative justice appears to represent the ultimate win-win situation: satisfied victims, satisfied offenders, and a reduction in reoffending'.

This article will look at the context in which restorative justice emerged, analysing its main characteristics from a historical perspective by examining how restorative justice differs from conventional models and, while recognising its positive aspects, explore some of the criticisms that show how the potential of restorative justice cannot be fully realised within the criminal justice system.

2. Method

Regarding the methodology used, the collection of information for this work involved research in DiscoverEd (The University of Edinburgh platform), Web of Knowledge, Google Scholar, and Microsoft Academic resources. For the searches, the terms used were 'criminal justice', 'criminology' and 'restorative justice'. After procuring the results, the articles and books were briefly examined by reading their titles and abstracts in order to filter the articles obtained with the theme of this article.

As this is an article prepared from secondary data, resulting from other research carried out on the subject, the path taken here was to construct our own arguments, highlighting the most important points from the research carried out, seeking argumentative consolidation, coherence, seriousness, and originality in propositions. The use of existing data (secondary data analysis) as the research method was chosen because there is already a great number of empirical evidence on the subject and data analysis takes less time and resources, notably for the purpose of this article that is to highlight some of the criticisms that show how the potential of restorative justice cannot be fully realised within the criminal justice system.

3. Results

3.1 Restorative Justice supporters' criticisms of conventional models.

In the Western world, there was a system in which crimes were solved by the community itself. The re-establishment of peace between those involved was emphasised, observing the best way to repair the damage caused to the victim and the community. Gradually, there was a system based on the State's monopoly of conflict and rights. Public authorities, then, assume the exclusive right to punish and the representation of the victim and society in criminal litigation (Christie, 1977, pp. 1-3). In Christie's critique, criminal justice system's steals 'conflicts more rightly owned by victims, offenders, and local communities' (Wood and Suzuki, 2020, p. 904).

Conventional models consider crime to be a breaking of the law and the response to it must be through official mechanisms, administered by the State, led by public agents, and that the victims' interests are represented by a state body (Morris, 2002, p. 598). Thus, most of these models, especially in the Western world, are based on adversarial processes in which two parties find themselves on opposite sides – on the one hand, the accused, on the other, the State. At the end of the process, it is decided whether the accused is guilty or not guilty. If guilty, they will receive a punishment (Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam, 2015, pp. 511-512).

It is questioned whether in conventional models of criminal justice, the interests and needs of the victim are disregarded by a lack of adequate information and absence of effective participation in the process. Furthermore, such models would promote increased incarceration (Van Ness and Strong, 2015, pp. 13-14) and would fail to promote the healing of wounds caused by those involved in the crime – victims, community, offenders.

Another aspect criticised is that conventional justice systems minimise the feelings of those involved, weaken personal and social relationships, and that they have become extremely bureaucratic (Rossner, 2017, p. 968). The

community, also affected by the crime, lost involvement in the resolution of the conflict and began to omit the support that should be given to victims and the reintegration of perpetrators (Johnstone, 2011, p. 11).

All these criticisms, added to the dissatisfaction with the current criminal justice system, and the feeling of a need for change, influenced the emergence and development of restorative justice (Van Ness and Strong, 2015, pp. 15;39).

3.2 What is Restorative Justice and how is it different from conventional models.

Defining restorative justice is a challenging task, with variations in its interpretation. Some people try to define RJ by focusing on the restorative process – people coming together to interact about the crime – and others focus more on the outcomes of the process, such as reparation, forgiveness and the prevention of reoffending. Lastly, others define it by focusing on both the process and the potential end results (Daly, 2016, pp. 9-10; Hoyle, 2017, p. 415; Rossner, 2017, p. 970). The British Ministry of Justice's definition of restorative justice highlights both the process and possible outcomes (Ministry of Justice, 2014, p. 3).

Daly (2016, p. 21) provides a good definition that is worth to transcribe:

Restorative justice is a contemporary justice mechanism to address crime, disputes, and bounded community conflict. The mechanism is a meeting (or several meetings) of affected individuals, facilitated by one or more impartial people. Meetings can take place at all phases of the criminal process – prearrest, diversion from court, presentence, and post-sentence – as well as for offending or conflicts not reported to the police. Specific practices will vary, depending on context, but are guided by rules and procedures that align with what is appropriate in the context of the crime, dispute, or bounded conflict.

It is essential for restorative justice 's understanding that the people involved, and not the State (Morris, 2002, p. 598), receive greater relevance and have greater participation. In addition, that the feelings of the people involved are prioritised, and these participants are invited to have dialogue about the events, their consequences and possible solutions (Rossner, 2017, p. 967; Van Ness and Strong, 2015, p. 64). The objective is to ensure ‘the opportunity for direct and active involvement of the victim, offender, and community in the procedures that follow a crime’ (Van Ness and Strong, 2015, p. 77).

The community has an enormous importance for restorative justice, directly participating in the decision-making process or taking responsibility for the members of the group. According to Braithwaite (1999, p. 105), ‘when communities start taking responsibility for the vulnerabilities of their young offenders and start talking about these vulnerabilities at and after conferences, of course they become more engaged with the deeper institutional sources of the problems’.

Restorative justice does not follow the formality typical of conventional processes and has more informal procedures, aimed at effectively solving the conflict between the parties and with the minimum intervention of a facilitator (Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam, 2015, p. 512).

Finally, RJ is concerned with what must be done to repair the harm caused by the crime – especially to the victim – and is focused on this reparation and not punishment (Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam, 2015, p. 512; Beven, 2005; p. 194, Braithwaite, 2014, p. 18). Another relevant point is the process of reintegration of victims and offenders after carrying out the restorative mechanisms. ‘Reintegration means re-entry into community life as whole, contributing, productive persons. This means acceptance of the person as a member of the community’ (Van Ness and Strong, 2015, p. 120).

Therefore, it can be said that restorative justice is based on principles such as voluntariness, cooperation, sense of responsibility, mutual respect and informality (Braithwaite, 1999; Johnstone, 2011; Van Ness and Strong, 2015; Daly, 2016).

In short, Zernova (2008, p. 35) sums up RJ's aspirations as follows:

to create a new ethical orientation; to develop an alternative to punishment and treatment; to craft a model of criminal justice which will place victims at its centre; to design a way of doing criminal justice which will aim to repair harm and restore peace and harmony in the aftermath of a criminal offence; to construct a justice paradigm that will be characterized by voluntariness; to develop a model of criminal justice which will be de-professionalized, community-based and empowering for crime stakeholders.

3.3 Critiques and limitations of Restorative Justice: some reasons why its potential cannot be fully realised.

Despite exciting promise, restorative justice is not unanimously supported among criminologists and criminal justice scholars. As seen, RJ's aspirations are quite daring and some studies, in fact, demonstrate the relative success of restorative practices 'such as heightened participant satisfaction and reductions in recidivism' (Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam, 2015, p. 532). However, despite scientific findings that evidence some success in using restorative justice mechanisms, several methodological problems are observed when comparing restorative justice and conventional models. Additionally, there was evidence of a difference, but of little relevance (Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam, 2015, pp. 517; 532). In short, there are still many doubts, questions and fears regarding the mass implementation of RJ mechanisms.

One of these criticisms concerns the reduction of recidivism. Restorative justice supporters claim that one of the advantages is that it reduces recidivism (Johnstone, 2011, p. 5; Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam, 2015, pp. 516-517). Despite being controversial and methodologically problematic, some studies show that defendants who go through restorative justice commit fewer crimes in the future compared to those under conventional forms (Johnstone, 2011, pp. 18-19). However, in general, the difference found is small and the success of the practice depends on the full attainment of restorative justice standards – constraining, maximising, emergent standards (Rossner, 2017, p. 980-981). In fact, even Braithwaite (2014, p. 20) seems to recognise some methodological limitations in proving that restorative justice reduces recidivism and that there are no major differences in this regard between RJ and conventional models.

Victim satisfaction is another regular argument in favor of restorative justice. The evaluation of participants – victims and perpetrators – in the RJ mechanisms is, in general, positive, which is one of the optimistic aspects best described in empirical research on the subject (Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam, 2015, p. 516). It is claimed that RJ mechanisms serve victims' interests better than conventional methods (Johnstone, 2011, p. 5). Furthermore, it is stated that RJ mechanisms would bring more psychological benefits to victims, including contact between offender and victim (Rossner, 2017, pp. 979-980). However, it is important to clarify that most restorative justice programs are still limited to less serious crimes and it is not clear whether there are, in fact, benefits to victims of violent crimes with the practices of restorative justice.

One of the criticisms made of restorative justice refers to the belief 'restorative justice lacks legitimacy' (Morris, 2002, p. 609), as coerciveness is something important in the criminal justice system. One of the pillars of RJ is consensus – the solution to the conflict takes place through consensus among those involved and the role of the State in this process is secondary. There is no obligation to a decision made by an impartial third party, as with the conventional model. Thus, restorative justice does not have a theoretical basis and adequate structure to deal with the State's punitive claim when there is resistance on the part of the offender. Willingness, awareness and acceptance of mechanisms are essential in restorative justice's practice (Van Ness and Strong, 2015, p. 77). There will always be a need for the State's coercive force to be used in cases of resistive punitive claims and, also, in cases in which the offender, even after agreeing, withdraws from the pact made. Therefore, restorative justice will never be able to be a single path because it presupposes dialogue and voluntariness without which a consensus and said restoration cannot be reached. It has to be an option, but not the only one, because there must be the path of imposing a penalty – especially when the accused or the victim does not accept dialogue.

One question that is asked about restorative justice is whether it is capable of satisfying the punitive purpose, considered an important aspect, of the criminal justice system (Rossner, 2017, p. 982). Regarding society's expectations of the criminal justice system, Johnstone (2011, p. 21) accurately observes that 'most members of the public, including many victims and potential victims of crime, have certain expectations of the criminal justice system.' Thus, for a considerable part of the community, including victims, a justice application model that proposes dialogue, interaction between victim and offender, and a solution that is consensually adopted through meetings between them, seems wrong or an inadequate response (Hamilton, 2021, p. 175) to different types of crime – especially in cases of serious violent crimes. This feeling of injustice, or that nothing happened to the criminal, reflects a culture rooted in society that the response to crime should be punishment. This culture is difficult to change – it takes time. So, effectively, when it comes to social expectations in relation to criminal justice and the response to crime, culturally, punishment is expected. The results of the application of restorative justice mechanisms are not seen as a punishment and the generalisation of restorative justice to all cases compromises the credibility and trust of a large part of the population in the criminal justice system.

One of restorative justice's objectives is the repair or compensation of harm caused as a form of punishment. In other words, the crime is responded to by looking for a way to compensate or repair the harm caused by that act. This idea is at odds with that of punishment that is concerned with inflicting proportional and adequate punishment on the person causing the harm. The idea of repair is interesting and particularly fair in some cases. The problem arises when reparation is not possible or even not accepted by the victim, who prefers that a punishment be applied. In less serious crimes, reparation seems more adequate and viable. What to do when it comes to murder or another serious crime, for example? Or a crime in which society – in addition to the victim – is severely hit? 'There are some wrongs which are so serious that compensation or reparation is insufficient to put them right' (Johnstone, 2011, p. 22). Therefore, the restorative justice mechanisms must be used insofar as they are adequate, and the conventional methods of imposing a sanction must always be available.

Furthermore, one of the functions of criminal justice is to promote the protection and safety of people. In conventional systems, one way to do this is to remove the individual who has committed a crime from society or to control them in some way, including with the removal of liberty. Thus, through the application of a penalty (punishment) to someone who committed a crime, it is intended to take that case as an example so that other people do not commit the same crime. For restorative justice, the family and the community play an important role in the recovery and prevention of new crimes. This can be done through support groups that monitor and intervene in case of need, as well as monitor any risk that that individual may present. These mechanisms would be more effective, according to restorative justice supporters (Braithwaite, 1989, 1998; Cayley, 1998 as cited in Johnstone, 2011, p. 24). However, as Johnstone (2011, p. 24) points out, mechanisms to protect society may work in some cases, but they are not effective for most situations. They are most effective in smaller, more integrated communities where this control can be exercised more easily and effectively. In fragmented or poorly integrated communities, it is much more complicated to exercise the control necessary to ensure the security of society. Provide dates defining the periods of recruitment and follow-up and the primary sources of the potential subjects, where appropriate. If these dates differ by group, provide the values for each group.

4. Final considerations

Although restorative practices are old, interest in the topic became stronger in the 1990s, due to various criticisms of conventional models, especially with regard to their low effectiveness, high cost and the needs of the victims of crime who tend to receive little importance. There is scientific evidence to show positive aspects of restorative justice practices compared to traditional models. However, some of these studies have methodological limitations and, even so, the results obtained are not easy to interpret.

It is noticeable that the success of restorative justice mechanisms is based on a supposed failure of conventional models. The ideas, while good, do not seem suitable for all types of crimes, all societies and all cultures. The very idea of reparation assumes that this component is desired by the community, but it cannot be said that this thought

is universal. For many people, the response to crime is and must be punishment. On the other hand, restorative justice empowers individuals affected by crime by posing the problem for them to decide on the conflict, weakening the State.

Voluntariness is fundamental to restorative justice mechanisms; remove this component and it is not possible to implement its practices, because the eventual results will not be true or authentic. Therefore, when voluntariness is absent – of the offender or victim – it will be necessary to use the conventional model of imposition of force.

The shift from punishment to restoration, proposed by restorative justice, is interesting. However, it encounters a sociological barrier that is difficult to overcome: social expectations around criminal justice. The idea of justice is still associated with punishment for a large portion of people who do not see “doing justice” in restorative justice mechanisms.

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Relationship between Educational Environments and the Creativity Learning Index in Children

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Abstract

This study investigates environmental factors and their correlation with potential influences on students' creativity and the reinforcement of creative behavior along the trajectory of primary schools. This attempt falls within the research that confirms the positive relationship between an active learning environment and its experiences, its connection to students' abilities and interests, and their future success. It explores how its flexibility allows for more opportunities for learner creativity. This study aims to identify common change or the degree of change in variables by examining the relationship between the educational environment and creative learning. A coefficient analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between creative thinking skills scores of students in both urban and rural environments, revealing a moderate positive correlation reaching statistical significance levels ranging from 0.56 to 0.59. Statistical methods, including arithmetic mean calculations and independent T-Test analysis, were employed to analyze the data. The results shed light on the significance of the environment in facilitating creative learning, showing statistically significant differences attributed to the environmental variable in favor of urban areas. Considering these results, it is recommended to incorporate thinking skills in curricula to enhance the potential of the environment and enrich it with possible programs that increase opportunities for creative learning.

Keywords: Child and Creative Learning, Learning Environments, Relationship with Creativity

1. Introduction

Teaching creative thinking skills is considered both a goal and a methodology to meet the evolving needs of individuals and society in the face of rapid changes in science, technology, and communication. The pursuit of adaptation to this transformation, for knowledge production and transfer, particularly in educational institutions, can contribute to the development of learning experiences and designs that encourage questioning assumptions, analysis, and interpretation as essential aspects of education. These skills are widely spread in future professions, requiring empowerment through intentional methods to provide effective learning and deliver best practices that enrich school learning activities and develop systems to prepare students, equipping them with knowledge and creative skills for the competitive market (Jacobs, 2012). Our goals in this study align with Gardner's interpretation (1993) that creative children possess higher-than-average intellectual skills and achieve high-quality outcomes. Creativity is seen as a fundamental skill for effective learning, and the study sample's exposure to a scientific program focused on creative thinking allowed learners to develop high-level skills such as planning, prediction, communication, productive thinking, and decision-making.

Creative thinking is a crucial skill that can help students transition into the future if we truly believe that there is time and space for creativity in our educational environment (Kaufman, 2015). Education is among the investments that can yield the highest returns for any country globally. It should be viewed as an integral part of the daily life experience that individuals undergo while employing their abilities in tasks that work to identify their potential within educational environments that nurture creativity.

Individuals are born with various predispositions, and the impact of the environment on children's development varies. Researchers have emphasized the contribution of culture, school, and home environments to individual creativity, Thomas, N. G., & Berk, L. E (1981). The study also revealed significant differences between children from rich and poor home environments, especially in variables related to curriculum constraints and work organization, which rarely stimulate creativity. There is increasing pressure on teachers to support and develop future skills.

School structures, characteristics, resource shortages, extracurricular activities, and inflexible teaching do not contribute to the development of mental abilities, and the development of best practices in education and professional training for teachers does not align with research results that link creativity to high levels of thinking. It requires a proper focus on them (Pamsy P. Hui et al. 2022). In this regard, Chan.S & Yuen.M. (2014-2019) has encouraged collaboration between teachers and school leaders to work together in formulating goals and plans that focus on discovering the passion of these children, contributing to the development of their latent abilities.

Considering the field reality, the school education system in the UAE still emphasizes cognitive knowledge and provides fewer opportunities to develop those paths or adjust educational practices to create a valuable methodology that captures learners' interests in an active and engaging environment. Education is seen as playing a strategic role in driving learners to employ knowledge, solve problems, and persevere, encouraging them to form cognitive structures related to cause and effect and explaining their ideas with reasons (Bhakti & Astut, 2018).

In my belief, changing curricula alone will not help our schools, but developing thinking skills and characteristics provides the possibility that enhances the most successful creativity for future jobs, requiring a flexible work environment to deal with the impacts of the technological revolution and information globalization.

2. Study Problem

The current study explores a central role in creative learning, which is the role of the educational environment and its relationship with potential environmental factors that affect students' creativity and creative behavior or the supporting factors. This has added and extended value educationally and culturally as a priority towards excellence. The study aims to anticipate the responsible role of nurturing environments to expand, reflecting the growing needs in terms of educational interventions, training programs, requiring clear adoption of a mission and the declaration of its educational philosophy that enables development opportunities and creative confidence. However, these activities receive less attention, even though they represent a form of positive learning and help students overcome obstacles related to bullying, supporting their learning, and contributing to raising the level of life in their communities, especially in the presence of environments with social backgrounds influencing the concepts that students learn, such as preparedness for collaboration, communication, argument strength, and logic, which are pivotal points in enhancing creativity and awareness, varying from one environment to another.

Therefore, the problem of the study revolves around the methodology that explores the answer to the study problem, which is:

Is there a significant relationship/difference between the response of sample individuals, students in (urban/rural) areas, to the creative thinking test?

Do creative thinking skills differ among students, depending on the (urban/rural) environments?

3. Study Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Explore the relationship between the environment and the creativity learning index in children.
2. Determine the relative contribution of the environment type in explaining the qualitative impact of creative learning.

4. Study Importance

As briefly discussed above, this study is expected to shed light on an aspect that has been of great interest to many researchers, seeking to explain the roles of the environment and its quality in developing students' creative abilities and increasing opportunities for success. This is crucial in the development of future education for societies.

The presence and spread of creative learning in our communities, along with the lack of awareness of its importance in various aspects of life, especially in school education, contribute to the early repulsion of many student capabilities. Furthermore, no similar study has been discussed for children in the UAE, which represents an authentic aspect of this study. In addition to the geographical diversity of the UAE community environments, their environmental and social characteristics are essential factors. The awareness among individuals about nurturing creative potential encourages contributions to modifying the negative relationship between the roles of some environments that obscure creative excellence.

This study can be considered unique, as its goals attempt to explore the potential of learning environments and subsequently provide support for students in the early stages of education. It aligns with modern trends in a field that is highly significant by focusing on the role that the environment plays in developing, nurturing, and creating practices and specific interests in nurturing the creative potential of children.

Hu (2007) emphasizes that creative thinking plays an important role in the process of scientific knowledge production. Upon reviewing previous studies, it is evident that research has been conducted on the effects of educational practices on creative thinking in the UAE. It was observed that the educational practices developed in this study had an effective impact on developing creativity in children, making it a rare study in this regard.

5. Study Terminology

5.1. Educational Environment

The educational environment is one of the most influential factors in the success of the upbringing and cognitive growth of the child. It involves direct effects based on experience, adaptations of the learning environment, curriculum, teaching methods, and strategies that embody content modification. Additionally, it includes family culture, community events, and a wide range of activities that help learners grow and participate. Non-formal education not only brings multiple benefits to individuals but also provides a broader perspective on learning.

The quality of the environment is measured by its ability to provide an educational environment according to appropriate standards. This enables stakeholders and representatives of the community to supply students with the necessary materials to achieve their academic goals and continuously improve the educational outcome. This is achieved by focusing on preventing students from failing rather than revealing failure after it occurs, using appropriate statistical control methods (Dahar and Niwaz 2010).

5.2. Creative Learning

It is measured by the total scores obtained by the student on the creative thinking scale.

5.3. Creativity

The known perspective of creative aspects includes creative personality, creative environment, creative product, and the creative process. Torrance (1993) defined creativity as mental effort for multiple aspects involving problem-solving and knowledge gap filling.

Thus, we can say that problem-solving can be mediated by the ability for imaginative thinking. Intelligence is explained as the ability to solve problems, and this intelligence is linked to the creative process and creative behavior.

5.4. Creative Thinking

There are many definitions of creative thinking in educational literature.

-Aljughiman (2018¹⁷³) sees it as the ability to generate unprecedented ideas closely related to knowledge, basic skills, and looking at problems from different perspectives than the prevailing ones.

-Torrance (1988) described it as the process of perceiving difficulties, problems, gaps in information, missing elements, attempting to solve deficiencies, evaluating and testing hypotheses, and coming up with solutions regarding them. Torrance also identified four dimensions of creative thinking: fluency, originality, elaboration, and flexibility.

- **Fluency:** Generating the maximum number of ideas in a limited time.
- **Originality:** Unique, unprecedented ideas.
- **Elaboration:** Adding details to the model.
- **Flexibility:** Producing different thoughts enabling creative curves (Runco, 2014). Divergent thinking is open to things and leads to suggesting multiple solutions to one problem. The concept of creativity development is associated with the quality indicator in the child's educational environment.

6. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The axis of global educational policies revolves around the challenges of artificial intelligence, its rapid evolution, and the extent of its effective investment. It aligns with the framework of the information and knowledge era, responding to the changing needs of societies, particularly the development of an individual's ability to recognize possibilities in environments. This empowers individuals to actively participate in and improve their communities, focusing on learning, problem-solving, and creativity (Barab & Plucker, 2002).

It is undeniable that the optimal way to link this evolution with educational environments is by adopting strategies for thinking skills and innovation (Mota & Scott, 2016). Our educational institutions need a revolution involving transformations in the style of education and appropriate teaching that students need for success. This enables us to use and deploy our natural resources in the future, employing good thinking and creative ideas to solve these problems, allowing them to make decisions to apply a practical and scientific methodology (Joe Y.E Lau, 2011). Creative learning supports this, emerging as one of the important aspects of learning design, recognizing the roles of the environment as an influential factor.

It is worth noting that most studies emphasize the importance of knowledge as a key determinant of problem-solving abilities in this field (Gagne, 1980). These studies highlight the importance of tasks that require intellectual activities and skills, stressing that separating creativity from academic learning does not contribute to the development of students' creative skills. Fair and inclusive education requires a broader understanding, including connections at different performance levels and relevant task situations in an educational environment that provides the best climate for nurturing; however, in our educational environment, it is unclear whether there is a relationship between it and the challenges faced.

The real motivation behind this study is that creative learning involves passion, curiosity development, thinking outside the box, and its application. Chan.S & Yuen.M. (2014) explain that all teachers need to be aware of the personal and environmental effects that may influence efforts to support creative learning in children, contributing to awareness of the difficulties they may face.

Hammouri and Alahmari (2020) indicated a positive relationship between providing an educational environment with suitable programs for learner development and the success of the educational process. Previous literature confirms that individuals with high abilities are more active in seeking new solutions, leading to innovative and new results under favorable environmental conditions (Renzulli, J.1977). Carpio et al. (2015) emphasize that

problem-solving is preferable to occur through training in situations with the greatest variation in problem-solving solutions. Another component is the relationship between the impact of the educational context and both diversity and challenge as characteristics that can be employed by learners (Fernanda Hellen et al., 2014). Teachers can include the discovery of facts and problem-finding in teaching practices "CPS" (Van Hooijdonk, et al. 2020), providing greater opportunities to meet the needs of most students in the learning environment.

Regarding this, Khreiba's study (2020) pointed to a high level of creative learning, positive statistically significant relationships between the creative learning environment and positive personal learner characteristics. Also, there is a positive statistically significant correlation when positively interacting as one of the dimensions of the creative learning environment and the cognitive aspect of the learner. Moreover, unique temporal dynamics of cognitive processes are essential for coming up with original ideas. It is unknown, therefore, how the environment affects the temporal dynamics of creativity (Daikoku et al. 2021).

The study by Kleibeuker et al. (2016) provides important insights into teaching problems that require thinking outside the box, serving as a useful starting point for modeling the relationship between cognitive neural development that recognizes the complexity of functional brain growth during the transitional stage, and the underlying cognitive processes behind creativity in both verbal and spatial visual fields of performance.

In his study, Lin & Wei Wu (2016) urged teachers to develop more creative teaching methods to educate the new generation of students due to the evolution of communication technology. The important goal of education is to make children learn knowledge and apply it in life, and he emphasized that schools are the key to achieving this. While C. Yildiz and T. Guler Yildiz (2021) found that there is a somewhat positive relationship between the creative thinking scores of children and scientific process skills, and the creativity scores for children with a high-quality environment are higher. The creativity scores for children's thinking skills vary in favor of children with parents with higher levels of education.

Here, the researcher confirms the view that traditional education, which focuses solely on knowledge, represents a weak presence for capabilities and their potential for development (Rogers, 1962). This stands as a framework for thinking processes, whereas learner engagement in active learning can enhance the creative atmosphere of schools (Gagne, 1980). The roles of the educational environment and its adaptation to achieve goals and personal characteristics should reflect an elevated image of successful learning practices. When learners can reshape their roles and demonstrate their creative problem-solving abilities, it transforms the essence of the learning process for the educational unit into an interactive and stimulating environment. This encourages them to participate in planning and provides a principle for independence based on their intellectual and psychological interests. This is something that teachers need to create in learning environments (Bhakti, Y. B., & Astuti, I. A. D. 2018).

No wonder, as thinking programs serve as a source to provide individuals with a set of strategies, enriching the children's environment with knowledge and skills, and driving a passion for creative learning (Al-Salihin et al., 2020). An expert teacher allows children to deal with problems and the environment without interruption, as such interventions often hinder creative flows (Christina and Brendel, 2017). In this regard, Vivian M.Y. Cheng (2019) adds that high-level creative developments, such as new and innovative thinking, were found when expressing confidence in this type of learning. Students described learning strategies as a form of active and enjoyable learning that encouraged them to develop their curiosity, appreciate their ideas, and think on a broader scale. They considered it a better understanding of scientific knowledge, positive attitudes, and major gains for them.

In another context, studies have shown that educational environmental factors have a significant impact on individual creative performance and organizational preparedness, as evidenced by Delphi analysis (FDM) examining factors classified into four dimensions: individual and family traits, community elements, and school. The community is considered a criterion for the social and cultural education environment, being the most significant influencer in developing students' creativity. Results indicate that an improved social environment, which can create a suitable incentive from the external environment, establishes a preventive space for knowledge and creativity in line with the knowledge-based economic era. It instills diverse creative education in daily life, considering important skills for the local community that include valuable ideas. Programs related to the social

and cultural education environment were classified as helping to increase success (Mota & Scott, 2016⁵¹), which we believe are among the most influential factors in developing a child's creativity, as described by experts.

We argue in this research for a vision to enhance those potentials and practices that are more successful in the context of social and school education environments. It is crucial to realize that classroom environments are an important factor contributing to confirming a mentally rich learning community, and Bezerra et al. (2022) found a slowdown in reading acquisition due to social and economic variables.

7. Educational Environments

Elevating educational environments and their performance requires providing development opportunities for programs that focus on education aimed at meeting and developing learners' needs and problem-solving. It involves offering projects that help expand interests and classroom educational activities and experiences in and outside the school environment. Teachers should possess a wide range of skills that increase success opportunities. According to Hoy, W.K. (2003), the school environment's climate permeates the entire school and is invoked through the common perspectives of all stakeholders. The level and type of personal communication in the school have an impact on children's cognitive, social, and psychological growth, encompassing all personal exchanges among teaching staff themselves, between students and teaching staff, among students as a whole, and between the school and families. Readings on primary classroom environments revealed two interrelated environmental factors: (a) the school and (b) the community. Creativity in these environments can be achieved through a mix of special teacher characteristics, proper preparation to reduce potential issues in their planning, management, and a supportive school environment, as well as understanding parents (Dikici & Soh, 2015).

Recent experimental research has provided evidence that students engaging in tasks in a creatively rich environment yield better results than their peers in an environment lacking the application of creative thinking skills (McCoy & Evans, 2002). Cognitive processes such as planning, prediction, hypothesis generation, experimentation, problem-solving, and result interpretation are closely related to creative learning (Hu, 2002).

The experience available in the environment is crucial for developing high-level thinking individuals, indicating the quality of the learning environment and the mental health of learners. It provides opportunities for developing communication and expressing creative ideas in the future (Davis, 2014⁴³⁵). Research on these students has consistently shown differences in school adaptation. For instance, students who are new to school may not have a significant connection between school adaptation and achievement attempts (Yoleri & Taniş, 2014), while the ability for self-regulation in learning in relation to academic performance (Lindner, R. W., & Harris, B., 1992), Self-regulation in learning is related to the level of environment, education, and awareness, allowing them to facilitate cognitive advancement and concept formation (Azur, 2015). Additionally, students who have social and learning goals for task performance achieve greater success (Wentzel, K.R. & Asher, S.R. 1995).

According to UNESCO, the characteristics of educational environments involve possibilities for directed learning towards achieving a sustainable future for communities. Development is more than just increasing or decreasing national income; it involves creating an environment where individuals can develop their full potential, increase their experiences, and live a fruitful life according to their needs and interests, appreciating the life they lead (Mota & Scott, 2016²⁰⁶), which is the essence of development.

In this way, it is important to understand that children cannot access services in the absence of high-quality learning and care. Natural potential quickly disappears, and an environment that creates suitable and stimulating conditions for discovery and learning provides an effective platform for enabling and flourishing talents (Callagher, 1994). The latent creativity within a child may be undermined and never revealed if there is a lack of community and environmental support and response to recognizing and employing it at each stage. Attention to the learning environment begins early by finding alternatives and options that support small creativity (Craft, 2001). The balance between environmental components and thinking skills remains crucial for creating and fostering creative learning, as it is linked to thinking and problem-solving exploration (Sternberg R.J, 1998).

8. How can we study creativity?

According to literature that has addressed creativity, those dealing with this issue affirm that the cultural and environmental context is a significant factor in determining the conducive conditions essential for the development of creative activities (Sternberg & Lubart, 1990). This is particularly crucial for nurturing creative thinkers and leaders. In this context, educators are urged to contribute individually and collectively to provide opportunities for students to explore their interests more deeply. They should then refer these interests for further developmental support, recognizing potential as an entry point for profound and positive growth. The curriculum should incorporate beneficial practices for thinking skills and problem-solving, considering the consensus in literature that creativity can be improved (Amabile, 1996; Baer & Kaufman, 2006; Kropfli, 1992; Kaufman, Beghetto, 2009; Torrance, 1968, 1995).). Based on this, deviating from it has consequences. Isolation in traditional classroom settings, away from the broader world, may be one of the causes of leaving talented individuals to learn. Therefore, developing the roles of teachers and their beliefs in their ability to change teaching methods is a cultural imperative (Margaret L. et al. 2021¹⁵⁵), to align with both the curriculum and modern strategies.

Furthermore, recent research has indicated that the design thinking methodology is considered one of the best ways to prepare future students for creative development, yet it is often overlooked. Hence, it can be said that the learning environment still does not fully harness all motivational energies, especially for high-thinking individuals and support for their creativity (Kraft, 2006). The development of this creativity is often related to the roles of teachers, which include maintaining an open attitude toward creative ideas or behaviors, thus fostering student creativity (Dikici & Soh, 2015).

In fact, Cachia et al. (2010) supported the idea of supporting creative learning, suggesting its development within current and future educational curricula that align with future skills strategies. This involves strong connections between a student-centered learning environment that allows learners to go beyond the provided knowledge. Additionally, David (2012) believes that there are teaching principles that encourage creative learning. Whether these actions are partial or comprehensive, creative teaching consists of creating an educational environment that encourages students to see the essence and details of a subject, formulate problems, and solve them. Engaging learners in activities that embrace the application of thinking skills helps teachers identify the types of learners in the classroom.

In summary, the actual impact of the school environment on creativity levels will only be achieved by developing a culture that promotes creative learning and utilizes capabilities. This requires high standards that push everyone towards achievement, with competent teachers contributing to the development of activities and programs for these students. The ability to think outside the box is formed in elementary school.

9. Measuring the dimensions of creativity

The primary aim of this study is to highlight the roles of the environment in developing creative performance, making it the focus for achieving the required development of learners' cognitive skills. This self-management allows learners to effectively face future challenges by applying appropriate strategies that qualify them to be active and future contributors.

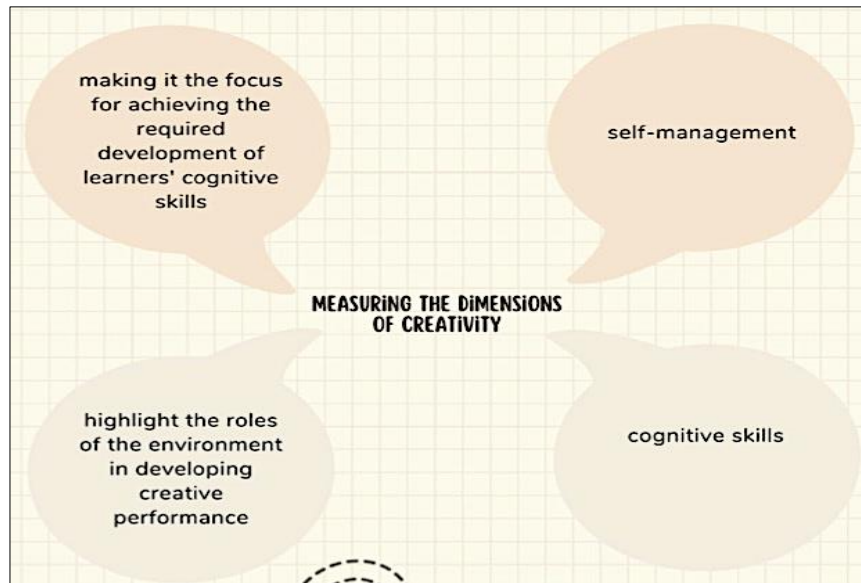


Figure 1: Measuring the Dimensions of Creativity

Numerous studies have attempted to explore the nature of the relationship between the environment and learning methods that stimulate learner development. The current study focuses on the relationship between the educational environment and the indicator of creative learning. This exploration began with Rhodes (1961), who identified four aspects influencing individual creativity, known as the four elements: the individual, the product, the process, and the environment. He emphasized the correlation between these four elements - the individual representing the different characteristics and creative potential, the creative environment and problem-solving solutions - with our study primarily focusing on the creative environment as a core factor. The educational environment is essential for supporting creativity, often referred to as the conditions that support educational, psychological, and physical factors. Through this research, which calls for the improvement of learning environments for creativity, we question: What effects will the implementation of thinking education in the UAE have on students' performance and the development of their potential?

The study conducted by Chan.s & Yuen.M. (2014) examined the relationship between students' creativity, learning strategies, creative environment curricula, learning activities, and external learning. The study concluded that the learning environment is necessary to support creative potential in an atmosphere where ideas are evaluated, and errors are considered an essential part of the learning process.

Our review of research in the context of school environments has led to calls for improving classrooms and the learning environment in general. The assumption has been interpreted as the inability of systems to perceive the mental processes individuals will employ for creativity (Kettler et al. 2018).

Related research discussing the application of creative thinking skills, various research methods, evaluation models, statistical analysis, and the interpretation of results regarding the relationship between these factors and the environment are diverse. Studies like Sternberg & Lubart (1999) discussed the impact of cognitive ability factors, knowledge, thinking methods, personal characteristics, and environmental elements as factors that may enhance or hinder creative processes, understanding the relationship between the environment's influence and its role in students' creative learning.

10. Statistical Processes

The researcher used a set of statistical processes, including:

- mean averages
- standard deviations
- Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.

Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the difference between the average scores of the study's two samples on the creativity scale.

11. Data Collection and Analysis

-Participants:

The current study included a random sample of 55 participants attending public primary schools in cities and villages in the United Arab Emirates. Regarding the correlational study sample, Fraenkel et al. (2011) mentioned that samples for correlational studies should consist of at least 50 participants.

The results of this study were obtained after documenting, processing, analyzing, and presenting the data according to the study's questions.

-Conducting an analysis of the relationship between thinking skills and the quality of the environment:

1- Frank Williams Creative Thinking Test

- The Divergent Thinking Scale measures fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, and title. Williams (2003) highlights that the test has several features and emphasizes its importance as a method for measuring a set of characteristics associated with the creative process, the creative individual, and the creative outcome. The four factors discovered initially through factor analysis led to the identification of creative thinking in Guilford's intelligence model.

The test exhibited a statistically significant correlation ($\alpha= 0.05$) between the total score of the Divergent Thinking Test (A) and the Torrance Creative Thinking Scale, with a correlation coefficient of (0.479), indicating the scale's reliability (Khair Allah, 2014).

The applied scale aimed to detect the creative potential and abilities of the study participants, containing 12 frames with shapes that required completing a creative drawing measuring fluency, flexibility, originality, details, and providing a title based on the image. The total application time for the scale test in this study was limited to 10 minutes for each activity.

The study also used the evaluation of characteristics associated with the creative process, creative individuals, and creative outcomes, focusing on fluency, flexibility, originality, details, and title, where fluency represents the quantitative ability of produced ideas, flexibility is the ability to adopt different approaches to problem-solving, and originality represents uniqueness, rarity, nonconformity, and viewing problems from different perspectives.

12. Methods

This study is based on a correlational research model, which is one of the quantitative methods. Correlational studies examine the level of relationship between at least two variables, and exploring the relationship in correlational studies does not establish a causal relationship.

The aim of this study is to identify the common change and/or the degree of change in variables by examining the relationship between the creative learning environments.

In studying and reviewing assessment tools, the Frank Williams scale was used. From its previous applications, it is believed to measure students' abilities to explore and present ideas (Williams, 1993) and to plan tasks in light of the field of multiple skills such as communication, productive thinking, prediction, planning, decision-making, which the experimental sample students were exposed to through the program.

13. Presentation, interpretation, and discussion of results

The results of this study were reached after documenting, processing, analyzing, and presenting the data according to the study questions.

We review the results obtained in accordance with the sequence of research questions, then draw conclusions and recommendations. As follows:

- The study used exercises to assess characteristics associated with the creative process, the creative individual, and the creative outcome, with four factors (fluency, flexibility, originality, details, and titling):

- **Fluency** represents the quantitative ability of produced ideas; an individual with intellectual fluency is characterized by productivity.
- **Flexibility** is defined as the ability to approach a problem in various ways.
- **Originality** represents uniqueness, rarity, non-conformity, and viewing problems from different angles.
- **Details** involve the number of additions in elements inside or outside the shapes.
- **Titling** relates to the length of complexity in the vocabulary used for each drawing.

14. Results of the first question: Is there a significant relationship/difference between the response of sample individuals, students in (urban/rural) areas, to the creative thinking test?

Calculating the differences in the response of the sample individuals to the creative thinking test between urban and rural groups:

- A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted for the relationship between thinking skills and the learning environment. A correlation coefficient was calculated between the creative thinking skills of students and the learning environment, urban and rural. All correlations reached a statistically significant level, and a positive correlation was observed ranging from 0.56 to 59.0, indicating a moderate inverse correlation.

- Calculating the differences in the total score of the creative thinking test to identify the results by calculating the means and standard deviations for the study sample's response to the total score of the creative thinking test based on the environment variable.

-Reviewing the results of calculating the means, standard deviations, and probability values for the grades of urban/rural students on the Frank Williams Creative Thinking Scale before and after the proposed program application showed in table (1):

Test Type	Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T Test	P Value
Before					1.02	0.367
	Urban Students	33	59.73	14.75		
	Rural Students	22	62.48	12.09		
After					16.22	0
	Urban Students	33	79.18	8.94		
	Rural Students	22	73.82	8.64		

From the above table, it is evident that the average scores and standard deviations for the group of rural students in the pre-test were (62.48) and (12.09), respectively, and the average scores for the group of rural students in the post-test were (73.82) with a standard deviation of (8.64). This indicates a statistically significant difference between their scores in the pre-test and post-test, suggesting a positive effect of the Thinking Skills Program on creative learning among students.

The table also shows that the average scores for the urban group in the pre-test were (59.73) with a standard deviation of (14.75), and their average scores in the post-test were (79.18) with a standard deviation of (8.94). This indicates a preliminary indication of a higher level of creative learning for the urban group compared to the rural group.

15. Results of the Second Question: Do creative thinking skills differ among students, depending on the (urban/rural) environments?

Calculating the results of the pre-test and post-test between urban and rural groups:

Statistical differences will be calculated between the two groups (urban/rural), followed by assessing the impact of the proposed Thinking Skills program on creative learning for both research groups.

The data were statistically processed using the T-Test for two independent samples, and the calculated t-values and p-values are presented in Table (2), which shows the mean scores, standard deviations, and t-values for the study groups (urban/rural).

Group	Procedure	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	T-Value	P-Value	Significance Level
Rural Students	Before	22	59.7	14.7	34	-5.29	0.000	Significant
	After	22	79.18	8.94				
Urban Students	Before	33	62.5	12.1	57	-4.38	0.000	Significant
	After	33	73.5	8.64				

From the above Table (2), we find that the average scores of rural students in the pre-test for creative thinking were (59.7) with a standard deviation of (14.1). The average scores for urban students were (62.5) with a standard deviation of (12.1). The calculated p-value was greater than the significance level of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant differences between the study groups before the implementation of the Frank Thinking Scale for creative thinking.

The average scores for rural students in the post-test were (79.18) with a standard deviation of (8.94), while the average scores for urban students was (73.5) with a standard deviation of (8.64). The p-values between the study groups were (0.00), confirming statistically significant differences between the study groups after the implementation of the proposed program. This suggests a substantial positive impact of the Thinking Skills program on enhancing creative learning among the study groups.

The overall results post-test indicates significant improvement, and the activities provided succeeded in developing learners' thinking. Students are likely to succeed academically and develop more positively in a healthy school environment, working with thinking and problem-solving frameworks. When students learn and thrive through evaluating and synthesizing new information, given the opportunity for exploration and discussion, they become better prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century, armed with deep knowledge (Knodt, 2009). They are ready to question assumptions and provide bold solutions, portraying the vision of developing capabilities and leaders of the next generation in our schools. This flows from the awareness of creating opportunities and creating an academically creative environment supported by environmental activities and community experiences to enhance the image of their local communities.

Student participation in learning, problem-solving, asking questions, and planning solutions; employing discussion with others using models and acquired knowledge has helped develop communication, planning, prediction, accepting opinions, understanding different perspectives, contributing to a deeper understanding of the subject. I believe that these discussions, writing their thoughts, notes, and sharing their feelings with their classmates will provide us with the evidence we need that they will be successful learners in the future. However, their development is currently lacking in our schools (Piske, F. H. R. et al., 2014).

The results indicate agreement with most previous studies, demonstrating a connection between a child's thinking and their representation of the environment, according to psychologists. The findings supported the roles of the classroom environment and teaching methods, emphasizing the crucial role of teachers in nurturing creative potential. The impact of implementing activities related to thinking skills and problem-solving was observed as an opportunity to facilitate changes, breaking the constraints of conventional thinking. True learning for students occurs in a flexible and highly effective environment for applying thinking skills and solving problems, allowing them to explore challenges through testing various strategies (Goldschmidt, Smolkov, 2006). There is a significant indication of children's performance being influenced by an environment that provides opportunities for choice and sufficient time for learning, especially in tasks with a significant impact on their performance, particularly in schools where teachers promote thinking and expand goals for students, fostering their creative potential (M. Besançon, T. Lubart, 2007). The skills required by students in the twenty-first century demand deep learning, problem-solving, questioning, and risk-taking in ideas. Some influential correlations that require further research emerge because differences sometimes stem from variations in the social and environmental context (Richa Sharma, 2011). Classroom dynamics and traditional teaching methods (Thomas and Berk, 1981) also play a role. Teachers need a solid foundation in research and theory related to creativity, as well as a diverse range of teaching and management strategies that connect research with practice. The great opportunities lie in adopting training

programs for teachers, aiming to develop essential skills, selecting appropriate strategies, and aligning them to transform our schools into institutions that shift from teaching basic skills to nurturing constructive skills, leading into the future.

Readings suggest that a system of factors can influence the relationship between the school environment and the creative performance of learners. Most of these factors are determined by conditions and socio-cultural factors, including the quality of education, psychological factors, and the positive and active contribution that responds to the energy of learners and their engagement with learning (Al-Khaza'i, 2020). Social upbringing methods and available opportunities also play a role in developing or limiting the creative interests and inclinations of learners, hinting at statistically significant differences.

Based on the results that emerged, they indicate that the environment has a significant and effective impact on the development and shaping of creativity. It creates a space to stimulate personal, academic, and creative skills in learners. This awareness prompts us to plan for strategically selecting essential strategies in creativity, curiosity, problem-solving, and neutralizing factors and conditions that could undermine support for creative learning in classrooms. School administrators should actively work on this, being aware of issues related to future learning that activates its essence through creative thinking as a goal for effective learning design and successful development. Furthermore, there is an attempt to encourage primary school teachers to create attractive and inspiring spaces within school environments to stimulate ideas.

The study revealed differences in learners' performance, even though students were exposed to the same training program. We noticed variations in performance, such as oral and written communication skills, task planning, and fluency of ideas among students in different environments. This can be justified by cultural and human development differences, personal and social skills, negatively affecting learning and accessing the quality of outcomes.

Positive interaction can be discussed within a learning environment that encourages the development of students' abilities in planning, communication, exploration, experimentation, and active learning. Providing tasks for self-directed learning and continuous development adds value to their confidence, fosters active participation, and feeds creativity, ultimately improving our schools' outcomes. Nevertheless, this doesn't negate the presence of teachers who understand the creative process. They can use deliberate strategies in content selection, lesson planning, material organization, and even assessment creation in ways that help students stimulate cognitive processes and develop skills, building fundamental bridges for creativity.

It is worth mentioning that enriching their repertoire with effective strategies and skills was a fundamental approach in the skills training program (communication, prediction, productive thinking, planning, decision-making), employing them in fostering creative learning, providing tools for experimenting with new methods, and discovering their small potentials. Students expressed a motivational sense of learning, maintaining a competitive edge. The active engagement with the received skills by some indicates that the active interaction itself, based on their connection within a creative design environment for thinking skills tasks, designed to help them learn new things, generate original ideas, and provide reliable evidence that these strategies will be useful for them in future creative behavior, and these are skills that must be enhanced in individuals because they represent their uniqueness. The endeavor to develop teaching sciences that focus on inclinations and skills to enhance their skills for sustainable learning is essential, forming good mental habits, including communication, planning, prediction, decision-making for problem-solving. These skills will inspire them for future use, enabling them to understand societal challenges and take the initiative to solve them, rather than passively listening to ready-made lessons. In my opinion, they will have a profound impact on building confidence in their future performances. Therefore, the developmental generative organizational advancements in creative learning should not be neglected. Gradual creativity is closely linked to product innovation (Leoni, L., et al., 2022).

In conclusion, awareness of positive teaching and learning methods for students by family, school, and society will provide psychological and social support for learners, improving their mental, psychological, and social health, and thus academic performance.

16. Conclusions and Impacts

We are living in a world with diverse interests and changing demands, and this learning serves as an example of how we can bring these learners closer to developing future solutions and productivity that allow their environments to flourish.

- In this experimental research, we provided evidence of the interaction between student creativity and the design of thinking skills task environments. The researcher presented evidence of the contribution of active learning practices to the development of creativity in learners. More of this will provide various opportunities for educators over a longer period.
- This indicates the association of creative learning with a collaborative educational environment, showing that it can contribute to the development of learner readiness and increase opportunities for excellence. Implemented programs contribute to improving the quality of learning for students, enhancing learners' cognitive, planning, communication, prediction, decision-making skills, guiding them towards mastery and creativity, extending to reducing the negative impact of traditional environments.
- Overall, our study provides a framework that future studies will benefit from. It necessitates achieving the goals and objectives for thinking skills, teaching them through curricula. We suggest that future research delve into employing curricular components and diverse environments.

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Immigration Supervision Model for Detainees Living Outside Immigration Detention Centers: Case Study of Detainees for More Than Ten Years in Indonesia

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Abstract

Article 85 of Law Number 6 Year 2011 on Immigration stipulates that detention of foreigners can be carried out until the detainee is deported. However, in the event that the deportation cannot be carried out, the detention may be carried out for a maximum period of ten years. The designated Immigration Officer may remove the detainee from the Immigration Detention Centre if the ten-year period is exceeded and allow the detainee to stay outside of the Immigration Detention Centre by stipulating the obligation to report periodically. To date, there are eight detainees who have been placed outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre due to their detention period of more than ten years. Some of them have even worked and married Indonesian citizens. This social fact needs to be seriously examined, as it has the potential to cause social pathology in the community. The formulation of the problems to be discussed in this research are as follows (1) How is the supervision of detainees who are more than ten years outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre? (2) What is the effective form of field supervision for detainees who are more than ten years outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre? The research method used in this research is normative-empirical legal research which is analysed with the Theory of Law Enforcement Effectiveness and Legal Certainty. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the supervision of detainees who are more than ten years outside the Immigration Detention Centre has not been implemented optimally. The implementation of field supervision of detainees has not been carried out due to the absence of rules or mechanisms related to field supervision of detainees who are more than ten years outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. In fact, the supervision carried out so far has only been carried out administratively and the field supervision, especially for officers, has not been carried out thoroughly for the detainees. In this case, the importance of field supervision is to see that the reported report is in accordance with what they reported, starting from the change of address, status to activities carried out and to control the condition of detainees who are outside living with the general public. This supervision needs to be done in order to avoid any violation of the law by the detainees in social life with the surrounding community.

Keywords: Detainees, Immigration Supervision, Immigration Detention Centre, Ten Years

1. Introduction

The existence of international crossings has made it easier for everyone to move from one country to another. The freedom of movement between countries makes the existence of basic rights or human rights regulated in the constitution (Syahrin, 2018). The development of international migration shows the main role of the state. The state acts as a facilitator to facilitate access for individuals or groups to carry out migration in accordance with the national interests of each country (Sande, 2020).

The presence of the technological era to support the progress of the country cannot be distinguished through the activities, validity and arrival of foreigners in Indonesia (Hendrawan and Shatrya, 2022). As a country that has a qualified location in international relations, starting from a geographical point of view or the ability of natural resources and human resources, causing the flow of people entering and leaving the territory of Indonesia to increase (Anjasmara, et.al., 2022).

The presence of foreigners in Indonesia, in addition to making a good influence, also makes a bad image related to the emergence of criticism of the progress of a nation. The discovery of an illegal immigrant trafficking, infiltration of people, international sale of children and women and the addition of international unions in the aspects of terrorism, narcotics, money laundering, infiltration and others (Wilis, 2009).

The role of control makes a meaningful dimension in protecting government functions according to plan because supervision is equally significant through the implementation of the expected good governance. Supervision in its understanding is aimed entirely at staying away from acts of abuse or deviation related to the objectives to be achieved (Pertiwi, et.al., 2023). With the existence of supervision, it hopes to be able to support the implementation of regulations that have been regulated in achieving the goals that have been prepared effectively and efficiently and to create public governance that is in the nature of organising good governance (Jazuli, 2018).

In terms of understanding, foreigner control is all implementation aimed at controlling the inflow of foreigners in Indonesia who do not comply with immigration regulations (Al-Asfahni, et.al., 2022). The supervision of foreigners has essentially been implemented and started by the Indonesian Representative Office abroad at the time of acceptance to make a visa (Santoso, 2004).

Foreigner supervision is divided into two parts, the first is administrative supervision and field supervision. In its definition, administrative supervision is supervision aimed at the commencement of the initial stage of the immigration process for foreigners, which can be carried out at the Immigration Office or on conveyances found to have foreigners in them. The second is field supervision, which is a foreigner supervision activity carried out outside a certain place within the working area of the Immigration Office (Bahri, 2013).

This field supervision is carried out alone or in combination. In-house field supervision is field supervision conducted by involving officials and employees of the Immigration Office. Joint field supervision is supervision of foreigners carried out simultaneously between other law enforcement agencies whose duties and functions are directly related to foreigners such as the Civil Registration Office and the Education Office (Ahmad and Sa'adah, 2021).

In carrying out the supervision of foreigners through administrative supervision, the first administrative stage is implemented with the receipt of immigration service files sent by foreigners or their guarantors. The entire application data is checked by the officer manually or by the system that checks the application file and banned data by the immigration information system (Muharam, et.al., 2022).

The system is implemented with the intention of collecting all information data on foreigners needed later for field supervision activities. In addition, in relation to the supervision of foreigners through field supervision, the administrative process starts from the issuance of the Head of the Immigration Office's Task Letter that there is a field supervision activity to form a task force and give task force orders in carrying out the implementation of foreigner supervision (Syahputra, 2019).

In exercising such control, a selective policy is needed, which is a policy that applies to all people to enter Indonesian territory. This policy requires only foreigners who provide benefits and are not harmful to security and public order to be given permission to enter and be in the territory of Indonesia. Foreigners who will enter and reside must have appropriate intentions and objectives while in Indonesian territory (Widyanto, et.al., 2020). With the existence of security and public order, there is a functioning state in society as a condition for the national development process regarding the expectations of national goals obtained by regulating the functions of security, order, and the rule of law as well as the fostering of comfort that contributes to the ability to enforce and prevent the occurrence of anything in legal sanctions with several other disturbances that have caused public unrest (Wilis, 2009).

There are two main points of supervision of these people in Indonesia, namely supervision of their whereabouts and activities while they are still in Indonesia. The main thing is that the supervision of their activities requires a related activity between agencies regarding their supervision activities (Jazuli, 2018). Supervision of foreigners must be prioritised again given the increase in international crimes such as human trafficking, human smuggling, and narcotics offences that are often implemented by international crime syndicates structured in this realm (Mayang, et al., 2021).

Immigration function activities are very urgent to protect the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia, where Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world which has 17,508 islands and has a strategic location that has an influence on the cultural, social, political and economic order (Wilis, 2009). Immigration control must be sought to control foreigners not only when they come, but also as long as the person stays in the territory of Indonesia along with their activities (Syahputra, 2019).

The role of the Government of Indonesia, especially the Directorate General of Immigration is explained in the General Elucidation of Government Regulation No. 31 of 2013 to protect the security and order as well as the interests of the state and the Government of Indonesia, prevention and deterrence are carried out on the basis of decisions, requests, or orders from officials authorised to carry out prevention in accordance with the Law, or related agencies in accordance with their duties and functions in terms of deterrence.

The Directorate General of Immigration must take firm action against those who do not comply with immigration regulations who commit immigration offences such as this, who deliberately commit immigration offences in Indonesian territory may be subject to Immigration Administrative Action. For foreigners who are subject to Immigration Administrative Action is one of them in an effort to wait for the sanction of immigration administrative action in Article 1 number 33 the person will be placed in the Immigration Detention Centre (Kurnia, 2019).

According to its definition, the Immigration Detention Centre is a Technical Implementation Unit in the field of Immigration within the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia which is under and responsible to the Regional Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia. The function of the Immigration Detention Centre is to carry out part of the obligations to the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia in the field of Alien Detention, which is under the Directorate General of Immigration.

To carry out the duties of the Immigration Detention Centre, which has the function of carrying out repatriation, detention, determination, deportation and enforcement obligations (Kurnia, 2019). Initially, it was not an Immigration Detention Centre, but according to the explanation in 1992 based on Law Number 9 of 1992 concerning Immigration Article 1 number 15, it is explained that immigration quarantine is a place of temporary placement for foreigners who are subject to expulsion or deportation processes and other immigration actions. In March 2004, based on the Decree of the Minister of Justice and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia Number M.01.PR.07.04 of 2004 concerning the Organisation and Working Procedures of Immigration Detention Centres, it was known that the term Immigration Quarantine was changed to Immigration Detention Centres. At the end of this time, there are currently Immigration Detention Centres in thirteen cities in Indonesia, one of which is the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre.

Elucidation of Article 1 number 33 of Law No. 6 Year 2011 confirms that the Immigration Detention Centre is a technical implementation unit that carries out the Immigration Function as a temporary shelter for Foreigners subject to Immigration Administrative Action. It can be interpreted that the residents of the Immigration Detention Centre are called Detainees based on Article 1 number 35 of Law No. 6 of 2011 concerning Immigration, which is defined as foreigners who have received a decision of detention from immigration officials. There are two criteria for foreigners who are placed in the Immigration Detention Centre.

The first criterion is illegal immigrants, namely foreigners who come or are present in the territory of Indonesia who are not listed in the provisions of the legislation in Article 1 paragraph (1) of the Regulation of the Director General of Immigration Number IMI-1489.UM.05 Year 2010 concerning Handling Illegal Immigrants. These criteria have origins from countries that are usually a problem and aim to choose to become asylum or want refugee status to another country, one of which is Indonesia, which is a transit country that he visited, related to his violation when in Indonesia was arrested by Immigration officers because the immigrant did not have sufficient documents (Sagala, et al., 2021). The next criterion is, immigratoir is a foreigner who comes to the Jakarta area officially, but in fact uses inappropriate documents and uses other people's official documents. The foreigner uses a document that is the same as the original, but not the same as the original document holder. He/she uses the document illegally to be in Indonesian territory as a legal immigrant (Darmawan, 2016).

Table 1: Data on Ten Year Detainees Outside Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre

No.	Name	Gender	Place of Birth	Date of Birth	Citizenship state	Travel Documents	Status Offence	Date of entry into immigration detention centre	Guarantor
1	NYTK	L	Vietnam	1961-01-01	Vietnam	-	Immigratoir / Article 24 of Law No. 9 of 1992	1996-11-27	SE (Wife)
2	MHI	L	Bangladesh	1977-01-01	Bangladesh	-	Immigratoir	2000-09-13	LA (Wife)
3	KK	L	Myanmar	1974-01-01	Myanmar	-	Immigratoir / Article 39 of Law No. 9 of 1992	2003-11-11	N (Wife)
4	MKT	L	Myanmar	1976-10-19	Myanmar	-	Immigratoir	2003-11-13	Siti Komaria (Wife)
5	GA	L	Alzazair	1973-19-10	Alzazair	-	Stateless	2005-04-08	KH. MAI (Az Zikra Foundation)
6	OS	L	Daka	1972-02-03	Bangladesh	-	Immigratoir / Article 42 of Law No. 9 of 1992	1999-11-24	U (Wife)
7	EBW	L	Myanmar	1981-03-23	Myanmar	-	Immigratoir / Article 39 of Law No. 9 of 1992	2000-04-19	K (wife)
8	SA	L	Myanmar	1964-01-01	Myanmar	-	Immigratoir	1987-05-25	-

Source: Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, 2022

According to the information in Table 1 above, there are eight detainees who have been in Jakarta for more than ten years and have been granted permission to stay outside the Immigration Detention Centre. One of the detainees' immigration offences is violating Article 24 of Jakarta Law 9 Year 1992 regarding the presence of foreigners to have an immigration permit while in Jakarta.

The table shows that the period of detention of the detainee has exceeded the period of time to be in the Jakarta area. This is in accordance with Article 85 paragraph (2) of Law Number 6 Year 2011 explaining that a detainee cannot be deported, then the detainee can be detained for a maximum period of ten years. If it is more than ten years, a minister or immigration official may remove the detainee from the Immigration Detention Centre. Then in ten years a detainee still has not been deported, the Minister and Immigration Officials will try to deport the detainees so that later they will not have a negative impact on Indonesian society (Hermawan, 2020).

It can be seen that according to the information above, the detainee has been living in Jakarta for more than ten years and should have been deported from Jakarta. When the detainee is given permission to be outside the Immigration Detention Centre, the detainee is obliged to report periodically to the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre every month with a period of one month as described in Article 221 of the Government

Regulation of the Republic of Jakarta Number 31 Year 2013 (Ryanindityo, 2019). However, in this case it needs to be seen again because with a long enough period of time outside the Immigration Detention Centre, there needs to be a review of the implementation of this reporting every month optimally in accordance with the regulations described. This is important to do in terms of administrative supervision so that there is no legal non-compliance in the implementation (Syahrin, 2017).

From the urgency of the research above, there is a legal impact from the urgency, it is seen that there is a legal vacuum in terms of field supervision of detainees who live outside the Immigration Detention Centre, as explained in Article 174 paragraph (1) of Government Regulation No. 31 Year 2013, namely supervision is divided into two, namely administrative supervision and field supervision. Of course, the role of field supervision is an obligation for Immigration Detention Officers as law enforcement officers or Immigration Officers in conducting field supervision of detainees who are outside the Immigration Detention Centre, but the mechanism or guidelines related to field supervision of detainees who are granted permission outside the Immigration Detention Centre have not been regulated in the rules and regulations to conduct field supervision of detainees.

Secondly, there is legal uncertainty in terms of deportation policy which is explained according to Article 85 paragraph (2) of Immigration Law Number 6 Year 2011 on Immigration that deportation should be carried out for a maximum of ten years for the detainee, but in its implementation according to the detainee's statement above that there are still detainees who are more than ten years still in Jakarta.

Based on the background description, the formulation of the problem to be discussed is as follows (1) How is the supervision of detainees who are more than ten years outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre? (2) What is the effective form of field supervision for detainees who are more than ten years outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre?

2. Method

The research method used in this research is normative-empirical legal research. The normative method explains legal principles and legal theories from legal experts. The purpose of this paper is to explain that normative research has a relationship to law developed on the basis of the ideology of jurists (Tan, 2021). This method is interpreted in the legal order at the level of norms, rules, principles, theories, philosophies, and legal policies to find out problem solving or answers to conflicts either in the form of a regulatory vacuum or the vagueness of a provision in the norm (Qamar and Rezah, 2020). Normative research uses prescriptive analysis which will produce new findings in research. Furthermore, the empirical method is research conducted through a field approach. In the case of this writing, it is put together into data, and processed by means of descriptive analysis techniques, to obtain factual conditions from various field conditions (Benuf and Azhar, 2020).

3. Discussion

3.1 Implementation of Supervision of Detainees outside Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre

3.1.1 The Urgency of Monitoring Detainees Over Ten Years

In its implementation, the role of immigration control is very important in maintaining or protecting the interests of all aspects, especially the guarding of detainees and all aspects in the Immigration Detention Centre environment which includes human resources and security (Duantara, et al., 2023). A detainee is someone who is subject to Immigration Administrative Action and is accommodated in an Immigration Detention Centre or Immigration Detention Centre.

Based on the results of the field analysis, it can be seen that there is a policy of supervising detainees who are more than ten years old which is regulated in Article 85 paragraph (3) of Law Number 6 Year 2011. This provision explains that such detainees are allowed to stay outside with the approval of the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre.

In conducting supervision of detainees who are outside the Immigration Detention Centre, there is no further regulation, especially regarding field supervision of detainees. Immigration supervision itself is divided into two forms, namely administrative and field supervision according to the explanation in Article 174 of Government Regulation Number 31 Year 2013 (Nugroho and Wahyudi, 2018). Based on this regulation, the detainee is required to report periodically every month to the Immigration Detention Centre. This is a form of administrative supervision that is carried out once a month to the Immigration Detention Centre. As for field supervision, there are no specific guidelines to conduct direct supervision outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre.



Figure 2: Administrative Periodic Reporting

Source: Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, 2022

The implementation of administrative reporting as described in the regulation, especially in Article 221 of Government Regulation Number 31 Year 2013, has been implemented in relation to the status of detainees and the last address that must be reported to the Immigration Detention Centre. The process carried out at the Immigration Detention Centre is by signing as proof that the detainee has reported to the Registration, Administration and Reporting Section every month. The results of the report are then recapitulated manually and stored through archives at the Immigration Detention Centre (Darmawan, 2016). The importance of reporting by detainees is to see any changes in their status or address which are intended for all detainees who are outside and can be monitored by the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre (Afirda, et al., 2022).

According to the interview with one of the detainee subjects who has been outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre for more than ten years, it is known that there are indeed changes such as the status of the detainee who is married and there is also a change of address from what was originally reported to the latest change from what was originally reported by the detainee.

The role of the Immigration Detention Centre, especially in conducting supervision, must still be carried out because there are still eight detainees who have been outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre for more than ten years. The detainees are still under the supervision of the Immigration Detention Centre, but because the regulations are allowed, especially by the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre, to allow the detainees to be outside but still under the supervision of the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre (Indah, 2019).

So far, administrative supervision has been carried out by detainees to report their whereabouts to the Immigration Detention Centre, especially in the Registration, Administration and Reporting Section. While in the field supervision, it has not been implemented by the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. Based on observations in the field, the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre officers only wait for the arrival of detainees to report to the

Registration, Administration and Reporting Section to carry out the signature as proof that the detainees have carried out their obligations every month, namely periodic reporting.

The Head of the Security and Order Section, said that there is a need for detailed regulations or guidelines for officers in terms of conducting field supervision of detainees outside the Immigration Detention Centre, so that the Immigration Detention Centre can run in accordance with the regulations set by the State, especially the Immigration.

The importance of field supervision regulations is related to the Theory of Legal Certainty. Soedikno states that an implementation of the law must be in accordance with predetermined rules. The existence of regulations aims to regulate field supervision so that it can be carried out by Officers to carry out supervisory duties towards these detainees.

With the existence of a legal certainty that has been regulated, Immigration Detention Officers and detainees must carry out what is ordered by the regulation. Of course, the regulation aims to be implemented, especially in reporting can be optimised every month and the data attached is in accordance with the original. Furthermore, field supervision by officers can be monitored if there is a change in status or address that detainees report to the Immigration Detention Centre.

3.1.2 2. Suboptimal Monitoring and Reporting of Detainees Over Ten Years

Effectiveness in every activity is very important in the implementation mechanism. With a policy or regulation that regulates the running of an activity that is an obligation to be carried out in each implementation.

In its understanding, effectiveness is a relationship between the intended results through the intended results. Effectiveness in running a programme is the ability to carry out the duties and functions of a programme or planning that is carried out in accordance with the regulations that have been regulated or made (Lathif, 2017). The importance of effectiveness is to be able to see as the implementation that has been carried out in the course of a policy (Sukananda, 2018). The activity can be seen as effective or not from various parties that are carried out, especially in this case from the Immigration Detention Centre and from the Detainees.

Detainees have obligations as stipulated in the regulations in terms of periodic reporting, so this is the measure of effectiveness in terms of the continuity of reporting to the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre.



Figure 3: Periodic Reporting Documents by Detainees Over Ten Years Old
 Source: Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, 2022

Based on the document, it can be seen that detainees have not been reporting regularly once a month to the Immigration Detention Centre as required in the regulation. The example above is the result of data obtained from the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, especially in the Registration, Administration and Reporting Section. In this implementation, there are still detainees who have not reported periodically, especially to report changes in address, status and daily activities. Related to this, the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre can return the detainee to the cell again because they do not carry out reporting obligations to the Immigration Detention Centre (Widyaningrum, et al., 2021). The reporting obligation should be carried out by detainees every month to the Immigration Detention Centre, because they have been allowed to be outside the Immigration Detention Centre as a form of respect for human rights.

Based on Article 222 of Government Regulation No. 31 Year 2013, it is stipulated that if the detainee does not perform the mandatory reporting, the detainee may be returned to the Immigration Detention Centre, for not performing the obligations that the detainee should perform. During the revocation period, the detainee is placed in a cell again for a period of six months. Therefore, it requires awareness from the detainee to carry out his obligation to report periodically to the Immigration Detention Centre. On the other hand, Immigration Detention Officers must continue to appeal and remind detainees of their obligations while outside the Immigration Detention Centre, namely to report periodically every month to the Immigration Detention Centre.

The reporting procedure to the Immigration Detention Centre is done by the detainee coming to the Registration, Administration, and Reporting Section, then reporting to the officer about the latest development of the detainee's status and daily activities. The reporting is done by signing on a sheet such as the documentation sheet previously described (Morradi, 2015). The officer prepares the sheet for each detainee who is outside, then signs or initials it as a sign that the detainee has fulfilled the mandatory reporting obligation. Based on the observation, it is found

that the implementation of this supervision has not been running optimally, because only some detainees have reported back the change of address, as well as their status. So far there are only four detainees who have regularly reported themselves periodically to the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre.

For detainees who have not carried out the reporting should be taken into consideration by the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre so that this implementation can be optimally implemented, and consider imposing sanctions if detainees do not carry out their obligations. After the warning, the field supervision is again effective. Based on the data collected, there are two detainees who actively report their whereabouts again. The Immigration Detention Centre has reintroduced periodic reports for all detainees who are outside the detention centre. However, only a few of them can be contacted again because the address is still the same as the one originally reported.

Based on the statement of the Head of the Registry, Administration, and Reporting Section, cooperation is needed between the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre and out-of-cell detainees to periodically report their whereabouts to the Immigration Detention Centre so that the implementation can run or be effective again in accordance with existing regulations. In the observation in the field, there is an assumption from detainees that they are considered free when they are given permission outside and should not report to the Immigration Detention Centre. Therefore, it is necessary to coordinate or appeal to detainees to continue to carry out the reporting that has been regulated in the legislation (Sentono and Syarhin, 2021).

One of the detainee subjects, KK from Myanmar, stated that the assumption is that if you have already reported, then there is no need to report again in the following month. This is because there is no data change, and the officer already knows his whereabouts. According to him, so far there has been no appeal from the officer to ask him to report to the Immigration Detention Centre.

To find out the reasons for the non-optimal implementation of periodic reporting carried out by detainees outside the cell can be analysed based on Soerjono Soekanto's Theory of Law Enforcement Effectiveness. According to him, the applicability of law in society is influenced by five factors, namely:

a. Legal Factors

The legal factor is the regulation that regulates the existence of detainees who have been more than ten years and are given permission to leave the Immigration Detention Centre by the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre. This provision has been regulated in Article 85 of Immigration Law Number 6 Year 2011 regarding the release of detainees to be outside the Immigration Detention Centre on the basis of permission from the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre. This provision has also been regulated in Article 174 of Government Regulation Number 31 Year 2013 which explains that supervision consists of administrative and field supervision. In terms of administrative supervision, it is regulated in Article 221 related to periodic reporting. For field supervision, especially for officers in carrying out field supervision of out-of-cell detainees who are granted permission, until now there is no rule or guideline for officers in carrying out field supervision of detainees who have been outside the Immigration Detention Centre for more than 10 years. Furthermore, Article 221 regulates periodic or administrative reporting which requires detainees to report once a month to the Immigration Detention Centre. In the implementation, the detainee shall report related to his/her status, change of address and activities conducted while outside the Immigration Detention Centre. Furthermore, if the detainee does not carry out the periodic reporting obligation, then in accordance with the explanation in Article 222, the detainee will be returned to the Immigration Detention Centre and his/her licence will be revoked within a period of six months in accordance with the explanation in the article.

DEPARTEMEN HUKUM DAN HAM RI
 DIREKTORAT JENDERAL IMIGRASI
 KARANTINA IMIGRASI JAKARTA
 JALAN PETA SELATAN 5 D
 JAKARTA BARAT

SURAT – JAMINAN

-----Pada hari ini Kamis tanggal 14 bulan April tahun 2005 saya yang bertanda tangan bawah ini:-----

Nama : [REDACTED]
 Tempat / Tgl. Lahir : [REDACTED]
 Pekerjaan : Ibu Rumah Tangga
 No. KTP : 09 . 5207 . 501082 . 5508
 Alamat : Kalideres RT 007 / 001 Jakarta Barat

-----Dengan ini saya menjamin terhadap Warga Negara Asing yang tersebut di bawah ini :-----

Nama : [REDACTED]
 Tempat / Tgl. Lahir : [REDACTED]
 Pekerjaan : -
 No. Paspor : -
 Alamat : Asrama Karantina Imigrasi Jakarta.
 KEPERAWAN : [REDACTED]

-----Atas pengawasan dan keberadaan Warga Negara Asing tersebut di atas, selama dalam proses penyelesaian penyidikan yang melanggar Pasal 42 Undang-Undang No. 9 Tahun 1992 tentang Keimigrasian dan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku -----

-----Apabila dikemudian hari terjadi sesuatu atas keberadaan Warga Negara Asing tersebut di atas (melarikan diri dll...) maka saya bersedia dituntut sesuai dengan ketentuan hukum yang berlaku di Indonesia.-----

-----Demikian Surat Jaminan ini saya buat dengan sebenarnya dan penuh tanggung jawab.-----

[Signature]
 [Signature]
 METERAI TEMPEL
 6000
 (UMAILAH)

Figure 4: Letter of Guarantee on behalf of Detainee OS

Source: Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, 2022

Furthermore, in the licensing of detainees to be outside, in accordance with the explanation of Article 215, it is determined that the licence to be outside the Immigration Detention Centre must also be submitted to the guarantor or his/her family as well as to the ambassador concerned. In this case, one of the conditions for granting permission is also the existence of a guarantor's statement to guarantee the detainee's stay outside the Immigration Detention Centre. The detention of the detainee is in accordance with the explanation of Article 214 that the deportation action against the detainee has not been implemented, then the detention is carried out for a period of ten years. Article 220 explains that if the period has exceeded ten years, the Minister or the designated Immigration Officer, in this case the Immigration Detention Centre, must continue to implement and seek the deportation of the detainee from Indonesia.

b. The Law Enforcement Factor

This factor is from the legal organiser that must be carried out as regulated in the law. In this case, the law enforcer is the Immigration Detention Centre that carries out the supervisory function to detainees who carry out periodic reporting every month. The mechanism for the implementation of the reporting has been administratively regulated in the regulations regarding the detainees' obligation to report once a month to the Immigration Detention Centre. Facts in the field or direct observation of the implementation of the law from the Immigration Detention Centre as well as from the detainees outside the cell, it turns out that the implementation has not been optimised. It can be seen in accordance with the data in the field that detainees who have been outside the Immigration Detention Centre for more than ten years have not carried out their obligations by routinely reporting every month to the detention centre. This becomes an obstacle and lack of optimal law enforcement to detainees who are more than ten years outside the Immigration Detention Centre, because these detainees are still under the supervision of the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre who should carry out their obligations as regulated in the Law. For this reason, more optimal law enforcement is needed again in carrying out the supervisory function to detainees so that it can run according to the regulations and can be monitored by Immigration Detention Officers.

c. Facility Factor

In supporting the implementation of detention, reporting, and carrying out the supervisory function, the officer waits for the arrival of the detainee to prepare a report sheet for the detainee. The sheet is then initialed or signed as proof that the detainee has reported monthly to the Immigration Detention Centre. In the field observation, the facility factor has not been implemented optimally, because the detainee only comes once a month to report and the Immigration Detention Centre only prepares administratively for the detainee's reporting.

d. Community Factors,

In this case, detainees are given permission to stay outside the Immigration Detention Centre with the approval of the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre. Detainees who are outside live with the surrounding community in their neighbourhood. In the field observation, the surrounding community does not know that the detainee is a foreigner whose status is as a detainee. The surrounding community believes that their presence is difficult to recognise as foreigners, because in terms of language and physically they are almost similar to native Indonesians. Based on an interview with the Head of Kalideres Village, it was found that the village as a representative of the Regional Government has not been aware of the existence of these people or detainees who are not Indonesian citizens and live with the surrounding community. In his statement, it can be feared that legal and social deviations may be committed by the detainees. The village administration said that until now there had been no report related to the disturbing activities carried out or the daily life of the detainees with the community in the Kalideres neighbourhood. It is necessary to coordinate with various parties including the Immigration Detention Centre as an institution that gives permission for detainees to live outside the Immigration Detention Centre and to report to the kelurahan on detainees who are outside and urge detainees to always carry out periodic reporting every month. Next is the Kalideres Village as the domicile of detainees who live in the local area. It is important to coordinate with the Immigration Detention Centre regarding the detainees who live outside in terms of reporting the detainee's address, as well as their daily activities. Lastly, the detainees themselves must always be active in carrying out periodic reporting obligations every month, by coming to the office and always maintaining good relations with the surrounding community.

e. Cultural Factors

This is a social ethic that contains good and bad values in the community. Currently, detainees live with the community because they are authorised by the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre. In direct observation, there has been no reporting to the kelurahan regarding the presence of detainees. The community assumes that the person is a local resident who lives with the community as in general. Regarding reporting, it is not optimal for all detainees to come to the office, only some of them come to the office to report. Some detainees behave well and cooperate in carrying out the supervisory function by answering questions well, reporting changes in address, status and others up to date. The importance of socialisation to detainees from the Immigration Detention Centre in order to carry out their obligation to report periodically every month.

In the results of observations and interviews with the above officials related to detainees who are more than ten years outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre associated with the theoretical factors of law enforcement effectiveness, it turns out that it is not fully in accordance with the rules that have been made or in accordance with the provisions of the legislation. From some of these factors, it can be seen that the law enforcement factors that have been implemented have not been effective in their implementation. In its implementation, the ineffective law enforcement factor can be an influence on other factors that are not effective in accordance with applicable regulations. The implementation of law enforcement that has been carried out still has many shortcomings from the detainees and from the Immigration Detention Centre (Muhlisa and Roisah, 2020). As required by the regulation, detainees are required to report their whereabouts periodically every month to the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. The report includes changes in civil status, address, and daily activities.

But in fact, the detainee has not implemented the reporting as applied in the regulation and through data observation in the field. The Immigration Detention Centre should be able to enforce the law if the detainee does

not report to the Immigration Detention Centre once a month. The Immigration Detention Centre can revoke the detainee's permit to be returned to the cell if the detainee does not perform his/her obligation.

The next factor is from the community. Observations in the field and interviews with the Kalideres urban village stated that there has been no report or confirmation to the urban village. Detainees to date have never reported their presence as foreigners living with the community in Kalideres Kelurahan. Reporting to the kelurahan as the local representative is very important in preventing any irregularities in the field directly. This is very important so that the surrounding community can understand and comprehend the presence of the detainee while living with the community. So far, the community does not know the status of the detainees. The surrounding community assumes that they are just ordinary citizens or local residents who live with them. They also do not know the circumstances and status of the person as a detainee who is given permission to live outside the Immigration Detention Centre.

The suboptimal implementation of a regulation is certainly not in accordance with the expectations of the Law (Hartono, 2012). Therefore, further regulations or adjustments to the policy rules are needed from the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre in handling out-of-cell detainees so that they can be properly monitored in accordance with applicable policies.

Based on the results of observations in the field and analysis in the discussion, the implementation of supervision of Detainees who are more than ten years outside the Immigration Detention Centre has been carried out only administratively as stipulated in the Law, namely administrative and field supervision. Administrative supervision is carried out by means of periodic reporting. However, the supervision does not run optimally because it is not fully implemented every month.

Cooperation between stakeholders is needed in carrying out the supervisory function so that it can be optimised as stipulated in the regulation. The Immigration Detention Centre must continue to appeal to detainees to carry out the reporting, as well as carry out law enforcement to detainees if they do not report to the Immigration Detention Centre once a month. This action is expected to cause a deterrent effect for the detainee to always obey in carrying out the supervisory function.

3.2 Monitoring Methods and Reporting of Detainees Over Ten Years Old

The implementation of field supervision is an important action in supporting the implementation of administrative supervision, as regulated in Article 174 of Government Regulation Number 31 Year 2013. In the implementation in the field, this supervision has not been carried out optimally for out-of-cell detainees who live outside the Immigration Detention Centre. Based on an interview with the Head of Security and Order Section, Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, it is known that the implementation of field supervision cannot be carried out because until now there is no regulation related to detainees who are more than ten years old. Officers have not been provided with legal guidelines that explain how the mechanism of field and administrative supervision of detainees outside the Immigration Detention Centre.

In relation to this issue, the researcher has conducted interviews and observations with several detainees to analyse the obstacles of not reporting detainees for more than ten years to the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. The first detainee is KK who is a Myanmar national. The detainee does activities outside as a trader and also a casual labourer to meet his daily needs with his family. The researcher asked whether the officer had conducted field supervision on him. He explained that the supervision had been carried out but not routinely and for quite a long time because the officer assumed that he already knew the KK's whereabouts and there was no need for direct supervision and reporting back. The same thing was also conveyed by other detainees, namely OS (Bangladesh) and NYKT (Vietnam). In their daily lives, they work as casual labourers to support their families while outside the Immigration Detention Centre. They conveyed that the officers already know their daily whereabouts and there is no need for routine reporting every month back to the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre.

In the observation, it was found that only a few detainees have carried out routine reporting every month, which should be done by all detainees outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. The supervision can run optimally, if it is carried out in synergy between both administrative and field mechanisms. Administrative supervision has begun to be reactivated with some detainees who have reported, but the fact is that they have not fully reported on a regular and scheduled basis.

The implementation of field supervision can be carried out properly if administratively it can run as stipulated. The reporting includes changes in civil status, activities, and the latest address of the detainee. This is important in the role of field supervision implementation, because when the administration has been carried out maximally then the implementation of field supervision can be carried out. This supervision is important to directly see or review the validity of what the detainee actually reported to the Immigration Detention Centre.

The current obstacle is the absence of further regulations related to the mechanism or guidelines that will be implemented by officers to carry out field supervision of detainees living outside the Immigration Detention Centre. This rule is needed to facilitate communication between out-of-cell detainees who have been more than ten years with officers. Supervision is expected to run well if there is a technical rule that will be used as a guideline to remind the out-of-cell detainees of their obligation to report their whereabouts in accordance with the established procedures.

After analysing and conducting field observations related to the implementation of field supervision to detainees, the implementation of supervision has not been carried out optimally, because there is no further regulation (Hasan, 2015). Therefore, recommendations are needed from various parties to examine various inputs to formulate the right field supervision method for officers in carrying out their functions. These recommendations are not only from internal parties but also suggestions and innovations from outside agencies, especially the local government which has the authority to know the whereabouts of the community in accordance with the domicile or residence that the community lives in.

With this legal vacuum, it is feared that it will hamper the performance of the Immigration Detention Centre. Supervision of detainees outside the cells is not optimal, so that the data obtained is not up-to-date. In addition, the absence of this regulation has the potential to cause unrest from the surrounding community regarding the presence of detainees (Surbakti, et al., 2021). To anticipate this problem, the Immigration Detention Centre has made several preventive efforts. For example, preparing a schedule of supervision activities for officers for 3 months to directly see the validity of the documents reported regarding the status, address, and activities of detainees to the Immigration Detention Centre.

This scheduling is expected to support the validity of administrative supervision. The Section Head of Registration, Administration, and Reporting stated that there should be an appeal to the out-of-cell detainees to report to the Immigration Detention Centre and coordinate with the Kalideres Village as the representative of the Local Government. Such cooperation is very important in order to improve effective supervision of the detainees.

Lurah Kalideres conveyed the need for a copy of the report submitted by the detainees to the Immigration Detention Centre, so that the sub-district office is also aware of their presence while living in their domicile. stated that so far there has been no direct reporting to them as representatives of the region regarding the presence and activities of detainees in their jurisdiction. They only know that detainees are foreigners with immigration detention status who are given access to live outside the Immigration Detention Centre. Furthermore, he conveyed the need for a copy of the report submitted by the detainees to the Immigration Detention Centre, so that the kelurahan also knows their whereabouts while living in their domicile. With this report, Kalideres Urban Village can know the activities or whereabouts of the detainees while in the Kalideres area, so that all activities or daily life can be monitored which hopefully will not cause unrest for residents around their destination. According to him, in addition to the need for reporting to the urban village, an identity card from the Immigration Detention Centre is also needed for out-of-cell detainees, as juridical evidence that they have been placed outside the Immigration Detention Centre because they have passed the detention period of more than ten years.

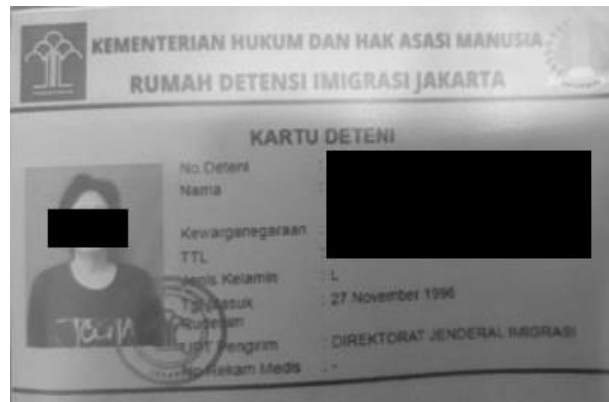


Figure 5: Detainee card for more than ten years outside immigration detention centre on behalf of NYTK
 Source: Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, 2022

Based on field observation and interview with the Section Head of Security and Order, the issuance of detainee card is intended for detainees who live outside the cell or who have been more than 10 years. The purpose of the card is as an identification to the detainee to signify that the detainee is still under the supervision of the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. However, in fact, almost all out-of-cell detainees who are outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, have not all received the card for several reasons. This policy was then re-implemented after the Immigration Detention Centre received complaints from the surrounding community. This obligation must be carried out periodically every month, and must be known by the Immigration Detention Centre and Kalideres Village. The existence of this card aims to make it easier for officers and the public to recognise them as detainees who are granted permission to stay outside the Immigration Detention Centre.

Lampiran XXIV
 Peraturan Direktur Jenderal Imigrasi
 Nomor : F-1002.PR.02.10 Tahun 2006
 Tanggal : 11 September 2006

KARTU DETENI

FOTO UKURAN 4 X 6 cm	NAMA : (L/P) TEMPAT/ TANGGAL LAHIR : KEWARGANEGARAAN : NOMOR, TEMPAT DAN TANGGAL PENGELUARAN, MASA BERLAKU DOKUMEN PERJALANAN : TANGGAL MASUK : TANGGAL KELUAR : INSTANSI PENGIRIM : KASUS/ PERATURAN YANG DILANGGAR : NOMOR DAN TANGGAL SURAT KEPUTUSAN TINDAKAN KEIMIGRASIAN : NOMOR DAN TANGGAL SURAT PERINTAH PENDETENSIAN :
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1

Halaman depan

Catatan petugas:

1. Ciri-ciri Umum:
 - a. Tinggi Badan :
 - b. Warna Kulit :
 - c. Warna Rambut :
 - d. Bentuk Muka :
 - e. Etnik :
2. Ciri-ciri Khusus:
3. Lainnya:
4. Sidik Jari

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Petugas,
 NIP.

2

Halaman belakang

Catatan:

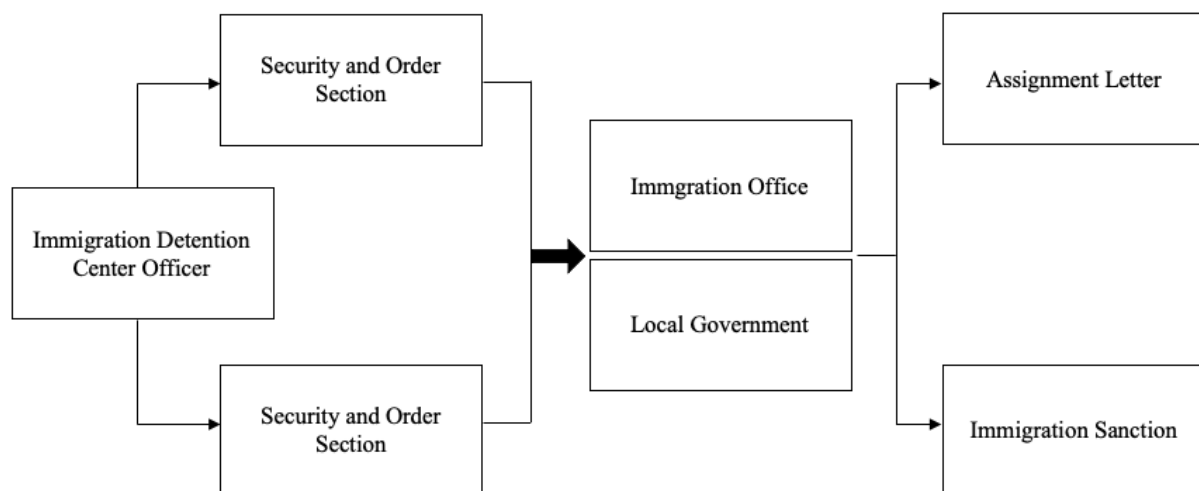
1. Warna Biru Muda, tulisan warna hitam;
2. Ukuran sesuai dengan Kartu KIMU

Figure 6: Detainee Card Attachment
 Source: Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, 2022

The picture above is an example of a detainee card attachment which is a format or example in making Detainee Cards for the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. Comparison with the one made by the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre is quite good, but the data is not yet complete like the example in the format above. This is a matter for reconsideration for the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre in terms of making the detainee card in accordance with the existing format.

The implementation of the card in fact has not been given to all detainees living outside. The Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre should make it in accordance with the above format before it is distributed to detainees who are outside. The existence of the detainee card is a marker that the foreigner concerned is still a detainee who is still in the supervision area of the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre.

With regard to the supervision of out-of-cell detainees, the researcher coordinated with the Head of Deportation Section, Directorate General of Immigration. He stated that until now, there has been no detailed report on the number and whereabouts of detainees who have been outside the Immigration Detention Centre for more than ten years. This is an obstacle because there is no further regulation related to these detainees, especially in terms of supervision of these detainees. He suggested that the supervision should not only be imposed at the Immigration Detention Centre, but should also involve the Local Immigration Office. Coordination is needed between the Immigration Office, the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, and the Regional Representative (Kalideres Village), so that the presence of out-of-cell detainees can be monitored accurately. The mechanism that can be done in the event that the Immigration Office knows that there is an out-of-cell detainee can report his/her whereabouts to the Directorate General of Immigration cq. Sub Directorate of Detention and Deportation. This report is then followed up so that joint immigration supervision can be carried out with related agencies.



1. Immigration Detention Center officers conduct detainees surveillance once every three months.
2. Immigration Detention Center officers create a periodic reporting schedule for detainees

Figure 7: Immigration Supervision Model for Detainees with More than Ten Years of Detention Outside
Immigration Detention Center

Source: Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre, 2022

To respond to the needs in the field, it is necessary to formulate further rules as guidelines or mechanisms for officers in carrying out field supervision functions in order to provide valid data to the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre. One of the main factors from observations in the field is that the absence of further rules related to the supervision of 10-year detainees living outside makes an assumption for detainees after being interviewed that they assume the officers already know their whereabouts and there is no need for direct supervision or review to the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. In carrying out this supervisory function, communication between all parties is required. Creating a flow or scheme of supervision of out-of-cell detainees requires coordination between all parties. The implementation can be done routinely or scheduled according to the reporting done by the detainee.

The Security and Order Section needs to create a schedule for officers to carry out supervision of detainees who have been outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre for more than ten years. The making of detainee cards should be given thoroughly to all detainees who live outside. This is done in order to signify that the foreigner is still a detainee who is granted permission to stay outside with the approval of the Head of the Immigration Detention Centre. The Registration, Administration and Reporting Section prepares the latest data for officers to carry out the monitoring. If the detainee does not report, the above scheme can be a solution to carry out field supervision and carry out law enforcement against the detainee. This mechanism also needs to be done with coordination between all parties. Furthermore, law enforcement against offending out-of-cell detainees needs to be implemented, with the aim of preventing things that are not in accordance with the applicable laws. Officers in carrying out repressive measures, should consider revoking the licence of the detainee first. This is because the detainee is still under the supervision of the Immigration Detention Centre.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the supervision of detainees who are more than ten years outside the Immigration Detention Centre has not been implemented optimally. Immigration Detention Centre and detainees have not performed their obligations as applied in the law. The law enforcement factor that is not implemented by the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre to detainees related to the revocation of permits is not implemented by the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. This activity must be carried out considering that the detainee does not carry out his obligation to report his whereabouts to the Immigration Detention Centre. Periodic supervision that is required for detainees to carry out reporting has not run optimally, because it is not carried out regularly every month at the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre.

The implementation of field supervision of detainees has not been carried out because there is no regulation or mechanism related to field supervision of detainees who are more than ten years outside the Jakarta Immigration Detention Centre. In fact, the supervision carried out so far has only been carried out administratively and the field supervision, especially for officers, has not been carried out thoroughly for the detainees. In this case, the importance of field supervision is to see that the reported report is in accordance with what they reported, starting from the change of address, status to activities carried out and to control the condition of detainees who are outside living with the general public. This supervision needs to be done in order to avoid any violation of the law by the detainees in social life with the surrounding community.

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Social Perception and Support of a Public Sanitation Service in Bandung: Community Insights and Engagement Strategies

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Abstract

This paper presents findings and recommendations to improve wastewater treatment service policy outreach and infrastructure development strategies, aiming to garner better public support and prevent social rejection. Focusing on Bandung City's municipal wastewater management, the study surveyed 400 households to assess community perceptions regarding the expansion of wastewater services and the construction of Fecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs) by 2032, as outlined in the 2011 Wastewater Management Masterplan. The survey, conducted through face-to-face interviews with household decision-makers, employed a structured questionnaire. Significant correlations were found between various factors and public perceptions of the wastewater treatment service in Bandung City, with positive perception strongly linked to infrastructure support. The study highlights the importance of targeted educational efforts to enhance positive perceptions and support for wastewater treatment infrastructure, emphasizing maintenance awareness and engagement. Additionally, door-to-door socialization emerges as the preferred engagement method, highlighting the necessity for tailored approaches to enhance community involvement in wastewater management.

Keywords: Public Service, Local Support, Sanitation, Engagement Strategy, Correlation Analysis

1. Introduction

Safe water supply and sanitation are crucial for sustaining human life, as they play a vital role in preserving public health and well-being. Properly managed disposal of human wastewater prevents the spread of infectious diseases (Cairncross et al., 2010), averts stunted growth in children (Torlesse et al., 2016), maintains water resource quality, and protects communities from the severe impact of waterborne illnesses (Ferreira et al., 2021). Additionally, inadequate sanitation infrastructure places a significant burden on healthcare systems, which could otherwise address other critical health issues (Ferreira et al., 2021). Safe water access and sanitation are stated in the sixth indicator of the UN's SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) which is also used by Indonesia's Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) as a benchmark for the country's sustainable development. In the SDGs —more specifically sub-goal 6.3— the ministry targets safe disposal of wastewater should be increased by half in 2030 (BAPPENAS, 2023).

The Indonesian government regards decentralized wastewater treatment systems (DEWATS) as a promising solution to its wastewater disposal challenges. This commitment is demonstrated through initiatives by the central government to assist local authorities in planning and implementing public sanitation services. However, public acceptance and adoption remain hindered by social stigma. For instance, in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta, locals rejected a 40 billion Indonesian Rupiah plan to build a Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP), citing concerns about environmental damage, such as unpleasant odors and water pollution (Yohanes, D., 2023, September 19). Socio-economic issues were also raised, with doubts about local employment opportunities. Similarly, in Tulungagung Regency, Central Java, a DEWATS installation operated for only five years before ceasing services due to similar public concerns (Setyawan, E., 2024). This resistance has led to significant financial losses and continued rejection of renovation or revival efforts.

Despite its history of rejection, this type of public sanitation system is still planned to be implemented in other cities. One location being Bandung City. Bandung's local government with their wastewater management expansion plans. The success of the Bandung public service plan is dependent on the residents' adoption of policies (Bruch & Atwell, 2015; Xu et al., 2023). The public has the right to choose whether to engage and participate in the service or reject its implementation. Therefore, it is crucial that residents in the targeted area maintain a positive perception of the system and their roles, which will influence their adoption decisions. Conversely, social stigma will lead to low acceptance and adoption (Bruch & Atwell, 2015; Ligtenberg & Bregt, 2014). Thus, it is crucial to understand the current state of public perception to garner public compliance and support for the sanitation policy. This study aims to bridge the analysis of public perception with several factors and characteristics of the targeted service area. To understand which factors may have a correlation with positive perception and support for the sanitation service.

Msaki et al. (2022) uncovered significant differences in the knowledge, attitudes, and perception of treated wastewater were observed across different demographic variables such as age, sex, and education level. Sintondji (2017) and Mosimane & Kamwi (2020) both found that low education levels were associated with poor sanitation practices and limited access to sanitation facilities. This suggests that education plays a significant role in compliance with wastewater sanitation services. Additionally, Mosimane & Kamwi (2020) identified a significant difference in access to sanitation and water services based on education and income levels. (Robinson et al. (2005) also noted that lower income and education levels were associated with less knowledge about wastewater reuse, which could impact compliance with related sanitation services.

A range of factors influence sanitation service compliance, with home ownership and residential status playing a significant role. In India, non-economic factors such as gender, age, education, occupation, religion, and caste, as well as access to water supply and dwelling materials, have a greater impact on latrine use than income (De, 2018). In rural India, the amount of dwelling space owned by households is associated with latrine ownership, and there is significant variation in ownership at the village and state levels (Jain et al., 2019).

Research on public perception of sanitation regulation and services reveals a complex interplay of factors. Friedler & Lahav, 2006; Kandiah et al. (2017) found that public support for wastewater technology is influenced by the perceived benefits and risks. Similarly, Poortvliet et al. (2018) identified pro-environmental personal norms and risk and benefit perceptions as key drivers of acceptance of new sanitation systems. Garnett & Cooper (2014) found that effective dialogue between government and public is crucial for resolving controversial waste management issues and fostering progress through changes in individuals and communities thus facilitating the support for waste sanitation policies.

This study offers a novel exploration into the factors influencing household acceptance of the sanitation service of DEWATS in Bandung City, providing a comprehensive analysis of community perceptions ahead of significant infrastructure developments outlined in the 2011 Wastewater Management Masterplan (Setiyawan et al., 2021). Employing a quantitative approach, the study uses Pearson's correlation analysis to investigate relationships among various demographic factors (including position within the family, age, gender, employment, education, and income), residency status (home ownership and duration of residency), familiarity with decentralized

wastewater services (including septic tank maintenance history), and general perceptions of DEWATS. Additionally, it examines preferences for outreach programs to identify effective social outreach strategies. This multifaceted analysis not only addresses the practical implications of wastewater management but also contributes to the broader understanding of community engagement and acceptance in environmental infrastructure projects.

2. Methods

The methodology employed in this research involves primary data collection through the distribution of door-to-door direct questionnaires in the study area, followed by comprehensive statistical analysis. The detailed steps of the study process are elaborated below.

2.1. Data Collection

2.1.1. Study Area

To ensure the proper management of municipal wastewater, especially fecal waste management, Bandung City conducted studies and developed a Wastewater Management Masterplan in 2011. The plans showed several areas which will be the focus of wastewater service expansion plans in the time span of 2011 to 2032. The east districts of Bandung City areas to be the focus of on-site and off-site communal wastewater treatment development with plans of building a Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) in each area (Setiyawan et al., 2021). The plan for new infrastructure creates an urgency to understand and see the perception of the local community in anticipation of rejection and to promote adoption.

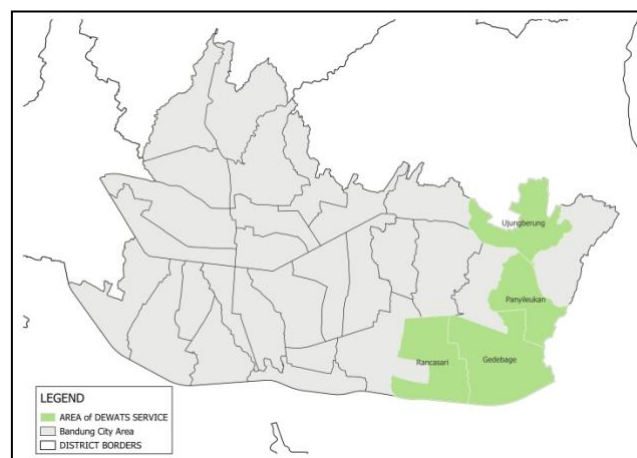


Figure 1: Study Area - Districts in East Bandung

2.1.2. Sample Population

The survey respondents are representatives from each household (Heads of Families). The family representative selected as a respondent is the mother/matriarch of the household. The number of respondents is determined to represent the population of 67,467 households in Gedebage District, Panyileukan District, and Rancasari District. By using the Slovin sampling method, a total of 400 households from the selected sites were involved in the study.

2.2. Survey Process

Quantitative data collection methods were used to obtain primary data. A questionnaire, with structured and semi-structured questions, was the main instrument, which involved face-to-face interviews with one respondent from each of the selected households. Interviews were conducted in February 2024 with the assistance of a trained research assistant who was a local resident of the site being surveyed. The decision makers of the households were chosen as respondents, this meant that it could either be father or mother or any other elder of the family. Although,

in some cases, the decision maker was the adult children of the household. The questionnaire was designed in English and translated into Indonesian, which is the language spoken and understood by the respondents.

Prior to administering the questionnaire to the respondent, a short definition and elaboration on wastewater, wastewater recycling, reuse, and treatment technologies were given and can be seen in Figure 2. The questionnaire was also divided in parts for conciseness as follows:

1. Demographical data of the respondents including position of the respondent in family, age, gender, employment, education, and income.
2. Data concerning residency status was also asked, which included the ownership status of the house, the duration of residency.
3. The history and familiarity of the participants with the decentralized wastewater management service was asked which included their experience in emptying the septic tanks.
4. Their general perception of DEWATS was asked through several questions that represented negative and positive perception.
5. The preferences of outreach program methods were asked for gaining insight into future promising social communication strategies.

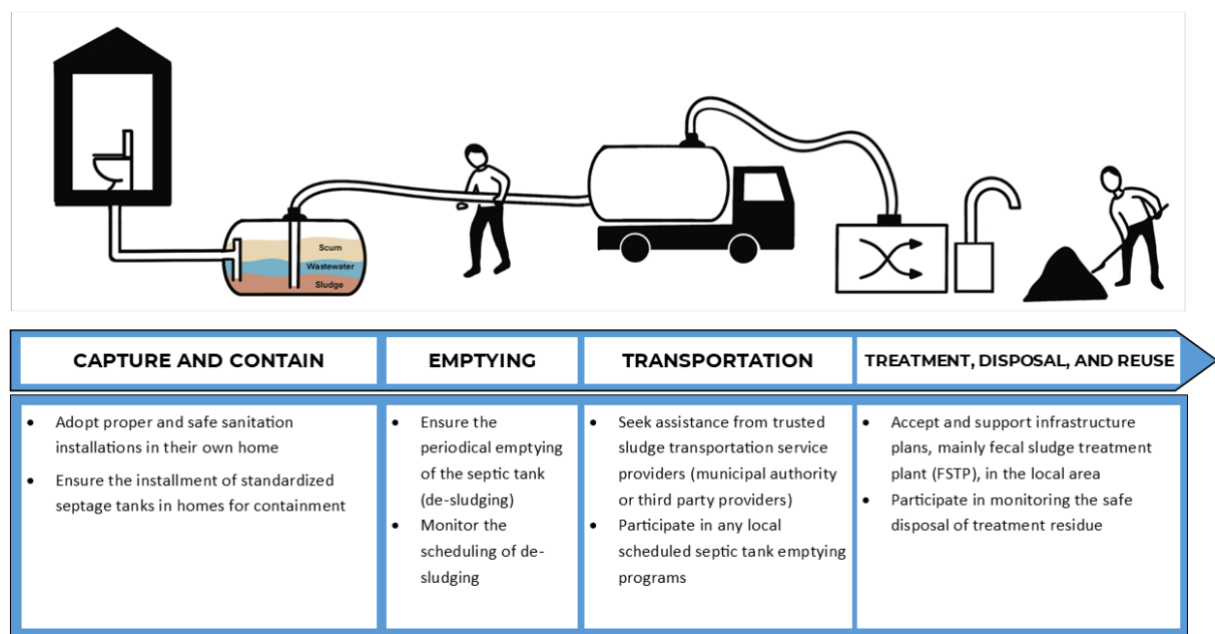


Figure 2: Information given on the public role in the sanitation service

2.3. Variables and sub-variables

The following table outlines various factors influencing household sanitation practices and perceptions. These factors are categorized into demographic, residential, familiarity and history, and perception and support variables. Each variable is defined clearly, with corresponding sub-variables providing further granularity. Sources cited for each definition provide empirical backing and context for the variables. This structured overview aids in understanding the complex dynamics at play in household decision-making and attitudes toward sanitation services.

Table 1: Variables and Sub-variables collected.

Variable	Sub-Variable	Definition	Source
Demographic Factor	Decision Makers of the family	Individuals in the household responsible for making decisions regarding sanitation.	(Msaki et al., 2022)

Variable	Sub-Variable	Definition	Source
	Education Level	The highest degree or level of school completed by members of the household.	(Msaki et al., 2022)
	Income Bracket	The total earnings or income bracket of the household.	(Msaki et al., 2022)
Residential Factor	Home Ownership	Whether the household owns or rents their home.	(De, 2018; Jain et al., 2019)
	Residential Duration	The length of time the household has lived at their current residence.	(De, 2018; Jain et al., 2019)
Familiarity and History	Familiarity with the sanitation service	How well the household knows and understands the local wastewater sanitation services.	(Gómez-Román et al., 2020)
	Septic tank ownership	Whether the household owns a septic tank.	(Velazquez et al., 2015)
	Septic Tank Maintenance History	The record of past maintenance (emptying) activities for the household's septic tank.	(Velazquez et al., 2015)
Perception and Support	Positive perception	Positive perception of wastewater sanitation service	(Friedler & Lahav, 2006; Kandiah et al., 2017)
	Negative Perception	Positive perception of wastewater sanitation service	(Friedler & Lahav, 2006; Kandiah et al., 2017)
	Support for Treatment Infrastructure	Agreement to support of wastewater sanitation service	(Setiyawan et al., 2021)

2.4. Data Analysis

The collected data were catalogued into Microsoft Excel and imported to the R software for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to compute frequencies and percentages of respondents' demographic characteristics. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used in this study to measure the strength and direction of a linear relationship between a respondent's knowledge of wastewater and reuse option by age and educational level. The correlation coefficient is represented by r . Pearson correlation analysis was chosen as it provided means to evaluate the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. It is considered the most effective method for assessing associations due to its reliance on covariance. This coefficient not only reveals the magnitude of the correlation but also its direction. All statistical tests were considered significant at a confidence level of 95% ($P,0.05$).

3. Results

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from the respondents. This begins with an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants, detailing aspects such as age, gender, education level, and socioeconomic status to contextualize the sample population. Following this, a descriptive analysis of public preference is presented, highlighting key trends and patterns in the data. Lastly, the section delves into a correlation analysis, examining the relationships between various demographic factors and public preferences to uncover significant associations and potential influences.

3.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

The provided dataset contains information about participants sampled from different neighborhoods within specific districts. Each row corresponds to a neighborhood within a district, detailing the number of participants sampled and the proportion of the sample relative to the total surveyed population in that district.

In the district of Rancasari, several neighborhoods were surveyed. The neighborhood of Cipamokolan had 34 participants, accounting for 9% of the total sample from Rancasari. Derwati and Manjahlega had 33 and 39 participants, respectively, making up 8% and 10% of the sample from Rancasari. Mekarmulya had 23 participants, representing 6% of the sampled population in Rancasari. In Ujung Berung district, several neighborhoods were also included in the survey. Pasir Endah had 21 participants (5%), Cigending had 38 (10%), Pasirwangi had 25 (6%), Pasirjati had 26 (7%), and Pasanggrahan had 28 participants (7%) sampled from Ujung Berung. In the Gedebage district, neighborhoods such as Cisantren Kidul had 34 participants (9%), Rancabolang had 21 (5%), Rancanumpang had 8 (2%), and Cimenerang had 7 participants (2%). Lastly, the district of Panyileukan surveyed participants from Cipadung Kulon (25 participants, 6%), Cipadung Kidul (20 participants, 5%), Cipadung Wetan (6 participants, 2%), and Mekar Mulya (12 participants, 3%).

This dataset provides a structured overview of participant sampling across various neighborhoods within the four districts of the study area, offering insights into the distribution and representation of surveyed individuals within specific geographical areas.

Table 2: Sample Proportion of Each District

District	Neighborhood	Participants	Sample Portion
RANCASARI	CIPAMOKOLAN	34	9%
RANCASARI	DERWATI	33	8%
RANCASARI	MANJAHLEGA	39	10%
RANCASARI	MEKARMULYA	23	6%
UJUNG BERUNG	PASIR ENDAH	21	5%
UJUNG BERUNG	CIGENDING	38	10%
UJUNG BERUNG	PASIRWANGI	25	6%
UJUNG BERUNG	PASIRJATI	26	7%
UJUNG BERUNG	PASANGGRAHAN	28	7%
GEDEBAGE	CIMENERANG	7	2%
GEDEBAGE	CISANTREN KIDUL	34	9%
GEDEBAGE	RANCABOLANG	21	5%
GEDEBAGE	RANCANUMPANG	8	2%
PANYILEUKAN	CIPADUNG KULON	25	6%
PANYILEUKAN	CIPADUNG KIDUL	20	5%
PANYILEUKAN	CIPADUNG WETAN	6	2%
PANYILEUKAN	MEKAR MULYA	12	3%

Figure 3 presents a breakdown of respondents' occupational statuses in the survey. Most participants, accounting for 56%, identified as housewives, making this the largest single group. Manual laborers constitute the second-largest group at 17%, followed by private sector employees at 13%. Business owners and entrepreneurs make up 7% of the respondents. Those who are currently unemployed or not yet employed represent 3% of the sample. Freelance workers, including digital content creators, account for 2%, while retirees, individuals in the "others" category, and online transportation partners/drivers each constitute 1% of the respondents. Notably, there are no student or university student respondents, as this category is represented by 0%. This distribution highlights the diverse occupational backgrounds of the survey participants, with a significant representation of non-working individuals and manual laborers.

The respondents had an average age of 42 years old. The educational distribution within the surveyed population reveals a predominant presence of individuals with a high school education (SMA), constituting the majority at 57%. This is followed by respondents who completed junior high school (SMP) at 30%, while primary school

graduates (SD) comprise a smaller yet notable portion at 13%. Notably, only a minimal percentage of participants hold a bachelor's degree (S1), representing just 1% of the sample. Surprisingly, no respondents reported having education beyond the undergraduate level (Higher Education). This breakdown underscores the prevalence of high school education among the surveyed group, suggesting potential implications for educational completion levels and their impact on various aspects of the population's perspectives and experiences.

The income distribution among respondents highlights a significant majority falling within the middle-income bracket, with 67% reporting monthly earnings between Rp 2.500.000 and Rp 4.999.999. Additionally, 12% of participants reported earning between Rp 5.000.000 and Rp 9.999.999 per month. Surprisingly, none of the respondents reported an income below Rp 2.500.000. This distribution suggests a concentration of respondents within the middle-income range, possibly reflecting broader economic trends and the financial circumstances of the surveyed population.

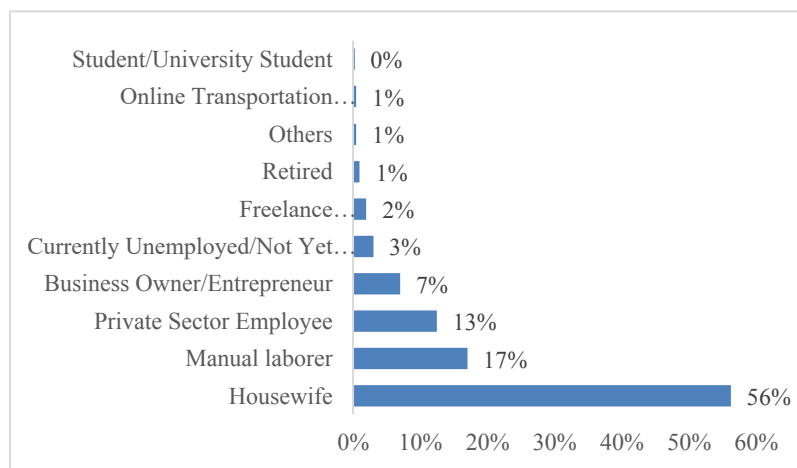


Figure 3: Occupation of respondents.

3.2. Correlation Analysis Results

To analyze the correlation between demographic factors and perception, we examined how various demographic variables relate to individuals' perceptions. Our study focused on understanding the interrelationships between demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education level, income, and occupation, and individuals' perceptions regarding the sanitation service. By collecting and analyzing survey data from a diverse sample population, we were able to quantify these relationships using Pearson's correlation analysis.

3.2.1. Demographic factors and correlation with perception

The correlation analysis reveals the relationships between Positive and Negative Perception of Familial Position, Age, Education Level, and Income Level. Familial Position shows a very weak positive correlation with Positive Perception (< 0.1), suggesting a slight association with higher positive perceptions, and a weak negative correlation with Negative Perception (< 0.1), indicating a slight association with lower negative perceptions. Age has almost no correlation with Positive Perception (-0.0072) but shows a weak negative correlation with Negative Perception (-0.1510), suggesting that younger age slightly relates to lower negative perceptions. Education Level has a very weak positive correlation with Positive Perception (0.0509) and a very weak negative correlation with Negative Perception (-0.0533), indicating minimal correlation in both cases. Lastly, Income Level has a weak positive correlation with Positive Perception (0.1608), suggesting that higher income levels modestly relate to higher positive perceptions, and a weak negative correlation with Negative Perception (-0.1089), indicating a slight association with lower negative perceptions. Overall, demographic factors exhibit generally weak relationships with positive and negative perceptions.

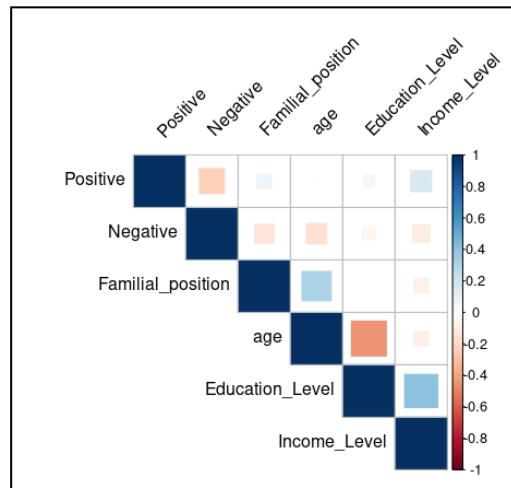


Figure 4: Correlation analysis result between demographic factors and perception

3.2.2. Correlation between residential factors and perception

The majority of participants (74%) own their homes outright (Self ownership), representing 294 individuals. A very small percentage (1%) have the right to utilize or lend the property (Hak Guna), consisting of only 2 individuals. The remaining participants (26%) are renters, totaling 104 individuals. Participants with a residential duration of more than 20 years constitute the largest proportion (56%), with 223 individuals falling into this category. Those with a duration of 0-5 years represent 18% of participants (70 individuals). The categories of 5-10 years and 10-20 years each account for 14% (56 and 51 individuals, respectively) of the surveyed population. These distributions provide a clear snapshot of the home ownership statuses and residential durations among the participants, highlighting variations in housing arrangements and tenure lengths within the surveyed group. Understanding these patterns can offer valuable insights into housing dynamics and demographic characteristics that may influence perceptions and experiences related to the sanitation service.

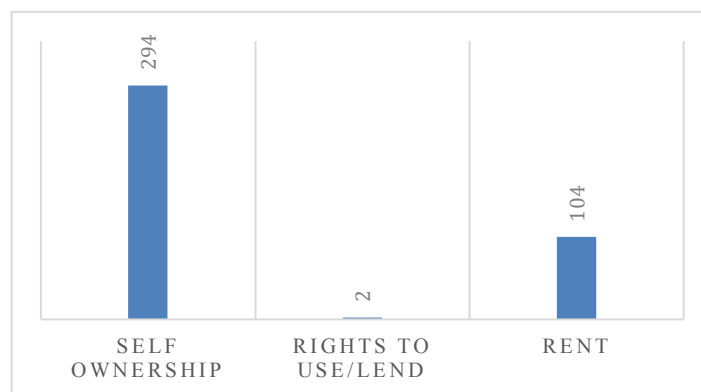


Figure 5: Resident's house ownership status

The results from the analysis of correlations between variables reveal interesting insights into the relationships within the dataset. Regarding housing-related variables, there is a positive correlation (0.2057) between positive perceptions and home ownership status, suggesting a potential association between positive outlooks and owning one's home. However, negative perceptions show a negative correlation (-0.1829) with home ownership status, which shows the probability of internally conflicting opinions of the respondents. Furthermore, the analysis reveals a strong positive correlation (0.7297) between home ownership status and residential duration, implying that the homeowners have been living in that area for a long time, by indication of their residential durations. Consequently, residential duration shows a positive correlation (0.2046) with positive perceptions, suggesting a potential link between longer residential stays and positive outlooks

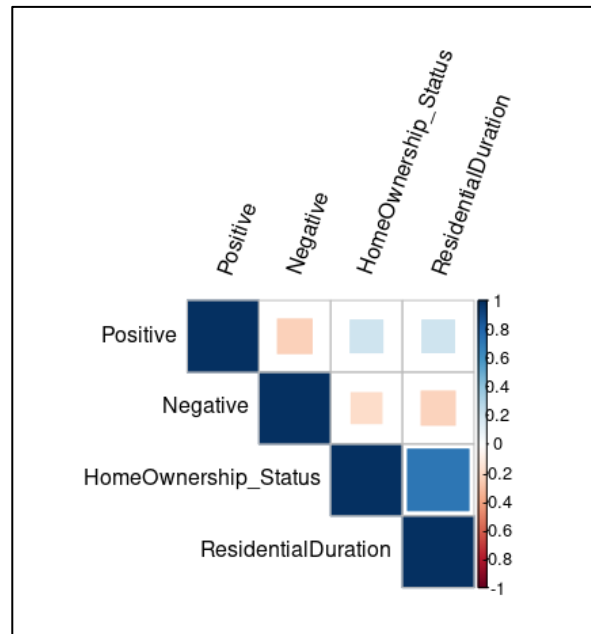


Figure 6: Correlation results between residential factors and perception level

The p-value associated with the correlation between positive perceptions and home ownership status is $3.38e-05$, indicating a statistically significant positive relationship. This suggests that there is likely a meaningful association between positive perceptions and the ownership of one's home. Similarly, the correlation between negative perceptions and home ownership status exhibits a low p-value of $2.36e-04$, indicating statistical significance. This implies that negative perceptions may be linked to certain aspects of home ownership. Moreover, the p-value of the correlation between home ownership status and residential duration is remarkably low ($1.05e-67$), confirming an extremely strong and significant positive relationship for the case of this study area. Overall, these low p-values across the correlations underscore the statistical significance of the observed relationships between perceptions, home ownership status, and residential duration within the dataset.

3.2.3. Correlation between wastewater treatment familiarity and history with perception

The survey results provide valuable insights into the participant's experience with the sanitation service and their perceptions. In terms of septic tank ownership, most respondents (61%) reported owning individual septic tanks, reflecting a preference for private sanitation solutions. This group comprised 243 individuals. Additionally, 23% of respondents (92 individuals) indicated using communal sanitation facilities, suggesting a reliance on shared resources for sanitation needs. However, a notable portion (16%) expressed uncertainty about their septic tank ownership status, with 65 individuals indicating they were unsure.

When examining maintenance history related to septic tanks, the survey found that a large majority (76% or 304 individuals) reported never conducting maintenance on their septic tanks. This finding raises concerns about potential neglect and the long-term sustainability of sanitation infrastructure. Additionally, smaller proportions of respondents reported maintenance intervals exceeding 5 years (7% or 28 individuals) and intervals of 2 to 5 years (10% or 39 individuals). A further 7% (29 individuals) reported maintaining their septic tanks within intervals of less than 2 years, reflecting varying levels of adherence to recommended maintenance schedules. These findings underscore the importance of promoting regular maintenance practices to ensure the effective and sustainable operation of sanitation systems within communities.

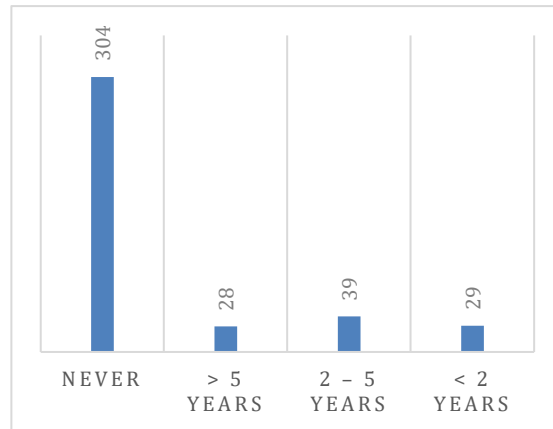


Figure 7: Maintenance history of septic tanks

The analysis shows a positive correlation (0.2378) between positive perceptions and the frequency of maintenance, indicating that individuals with more positive outlooks may be more inclined to adhere to recommended maintenance schedules for septic tanks. Conversely, there is a strong negative correlation (-0.3914) between negative perceptions and the frequency of maintenance, suggesting that individuals with more negative feelings may be less likely to engage in regular septic tank maintenance practices. Furthermore, the analysis reveals a moderate positive correlation (0.2817) between positive perceptions and septic tank ownership, implying that individuals with positive outlooks may be more likely to own their own septic tanks, although this correlation is relatively weak. There is a strong positive correlation (0.3920) between familiarity with sanitation services and positive perceptions, indicating that individuals who are more familiar with sanitation services tend to report more positive emotions. Similarly, there is a moderate positive correlation (0.4639) between familiarity with sanitation services and the frequency of maintenance, suggesting that individuals with greater familiarity may be more proactive in maintaining their septic tanks.

The analysis shows significant relationships, including a very low p-value (1.50e-06) between maintenance frequency and positive perceptions, indicating significance of correlation. Similarly, there are significant negative correlations between negative perceptions and both maintenance frequency (4.28e-16) and septic tank ownership (6.19e-16), suggesting that individuals with more negative feelings may be less likely to maintain their septic tanks regularly or own their own septic tanks. Furthermore, the analysis reveals statistically significant correlations between familiarity with sanitation services and both negative perceptions (9.13e-06) and maintenance frequency (3.85e-16).

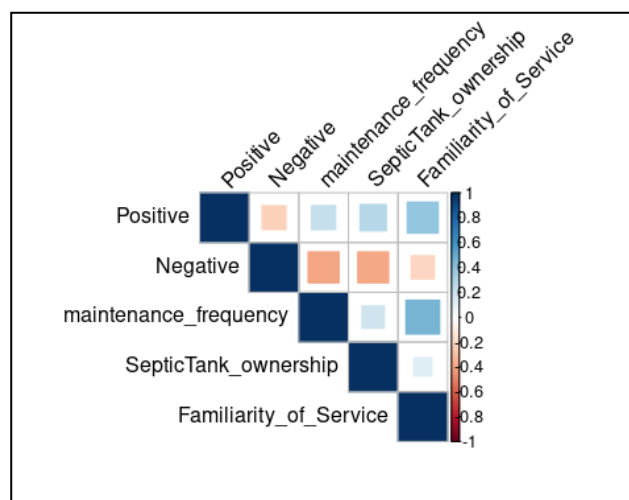


Figure 8: Correlation analysis results between wastewater treatment familiarity and history with perception

3.2.4. Correlation between Positive and Negative Perception and Support for Infrastructure

The analysis of perceptions and support ratings reveals notable trends in the data. On average, Positive Perception scores significantly higher at 4.18 compared to Negative Perception at 3.34, indicating a generally positive outlook. The Support rating, with an average score of 3.92, suggests a moderate level of backing or agreement among respondents. This distribution highlights a consistent pattern where positive perceptions tend to outweigh negative ones, while overall support levels are slightly higher than the midpoint, reflecting a generally favorable perception toward the subject of study.



Figure 9: Positive and negative perception distribution

The correlation analysis reveals several key insights among the variables examined. There is a moderate negative correlation of -0.2308 between "Negative" and "Positive", suggesting that as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease to a certain extent which generally show no internally conflicting opinions. The relationship between "Support" and "Positive" is notably positive with a correlation coefficient of 0.5337 , indicating a moderate positive relationship between these variables. Conversely, the correlation between "Support" and "Negative" is negative at -0.1574 , albeit weaker than other correlations observed. These findings highlight the nuanced associations and dynamics among these variables, emphasizing the complexity of their interrelationships in the context of the analysis.

According to the p-values, the relationship between Positive and Negative perceptions has a p-value of $3.08e-06$, which is extremely small and well below the common significance level of 0.05 . This suggests that the inverse relationship between Positive and Negative perceptions is statistically significant, meaning it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Second, the p-value for the relationship between Negative perception and Support is 0.00637 , below 0.05 , indicating that the inverse relationship between Negative perception and Support is statistically significant, and it is unlikely to be due to random variation.

Lastly, the relationship between Positive perception and Support has a p-value of $7.75e-31$, an extraordinarily small value, signifying an exceptionally strong statistical significance. This implies that the positive relationship between Positive perception and Support is almost certainly not due to chance. In summary, the analysis shows that the inverse relationship between Positive and Negative perceptions, the inverse relationship between Negative perception and Support, and the positive relationship between Positive perception and Support are all statistically significant.

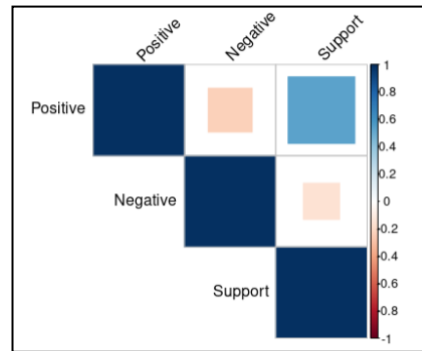


Figure 10: Correlation of public perception with support for infrastructure

3.2.5. Outreach Method Preferences

The analysis of public outreach methods based on their associated codes and preference points highlights interesting patterns in respondent preferences. Among the methods surveyed, door-to-door socialization emerges as the most preferred with a high score of 2139 preference points, indicating strong support for this direct engagement approach. Following closely behind are public socialization and focus group discussions with 2016 and 1709 preference points, respectively, suggesting a favorable reception for these interactive methods. Field trips to existing systems also garnered notable support with 1683 preference points, indicating interest in practical, hands-on experiences. In contrast, methods like exhibition, door-to-door distribution of pamphlets and printed media, and online media and social media received lower preference points, suggesting less enthusiasm for these outreach strategies among respondents.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Utilizing Pearson's correlation analysis, several key points can be examined to understand the relationship between familiarity with wastewater treatment and individual perceptions. This analysis allows us to quantify the strength and direction of the associations between variables such as awareness of wastewater treatment processes, personal history with these systems, and various demographic factors including age, education, occupation, home ownership, residential duration, and income. By exploring these correlations, we can identify significant patterns that reveal how familiarity and past experiences with wastewater treatment influence perceptions, which can provide valuable insights for improving public engagement and policymaking in environmental management.

4.1. Factors with significant correlation to the formation of Public Perception of DEWATS

Understanding the public perception of decentralized wastewater treatment systems (DEWATS) is critical for the successful implementation of these systems, particularly in urban areas like Bandung City. This subsection explores the various factors that significantly influence how households perceive DEWATS. By analyzing correlations between demographic, residential, and familiarity-related variables, and public perceptions, we can identify the key drivers of both positive and negative attitudes towards wastewater management infrastructure. The insights gained from these correlations provide valuable guidance for policymakers and stakeholders aiming to enhance community acceptance and support for DEWATS initiatives. This analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of public perception and the need for targeted communication and educational strategies to foster positive attitudes and support for sustainable wastewater management solutions.

Table 3: Summary of correlation analysis

Association	Pearson's r	P-value
Strong Correlation ($r = 0.5 - 0.1$)		
Positive perception and Support for infrastructure	0.5340	0.000***
Moderate Correlation ($r = 0.3 - 0.5$)		
Maintenance history and Negative Perception	-0.3910	0.000***
Septic Tank ownership and Negative perception	-0.3890	0.000***
Familiarity of Service and positive perception	0.3920	0.000***
Weak Correlation ($r = 0.1 - 0.3$)		
Income and Positive Perception	0.1610	0.001***
Income and Negative Perception	-0.1090	0.029*
Decision maker familial position and Negative Perception	-0.1360	0.006**
Maintenance history and Positive Perception	0.2380	0.000***
Septic Tank ownership and positive perception	0.2820	0.000***
Familiarity of Service and negative perception	-0.2200	0.000***
Home Ownership Status and positive perception	0.2060	0.000***
Home Ownership Status and negative perception	-0.1830	0.000***
Residential Duration and positive perception	0.2050	0.000***
Residential Duration and negative perception	-0.2240	0.000***
Negative perception and support for infrastructure	-0.1570	0.002**
Very Weak Correlation ($r = <0.1$)		
Decision maker familial position and Positive Perception	0.0760	0.117*
Age and Positive Perception	-0.0070	0.886
Age and Negative Perception	-0.1510	0.002**
Education level and Positive Perception	0.0510	0.310
Education level and Negative Perception	-0.0530	0.288

***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05

The analysis reveals several significant correlations between various factors and perceptions of decentralized wastewater treatment systems (DEWATS) in Bandung City. A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.5340$, $p < 0.001$) exists between positive perception and support for infrastructure, indicating that households with a favorable view of the sanitation service are more likely to support the development of related infrastructure. Interestingly, negative perception shows a weak negative correlation with support for infrastructure ($r = -0.1570$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting that negative attitudes can slightly diminish support for new infrastructure projects. This shows the importance of fostering positive public perception in the implementation of a wastewater service plan. This also further highlights that diminishing social stigma will effectively reduce the probability of public rejection (Bruch & Atwell, 2015).

Maintenance history and septic tank ownership both show moderate negative correlations with negative perception ($r = -0.3910$ and $r = -0.3890$ respectively, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that familiarity and involvement in septic tank maintenance reduce negative attitudes towards DEWATS. Conversely, familiarity with the service correlates moderately with positive perception ($r = 0.3920$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing the importance of awareness and experience in shaping favorable opinions. This indicates that individuals who are more familiar with sanitation services tend to report fewer negative emotions and engage in more frequent maintenance practices. These findings underscore the importance of delivering information about the importance and existence of maintenance services to the public such as septic tank emptying. This will foster initial traction of public engagement and positive perception among the public. Furthermore, the significance of these associations can inform targeted strategies to encourage proactive maintenance behaviors for better community health outcomes. This result show similar results with Gómez-Román et al.'s (2020) findings. Although, the significance of experience in maintenance history is a new finding.

Weak correlations also provide insights into the nuanced relationships between other variables. For instance, income shows a weak positive correlation with positive perception ($r = 0.1610$, $p < 0.001$) and a weak negative

correlation with negative perception ($r = -0.1090$, $p < 0.05$). Ownership status and residential duration also weakly correlate with perceptions; both factors positively correlate with positive perception ($r = 0.2060$ and $r = 0.2050$ respectively, $p < 0.001$) and negatively with negative perception ($r = -0.1830$ and $r = -0.2240$ respectively, $p < 0.001$). Most of the respondents were homeowners, old residents of the area, good for this analysis as newer built houses may already sufficiently use the DEWATS sanitation service. The findings provide compelling evidence of meaningful associations that warrant further exploration and analysis in understanding the dynamics of perceptions of sanitation and housing-related factors among the surveyed population.

Very weak correlations were observed between factors such as the decision maker's familial position and positive perception, age, and education level with perceptions, indicating minimal impact of demographic factors on the perception level. For example, age shows no significant correlation with positive perception ($r = -0.0070$, $p = 0.886$) but a weak negative correlation with negative perception ($r = -0.1510$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting older individuals may slightly disfavor DEWATS. Interestingly, this is the opposite of the results from Msaki et al. (2022). Education level has very weak and non-significant correlations with both positive and negative perceptions. This gives insight that public outreach programs could be done relatively uniformly in the area without needing deep consideration of demographic segmentations.

Overall, these insights underscore the importance of targeted educational and engagement strategies to enhance positive perceptions and support for wastewater treatment infrastructure, focusing particularly on enhancing familiarity with the service and fostering public participation in septic tank maintenance practice.

4.2. Strategies for engagement enhancement through public outreach programs

The analysis of public outreach methods reveals intriguing patterns in respondent preferences, offering valuable insights for enhancing engagement through outreach programs. Door-to-door socialization emerges as the most preferred method indicating strong support for direct engagement approaches. This preference suggests that personalized interactions play a crucial role in effectively conveying information and fostering community participation. Following closely behind are public socialization and focus group discussions underscoring the importance of interactive methods that allow for open dialogue and exchange of ideas, this aligns with the results of Garnett & Cooper (2014) which emphasized the importance of effective dialogue between government and the public in the early stages of sanitation policy implementation.

Field trips to existing systems garnered notable preference, indicating a desire for practical, hands-on experiences that offer tangible insights into wastewater management practices. These results also correlate with the analysis result which reveals people with higher maintenance history tend to have a more positive perception. In contrast, more passive methods such as exhibition, door-to-door distribution of pamphlets and printed media, and online media and social media received lower preference points, suggesting less enthusiasm for these outreach strategies among respondents. These findings emphasize the need for tailored approaches that prioritize direct engagement and experiential learning to effectively enhance community participation and understanding of wastewater management initiatives.

4.3. Limitations and future studies

The cross-sectional nature of the study captures perceptions at a single point in time, limiting the ability to infer causality or track changes in perception over time. Longitudinal studies are needed to observe how perceptions evolve with increased exposure to DEWATS and related outreach efforts. Future studies can conduct longitudinal studies to track changes in public perception over time, particularly before and after the implementation of DEWATS or other similar sanitation projects. This can help identify the impact of real-world experiences on attitudes and support.

The study focused on specific demographic, residential, and familiarity-related variables, potentially overlooking other influential factors such as environmental awareness, cultural attitudes towards sanitation, and political trust. Future studies should incorporate a broader range of variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of

public perceptions. Furthermore, the study's findings are specific to Bandung City and may not be applicable to other regions with different infrastructural, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts. Comparative studies across different regions could provide insights into how contextual factors influence public perceptions of DEWATS.

Intervention-based studies can also be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of various outreach and educational interventions designed to improve public perception and support for DEWATS. Experimental designs could be used to test different outreach strategies and their impact on perception.

Meanwhile, in-depth qualitative research such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic could be incorporated in future studies to gain deeper insights into the underlying reasons behind public attitudes and perceptions. This approach can uncover nuanced views and provide rich contextual data.

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Social Harms of Child Labor in Afghanistan (Case Study of Bamyan City)

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Abstract

The social harms of child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan, represent a fundamental and critical issue with widespread negative impacts on both children and society. Due to poverty and economic difficulties, children are compelled to undertake hard and exhausting work, depriving them of their basic rights such as education and play. The aim of this study is to identify the factors influencing child employment, evaluate its social and psychological consequences, and provide effective solutions to reduce and eliminate these harms. This quantitative research gathered information using questionnaires from child labor in Bamyan City and analyzed it with SPSS software. The results show that half of the children are deprived of education and mostly work in mechanics and blacksmithing with low income. Their guardians are predominantly unemployed or day laborers, and these children live in large families. The primary reasons for child employment include poverty, unemployment, the need for skill acquisition, deprivation from school, and the incapacity or illness of parents. Child labor leads to serious social harms such as depression, hopelessness, illness, aggression, encouragement towards drug use and crimes, and sexual abuse. Some children feel hopeless about the future, while others have aspirations such as becoming skilled workers, doctors, engineers, and politicians. This situation requires serious and urgent measures.

Keywords: Social Harms, Child Labor, Poverty, Unemployment, Bamyan

1. Introduction

Children are considered the future of any society and are among a nation's resources. However, in many countries, children face numerous issues and challenges that directly impact their lives and future. One of these challenges is child labor, which occurs in many countries, including Afghanistan, as a significant social harm. Child labor is a global phenomenon that comes in various forms and types. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), child labor refers to activities that harm the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of children and deprive them of their right to education. For example, it may result in children being deprived of school, forced to

drop out, or required to perform heavy and lengthy work alongside their studies (International Labor Organization, 2017). A 2018 ILO report indicates that approximately 218 million children worldwide are engaged in some form of labor. Based on this report, it can be said that one out of every ten children globally is a child labor. According to the ILO, Sub-Saharan African countries have the highest number of child labor. In 2018, 29% of children aged five to seventeen in this region were engaged in labor, most of them in hazardous and harmful work. The situation is different in the Middle East and North African countries, where about 5% of children aged five to seventeen are involved in dangerous work. However, in Southeast Asian countries, the child labor situation is alarming; in countries like India and Pakistan, many children are sold or kidnapped to be exploited in farms, factories, and workshops under harsh working conditions (Corsaro, 2014).

Bamyan, as one of the important and strategic areas in central Afghanistan, is known for its historical and cultural heritage and is considered a vital part of the country. However, like other regions of Afghanistan, Bamyan faces social and economic challenges that significantly impact the lives of young people, especially children. Among these challenges is the issue of child labor in Bamyan city, which is considered a social harm in the region. In Afghanistan, particularly in regions like Bamyan that suffer from inadequate economic and social infrastructure, child labor emerges as a serious issue. Poverty, unemployment, security crises, and other factors stemming from weak economic and social conditions compel children to engage in economic activities.

This article aims to examine and analyze the social harms of child labor in Bamyan city, Afghanistan. These harms include physical and psychological factors, lack of education, safety and health risks in the work environment, creating social and economic gaps, and long-term impacts on the children's social and economic future. Additionally, this research will investigate the rights of children and their violations in the workplace and attempt to provide solutions to support the rights of child labor and improve their living conditions.

2. Problem Statement

Child labor, as a subject that seriously impacts social and human aspects in less developed societies, is a significant and concerning challenge in Bamyan city, Afghanistan. This issue involves multidimensional social harms that directly affect the lives and futures of children.

Child labor in Bamyan city, due to poor economic conditions and weak social and economic infrastructure, is forced to engage in various economic activities. These activities include work in agriculture, small industries, domestic work, and even hazardous jobs. These children, at an age when they should be studying and playing, are exposed to hard and unhealthy working conditions. One crucial aspect of the child labor issue in Bamyan city is the physical, psychological, and social consequences that these children experience due to the inhumane working conditions they endure. The stress and fatigue from heavy work and unsafe conditions can directly harm their physical and mental health.

In this context, the violation of children's rights is also a fundamental concern in the problem statement. Children have basic rights to education, health, learning, and a favorable childhood experience. However, their presence in the workplace in Bamyan city conflicts with these rights, especially in cases involving hazardous work and underage employment, making these violations more evident.

Consequently, the issue of child labor in Bamyan city, Afghanistan, is a multidimensional problem with social, economic, and legal complexities, raising concerns and immediate needs for protecting these children's rights and improving their living conditions. This research will add valuable insights into social and legal concerns and aid in effective social interaction and policymaking to support child labor in Bamyan city.

3. Importance and Necessity of the Research

Research on the social harms faced by child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan, is highly significant and can contribute to the sustainable social and economic development of the region and the country as a whole. This

research can have numerous positive impacts on the lives of children, families, and society from various perspectives:

3.1 Children's Rights

One of the primary importance of this research is the preservation and promotion of children's rights. Basic rights of children to education, health, hygiene, and social support are guaranteed. This research can help identify the violations of these rights in the workplace and various social spheres, providing necessary information for reforming policies and support programs.

3.2 Social and Economic Development

Children's involvement in economic activities can have profound effects on the social and economic development of the region. On one hand, this issue can lead to a reduction in children's education and skills, eventually resulting in a shortage of skilled human resources in the region's future. On the other hand, the presence of children in the workforce can decrease economic productivity and increase future unemployment rates. This research can provide a more precise understanding of the economic and social impacts of child labor on the region.

3.3 Health and Hygiene

Harsh and dangerous working conditions may directly negatively impact children's health and hygiene. Research in this area can help identify the safety and health risks children face and propose appropriate measures to safeguard their health.

3.4 Psychological Impacts

Inappropriate working conditions and mental and emotional pressures may lead to irreversible psychological effects on children. This research can help identify the psychological impacts of these conditions on children and provide strategies to improve their mental health.

3.5 Continuity of Education

Children's presence in the workplace can result in lost educational opportunities and personal development. Research in this area can identify educational barriers faced by child labor and propose measures to enhance their education and personal development.

In conclusion, this research will not only help identify and analyze the social harms faced by child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan, but also provide strategies and solutions to improve the living conditions of these children and promote the sustainable development of the region.

4. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to examine and analyze the social harms faced by child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan. Based on this overarching goal, the specific objectives of the research are as follows:

- Identify the types of work that children in Bamyan City engage in and determine the type and severity of associated safety and health hazards.
- Investigate the physical and psychological harm caused by child labor on children's health and development, especially in physical, emotional, and psychological aspects.

- Analyze the impact of involvement in economic activities on child laborers' education and educational growth, and the violation of their educational rights.
- Assess the impact of child labor on their social access and future opportunities, including future employment and economic disparities.
- Evaluate the extent to which child labor' rights are upheld in the workplace and identify weaknesses and violations of these rights as per international laws and standards.
- Provide recommendations and strategies to improve the conditions of child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan, including enhancing safety and health in the workplace, developing educational programs, and promoting social and economic support and the enforcement of children's rights.
- Raise public awareness and understanding of the issues and social harms faced by child labor and the importance of addressing the rights of this vulnerable group.

Overall, this research aims to improve the situation of child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan, by analyzing and examining their social harms, advocating for their basic rights, and creating better conditions for their growth and development.

5. Research Question

Main Research Question: What social and economic factors lead to the increase in the number of child labor in Bamyan City, and what types of social and psychological harms do these children face?

This question aims to examine the roots and reasons for the spread of the child labor phenomenon in Bamyan and its impacts on the lives and futures of these children.

Sub-questions:

What are the various forms of child labor?

What factors cause children to work in different jobs?

What are the consequences of child labor in various jobs?

What risks and challenges do children face in different occupations?

What percentage of child labor attend school, and how many drop out?

6. Research Hypothesis

Main Hypothesis: Poverty and lack of financial resources in families are the main factors increasing the number of child labor in Bamyan City, and due to unsuitable working conditions, these children face significant physical, psychological, and social harms.

This hypothesis suggests a relationship between the economic status of families and the number of child labor, examining the negative impacts of work on children from various aspects.

Sub-hypotheses:

Children are engaged in hard and strenuous work, from being mechanics' apprentices to working as bakery assistants in the marketplace.

The weak economic situation of families is the main factor driving children to work.

Working leads to a decrease in school attendance and an increase in dropout rates among children.

Child labor causes psychological problems, including depression and anxiety, in children.

Child labor face discrimination and unfavorable behavior within the community and among their peers and are at risk of being used in illegal activities.

7. Literature Review

The social harms faced by child labor in Bamyan City is a relatively new research topic. Afghan researchers have not yet conducted studies on this issue in Bamyan, and there has been insufficient research at the national level in Afghanistan. However, international organizations have conducted research on this topic outside Afghanistan. Here are some summarized reports and studies:

According to a report by UNICEF, participation in economic activities can lead to a lack of education and delays in children's educational progress. Studies indicate that child labor have lower education rates compared to their peers (UNICEF, 2017). Moreover, child labor in heavy and hazardous industries such as mining and construction face serious safety and health risks, and the lack of adherence to health and safety standards can lead to irreversible accidents for them. Additionally, children's involvement in informal and hazardous economic activities can create social and economic gaps in the future. These children often end up in low-skilled and low-income jobs due to lack of education and insufficient work experiences (ILO, 2017).

Kayen conducted a study in Afghanistan. This research examines the impact of child labor, prevalent in two of Afghanistan's most populous provinces (Nangarhar and Kabul), on children's development. According to this study, child labor in Afghanistan significantly negatively affects children's growth. The study suggests that physical immaturity leads to weakened immune systems, malnutrition, bodily pains, and other issues. In this context, working children are more susceptible to illness compared to their non-working peers and are considered risk factors for themselves and society. Afghan children who work show signs of forgetfulness, overthinking, and lack of logical reasoning compared to their non-working peers. Child labor has caused Afghan children to neglect their social and emotional lives. Most of these children are unaware of the importance of socializing and making friends, display antisocial tendencies, and engage in illegal activities as they grow older. Even in interviews with the researcher, these working children expressed no concern about missing class or resembling non-working children (Kayen, 2023).

The ACSOR-Surveys Institute conducted research on child labor in Afghanistan in 2008. One notable finding of this research is the relationship between child labor and education. In Afghanistan, the current school attendance rate for children aged 5 to 17 is 58.7 percent. Although those who do not attend school generally work more hours than those who do, participation in child labor does not seem to negatively impact children's educational outcomes overall, as measured by current school attendance, school enrollment, or academic achievements. Regarding entry into child labor, most working children in four provinces reported that their father had the most influence on obtaining their current job, although a significant portion said that no one actually influenced them. The primary reason adults in the child labor's family allow children to work is related to the family's economic situation, usually to provide supplementary income. Finally, respondents were asked their opinions on the support needed to address the issue of child labor. Recommendations can be categorized into three general groups: improving education or the school environment, improving the economic status of the family and children, and creating a safe environment (ACSOR-Surveys, 2008).

In 2014, Salahuddin Naderi, in his thesis titled "Public Sociology and Testing Castells' Theory in the Field of Child Labor (A Participatory Action Research with Afghan Children in the Moshtaq Child-Friendly Center)," studied the situation of Afghan children. He used Manuel Castells' theory to depict the situation of children, illustrating conditions where children fall into a state of no return, referred to as black holes. Among these, migrant children are always at greater risk of falling into these black holes compared to other children. The goal of public sociology is to help these individuals and familiarize them with their conditions. This study used a project-based approach and a child-to-child approach to carry out activities aimed at educating, raising awareness, and empowering children. In the research process, 23 girls and 33 boys collaborated at the Moshtaq Child-Friendly Center (Naderi, 2014).

Pir-Khandan and colleagues, in their research, believe that many children work under exploitative conditions and are subjected to exploitation in a way that not only hinders their education but also has numerous negative effects on their physical and mental health. In addition to having weaker and more vulnerable bodies to work-related injuries and illnesses, these children also have little knowledge and awareness of the dangers of work, which makes them less likely to take care of themselves. Child labor exposes them to many social harms. The inefficiency of

educational, welfare, and economic institutions exposes this group to risks that, if continued, will have irreparable costs for society and the country (Pir-Khandan et al., 2021).

In 2012, Tawallai and colleagues, in their article “The Relationship Between Child Labor and Human Development in Developing and Underdeveloped Countries,” examined the phenomenon of child labor and the human development index. They argue that countries with high human development indices have lower rates of child labor, and conversely, where the rate of child labor is higher, the human development index is lower. This study examined the relationship between child labor and human development in 65 developing and underdeveloped countries. The findings indicate that the higher the human development index, the lower the rate of child labor, and vice versa. The researchers also concluded that achieving a high human development index, directly related to the quality of human life, requires the reduction and eradication of child labor in societies (Tawallai, 2012).

Zare Shahabadi conducted research in Yazd Province, Iran, on the role of dysfunctional families in the phenomenon of child labor. The findings of the study indicate that factors such as the unemployment of the family head, economic poverty of families, domestic violence, lack of healthy role models in the behavior of parents towards each other and the child, and parental addiction have contributed to the emergence of child labor. Among these factors, parental violence towards the child and parental violence towards each other had the greatest impact on the occurrence of this phenomenon (Zare Shah Abadi et al., 1988).

In 2019, Ali Imanzadeh, in his article “Lived Experience of child labor in Tabriz City from the Feeling of Loneliness,” conducted a descriptive and explanatory study of the lived experiences of child labor and their feelings of loneliness. This qualitative, phenomenological study, using purposive sampling and in-depth interviews with fifteen child labor, identified four main themes from their experiences: “perceived feelings,” “types of loneliness,” “consequences of loneliness,” and “ways to overcome loneliness.” child labor experience various types of loneliness, particularly existential loneliness, and feel a sense of meaninglessness, hopelessness, and abandonment in their lives. The study suggests policies such as improving social interactions, providing educational opportunities, teaching social skills, and spiritual therapy to overcome these feelings in child labor (Imanzadeh, 2019).

Shahin’s research on child labor shows that there are various reasons why children enter the workforce. The most important reasons include poverty, the high costs of education, and the fact that some families consider education unnecessary and prefer their children to enter the labor market at a young age (Shahin, 2012).

In 2017, Driscoll, in his article “A Review of Child Labor in Small-Scale Industry and Mining in Asia and Africa,” conducted a rapid review of data from academic, policy, and NGO sources about child labor in small-scale mining and industry (ASM) in Asia and Africa. The article describes various types of child labor in mines in countries such as Tanzania, the Philippines, and Indonesia, including pit digging, underground work, ore hauling and crushing, cooking for adults, and selling goods and services to adults, all of which pose various physical and psychological harms (O’Driscoll, 2017).

8. Methodology

This research is applied in terms of its purpose and descriptive-analytical in nature and method. To conduct the study on the social harms faced by child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan, a quantitative methodology with an emphasis on field study (Survey) and the use of questionnaires as the primary data collection tool was employed. This method, as one of the quantitative research tools, allows for the collection of extensive data, reflecting the overall status of the social harms experienced by child labor in Bamyan City. The statistical population of this research includes child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan, encompassing 142 child labor. A simple random sampling method was used to select the sample. Data were collected through questionnaires in July 2023.

The survey data collected in this study were analyzed using the SPSS program. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and arithmetic mean, as well as parametric tests, were used in the data analysis. The reliability of the scales was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a commonly used test to measure internal reliability. The calculated alpha coefficient ranges from 1, indicating perfect internal reliability, to 0, indicating no internal reliability (Bryman, 2008). A level of 0.70 is considered satisfactory (Mohammadbeigi et al., 2015). Brthout (2000) indicated that a level of 0.60 is "good" and that a health index used in BHPS reached a level of 0.77 (Bryman, 2008). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for Likert-type questions was found to be 0.769. The obtained results indicate that the questionnaire form used in the survey has sufficient reliability.

Quantitative research on the social harms faced by child labor in Bamyan City, Afghanistan, using questionnaires allows us to identify and analyze the multiple effects of social harms on this group of the population. The results of this research can serve as a basis for adopting appropriate measures and strategies to reduce and prevent the social harms experienced by child labor in this significant region.

9. Child Labor: Harms and Challenges

The term "child labor" refers to individuals under the age of 18 who participate in economic and work activities. These activities can include agricultural work, domestic work, employment in small industries and productions, street work, and public space work, as well as hazardous and essential jobs. Statistics show that child labor is extensively employed in developing countries. This concerning reality is not only due to the harmful physical and psychological impacts on children but also due to the violation of the human rights of this vulnerable group.

According to the theoretical classification by the International Labor Organization (ILO), child labor includes children engaged in the worst forms of child labor or those working below the minimum legal working age. They may also be forced to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work hours (ILO, 2017). Child labor are children who work outside the home. This type of activity encompasses a wide range of both real and bogus work, unskilled labor, begging, shoe-shining, selling low-value goods, and more (Imani & Nersisianous, 2010).

Child laborers, individuals under 18 years, engage in economic and work activities. This issue is a serious social harm in developing countries and has profound impacts on children's lives, society, and future societal development. The harms and challenges faced by this disadvantaged group include:

9.1 *Physical and Psychological Risks*

Child labor face serious physical risks due to hazardous working conditions and high physical demands. Heavy and exhausting work can cause significant physical health issues, including back pain, bone and joint problems, muscle weakness, and cuts and abrasions. Additionally, job stress and burdens can have negative psychological effects, such as increased stress, anxiety, and depression in these children.

9.2 *Lack of Education*

The work commitments of child labor limit their access to educational opportunities. These children often cannot adequately continue their education and, due to the poor economic conditions of their families, are forced to work, missing out on proper education.

9.3 *Social Isolation*

Child laborers are deprived of experiencing a normal social life due to their work conditions. They are usually excluded from participating in social activities, games, and educational and sports activities, leading to isolation and social marginalization.

9.4 Risk of Social Deviations

Child labor, due to a lack of access to proper educational opportunities and participation in social activities, is at risk of social deviations. They may engage in illegal and harmful activities due to harsh working conditions and economic pressures, resulting in negative experiences and harm to society.

9.5 Long-term Effects

The physical and psychological harms of child labor can have long-term effects on their lives. Physical injuries may lead to permanent health problems, and psychological harm can directly and indirectly affect their social relationships, education, and future careers.

10. Children's Rights: Violation of Fundamental Rights of Child Labor in Bamyan, Afghanistan

Children, as the leaders and future hope of any society, hold a crucial place in development and progress. Children's rights, as one of the fundamental principles of human rights, play a vital role in determining the fate of this young generation and the stability of society. These rights include fundamental rights such as the right to life, education, health and hygiene, social support, and more. However, the significant and often overlooked violation of children's rights in certain areas, especially in conditions of severe economic and social crises, causes serious harm to society.

The fact is that human rights belong to all human beings by virtue of their humanity, without any discrimination based on race, religion, color, nationality, language, class, creed, ethnic or social origin, political opinions, or any other reason, which is sufficient to refute this argument. Additionally, human rights, with their universal nature, apply to all age groups, and therefore children enjoy the same general human rights as adults (ILO, 20018).

Children's rights are simply human rights for children, with a special focus on the rights to special protection and care due to their vulnerability and inability to defend themselves. This is why the international community affirmed in 1989 that children have human rights and adopted the view that children need a special convention. The result was the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the first international legal instrument to encompass a comprehensive set of human rights, including civil, political, economic, cultural, and social rights for children (ILO, 20018).

The Bamyan region in Afghanistan is one such area where children not only grapple with economic and social problems but also view entering the labor market as a solution to meet the financial needs of their families. However, meeting basic family needs through child labor results in the violation of the fundamental rights of this segment of society.

11. Finding

This study, being a quantitative research, collected data using questionnaires and performed statistical analysis. In this study, the absolute majority of participants were boys. Figure 1 shows that only one girl participated in the study, while the rest were boys.

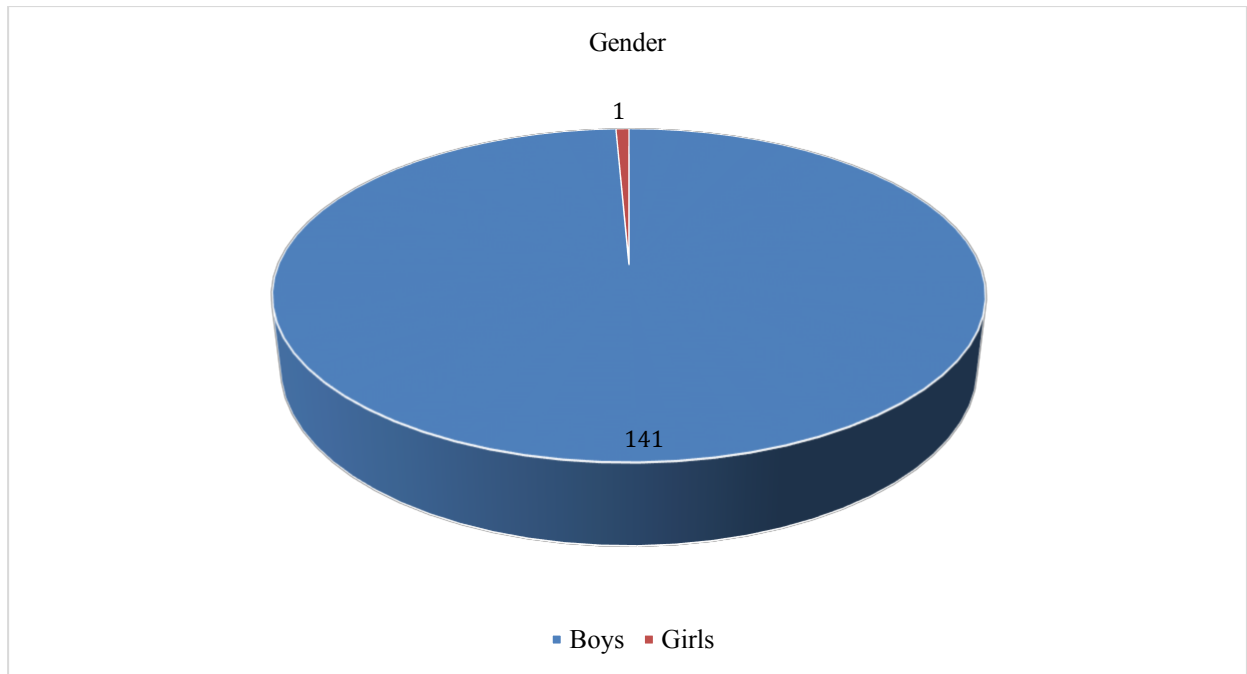


Figure 1: Gender of Participants

In this study, children between the ages of 9 and 17 participated, with the detailed percentage shown in Figure 2.

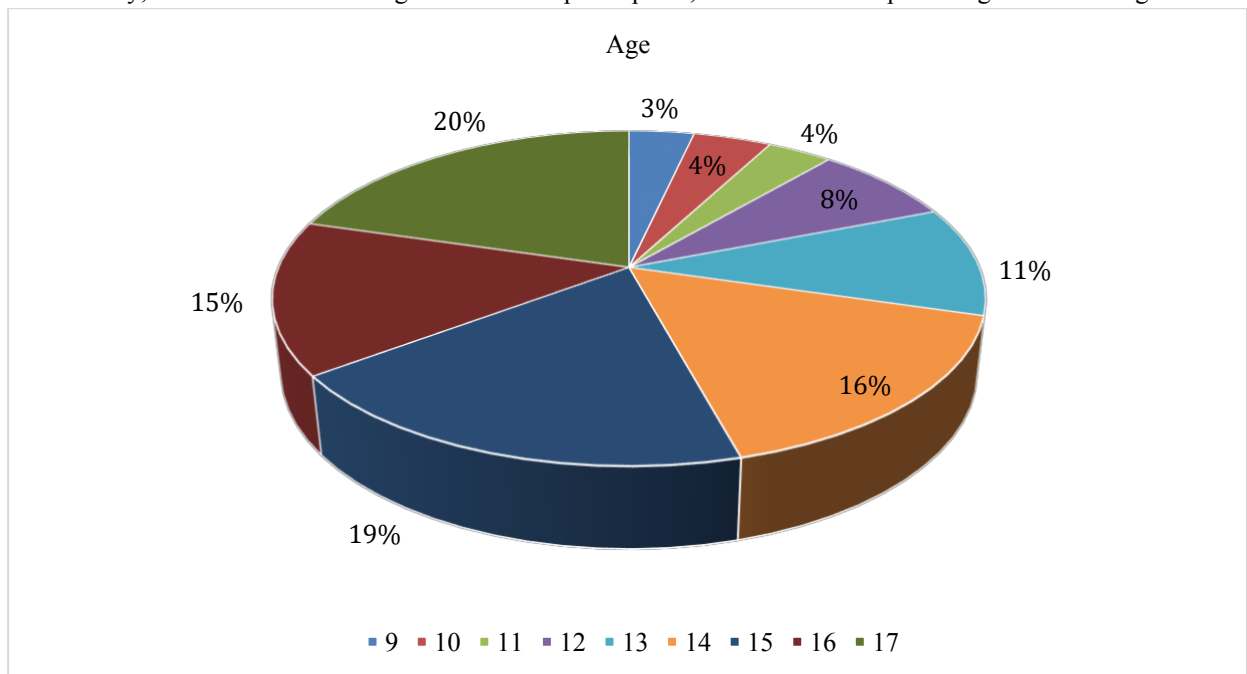


Figure 2: Age of Participants

These children are present in various educational levels, as depicted in Figure 3, with the majority of children being students of secondary school.

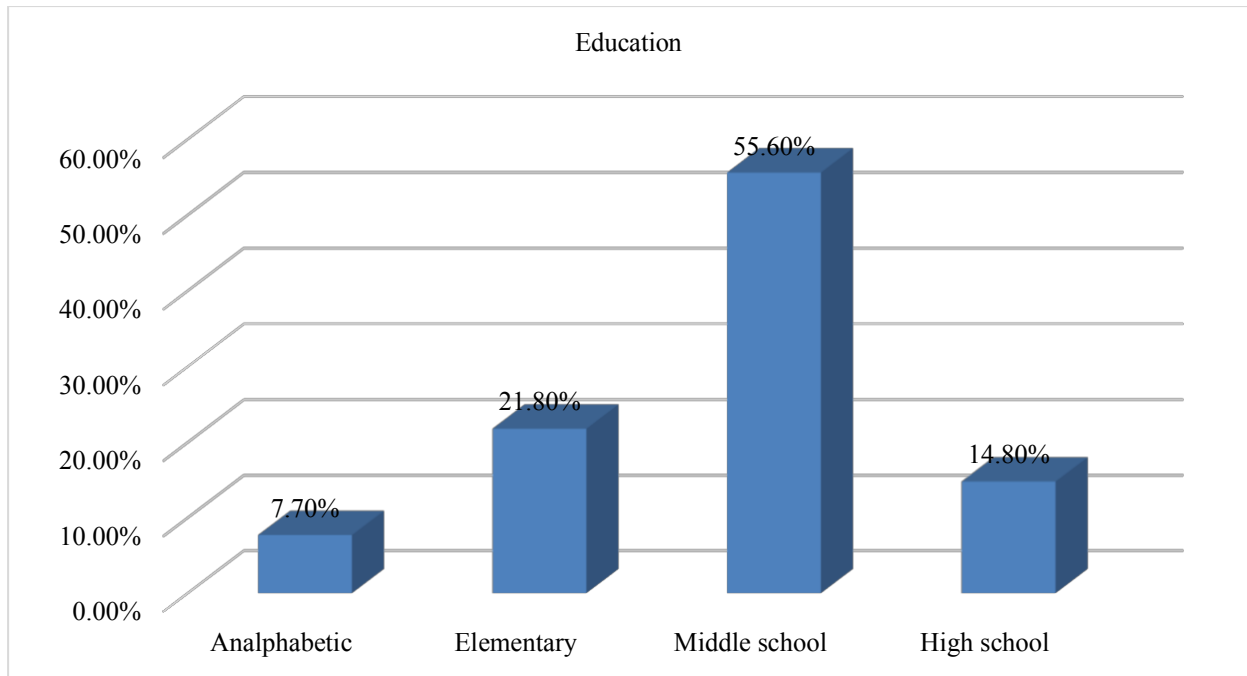


Figure 3: Educational Level of Participants

This research indicates that more than 50 percent of children currently do not attend school and are deprived of education due to work, as depicted in Figure 4.

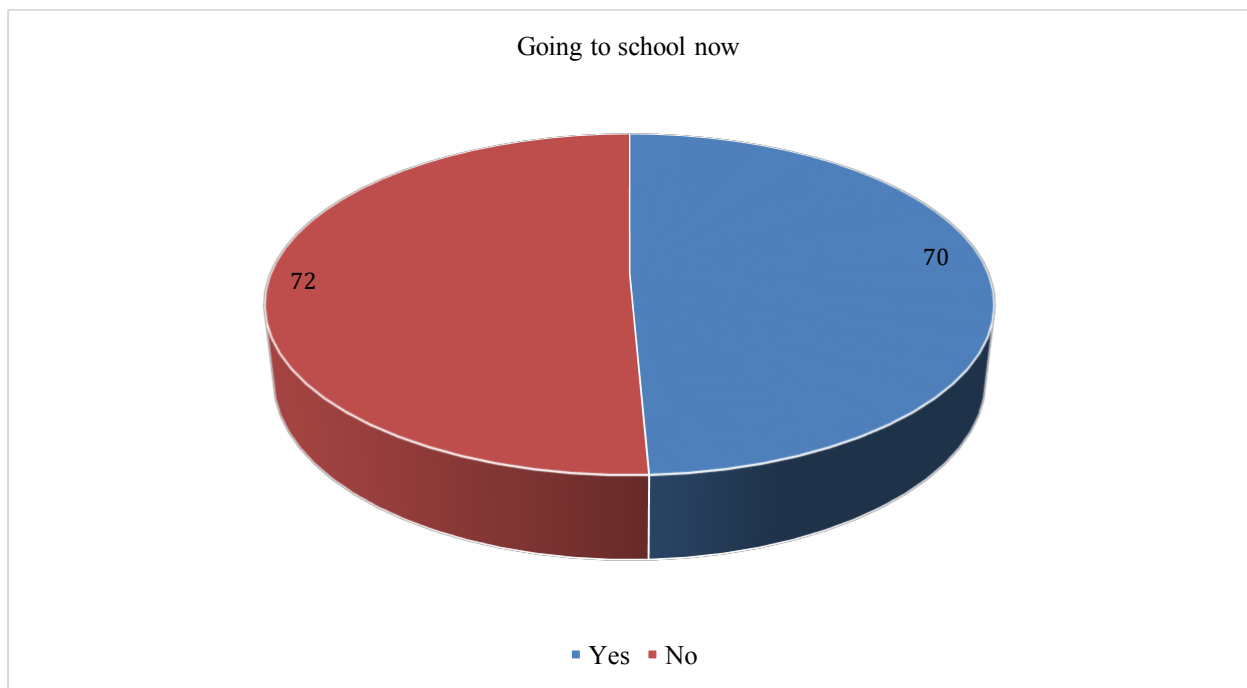


Figure 4: Access to School by Participants

Child labor are engaged in various tasks, and according to this study, most working children in Bamyan are occupied with difficult and strenuous tasks, as illustrated in Figure 5, which clearly shows the frequency of the types of work.

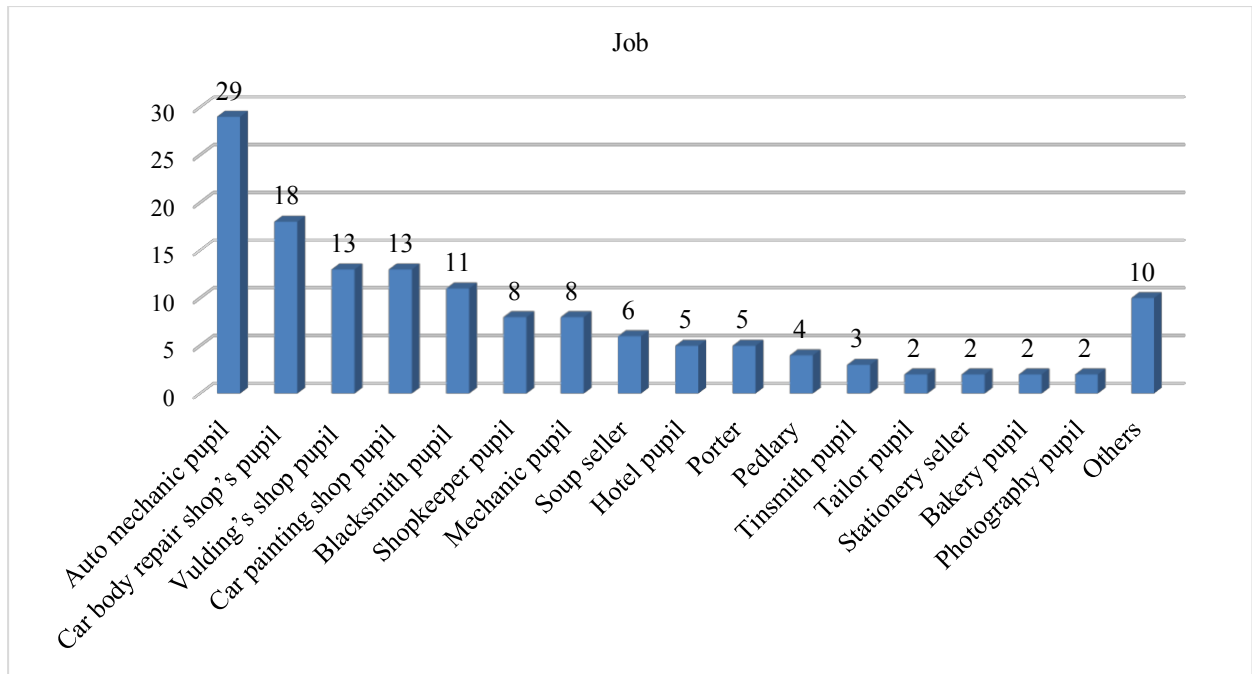


Figure 5: Jobs of Participants

Bamyan’s child labor have resorted to hard work due to economic difficulties, but Figure 6 indicates that these children do not have an acceptable income. The daily income of working children is expressed in Afghan currency units, which at the time of the survey was 87 Afghanis equivalent to 1 US dollar.

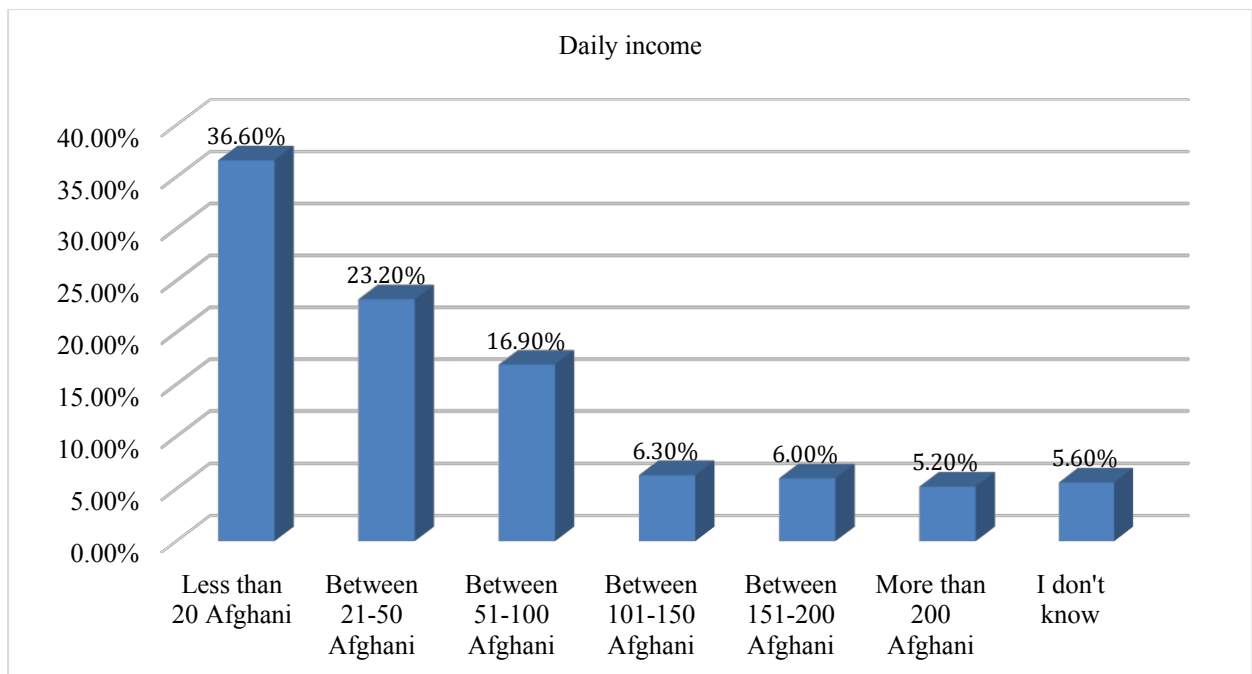


Figure 6: Daily Income of Child Labors

Most of the child labor have fathers, and the head of their family is their father. A small percentage of family heads are brothers, mothers of children, or others. Therefore, Figure 7 illustrates the family heads of child labor.

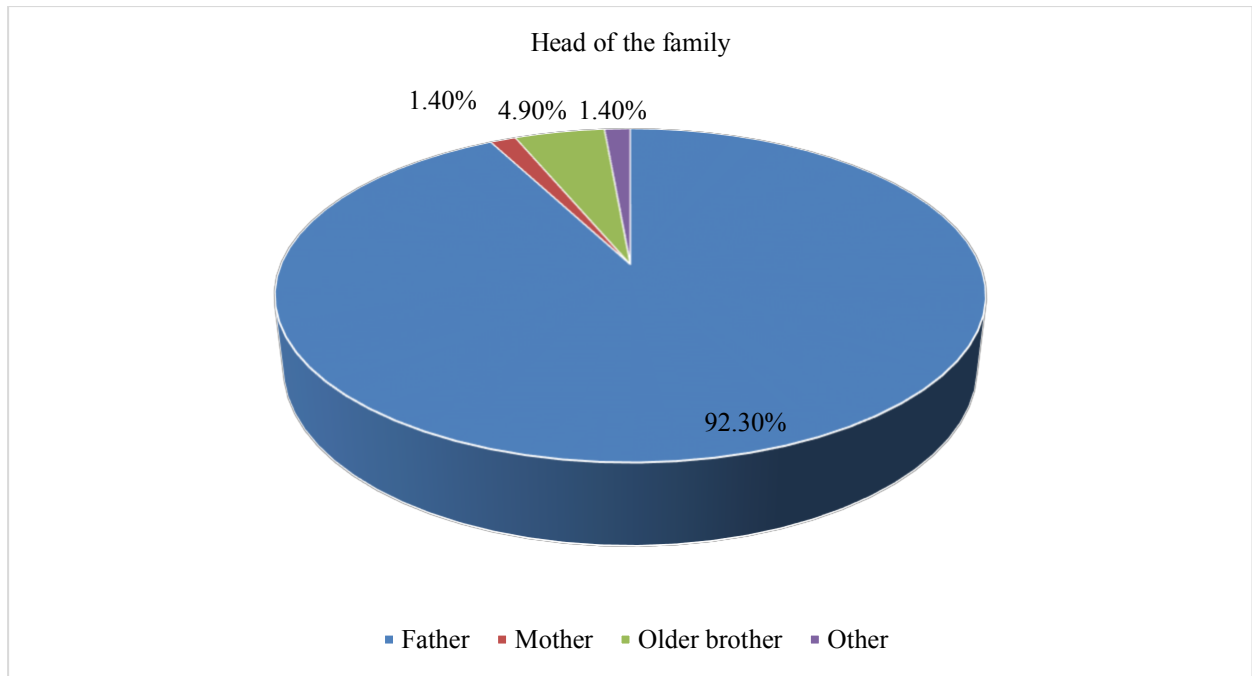


Figure 7: Head of the Family of Participants

Child labor is usually from poor family members, and the head of the family is mostly engaged in daily tasks. Figure 8 illustrates the duties of the head of the family.

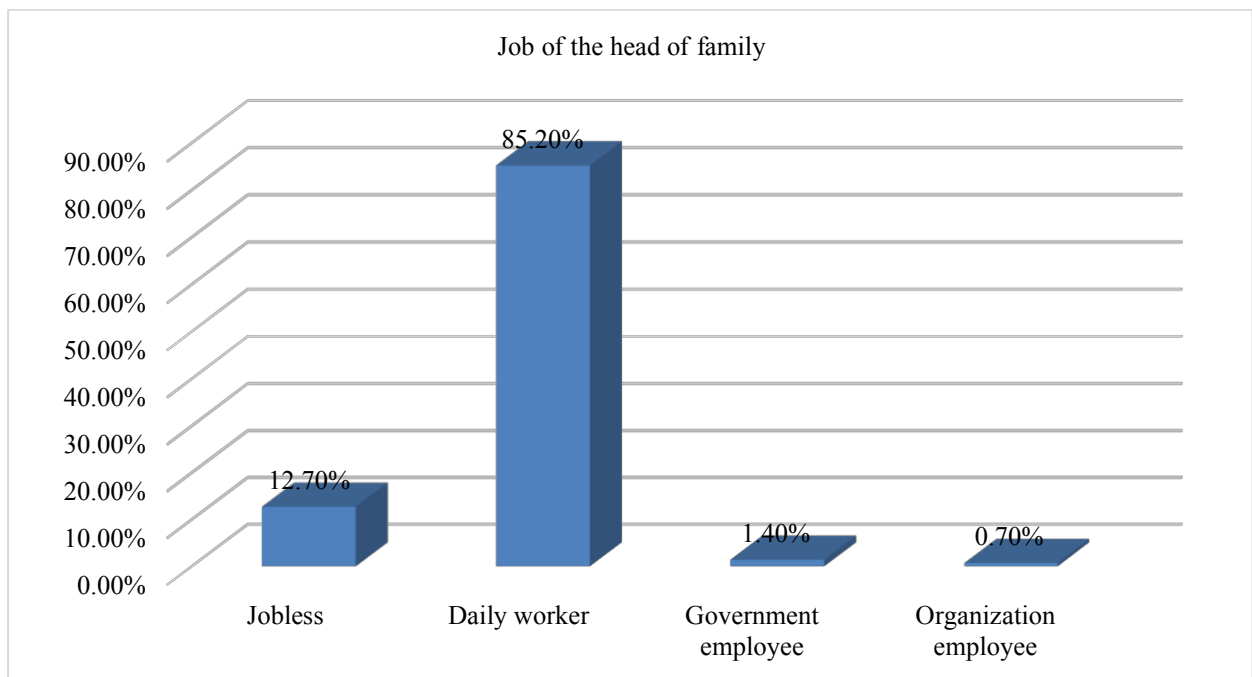


Figure 8: The Job of the Head of Family

Child labors are usually from extended families, and the number of family members is mostly six or more than six individuals. Figure 9 depicts the number of family members in child labor.

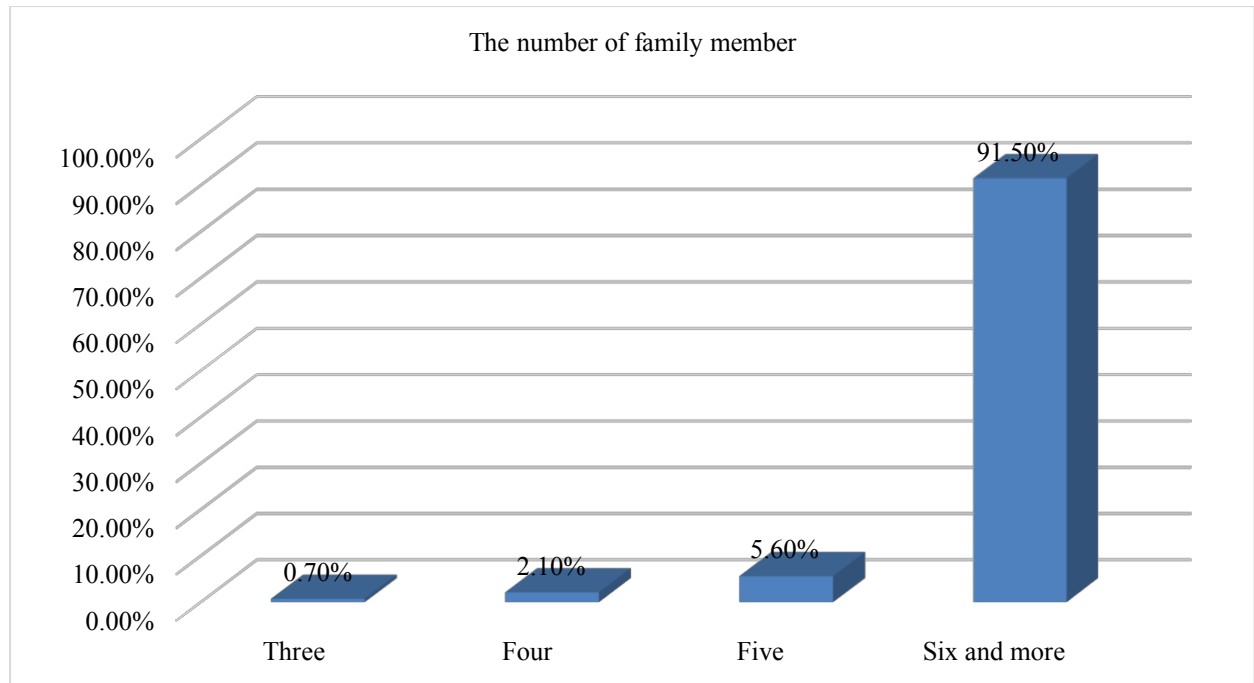


Figure 9: The Number of Family Members

Children usually engage in laborious work due to economic difficulties, and Figure 10 clearly illustrates the reasons for work in childhood.

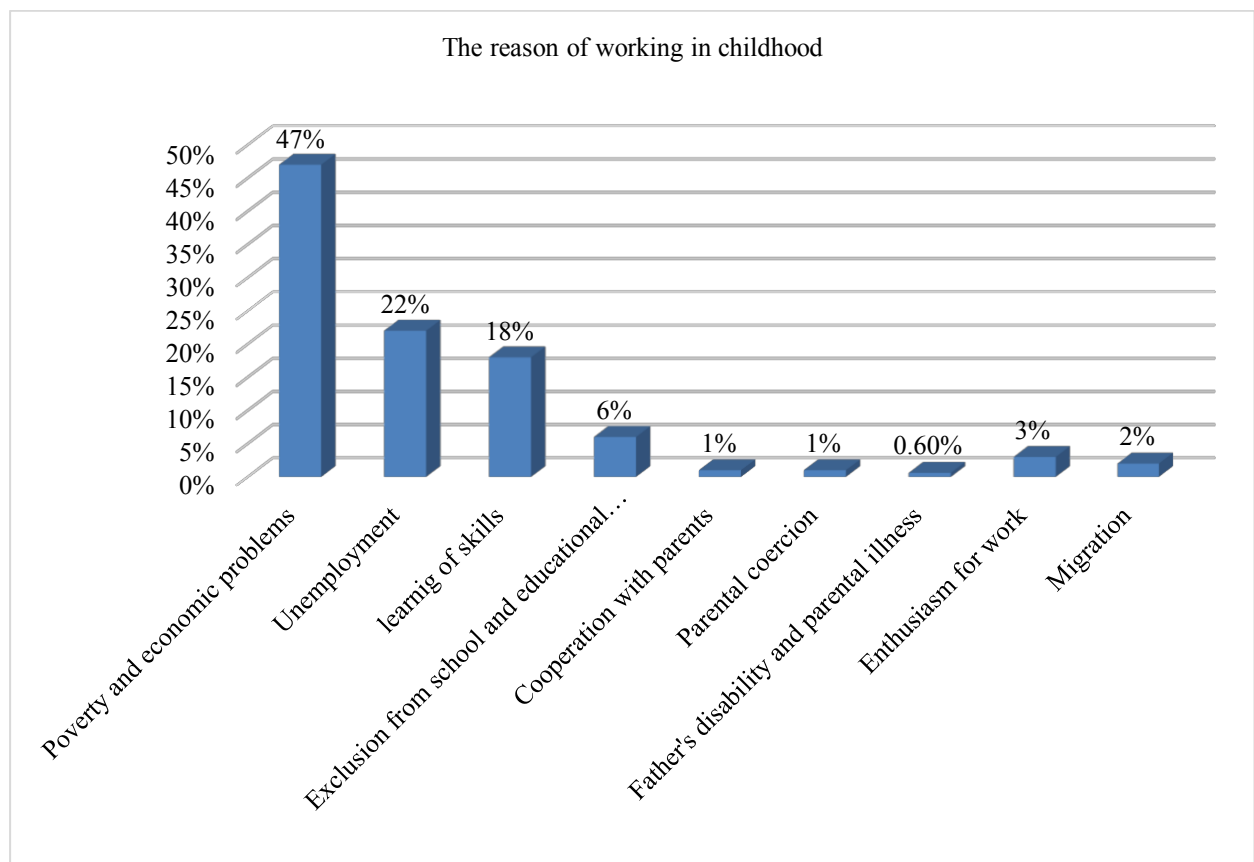


Figure 10: The Reason for Working in Childhood

Various factors have led children to engage in work, and Figure 11 illustrates the extent to which factors have compelled children to work and how each factor has affected them. This figure evaluates factors such as family economic problems, parental illness, insufficient income, domestic violence, and physical abuse.

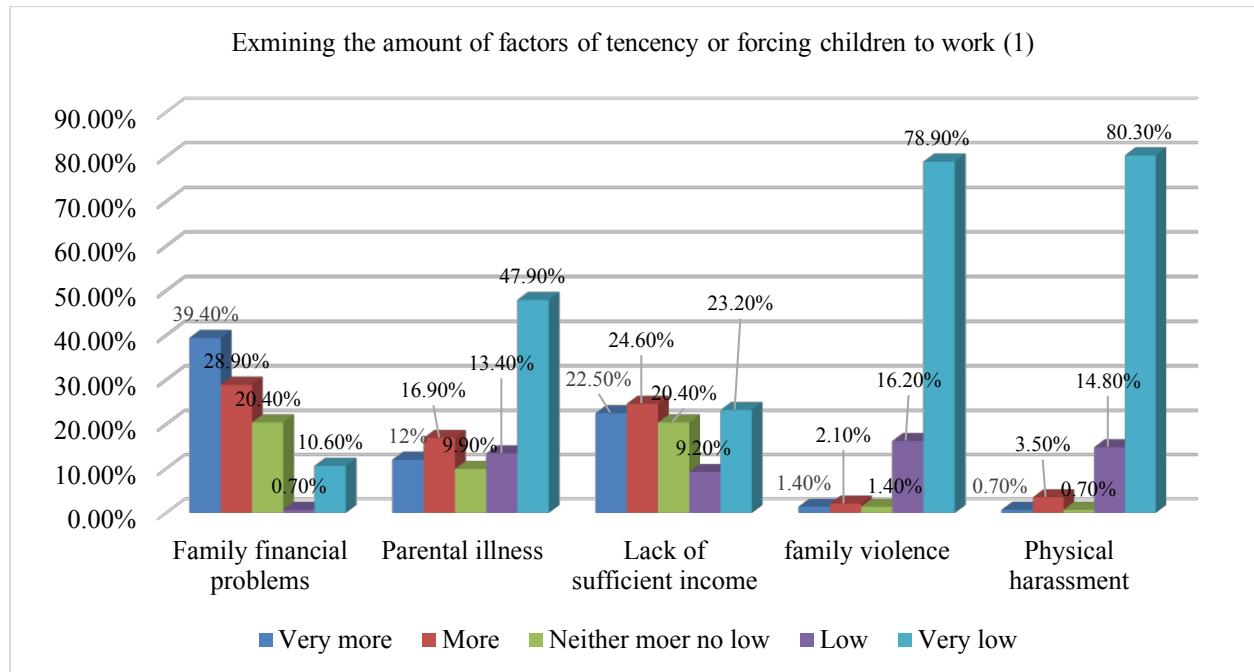


Figure 11: Examining the Amount of Factors of Tendency or Forcing Children to Work (1)

Figure 12 illustrates the impact of factors such as providing educational facilities, parental coercion, parental divorce, migration, and increased unemployment on children’s compulsion to work.

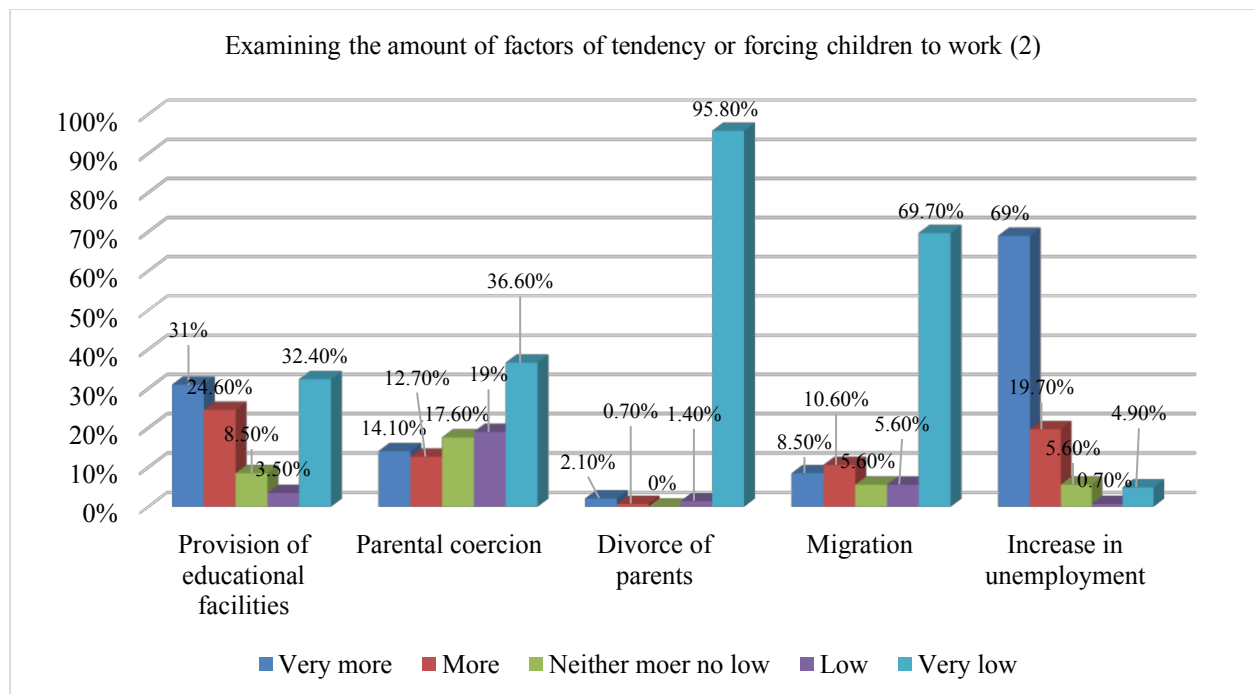


Figure 12: Examining the Amount of Factors of Tendency or Forcing Children to Work (2)

Child labor usually face numerous challenges and endure various harms during their strenuous work. Figure 13 illustrates the difficulties encountered by children during work and the impacts it has on them.

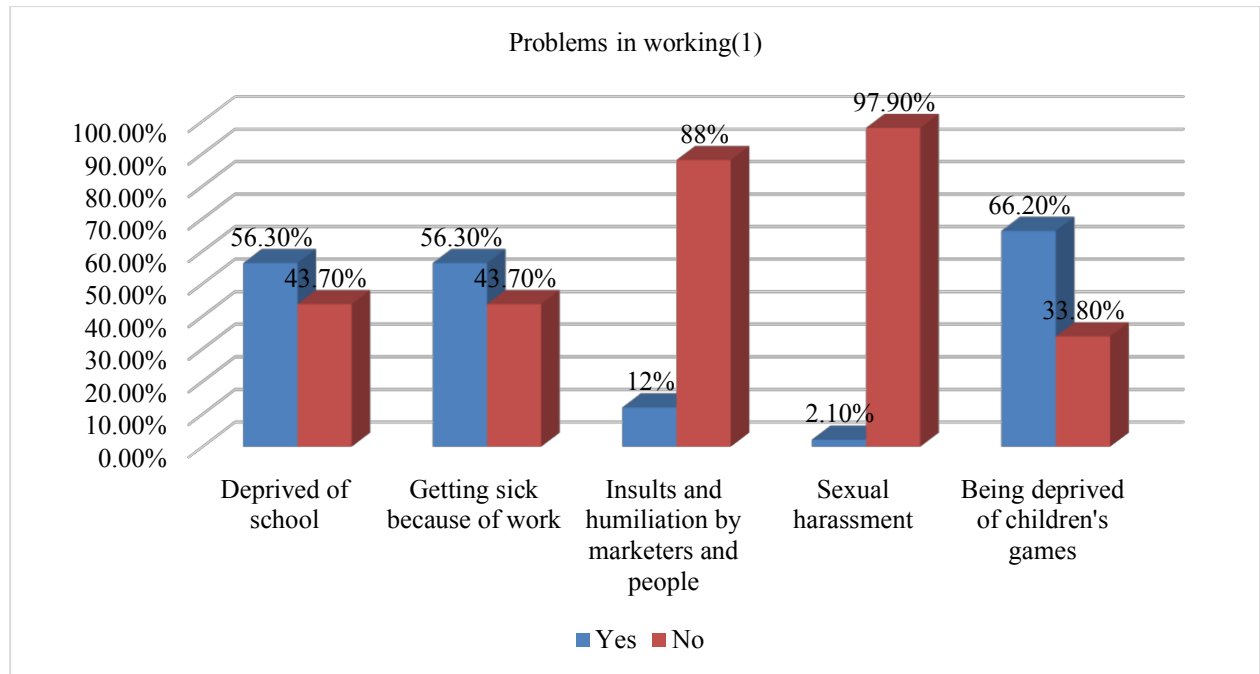


Figure 13: Children Facing Problems in the Workplace (1)

Figure 14 also illustrates the damages and problems encountered by children during their work.

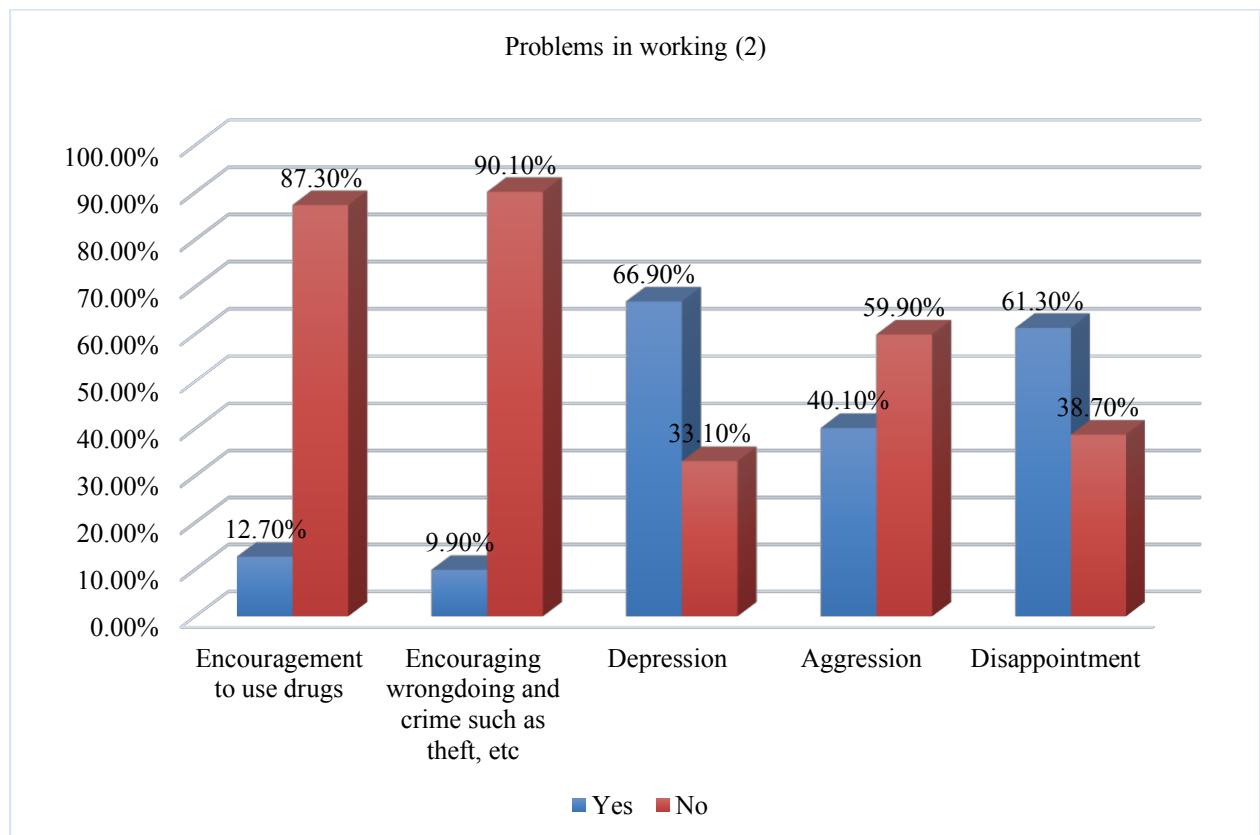


Figure 14: Children Facing Problems in the Workplace (2)

Every child has dreams and aspirations, desiring a better life in the future and holding various goals in mind. However, working children in the city of Bamyán have endured numerous social, mental, and physical damages, with their rights violated, engaged in laborious tasks beyond their capacity. These social damages have led some children to become indifferent towards their future, lacking aspirations. Figure 15 vividly portrays the aspirations

of child labor in the city of Bamyan, indicating which positions and roles they envision for themselves in the future.

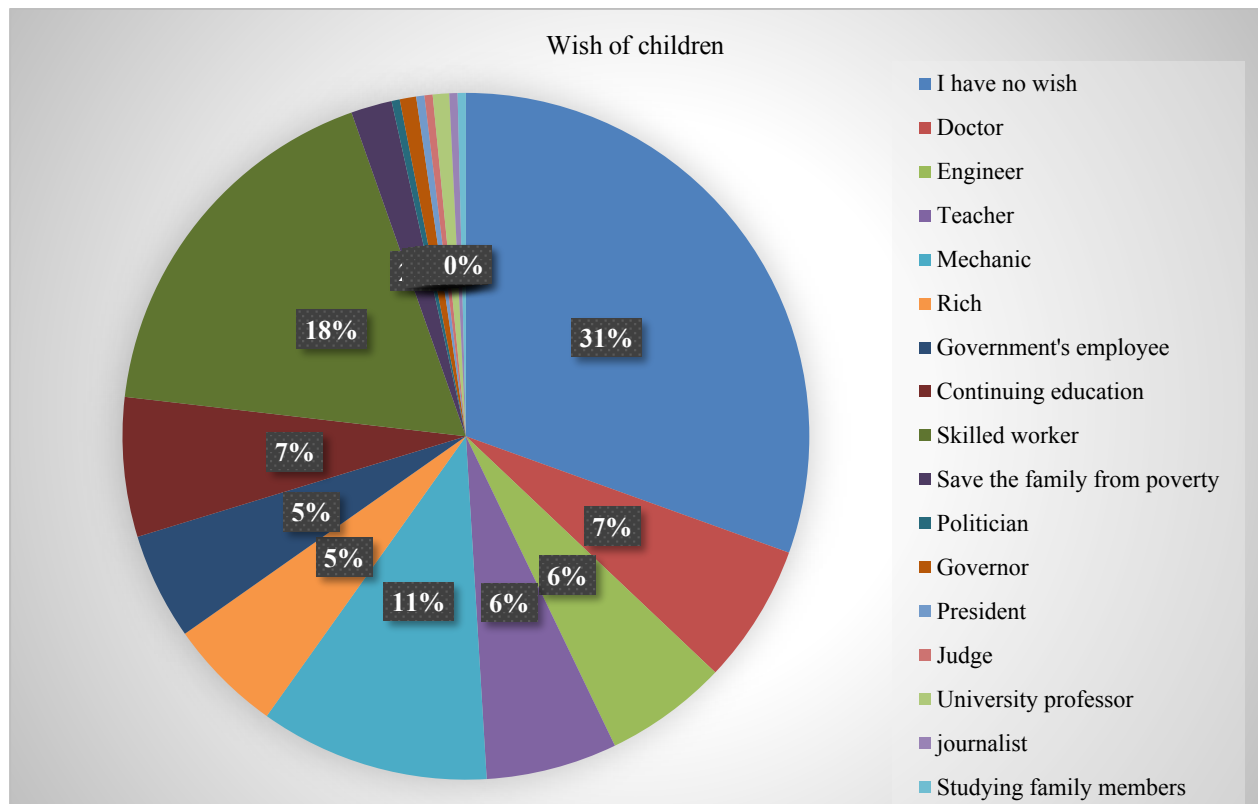


Figure 15: The hope of children for Future

Children are the hope and future of a society and a nation. Education, upbringing, and addressing the needs of children while respecting their rights provide the groundwork for the healthy upbringing of adolescents and teenagers. Children will achieve the goals they set for their lives. The above figure illustrates that child labor has various aspirations; from skilled workers to the level of the president, they want to reach. However, these aspirations require that children receive education and that their basic rights are respected. Instead of hard labor, the focus should be on education, and families of child labor should be economically supported so that they are not forced to make their children work.

12. Conclusion

Child labor in the city of Bamyan, Afghanistan, face numerous social challenges and adversities that not only impact their individual lives but also have broader negative effects on society. These children often engage in labor from a young age due to poverty and family financial needs, leading to missed educational opportunities and hindered healthy development.

Research findings indicate that half of the children in Bamyan are deprived of education or do not attend school and are mostly engaged in laborious tasks. The most of these children work as apprentices in mechanical and ironwork sectors and hard and arduous works, yet they lack acceptable income. Their caregivers are often daily wage laborers or unemployed, and 91.5% of these children live in large families with six or more members. The most significant reasons for child employment, in order of priority, include poverty and economic hardships, unemployment, the need for skill training, deprivation from schooling, eagerness to work, migration, parental coercion, cooperation with parents, and parental incapacity or illness. Child labor carries serious social risks, as evidenced by the most prominent adversities faced by child labor, including depression, deprivation from childhood play, hopelessness, educational deprivation, work-related illness, aggression in the workplace,

encouragement to substance abuse, humiliation and ridicule by employers and people, encouragement to commit crimes and illegal activities, and physical harassment and abuse. These social adversities and mental health problems have led 31% of children to feel hopeless and aimless about their future. However, other children have aspirations for their future, including becoming skilled workers, mechanics, doctors, continuing their education, becoming engineers, teachers, wealthy individuals, government employees, family poverty alleviators, university professors, governors, politicians, presidents, judges, journalists, and educators of family members.

Therefore, the situation of child labor in Bamyan center not only violates their fundamental rights but also has widespread negative effects on society and sustainable development. Multiple social adversities, including the violation of children's rights, physical and mental health effects, decreased educational opportunities, and the creation of social and economic gaps, require serious and immediate measures to protect this vulnerable group. Considering the importance of children's rights and the negative impacts of violating these rights on the future of children and society, it is recommended that effective programs and policies be implemented to restrict and reduce child labor in Bamyan center. Additionally, ensuring financial resources and social participation for the development of educational programs and social support for child labor is of paramount importance. These actions can gradually reduce the chain of social adversities of child labor and guarantee the improvement of their living conditions and future.

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Social Class and the Transition to Adulthood: Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) Youth in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study takes a comprehensive approach to the issue of Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), delving into the often overlooked role of social class disparities. By using a multilevel mixed-effects logistic model and data from the 2022 National Social Economic Survey (SUSENAS), it provides a robust exploration of the complex socioeconomic factors that shape the transition to adulthood among youth. This study contributes to understanding social stratification and its impact on NEET youth. The main finding underscores the protective role of social class against youth being NEET, revealing that adolescents from higher social class households are less likely to disengage from study or work compared to those from lower social classes. The analysis uncovers determinants of NEET youth, including, among others, being female, married, having higher education, and having a female-headed household. Meanwhile, protective factors of NEET youth include, among others, age, disability, residing in a household whose head is working, and residing in urban areas. Comparing estimation results across social classes reveals that individuals from the low social class have a significantly higher propensity to be NEET than those from the high social class.

Keywords: Indonesia, Multilevel Mixed-Effects Logistic Model, NEET Youth, Social Class

1. Introduction

The smooth transition from education to the workforce is not just pivotal for individual success, but also holds the key to economic vitality (OECD, 2023). This phase, which measures how well educational systems prepare students for real-world challenges, underscores the potential of the youth population. The Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) youth rate, covering individuals aged 15 to 24 who are not participating in education, employment, or training, provides a comprehensive view beyond youth unemployment. It considers challenges such as early school dropout, limited job prospects, barriers to education or training access, and social exclusion (Elder, 2015). The UN designated NEET youth as Indicator 8.6.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals

(UNDESA, 2015), emphasizing its critical role in promoting equal opportunities and addressing vulnerabilities among youth in sustainable development initiatives.

The International Labor Organization (ILO, 2024) projects the global NEET youth rate in 2024 to be 21.7%, with Southeast Asia at 17.5%. However, a glaring gender disparity persists, with young women facing significantly higher NEET rates than men. In Southeast Asia, for instance, 23.1% of young women are NEET compared to 13.9% of young men. In Indonesia, the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2023) reported a NEET rate of 25.8% among youth aged 15-24 in 2023, with women (35.7%) having more than twice the NEET rate of men (16.4%).

Given Indonesia's significantly higher NEET youth rate compared to neighboring Southeast Asian countries, it is imperative to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing this measure. By leveraging comprehensive nationwide data, we can better pinpoint why Indonesian youth tend towards NEET status, accounting for demographic and socioeconomic differences at the district level. This understanding will not only be instrumental in the development of effective strategies to ensure youth remain actively involved in education and employment, but also attract our curiosity about the unique challenges faced by Indonesian youth.

Several systematic reviews, scoping reviews, and meta-analyses have explored the factors influencing NEET youth in the past three years. Rahmani and Groot (2023), in their scoping review, identified that educational attainment, work experience, skills, physical and mental health, marital status, parental income, education, job status, and socioeconomic factors such as poverty and social inequalities are critical determinants of NEET status among youth. Meanwhile, a systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Rahmani et al. (2024) highlighted that NEET youth face increased risks of suicide, criminal behavior, and unemployment, with higher levels of education acting as a protective factor. A scoping review by Petrescu et al. (2024) emphasized that individual-level factors and contextual variables, including policies, influence the likelihood of youth becoming NEET. Interestingly, the study also revealed a need for more consensus regarding a unified definition of NEET youth. A meta-analysis of longitudinal data by Gariépy et al. (2022) suggested that mental health problems, along with combined measures of mental health and substance use, are predictors of becoming NEET later in life. A study by van Vugt et al. (2024) found that NEET status is driven by low literacy levels, with low-literate young people being more likely to remain NEET for extended periods. The study also found that countries' institutional characteristics influence NEET youth risks and that social-democratic welfare states reduce overall NEET youth likelihood, although low-literate individuals benefit less.

The literature on determinants of NEET often overlooks the role of social class. However, a pivotal study by Dicks et al. (2020) stands out, asserting that the risk of becoming NEET is closely tied to variables central to status attainment models: skills, education, and social class. This study's findings are crucial, revealing that a higher social class background can significantly reduce the risk of youth becoming NEET. Moreover, it underscores that the influence of social class is mediated by youth education, thereby emphasizing the impact of social class on NEET outcomes through educational attainment. Furthermore, the study highlights that the effect of social class is not static, but rather, it is moderated by youth education and personality traits, indicating that the relationship between social class and the likelihood of becoming NEET is dynamic and varies depending on levels of education and individual personality characteristics.

We strongly argue that incorporating social class into the study of NEET youth is not just important, but it's crucial. Social class profoundly impacts access to education and employment opportunities, molds social networks, and dictates the availability of resources and support systems for young people. Therefore, this study will not just emphasize, but it will underline social class as a pivotal determinant of NEET among the youth population, highlighting the urgency of addressing this issue.

This study takes a comprehensive approach to analyze the factors influencing NEET youth in Indonesia using nationally representative data. Specifically, the study aims to investigate how social class disparities affect the determinants of NEET status among youth, offering deep insights into the complex socioeconomic factors shaping their transition to adulthood. Through a two-pronged approach, we will explore how social class influences NEET youth propensity. First, we can uncover overarching factors contributing to NEET status across diverse

socioeconomic backgrounds by analyzing determinant variables across all research observations. This provides a comprehensive understanding of NEET youth propensity. Second, by categorizing observations into four social classes, we conduct a nuanced analysis that reveals specific patterns and disparities within social classes regarding NEET outcomes, offering crucial insights into the socioeconomic factors influencing youth disengagement from education and employment.

This study addresses a significant research gap by examining how social class influences NEET youth. The findings can inform strategies to reduce youth unemployment and improve educational attainment, which is critical for promoting inclusive economic growth. Furthermore, within the Indonesian context, this study represents a pioneering effort to systematically explore the status of NEET youth across different social classes using nationally representative data, providing a solid foundation for future research and policy development.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Methodology

This study utilizes a multilevel mixed-effects logistic model to tackle nesting and the categorical aspect of dependent variables. Acknowledging the hierarchical structure of the data, where individuals (level 1) are nested within districts (level 2), substantiates the choice to employ such a model. Additionally, the model accommodates the binary nature of the dependent variable. Incorporating random intercepts for each district addresses unobserved heterogeneity and discrepancies in socioeconomic conditions across districts. This modeling strategy not only facilitates the inclusion of individual and district-level variables but also enables a comprehensive analysis, delving deep into the impact of social class on the likelihood of youth being NEET (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2022).

Our empirical model comprises a latent variable, a variable that is not directly observed but is inferred from other variables, representing the underlying probability of youth not participating in employment, education, or training. This model examines the relationship between the latent variable and various factors, including individual characteristics, household attributes, and district-level contextual variables:

$$y_{ij}^* = x1_{ij}\beta1 + x2_j\beta2 + z_{ij}u_j + \epsilon_{ij}$$

The connection between the observed binary y_{ij} and the latent y_{ij}^* is established using a straightforward measurement equation:

$$y_{ij} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } y_{ij}^* > 0 \\ 1 & \text{if } y_{ij}^* \leq 0 \end{cases}$$

where y_{ij}^* is the unobserved probability of youth becoming NEET, $x1_{ij}$ represents the individual and household characteristics of individual i living in district j ; $x2_j$ represents the district contextual variables for district j ; z_{ij} denotes the covariates corresponding to the random effects; since this model follows a random intercept model, z_{ij} is simply the scalar 1; u_j represents the random effects; and ϵ_{ij} represents the errors, distributed as logistic with mean 0 and variance $\pi^2/3$ and are independent of u_j .

2.2 Data

The 2022 National Social Economic Survey (SUSENAS), a key data source for this article, is conducted annually by Indonesia's Central Statistics Agency (BPS). It provides a representative view at the district level, covering all 514 districts in 2022. This study specifically delves into the data of 178 463 respondents aged 15-24 who are neither heads of households nor spouses of heads of households. The decision to exclude 15 249 youth respondents who are heads of households or spouses of heads of households from the analysis was made to avoid potential biases, as these individuals do not reflect the typical youth population. Focusing on this more homogeneous group

of youth allows researchers to accurately compare NEET rates across various demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring the reliability of our findings.

In this study, NEET youth refers to individuals aged 15-24 who, during the week prior to the survey, fell into one of the following categories: (a) engaged in unpaid household responsibilities, (b) involved in personal activities such as sports, courses, picnics, social engagements (e.g., local organizations and community services), or religious worship, or (c) not engaged in any activities, defined as those who did not work, attend school, take care of the household, or participate in any activities other than personal ones during the past week. This definition excludes individuals employed or involved in entrepreneurship but temporarily not working.

Our study employs a rigorous methodology, using household income (per capita expenditures (PCE)) as the primary determinant of social class. While information on employment status and work sector is available for the head of household and his/her spouse, it may not comprehensively capture the intricacies of social class determination. Nonetheless, the study utilizes the available data to draw significant conclusions regarding the relationship between household income and life opportunities. This methodological approach mirrors the works of Zhang & Chen (2023). The lower class refers to households with the lowest 25% of per capita expenditures (PCE) or those in the first quartile. The lower-middle class encompasses households with per capita expenditures in the second quartile (25th to 50th percentile). The upper-middle class comprises households in the third quartile (50th to 75th percentile), while the higher class comprises households in the fourth quartile (top 25%).

Using the two definitions above, Figure 1 shows that the calculated NEET rate among individuals aged 15-24 is 21.3%. Indonesia's official NEET youth figure for 2022 stands at 23.2% (BPS, 2023). Our NEET calculation results indicate a slightly lower rate, approximately 1.9% less. However, incorporating youth who are heads of households or spouses of heads of households in the calculation produces a NEET youth rate of 22.8%, which is only about 0.5% lower than the official figure. When stratified by social class, Figure 1 shows that the NEET youth rate decreases as social class increases. This finding has significant implications, as it reveals a gap in NEET rates between low-class and high-class families. Youth from low-class families have the highest NEET rate at 25.9%, while those from high-class families have the lowest NEET rate at 16.2%, reflecting a gap of 9.7%. In addition, Table 1 complements this by displaying the mean and standard deviation of all variables used in this study for all observations and by social class.

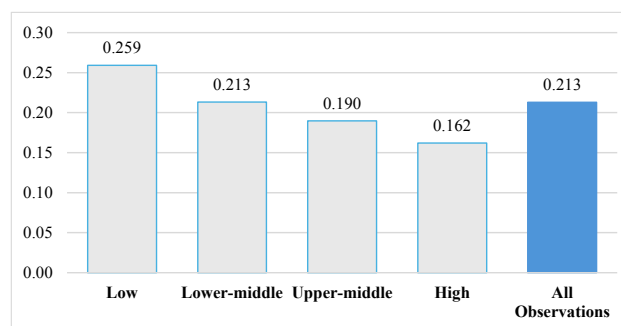


Figure 1: NEET Youth Rate by Social Class, 2022

Source: Author's calculation based on SUSENAS 2022 data

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Data

Variable	All Obs		Low		Lower-middle		Upper-middle		High	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Individual/Household	<i>(N=178 463)</i>		<i>(N=55 825)</i>		<i>(N=48 845)</i>		<i>(N=42 444)</i>		<i>(N=31 349)</i>	
NEET	0.213	0.409	0.259	0.438	0.213	0.410	0.190	0.392	0.162	0.368
Female	0.461	0.498	0.470	0.499	0.458	0.498	0.454	0.498	0.459	0.498
Married	0.061	0.239	0.078	0.268	0.062	0.242	0.051	0.219	0.041	0.198
Age	18.87	2.77	18.69	2.75	18.81	2.76	18.95	2.78	19.15	2.81
Education: Up to Primary	0.071	0.256	0.104	0.305	0.072	0.259	0.055	0.228	0.032	0.175
Education: Junior Secondary	0.219	0.414	0.262	0.440	0.226	0.418	0.196	0.397	0.164	0.370
Education: Senior Secondary	0.532	0.499	0.514	0.500	0.550	0.497	0.553	0.497	0.506	0.500
Education: Tertiary	0.178	0.383	0.120	0.325	0.151	0.358	0.196	0.397	0.299	0.458
Person with Disability	0.007	0.083	0.008	0.090	0.007	0.082	0.007	0.083	0.006	0.076
Head Female	0.136	0.343	0.122	0.327	0.131	0.337	0.145	0.353	0.155	0.362
Head Working	0.898	0.303	0.906	0.292	0.906	0.292	0.894	0.307	0.875	0.330
Urban	0.426	0.495	0.311	0.463	0.407	0.491	0.483	0.500	0.586	0.492
Log (Per Capita Expenditures)	13.80	0.60	13.20	0.30	13.67	0.21	14.07	0.20	14.70	0.42
Member aged 0-4	0.185	0.388	0.283	0.450	0.184	0.388	0.130	0.337	0.085	0.278
Member aged 60+	0.201	0.401	0.229	0.420	0.200	0.400	0.187	0.390	0.172	0.378
Live in Own House	0.890	0.313	0.890	0.313	0.888	0.316	0.883	0.321	0.901	0.298
Receive Social Assistance	0.307	0.461	0.427	0.495	0.346	0.476	0.241	0.427	0.119	0.324
District Contextual	<i>(N=514)</i>									
Poverty Rate	11.68	7.27								

Source: Author's calculation based on SUSENAS 2022 data; Poverty Rate figures are from BPS' Tabel Dinamis (<https://www.bps.go.id/id/query-builder>)

3. Results and Discussions

Table 2 presents the multilevel mixed-effect logistic model estimation results for NEET youth propensity. The table contains six models: the first two, [1] and [2], utilize all observations, while Models [3] to [6] are specific to each social class. Model [1] focuses on three binary social class variables—lower-middle, upper-middle, and high—using the low class as the base case, which is the primary interest of this study. To provide nuance, Model [2] substitutes the social class variables with log(PCE). Both models yield comparable results regarding magnitude and significance for each variable, indicating that social class and log(PCE) produce similar estimates. However, Model [1] uncovers an important finding: higher social class is inversely related to the likelihood of youth becoming NEET, highlighting a significant socioeconomic trend. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of our study, and it underscores the importance of our research in understanding and addressing NEET youth propensity.

Table 2: Multilevel Mixed-effects Logistic Estimates of Propensity of NEET Youth

	All Obs: Social Class	All Obs: log(PCE)	Low	Lower-Middle	Upper-Middle	High
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Social Class						
Social Class: Lower Middle	0.791 (0.013) ***					
Social Class: Upper Middle	0.697 (0.013) ***					
Social Class: High	0.641 (0.014) ***					
Log (Per Capita Expenditures)		0.730 (0.010) ***	0.626 (0.030) ***	0.858 (0.075) *	0.780 (0.070) ***	0.906 (0.041) **
Individual Characteristics						
Female	1.566 (0.021) ***	1.566 (0.021) ***	1.649 (0.039) ***	1.586 (0.042) ***	1.499 (0.043) ***	1.418 (0.049) ***
Married	0.117 (0.010) ***	0.117 (0.010) ***	0.107 (0.013) ***	0.105 (0.018) ***	0.139 (0.026) ***	0.159 (0.037) ***
Female * Married	35.436 (3.029) ***	35.283 (3.015) ***	37.740 (4.875) ***	42.615 (7.458) ***	31.186 (6.130) ***	26.697 (6.426) ***
Age 16	3.181 (0.127) ***	3.183 (0.127) ***	3.243 (0.195) ***	3.093 (0.240) ***	3.002 (0.281) ***	3.672 (0.462) ***
Age 17	4.268 (0.166) ***	4.264 (0.166) ***	4.216 (0.251) ***	4.434 (0.333) ***	3.938 (0.358) ***	4.986 (0.612) ***
Age 18	9.399 (0.350) ***	9.374 (0.349) ***	8.430 (0.484) ***	9.781 (0.702) ***	10.462 (0.897) ***	11.560 (1.356) ***
Age 19	14.088 (0.519) ***	14.052 (0.518) ***	13.053 (0.743) ***	15.109 (1.075) ***	15.627 (1.330) ***	15.928 (1.846) ***
Age 20	14.762 (0.555) ***	14.716 (0.553) ***	14.902 (0.871) ***	16.096 (1.169) ***	14.572 (1.261) ***	15.785 (1.855) ***
Age 21	14.310 (0.546) ***	14.258 (0.544) ***	13.807 (0.825) ***	14.605 (1.078) ***	15.823 (1.383) ***	16.010 (1.90) ***
Age 22	14.668 (0.567) ***	14.613 (0.565) ***	13.296 (0.811) ***	13.938 (1.045) ***	15.599 (1.381) ***	21.737 (2.565) ***
Age 23	14.237 (0.574) ***	14.187 (0.572) ***	12.139 (0.786) ***	15.140 (1.182) ***	14.898 (1.358) ***	20.072 (2.424) ***
Age 24	11.665 (0.478) ***	11.626 (0.477) ***	10.308 (0.683) ***	11.571 (0.916) ***	11.820 (1.099) ***	17.206 (2.091) ***
Education: Junior Secondary	0.620 (0.016) ***	0.621 (0.016) ***	0.587 (0.023) ***	0.679 (0.034) ***	0.657 (0.039) ***	0.670 (0.058) ***
Education: Senior Secondary	0.386 (0.009) ***	0.387 (0.009) ***	0.327 (0.012) ***	0.417 (0.019) ***	0.504 (0.027) ***	0.476 (0.038) ***
Education: Tertiary	0.119 (0.003) ***	0.121 (0.004) ***	0.075 (0.004) ***	0.116 (0.007) ***	0.159 (0.010) ***	0.184 (0.016) ***
Person with Disability	4.267 (0.281) ***	4.262 (0.280) ***	4.222 (0.482) ***	4.925 (0.645) ***	3.747 (0.498) ***	4.873 (0.830) ***
Household Characteristics						
Head is Female	0.857 (0.017) ***	0.858 (0.017) ***	0.855 (0.030) ***	0.882 (0.034) ***	0.850 (0.035) ***	0.837 (0.040) ***
Head is Working	1.115 (0.025) ***	1.116 (0.025) ***	1.183 (0.047) ***	1.152 (0.052) ***	1.121 (0.053) **	0.975 (0.052)
Urban	1.052 (0.018) ***	1.059 (0.018) ***	1.068 (0.031) ***	0.991 (0.031) *	1.069 (0.035) **	1.024 (0.043)
Member aged 0-4	0.931 (0.017) ***	0.928 (0.017) ***	0.881 (0.024) ***	0.946 (0.033)	0.952 (0.042)	0.983 (0.061)
Member aged 60+	0.982 (0.016)	0.980 (0.016)	0.929 (0.025) ***	0.993 (0.031)	0.993 (0.035)	1.041 (0.046)
Live in Own House	1.070 (0.024) ***	1.076 (0.024) ***	1.035 (0.040)	1.039 (0.044)	1.096 (0.050) **	1.206 (0.072) ***
Receive Social Assistance	0.809 (0.012) ***	0.803 (0.012) ***	0.829 (0.020) ***	0.806 (0.022) ***	0.769 (0.026) ***	0.686 (0.038) ***
District Contextual						
Poverty Level	0.995 (0.003) **	0.992 (0.003) ***	0.984 (0.003) ***	0.993 (0.003) **	1.001 (0.003)	1.005 (0.004)
Constant	0.075 (0.005) ***	4.732 (0.902) ***	47.850 (30.575) ***	0.449 (0.546) *	1.255 (1.591)	0.130 (0.089) ***
Var: District (constant)	0.163 (0.012)	0.165 (0.012)	0.189 (0.017)	0.199 (0.018)	0.155 (0.017)	0.130 (0.018)
LR-test (p-value)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Intra-Class Correlation	0.047	0.048	0.054	0.057	0.045	0.038
Observations	178 463	178 463	55 825	48 845	42 444	31 349

Source: Author's calculation

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. *** statistically significant at the 1% level, ** 5%, * 10%

Model [1]'s intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) is 0.047, indicating that differences between districts account for approximately 4.7% of the total variance in the propensity of being NEET youth, with the primary source of variability in life satisfaction at the individual level (95.3%). Furthermore, the likelihood ratio (LR) test of Model [1], which compares the multilevel mixed-effects logistic model to the conventional (single-level) logistic model, produced a p-value of 0.000. This p-value, which is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicates significant differences in estimates between the two models. These findings suggest that the multilevel mixed-effects logistic model provides more accurate estimation results than the standard logistic model.

Unless otherwise specified, the discussion will primarily focus on the estimates from Model [1]. However, we will also delve into the comparisons based on social class (Models [3]—[6]), a crucial aspect that adds depth and relevance to our research. We will particularly highlight the comparisons between high and low social classes for a comprehensive understanding.

3.1 Social Class

Social class is a crucial determinant in the school-to-work transition and, consequently, in avoiding the NEET status, as demonstrated by the study conducted by Dicks et al. (2020). Blustein et al. (2002) highlight that individuals from higher social classes benefit from greater career adaptability, better access to resources, and higher levels of self-concept crystallization, giving them a significant advantage in transitioning smoothly into the workforce. Conversely, those from lower-class backgrounds often face considerable barriers that hinder their progression to employment, education, or training. Complementing these findings, Staff & Mortimer (2008) reveal

that higher social class youth tend to pursue less intensive employment during high school and invest in post-secondary education, while lower social class youth often engage in early, intensive work experiences that do not support long-term educational and wage achievements. These disparities underline the critical role of social class in shaping educational and career paths, with lower social class youth facing increased risks of becoming NEET due to the compounded challenges in their school-to-work transitions.

The research findings on the relationship between social class and NEET status shed light on the crucial role of financial resources in this dynamic. The estimation results demonstrate a progressive pattern, indicating that youth from lower-middle, upper-middle, and high social classes have respective decreases in the likelihood of becoming NEET by 20.9%, 30.3%, and 35.9%, respectively, compared to those from the low social class. This pattern is primarily attributed to higher social class youth often having enhanced access to financial resources, which not only facilitates their education but also reduces the need for early employment. The findings also underscore the importance of stable and higher household incomes, which provide a safety net and alleviate economic pressures that might otherwise lead youth to discontinue education or training.

Our findings, particularly in Model [2], underscore the significant role of economic conditions in reducing NEET status. They reveal that a 1-unit increase in $\log(\text{PCE})$ is linked to a decrease in NEET youth probability by approximately 27.0%. This implies that higher social class or increased PCE corresponds to a decreased propensity for NEET youth status. For youths in the low social class, a 1-unit increase in $\log(\text{PCE})$ results in a 37.4% reduction in the odds of becoming NEET. In contrast, the same increase for youths in the high social class leads to only a 9.4% reduction. This substantial difference emphasizes the critical need for improving economic conditions, as indicated by higher per capita expenditures, which has a significantly greater positive impact on reducing NEET status for youths in the low social class.

The use of social class bivariate variables and $\log(\text{PCE})$ both effectively highlight the influence of economic conditions on NEET status. These measures are supplementary, providing additional insights that enhance the understanding of the primary variable. They demonstrate that higher financial resources and social class reduce the likelihood of youth becoming NEET. Including $\log(\text{PCE})$ in each social class model allows for a more nuanced quantification of this impact.

3.2 Gender and Marital Status

Female youth are 56.6% more likely (or 1.57 times higher odds) to become NEET than male youth, highlighting a significant gender disparity in NEET status. This finding is supported by ample international evidence, including Odoardi et al. (2023). Research from Turkey contextualizes this phenomenon, suggesting that being a young female NEET is not solely a personal choice but is influenced by structural factors within education and employment policies. This underscores the persistence of traditional gender roles assigning women primary responsibilities for domestic work (Lüküslü & Çelik, 2022).

When we compare estimates between low and high social classes, we find that the association is slightly stronger among individuals from the low social class. Among individuals in this class, females have 1.65 times higher odds of becoming NEET than males. Conversely, females from the high social class have 1.45 times higher odds. This difference indicates that while gender significantly influences NEET status across all social classes, socioeconomic factors linked to low social class may exacerbate this relationship, leading to a more pronounced impact on NEET outcomes among females in that demographic.

Marriage exerts a protective effect, reducing the likelihood of youth becoming NEET by 88.3% compared to unmarried youth. The result parallels the study conducted by Quintano et al. (2018) and World Bank (2019). This finding underscores the potential of marriage to offer stability, emotional support, and shared resources, thereby reducing youth's risk of NEET status. However, it becomes evident that the distribution of these benefits is not uniform but varies across different demographic groups. Marital status is crucial in influencing the likelihood of youth becoming NEET across low and high social classes. Specifically, married youth from the low social class experience a staggering 89.3% lower odds of NEET status compared to their unmarried counterparts. In contrast,

married youth from the high social class exhibit slightly less improvement, with approximately 84.1% lower odds of NEET status than their unmarried counterparts.

Female married youth have an astounding 35.4 times higher odds of becoming NEET than male unmarried youth. This statistic underscores a significant interaction effect between gender and marital status on NEET likelihood. In a study examining the determinants of NEET youth in Indonesia, Pattinasarany (2019) found that marriage is linked to a 9.3% higher likelihood of becoming NEET. When analyzing the data by gender, the study revealed a stark contrast: among males in the sample, being married is associated with a 17.1% lower likelihood of becoming NEET than unmarried men. Conversely, being married is associated with a 17.7% higher probability among females in the sample. A study by Utomo (2012) highlighted that in Indonesia, while many males smoothly transition from school to work, many females remain inactive and are excluded from the labor market. Furthermore, after marriage, many women face constraints in freely choosing their careers due to deeply ingrained societal expectations. These expectations predominantly emphasize their roles as wives and mothers, which can create substantial hurdles for women aspiring to pursue careers without external interference.

The disparity in NEET odds between married females across social classes is stark. In the low social class, married females are about 37.7 times more likely to become NEET than unmarried males. In contrast, in the high social class, married females are about 26.7 times more likely to become NEET than unmarried males. This disparity indicates that the influence of being a married female in the low social class on NEET status is considerably higher than that of unmarried males, more than it is in the high social class.

3.3 Age

Age covariates, a crucial aspect in our model, are represented as nine binary variables, each denoting the respondent's specific age. The estimation results reveal a compelling trend in which individuals aged 16 are 3.2 times more likely to be NEET than those aged 15. This progressive increase in the point estimates from age 16 to 20 underscores the cumulative effect of age on the probability of youth becoming NEET. At age 20, youth transition from late adolescence to early adulthood, a pivotal period where they assume increased responsibilities and make crucial decisions about education, employment, and independence. The significant jump in the estimate between ages 18 and 19 is particularly noteworthy. This could be attributed to various factors, such as individuals completing senior secondary education but not continuing to tertiary education or engaging in employment or the challenges of transitioning from a structured school environment to the more independent world of work or higher education. The findings parallel the study of Gaffari & Handayani (2019) and Pattinasarany (2019).

Comparing age point estimates across social classes shows that the likelihood of being NEET increases more among youths from high social class households. This result is counterintuitive, as higher social class is associated with better access to education and employment opportunities. However, one potential explanation is that high social class youths have the financial flexibility to take breaks from formal education or training to explore other interests, travel, or prepare for college entrance exams, leading to temporary NEET status. The fact that the odds of being NEET are highest at age 20 for the low social class and at age 22 for the high social class underscores the complex interplay of socioeconomic and developmental factors that affect youth differently across these age groups and social classes. In particular, youth from low social class households might face economic pressure to start working early to contribute to household income, often taking up low-skilled jobs.

3.4 Education Attainment

The analytical model demonstrates that higher educational attainment is associated with a lower probability of youth becoming NEET. Individuals with junior secondary, senior secondary, and tertiary education are 38.0%, 61.4%, and 88.1%, respectively, less likely to be NEET than those with only primary education. The increasing magnitude of these coefficients with higher education levels proves the significant impact of advanced education in reducing the likelihood of being NEET. Absor & Utomo (2017), in their analysis of the determinants of successful school-to-work transitions for young adults in the capital area of Indonesia concluded that education has a strong positive impact on this process. They found that education plays a key role in mitigating the adverse

effects of traditional cultural values and promoting successful transitions from school to work. The findings align with most studies on the determinants of NEET youth, but it's important to acknowledge exceptions to this trend. For instance, in Russia (Zudina, 2022), higher education does not universally protect against NEET status.

Individuals from the low social class who have completed junior secondary education are 41.3% less likely to be NEET than those with only up to primary education. In comparison, those from the high social class are 32.9% less likely. While junior secondary education is beneficial in reducing NEET likelihood in both social classes, the reduction is slightly greater in the low than in the high social class. Such disparity highlights the potential of completing junior secondary school to bring more pronounced educational benefits to individuals from low social class. Similar social class comparisons hold for senior secondary and tertiary education youth.

3.5 Youth with Disability

This study defines the disability covariate as individuals who experience at least one of eight types of difficulties or impairments that moderately or severely impact their daily activities: vision, hearing, walking or climbing stairs, using or moving hands/fingers, remembering or concentrating, behavior or emotional issues, speaking or understanding/communicating, and self-care. Estimation results indicate that youth with disabilities are 4.27 times more likely to be NEET compared to their non-disabled peers. The finding parallels Cabral's (2018) and Luthra's (2019) studies. A study by Siregar et al. (2021) shows that individuals with disabilities in Indonesia often encounter significant barriers to economic and societal participation. Such discriminatory attitudes and biases against individuals with disabilities can further limit their opportunities in both educational and employment sectors.

Adolescents with disabilities are 4.22 times more likely to be NEET in the low social class group and 4.87 times more likely in the high social class group compared to their non-disabled peers. These high odds ratios indicate that disability significantly increases NEET risk across all social classes. The slightly higher and unexpected odds ratio in the high social class is a poignant reminder of the potential impact of societal and familial pressures. These pressures, coupled with greater stigma and high expectations for success, may amplify the challenges faced by these individuals, making it harder for them to achieve educational and employment goals.

3.6 Household Head Characteristics

Two key indicators of household head characteristics are gender and employment status during the survey. When the head of the household is female, the likelihood of youth becoming NEET decreases by around 14.3% compared to when the head is male. Female heads may prioritize resources differently, potentially emphasizing education and skill development for their children. This focus could result in lower NEET rates as young people are better equipped for the job market or further education. The findings align with the studies conducted by Navarrete & Sánchez (2016) and Pattinasarany (2019). Comparison across social classes suggests that youth from female-headed households are 14.5% less likely to become NEET in the low social class and 16.3% in the high social class. The slightly greater reduction in the high social class hints at a more pronounced effect in this group, which could inform potential policy implications for youth skill development.

About the second indicator, we found that the probability of being NEET increases by approximately 11.5% when the household head is employed, compared to when they are unemployed. This probability rises even higher, by approximately 18.3%, for youths in low social class. However, the working status of the household head among youth in high social class does not significantly affect the odds of being NEET. These findings suggest that a working head does not provide sufficient support or resources to mitigate the risk to youth within his/her household among low-class households, whereas the working status of the household head does not significantly affect the odds of being NEET among high-class households.

3.7 Type of Residence

Youth residing in urban areas are 5.2% more likely to be NEET than their rural counterparts. With their heightened competition for employment opportunities, urban settings may contribute to this increase in NEET probability. The opposite is true for the case of Poland (Smoter, 2022).

For youths in the low social class, urban living increases the odds of being NEET by approximately 6.8% compared to rural living. This disparity suggests that urban environments pose additional challenges or lack adequate support systems, such as employment opportunities, educational resources, or training programs, which could reduce the risk of being NEET. However, for youths in the high social class, urban living does not significantly affect the odds of being NEET, indicating the potential of urban environments to provide better access to resources and opportunities that prevent them from becoming NEET, regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

3.8 Household Composition

Our research on household member composition has yielded significant findings. The model incorporates two variables: the presence of household members aged 0-4 (under-5) and those aged 60+ (elderly). The estimation results reveal a counterintuitive pattern: the presence of a household member aged 0-4 is associated with a 6.9% decrease in the probability of youth becoming NEET. This unexpected outcome suggests that families with young children prioritize stability and financial security, emphasizing education and employment opportunities for older siblings. In contrast, the presence of an elderly member in the household does not significantly affect the likelihood of youth being NEET. This lack of statistical significance raises interesting questions, such as the role of confounding variables, which warrants further exploration in the analytical model.

Our findings have profound implications for understanding the dynamics of youth becoming NEET in different social class households. In low social class households, the presence of under-5 children and the elderly reduces the odds of youth becoming NEET by 11.9% and 7.1%, respectively, compared to households without. However, in high social-class households, this effect is not significant. This suggests that young children and the elderly can significantly influence youth's educational and employment outcomes in lower social classes but not in higher social classes.

3.9 Household Assets and Social Assistance

Living in a household-owned home is associated with a 7.0% increase in the probability of youth becoming NEET. This finding is significant as it challenges the common perception that owning a house reflects economic well-being and provides stability and security, which should ensure youth educational or employment opportunities. The positive coefficient suggests that other factors linked to homeownership may counterbalance the potential benefits for youth engagement in education and employment.

The impact of living in one's own house on NEET status varies significantly between social classes. It shows no effect on NEET status in the low social class but contributes to higher NEET rates among youth from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. This difference underscores the importance of understanding the varying economic contexts and priorities related to household assets, which significantly influence outcomes for youth.

The impact of receiving social assistance on reducing the odds of youth becoming NEET shows intriguing and unexpected results across different social classes. In the low social class, social assistance is associated with a 17.1% lower odds of youth becoming NEET, whereas in the high social class, this reduction is a striking 31.4%. This disparity suggests a more substantial impact of social assistance in the high social class, highlighting the need for further investigation into these findings.

3.10 District Contextual

The estimation results indicate that for each 1% increase in the district-level poverty rate, the odds of a youth becoming NEET decrease by 0.5%. This finding is significant as it challenges conventional wisdom and suggests that districts with higher poverty rates may not necessarily lead to higher NEET rates among youth. This could be

explained by the possibility that districts with higher poverty rates are associated with a more active informal economy, where youth are more likely to engage in informal work or vocational training, reducing the likelihood of being NEET. Importantly, poorer districts often boast stronger community support systems, crucial in keeping youth engaged in education or employment. This underscores the importance of understanding and leveraging these community support systems to address youth NEET rates. Amendola (2022) analyzes macro-level determinants of the NEET rate across 40 countries, finding a positive correlation between poverty and the NEET rate at the national level.

Comparison across social class samples suggests that higher poverty rates are associated with a slight decrease in youth NEET odds in the low social class. However, poverty rates in the high social class show no significant association with NEET odds. This stark contrast suggests that district-level poverty rates have a minimal impact on NEET likelihood in higher social classes despite a small statistically significant effect in the lower social class. It is clear that other factors, yet to be fully understood, play a more significant role in determining NEET status among youth from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Summary of Findings

The central finding of this study underscores the protective role of social class against youth being NEET. Adolescents from higher social class households are less likely to disengage from study or work than those from lower social classes. Additionally, a higher PCE, a measure of economic well-being, correlates with a decreased probability of NEET status among youth.

Moreover, the analysis uncovers a multifaceted web of factors that influence the likelihood of youth becoming NEET. It is not a simple binary of 'NEET' or 'not NEET', but a nuanced interplay of various circumstances, including individual characteristics, household dynamics, and socioeconomic status. Factors that increase the probability of NEET status include being female, being a married female, having a disability, having an employed household head, living in urban areas, or owning a home. Conversely, factors associated with a lower likelihood of NEET status include being married (for adolescents), having higher education, coming from female-headed households, living with young children under five years old, and receiving social assistance. Age also plays a role, with a positive correlation with NEET probability up to age 20, after which this effect diminishes as youth age. Finally, district-level poverty, the only contextual variable in the study, indicates a reduction in the likelihood of being NEET.

Comparing estimation results across social classes generally reveals a wider disparity in NEET propensity for individuals from the low social class compared to those from the high social class. This stark disparity, evident in variables such as gender, marital status, the interaction between being married and female, and educational attainment, underscores the gravity of the situation. On the other hand, unexpected findings are apparent in variables such as age, disability status, households headed by females, and households receiving social assistance, underscoring the need for further investigation.

4.2 Policy Implications

Policymakers should consider several actions based on this study's findings. They should invest in education and skill development for lower social class youth, which will not only ensure equitable access to quality education and vocational training but also lead to enhanced educational attainment and employability. This can be achieved by providing targeted scholarships, mentorship programs, career counseling, and promoting employment opportunities. Additionally, they should develop specific education, training, and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities, which will contribute to their overall empowerment and inclusion in society.

Due to the considerable impact of NEET status on females, policymakers should prioritize empowering women in employment. Promoting flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies, such as remote work and

parental leave, can effectively assist women in balancing career and family responsibilities. Moreover, policymakers should implement programs that provide affordable childcare, educational grants, and training, specifically targeting those from lower social classes to empower married female youth. Collaborating with community and religious leaders to launch campaigns aimed at changing societal expectations that limit women's career opportunities and promoting the benefits of delaying marriage is also crucial (Nabila et al., 2022).

4.3 Significance of the Research

This study not only fills a critical research gap by exploring how social class influences youth to become NEET, but also provides actionable insights. It illuminates how socioeconomic status impacts NEET outcomes, guiding targeted interventions and informing policymaking for more effective and equitable solutions. By understanding these class-based dynamics, we can better address inequality and support disadvantaged groups, making a tangible difference in the lives of NEET youth.

Prior research on the determinants of NEET youth in Indonesia has primarily relied on data from the National Labor Force Survey (SAKERNAS), which collects household-level employment data (Anggraini et al., 2020; Naraswati & Jatmiko, 2022; Sari & Ahmad, 2021). Other studies have used data from the Indonesia Family Life Survey (Gaffari & Handayani, 2019) and the Socio-Cultural and Education module of SUSENAS (Pattinasarany, 2019). In contrast, this study utilizes SUSENAS data, providing a new foundation for similar research and opening avenues to explore additional factors that could influence NEET youth status. The inclusion of factors such as access to health services, food security, and utilization of various social protection and welfare programs could significantly enhance our understanding of NEET youth status, a crucial aspect of youth development and social welfare in Indonesia.

This study employs a robust multilevel regression approach, assuming that youth are nested within the districts where they reside. This methodological choice underscores our focus to a subnational spatial perspective on the NEET phenomenon, specifically examining how the district of residence affects the likelihood of individuals being classified as NEET. As of 2022, Indonesia is administratively divided into 34 provinces and 514 districts, with most basic public services, including education and employment, managed at the district level. Naraswati & Jatmiko's (2021) study investigates the determinants of NEET youth using multilevel regression, assuming respondents are nested at the provincial level. In contrast, our study adopts a more granular perspective by focusing on macro and socioeconomic conditions at the district level. Several international studies on the propensity of NEET youth also examine spatial aspects at the subnational level, including Cinquegrana et al. (2023) in Italy and Yang (2020) in China.

4.4 Study Limitations and Future Extension

While limited by its reliance on a single-year longitudinal dataset, this study is comprehensive in its approach. Future work can leverage the annual availability of SUSENAS data from the past five years (2019-2023) to thoroughly study evolving determinants and trends. This timeframe is particularly significant as it allows for a comprehensive investigation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the likelihood of youth being NEET. The years 2019-2020, 2021-2022, and 2023 serve as the pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic periods, respectively, providing a comprehensive understanding of how the pandemic has influenced youth transitions, thereby aiding in the development of resilient and inclusive recovery strategies (Norvell Gustavsson & Jonsson, 2024).

This study's definition of social class relies heavily on household PCE, which serves as a proxy for economic status. Adopting a broader definition incorporating multiple dimensions, such as the Goldthorpe Social Class Scheme (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992), can enhance future work. This schema considers occupational class, educational qualifications, and employment relations as critical determinants of social class. Understanding these multidimensional aspects helps identify effective interventions and policies to reduce NEET rates across different social strata.

The SUSENAS data, unfortunately, does not provide sufficient information to distinguish between inactive NEET and unemployed NEET individuals. This distinction is a crucial aspect of our research, as it has distinct implications and necessitates tailored strategies to address their specific challenges (Maguire, 2015). The urgency of this research lies in understanding and addressing the unique circumstances of each group, which can significantly contribute to effectively supporting and empowering NEET individuals, and ultimately, to the betterment of our society.

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