

## Introduction to the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Issues Conference Special Edition

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7th Global Issues Conference took place in April 2022 and as usual students at GPE member institutions could share their research with international audience during thematic sessions. Global Issues Conference takes place online and this year the session included:

- Education
- Environment
- Food Security and Supply Chain
- Gender
- Globalisation and International Politics
- Intercultural Interactions
- Media and Business
- Physical and Mental Health

Global Issues Conference (GIC) is organized by East Carolina University, USA and Carpathian State College, Poland on behalf of Global Partners in Education. Presenters come from 14 partner institutions in 11 countries.

After the conference, the Organizing Committee selects some presentations to be published in Global Partners in Education Journal. This year fifteen presentations were selected and the final eleven met all the requirements and are published and presented to wider audience.

From the field of **Education**:

1. *“Freedom of Expression of Judges in their Academic Research”* by Valentina Díaz Pizarro from Universidad Mayor, Chile

This academic research focuses on how to keep the balance between the freedom of expression and judicial independence and reflects on the situation in Chile.

2. *“English Language Curriculum in North Macedonia”* by Bisera Dalcheska Taleska and Marjana Vaneva from University American College Skopje, North Macedonia

This paper presents a detailed analysis of research conducted by the authors in order to find the factors that are essential in learning a foreign language. There are diagrams and charts showing their findings as well as some recommendations for the future.

**Environmental** issues were presented through:

3. *“The Humanities' Role in Solving Climate Change Through Fictional Narratives”* by Nasreddine EL Guezar from Mohammed I University, Morocco

The author shows us how much impact and influence scientific writing may have on readers' attitude towards the environment. We can learn that even humanities can contribute to the environmental discussion and ecocriticism can be used to interpret literary text in reference to environmental issues.

**Food Security and Supply Chain** session included the presentation on:

4. *“Tackling the Insufficient Food Supply in the Sufficient Chinese Hot-Pot Chain Restaurant Industry - A Summer Project”* by Mohan Huo, Jie Peng, Ke Wu, Linxuan Zhang, and Yiao Liu from Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China

This paper shows us ways of improving the food supply chain in order to support business development. The research was done to find ways in cost reduction and labour and at the same time keeping the quality standards.

In the session entitled **Gender** there was the following presentation:

5. *“Moroccan Women on the Market: Working Towards United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals”* by Douae Serraf from Mohamed I University, Morocco

We are introduced to the situation of Moroccan women who want to enter the marketplace and are faced with a number of issues and ways of discrimination. There are many examples that show us what the situation is and how it has been changing due to some regulations, such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – the global project implemented by United Nations in 2015.

Those who attended the session about **Globalisation and International Politics** could hear the presentation:

6. *“Love thy Neighbors: Countering the Growing Impatience in International Politics - Ukraine-Russia Conflict”* by Sadaf Qadir and Zainab Iqbal from Fatima Jinnah Women University, Pakistan

The paper shows that each conflict has global impact and cannot be treated as local. We are a global community and we live the consequences of events. The paper starts with historical insight trying to identify the causes of Ukraine-Russia conflict as well as show the impact it generally has around the world with focus on Pakistan.

During the session on **Intercultural Interactions** one could listen to the following presentations:

7. *“The Yagua People of Peru”* by Teadora Stefanovska and Iskra Andreeska from University American College Skopje, North Macedonia

The project focuses on the culture of the Yagua People and challenges they face. Their aim is to raise awareness of various problems in cross-cultural contacts.

8. *“Singing: The Human Connection”* by Marguerite Hemedinger from East Carolina University, USA

This article was inspired by the author’s personal experience and shows us similarities and differences in the attitude towards teaching and learning singing in five different countries.

One of the presentations during **Media and Business** session was:

9. *“Cultural Appropriation and Cancel Culture: A Global Survey”* by Chiamaka Ezedimbu from Igbinedion University, Nigeria

This paper deals with a difficult issue of misinterpretation of cultural appropriation. It tries to show that it might cause inappropriate situations, especially when it comes to virtual exchanges.

And the session about **Physical and Mental Health** included:

10. *“Hospital Waste Management and the Associated Hazards”* by Saoussen Benemara, Nourelhouda Benhamed and Benameur Nehar from Université Aboubekr Belkaid Tlemcen, Algeria

One of the main concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is management of waste, including medical waste. This paper aims to make current diagnosis, analyse the causes and suggest solutions.

11. *“Increasing Trend of Suicide Among Youth: A Social and Psychological Problem”* by Dua Somro, Hala Saadat Ullah Khan, Salwa Nadeem, Hamna Javed, and Ms. Zainab Iqbal from Fatima Jinnah Women University, Pakistan

According to this paper, suicide is the main cause of death in all parts of the world and should be given special attention and global initiatives should be taken to prevent suicide.

Our annual meeting during The Global Issues Conference once again gave many people a chance to present their research to international audiences. The wide variety of topics makes it possible for each attendee to find their field of interest and discuss some issues with people who are fascinated by the same topic.

The Global Partners in Education Journal is where some of the papers are published to allow even bigger audiences take a closer look at the chosen problems.

We would like to thank all those that were present during the conference as well as those who decided to publish their articles. It would not have been possible without invaluable help of our reviewers who also proofread the articles:

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## Freedom of Expression of Judges in their Academic Research

Valentina Díaz

Universidad Mayor, Santiago, Chile

### Abstract

Freedom of expression allows for the democratization of the judiciary. Judges have the right to freely express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions by any means of communication. Such freedom is a basis in academia, involving the ability to explain the conclusions of an investigation as a statement based on reasoning and evidence. Conclusions may be right or wrong, but they are freely expressed. However, the exercise of this freedom entails limitations: the maintenance of neutral, objective, and impeccable conduct of judges. These limitations guarantee the principles of impartiality and independence in the administration of justice—the principles that seek to preserve the dignity of the jurisdictional functions and the impartiality and independence of the judiciary. Judges may speak and write freely, as long as they do not promote ideas that may compromise impartiality and independence. Indeed, the freedom of expression of persons exercising jurisdictional functions is subject to greater restrictions. But the restriction to this right does not imply that any manifestation or expression issued by a judge may be restricted.

*Key words: freedom, independence, restrictions*

### Introduction

Judges can publish academic papers, write in newspapers, give their opinions on social networks, and pronounce their point of view in different media. This state of affairs is relatively new; in the past judges were more reserved when it came to giving public statements. Nowadays their participation and opinion on contentious issues is increasingly expected. On the other hand, when participating in academic work, which is the subject of this article, judges express their opinions openly, exchanging ideas and debating them without fear of reprisal or criticism. This increased public exposure raises new questions about judicial independence. Thus, divergent interests are at stake that must be weighed against freedom of expression. Now, when judges express their opinions in a context outside of academic work and express it in judicial decisions, their freedom of expression may be restricted, as they cannot take sides in any case, or their rulings may be perceived as impartial. So not all cases are clear regarding the expression of a judge's opinion, raising several questions: Can judges participate in academic work? Are they allowed to express their opinion without infringing on their freedom of expression? All these questions require a careful balance since judges, on the one hand, enjoy the right to freedom of expression like all other members of society, but on the other hand, their participation cannot be impartial. This paper aims to give a brief comparative overview of how national jurisdictions address the potential conflicts between freedom of expression and judicial independence.

### Comparative Overview

Judges are traditionally expected to exercise considerable restraint in the exercise of their freedom of expression in the interest of judicial independence since judges cannot disclose confidential information concerning litigation of which they are aware in exercising their judicial functions. In view of this, when communicating their views, they should do so with caution and refrain from responding to public criticism of their judicial activities. The case is different concerning legal issues that they comment on in legal journals, conferences, academic papers, newspapers, etc. In most countries, judges are allowed, and in some are even encouraged, to participate in public debates about the law, the legal system, and the functioning of the judiciary in general. This demonstrates that, despite the differences, there are several similarities in this respect as all countries seek to balance freedom of expression with the authority, impartiality, and independence of the judiciary. In Chile, judges are largely protected from any sanction unless their speech is directly related to the administration of justice. The opinions expressed publicly by judges are considered a private and personal matter; therefore, their freedom of expression is protected. However, it is necessary to question the freedom of expression if any violation of the prohibitive norms is at stake. The measures adopted to ensure that situations that transgress the norm do not occur are limited to repressive measures, such as a reprimand and dismissal, which represent the most serious reprisals against freedom of expression if the opinion of a judge is considered to be impartial or against the norm. This is reflected in the case of *Urrutia Laubreaux vs. Chile* in which in 2004 the Supreme Court of Justice of Chile authorized Judge Urrutia to attend the "Diploma on Human Rights and Democratization Processes". On November 30, 2004, Judge Urrutia informed the Supreme Court that he had passed the diploma course and submitted his final paper on the human rights violations that occurred during the Chilean military regime. The Supreme Court forwarded the work submitted to the competent body to discipline Mr. Urrutia and subsequently returned the academic work to him, informing him that the Supreme Court had considered that it contained "inadequate and unacceptable assessments" for the said court. On March 31, 2005, the Court of Appeals of La Serena decided to sanction Judge Urrutia with a disciplinary measure of "written censure". After an appeal, the Supreme Court upheld the challenged resolution and reduced the sentence to a "private reprimand", which lasted 13 years, affecting his judicial career. On May 29, 2018, and in compliance with the recommendations of the Merits Report, the Supreme Court of Justice of Chile vacated the sanction imposed on the victim. In the judgment the Court found that it was not by the American Convention to sanction expressions made in an academic paper on a general topic and not a specific case, such as the one made by Judge Urrutia. The Court stated that in such a case the right to freedom of expression was violated and that Chile was responsible for the violation of Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights, about the obligation to respect and guarantee such rights, enshrined in Article 1.1 of the same, to the detriment of Judge Urrutia.

### **Academic freedom about freedom of expression**

The relationship between academic freedom and freedom of expression has been demonstrated by United Nations bodies and by the Inter-American Human Rights system itself. However, there are certain aspects of academic freedom that go beyond the relationship with freedom of expression which has a direct impact on the rights to personal security, the rule of law, and democracy. Academic work or research carried out by a judge promotes the development of knowledge and its progress. This freedom

allows for the transmission of experience and knowledge. This implies that academic publications should be free, open, and safe spaces in which ideas should be exchanged and debated without fear of violence or reprisals. A judge, who elaborates on a given issue and does research, presenting the result of that research in the form of a monograph with the character of a thesis, has the freedom to choose the topic, without fear of transcending the limitations of the program that follows the lines of research and cannot avoid drawing the conclusions if they come from the research. One may disagree with the conclusions, the procedure, or the research, but the academic work should be evaluated from the point of view of academic standards. Therefore, any other kind of evaluation violates the academic freedom of research if it disagrees with the results or conclusions reached. Therefore, a judge who exposes his point of view in academic work has total freedom to express himself as any other person, without being compelled to impinge on the impartiality or being subject to sanctions established by the legal doctrine.

### **Freedom of expression and its regulation in the law**

Freedom of expression, as already mentioned, is the right to perform actions that show the intention of a person to give a message or content that helps the democratic debate. Its main objective is to make possible a public discussion, useful for life and the community in which we live, contributing to the free development of one's personality. This right can only be intervened for the protection of the rights of others when impartiality is affected, and for this purpose, it enjoys the following specific guarantees (Escobar 2006):

1. Prior censorship is prohibited: prior intervention by the public authorities to prevent or modulate an academic work, a publication, a message, or opinion is not allowed, according to the Constitutional Court.
2. Administrative sequestration is prohibited: The administrative authority may not remove from circulation or restrict the media in which an idea or content is expressed.

This freedom of expression is protected in the international field of human rights, in articles 8 and 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The American Convention on Human Rights in Latin American protects freedom of expression by prohibiting prior censorship, regardless of the cause, in Article 13 in relation to the obligation to respect and guarantee the rights indicated below:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
2. The exercise of the right provided for in the preceding paragraph shall not be subject to prior censorship but shall be subject to subsequent liability, which must be expressly established by law and be necessary to ensure:
  - a. respect for the rights or reputation of others, or
  - b. the protection of national security, public order, or public health or morals.
3. The right of expression may not be restricted by indirect means, such as the abuse of official or private controls of newsprint, radio frequencies, or of schools and



apparatus used in the dissemination of information, or by any other means designed to impede the communication and circulation of ideas and opinions.

4. Public spectacles may be subject by law to prior censorship for the exclusive purpose of regulating access thereto for the moral protection of children and adolescents, without prejudice to the provisions of subsection 2.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, judges have recognized the right to freedom of expression. The exercise of this right is limited by the duties and responsibilities derived from their profession, such as the principles of independence and impartiality, which constitute an essential element of the rule of law. The judges' right to freedom of expression cannot be limited by their status as such. In addition, it does not matter what means they use to exercise this right; they must abide by the consequences that their exercising of this right entails, because it can destroy the presumption of impartiality. An impartial legal process not only harms the citizen's right to judicial guarantees, but also harms the judiciary itself. But as far as the opinion refers to academic works, the expressions made by the judges on a general subject cannot be sanctioned, because it is not a specific case that affects the impartiality of the judge.

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## Author Notes

**Valentina Diaz Pizarro** is a law student at Universidad Mayor de Chile. She works as a research assistant at the research center for society and health at the same university. She is enthusiastic about research work based on the protection of human rights and research related to international law. Her participation in the 7th Global Issues Conference on freedom of expression of judges in academic work boosted her assertiveness and determination to present her point of view in an international forum.

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## English Language Curriculum in Macedonia

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### Abstract

In order to highlight the need for change in the instructional practices and English language curricula in Macedonia, this paper targets the first-grade curriculum in the country and the lesson plans adhering to the planning standards developed by the Bureau for Development of Education. The study employs a mixed-methods approach to conduct research in a village in Macedonia. Qualitative data have been gathered from an online semi-structured interview with two educators from the United States of America, Cuchiarra and Fillmore, who have conducted extensive research in urban districts throughout the country. Another source for qualitative data is the comments on the reflection checklists that have been developed and filled out by the author of the study. Then, the author randomly chose 32 students from the same grade-level, divided them into two focus groups that had students with different proficiency levels and implemented two curricula; the one developed by the Bureau with group A, and another one based on the 3Ls Framework, which is a framework developed by the interviewees, with group B. In order to gather quantitative data, four posttests were administered, and the results are subject to analysis and comparison. Two hypotheses are tested, null – which refers to having no difference in the posttest results, and alternative – with regards to a possible difference in the posttest results. When it comes to the design, this is a QUAL -> quan design, i.e., more data is coming from the core qualitative component due to the limitation of the quantitative data. The core component is the qualitative data that can stand on its own, yet the quantitative data is regarded as a supplemental component and does not stand on its own. However, both outcomes of the research process will lead to integration in the conclusion because both types of data are in constant interaction. The findings of the study show that the current English language curriculum in Macedonia does not prepare the students for lifelong learning nor life in the 21st century, does not nurture a culture for independent learning, nor requires critical thinking or meaningful discussions.

*Key words: curriculum, research, outcomes, data*

### Background

North Macedonia is located on the Balkan Peninsula, Southern Europe. According to the census in 2002, North Macedonia is a country with around 2.02 million inhabitants. Ethnically, 64.17% are Macedonians, 25.17% are Albanians, 3.5% are Turks, and there are other ethnic groups such as Roma, Vlachs, Serbs, and Bosnians (Population, 2002). The official language of North Macedonia is Macedonian, which is spoken by most inhabitants. On the other hand, 20 % of the citizens speak Albanian, which holds the status of an official language too.

Children start going to primary school at the age of 6. Primary education in North Macedonia is compulsory, free of charge and with equal access to all students. The main responsible institution is the Ministry of Education and Science which adopts the curricula and the annual teaching plans for all primary education grades developed by

the Bureau for Development of Education (An Official Website of the European Union, 2020).

In North Macedonia, students start learning English at the age of 6. However, there are options to begin even before the age of 6 when children go to preschool. Nevertheless, preschool is optional, thus this project focuses on the compulsory primary education that every child receives. English has become a global language. Thus, parents and guardians in North Macedonia see it as a priority and believe that it is of utmost importance for their children's future. English language teaching in North Macedonia is based on CEFRL (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). More precisely, CEFRL is a framework which organizes language proficiency in six levels and that is from A1 to C2 (Council, 2001).

However, many parents decide that their children should attend private English lessons or a private school because of the public system's inefficient implementation of instructional practices and lesson plans based on simple sentences or vocabulary out of context. This study assumes that the traditional drilling and prompting, answering questions yet never relying on questioning, failing to provide progress data, memorizing by heart, are demotivating factors. It also assumes that the traditional practice of teaching English in the first foundational year of the students or the following years is not helpful, but inefficient and lacking in many aspects that are to be discussed.

## **Methodology**

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach in order to answer two research questions.

1. Do content-rich texts in EL lessons build more knowledge than 'considerate' texts?
2. Does the 3Ls (Learning, Language and Literacy) approach improve fluency more than the traditional 'prompting' method?

Mixed-methods research is an analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (Shorten & Smith, 2017). The overall reason for this choice of approach is to expand and strengthen the conclusion and by that contribute to the published literature (Schoonenboom & Burke Johnson, 2017). The use of mixed methods is helpful with regards to the examination of the research questions and the information obtained in the end. Mixed-methods research does not limit the researcher to only one type of data (Creswell W. & Clark Plano L., 2018), but it enables them to use all the tools of data collection. Qualitative data is collected in order to explain quantitative results. This project analyzes data from the collaborative work of Maryann Cucchiara and Lily Wong Fillmore when they implemented the 3Ls Framework in New York City public schools through interview questions as well as the reflection notes from each lesson with two focus groups and the vignettes presented in Chapter III. Then, with regards to quantitative data, this study shows results of the conducted posttests of two focus groups. The participants in this study are 1<sup>st</sup> grade students from North Macedonia who followed classes in English. The two focus groups consist of 16 students each: group A followed the state curriculum developed by the Bureau for Development of

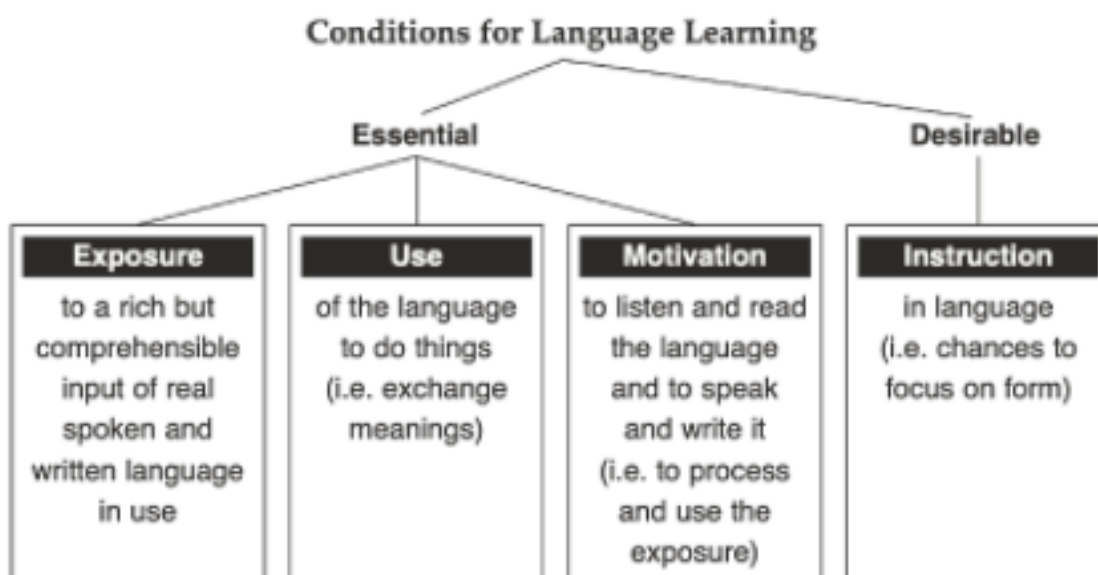
Education, and group B was exposed to the 3L Lesson Flows through a combination of ESA and Task-Based language teaching approaches. This study is based on two theories: constructivism and behaviorism. The 3Ls Framework falls under the category of constructivism, and the instructional practice in Macedonia under behaviorism, that is group B. Both groups were facilitated by the author of this study. When it comes to the design of the study, this is a QUAL -> quan design (Schoonenboom & Burke Johnson, 2017). This means that more data is coming from the core qualitative component due to the limitation of the quantitative data. The core component is the qualitative data that can stand on its own, yet the quantitative data is regarded as a supplemental component and does not stand on its own. However, both outcomes of the research process will lead to integration in the conclusion because both types of data are in constant interaction. “Quantitative dominant [or quantitatively driven] mixed methods research is the type of mixed research in which one relies on a quantitative, postpositivist view of the research process, while concurrently recognizing that the addition of qualitative data and approaches are likely to benefit most research projects.” (Johnson & AJ., 2007). This study relies on carefully examined qualitative and quantitative data and can speak to different audiences – those that are attracted to understanding and meaning, and those that rely on statistical data. The advantages of conducting a mixed method research are addressing and answering more than one question, perceiving the data from different perspectives, avoiding bias, and, in our opinion, this is suitable for evaluating instructional practices.

## Second Language Teaching

Second language acquisition (SLA) takes into consideration the fact that the learner already speaks another language and “encompasses the process an individual goes through as he or she learns the elements of a new language, such as vocabulary, phonological components, grammatical structures, and writing systems.” (Robertson & Ford, 2009). There are six stages of SLA; **pre-production**, also known as “the silent period,” when the student does not speak but takes in the new language, then **early production** when the student starts using a few words and simple sentences, **speech emergent**, longer sentences and more words on familiar topics, **beginning fluency**, the student still struggles to speak fluently due to lack of vocabulary yet the sentences can be understood better and the speech is considered fairly fluent, **intermediate fluency** when the student starts speaking fluently in social situations, also they can easily manage a new situation or unfamiliar topics, the errors are not that frequent, and finally, **advanced fluency**, communicating fluently in all contexts (Robertson & Ford, 2009). The time that it takes to go through all the stages largely depends on the individual, but the instructional strategies of the teacher are of utmost importance as well. Since the target participants in this study are first-grade students, it is assumed that they are in the pre-production stage at the beginning of the school year. Task-based teaching in SLA started towards the end of 1960s (Ellis, Principles of instructed language learning, 2005). Tasks were usually linked to problem-solving or role-play techniques (Brown, 2007). Since SLA is a field of study that is still in its developing stage, one can easily deduce that there is no agreement whether the instruction should be based on TBT or PPP. This study takes into consideration the characteristics of both teaching methods.

There are many people who have learnt to speak a language without any lessons, yet there are some who, even though they have been taught a language for years in

school, have not managed to reach a level of proficiency nor fluency at all. People who have learnt a language on their own have a desire and a motive to do so, that is what makes the difference. (Willis J. , 1996) They are usually people who travel for business or people who are in contact with the language because of a friend, thus they are presented with many opportunities to use the vocabulary and the phrases they know. In addition, native speakers of the language do not expect them to be flawless, so they learn as they participate in exchanges without any pressure. On the contrary, those people who are motivated enough to use the language while receiving proper guidance, thrive and achieve accuracy easily. It leads to the role of the teacher being a facilitator or a guide in the process of learning. Willis states that it is important to use the language freely in order to learn to speak it. “Free use involves a far broader range of language and gives learners richer opportunities for acquiring. They need chances to say what they think or feel, and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere with using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened.” (Willis J. , 1996). Willis refers to the classroom setting in which teachers should implement an instructional practice that allows the students to engage in a lot of speaking activities, but general topics that are familiar to them, so they get more comfortable when using the language. Another important point that this study takes into consideration is “Reading widely is one of the best ways to learn another language.” (Willis J. , 1996), therefore the first-grade curriculum should be based on children stories and nursery rhymes that the students will understand with the guidance of the teacher, and one of the main goals is to develop the desire to read. In addition, re-creating natural learning conditions in the classroom leads to all learners learning, thus this is one of the basic characteristics of TBL. In order to become fluent in a language, there are certain conditions that should be met. The following diagram shows the essentials conditions that lead to effective language learning.



(Willis J. , 1996)

This diagram presents that exposure, use, motivation and instruction are very important factors when learning another language. Thus, the classroom can provide all the aforementioned conditions by planning lessons that relate to being exposed to real language, numerous instances for discussion, motivating the students to

reproduce the language, and providing instruction that allows them to become comfortable when using the target language.

Tasks in SLA are understood as pieces of work that are related to the real world but facilitated by the teacher. (Ellis, Task-based language learning and teaching, 2003) It is an activity that is characterized by social interaction, meaning, comprehension and production of the language in a meaningful way. (Lee, 2000) Tasks present the means to urge students to produce an output after setting the instruction flow. (Brown, 2007) Another important source is Vygotsky who was a strong believer in social interaction and stated that the process of learning requires mediated learning; using material tools, interaction with others, and using symbols. (Vygotsky, 1978) TBLT is closely linked to Vygotsky's ZPD as well in the sense that while doing tasks the learner relies on their own knowledge, but they also build new knowledge by relying on other people's knowledge. The more knowledgeable one does not need to be the teacher, it can be another student, thus it meets ZPD's criterium that learning needs the presence of a learner and the presence of the more knowledgeable one. Tasks provide the learners with numerous opportunities to use the language, especially children who can learn more through tasks than responding to drills. (Poehner, Group Dynamic Assessment: Mediation for the L2 Classroom, 2009) This study assumes that tasks provide the students with the right motivation to learn the language.

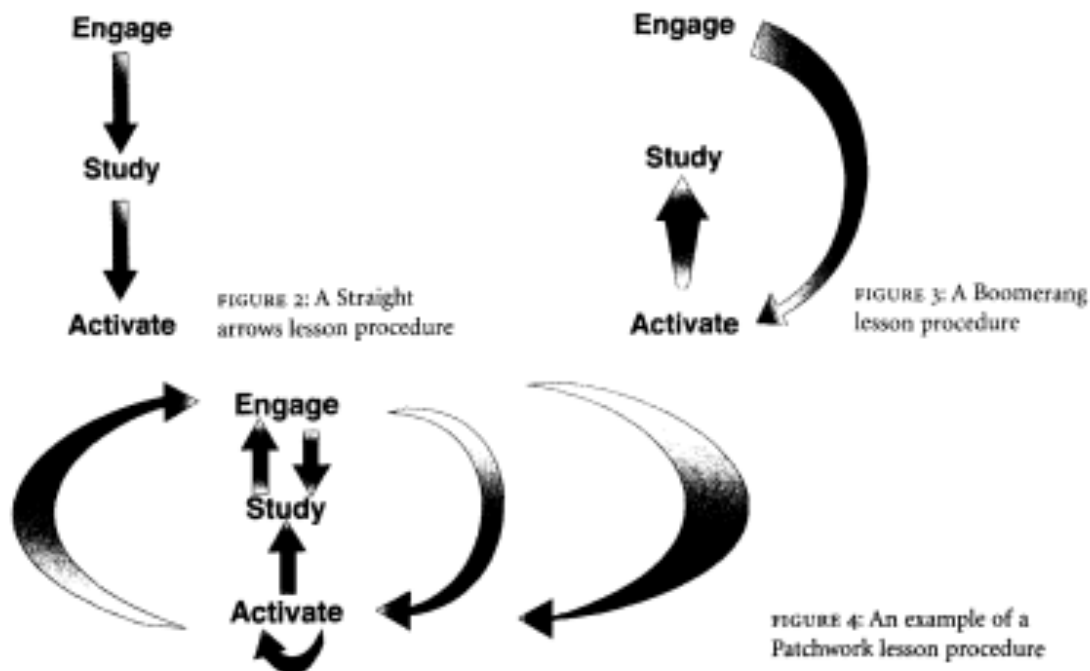
### **Presentation, Practice, Production as a Teaching Method**

PPP (Present, Practice, Produce) as a teaching approach is commonly used when teaching a foreign language. The first part of the lesson plan in PPP is presentation, that means that the teacher introduces a situation which represents the target vocabulary and linguistic frames, then the students practice the vocabulary by choral repetition or individual repetition where a student repeats a word, phrase or a sentence urged by the teacher, finally, the teacher nominates a student to make the desired response connected to the vocabulary (Harmer, 2007). PPP was practiced during the 1960s, then it came under attack in the 1990s. Ivan Illich in his work *Deschooling Society* stated "In fact, learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation of others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting.", pointing to the teacher's role of an instructor and the straight-forward teaching method, as well as high restricted vocabulary, yet what the students need is being exposed to an authentic language environment (Illich, 2000). Moreover, PPP was considered inadequate because it does not create a natural learning setting, so as a response to the criticism alternatives to PPP were offered. Johnson and Byrne suggested to start the lesson with the production phase, notice what aspects of the students' output need mediation, then go to the present and practice phase in order to overcome the problems (Lewis, 1993) (Byrne, 1987).

Then, as a response, another trilogy was introduced ESA which stands for Engage, Study, Activate (Harmer, 2007). The Engage phase happens in the first phase of the lesson when the teacher motivates the students to learn and emotionally engage with the topic. Then, Study, introducing the unit theme for the day, finally, Activate, when



students are encouraged to use the language they know. ESA has three lesson flows which can be seen in the figure below.



(Harmer, 2007)

A straight arrows lesson procedure follows the three phases accordingly and is the most similar to PPP. The lesson starts with the teacher showing a picture that is related to the unit theme, then by engaging them, the teacher manages to get to the Study phase where meaning and form are explained. The lesson ends with the students using the vocabulary or the grammar structure in sentences of their own. Then, a boomerang lesson procedure is when the teacher first engages the students, then asks them to produce the language they know on the topic, then based on their output some aspects of the language are studied. A patchwork lesson may follow different sequences based on the needs of the students.

PPP and its alternative ESA are useful when introducing forms such as *can* or *can't*, yet their use when it comes to communicative tasks is not efficient. (Harmer, 2007). A lesson based exclusively on PPP is an inefficient delivery of concepts that need TBLT to be put into context.

When it comes to choosing the right method, John Dewey is one of the names that is of importance for this study. As stated by Dewey "I believe that the active side precedes the passive in the development of the child nature..." He is therefore a strong believer in expression and physical movements, otherwise, the child is becoming passive and has an absorbing attitude. He believed that all the intellectual and rational processes result from action. (Dewey, 1897) He places images as the best instrument of instruction, and this is closely linked to ESL teaching methods, preparing a lesson that leads to the child's ability to mentally form images of various subjects. Then, carefully observing the students' interest and evaluating what the student is ready for. "I believe

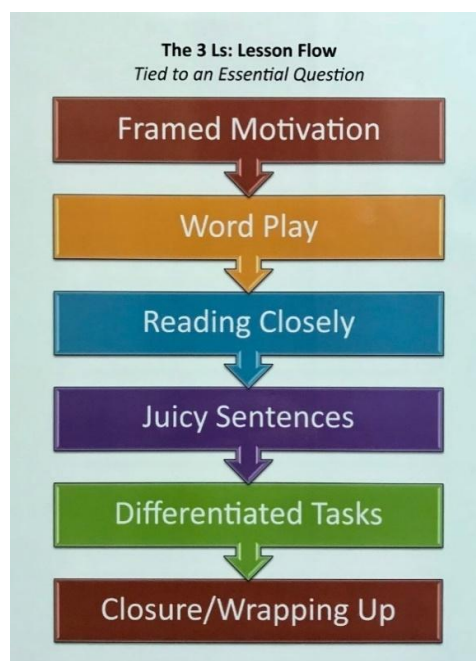


that next to deadness and dullness, formalism and routine, our education is threatened with no greater evil than sentimentalism.” (Dewey, 1897), as stated Dewey since he meant to convey a message that emotions should be welcomed in education. His *My Pedagogic Creed* outlines the need to take into consideration the psychological and social needs of the child instead of just flying through the curriculum.

### 3Ls Framework

In 2007, Maryann Cucchiara began working with Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore to introduce changes in the EL classroom in more than 300 schools in New York City (Schools, 2021). Their mission was to change the decontextualized texts to compelling texts in order to increase the English language proficiency and decrease the number of students who stalled. They named those compelling and complex texts “juicy texts” and strongly believed that through instruction centered on juicy texts students will develop their language skills, critical thinking and fluency. They created a framework based on the 3 Ls: Learning, Language, and Literacy. Cuchiara and Fillmore based the framework on three instructional principles: 1. Text, Talk and Tasks should be cognitively demanding (3Ts), 2. Instruction should provide Access, Attention, and Active Engagement (3As), and 3. Students learn from quality texts that are Complex, Compelling, Concise, and Connected (4Cs) (Schools, 2021).

The 3Ls approach comprises of six elements that are to be discussed in detail since it is the approach used with one of the focus groups, group B. The six elements build on each other and are interconnected, and they are tied to an essential question which is overarching, and students are supposed to explore throughout the unit.



(Schools, 2021)

As shown in the picture, the six elements are: framed motivation, word play, reading closely, juicy sentences, differentiated tasks, and closure/wrapping up. All of them are supported by instructional practices that teachers use on an everyday basis. The first

element of the framework, Framed Motivation, calls for the students' previous knowledge on the unit. Learners are motivated to explore the topic by watching a video, or powerful images, even quotes. Besides tapping into the students' previous knowledge, Framed Motivation, also builds background knowledge needed for the upcoming text. Next, the second element, Word Play, is the part of the unit when the teacher provides 3-8 words carefully chosen that are one of the learning outcomes of the unit. In order for the students to comprehend the text, they need to understand the words, so before indulging into listening to or reading the narrative, the teacher presents some words that are to be found in the text later. The teacher does not provide translation, but through instructional conversation, they guide the students to uncover the meaning of the words. Activities that might be used with young learners are: Talk It Out, Act It Out, Grow It, Draw It, Stretch It, and Feel it. Using visuals is extremely helpful, so that the teacher avoids mere translating. Next, Reading Closely, the text that is to be presented is related to the essential question as well as the framed motivation, and some of the words that the teacher perceives as challenging for the students are examined in the word play stage. The teacher steps into the role of the learner and chooses a text that is worthy. Then, teachers guide the students through the text and highlight language points while encouraging students to use them in their own speech and writing. Also, the teacher has a few questions ready, called text-dependent questions, such as "How does the author's tone change from paragraph four to paragraph five?" and together with the students they answer the questions through Turn and talk, Stop and jot, and whole class discussions. The main point is to address big ideas and to attend to the academic language of the text. Next, Juicy sentences developed by Fillmore; after Reading Closely, the teacher selects a sentence that contains big ideas or one that is richly detailed. Collaboratively, they deconstruct the sentence, and reconstruct it again, either as it was before or in some other possible way. During this part, the teacher can explain grammar or lexical points that the students need to grasp. Then, Differentiated Tasks as the fifth element of the framework, require detailed and careful design. This element is supported by the Vygotskian learning theory, "it is a time for students to work as apprentices in becoming critical readers and writers while employing the academic language they have been learning." (Schools, 2021) It is best developed when it allows for individual work, pair work and group work. It is a time when the students work in their zone of proximal development, tackling difficult tasks at their instructional level with appropriate scaffolds to support their effort. Although many of the tasks need to be scaffolded, they should not be overly scaffolded so that they do not remove any cognitive demand. The teacher's role as the more knowing expert can vary, but mainly they should provide feedback, guidance and evaluation. These tasks are very important to foster students' output. Also, as students work with individuals and groups during this time, they can make assessments of the students' learning as well as make assessments for the next steps in the learning language and literacy instruction. Finally, wrapping up the 3Ls lesson with a Closure which is usually done through a ticket-out-the-door activity. It is a time for the students to present their work, to read their writing, or share their new learnings. It is during this time when the teachers return to the essential question and encourage students to share their views, opinions, and understanding.

## Data Collection

In order to answer the first research question, *Do content-based texts in EL lessons build more knowledge than 'considerate' texts?*, qualitative data is gathered in the form

of a semi-structured interview and a teacher's reflection checklist with the support of observation vignettes.

With regard to the interview as a data collection tool, the researcher was focused on three categories; 1. Why adapt the curriculum to 3Ls?, 2. Were students more knowledgeable after receiving 3Ls lessons?, and 3. Is differentiation necessary?

To answer the first question, this research summarizes the interviewees' answers regarding the need for change. Continually throughout the years, the EL departments in the United States noticed that there were students who reach a certain level and never progress. In order to address the stalling, they adapted the curriculum and changed the coursebooks that consisted of texts below their grade level, texts that are overly simplified to texts that require more skills. Cuchiara and Fillmore agreed that the texts should not confuse the learners, thus, the teacher's support is inevitable. They believed that teachers do not need a prescriptive curriculum but support for their instructional vision so they could create texts, talk, and tasks to examine content, develop knowledge, and uncover learning, all while developing rich and complex academic language. Their main objective is text, talk and tasks that are cognitively demanding. They saw that the 3Ls curriculum leads to active engagement, improved attention, and students learn more. The texts and lesson the students tackle should be compelling to them. In that way, those texts immediately create a sense of wonder and invite investigation which again supports the importance of independent learning and motivation. The shift to 3Ls improved participation in class, they noted. They believe that besides the compelling texts and topics, what the curriculum needs is a caring teacher that would scaffold to meet the students need.

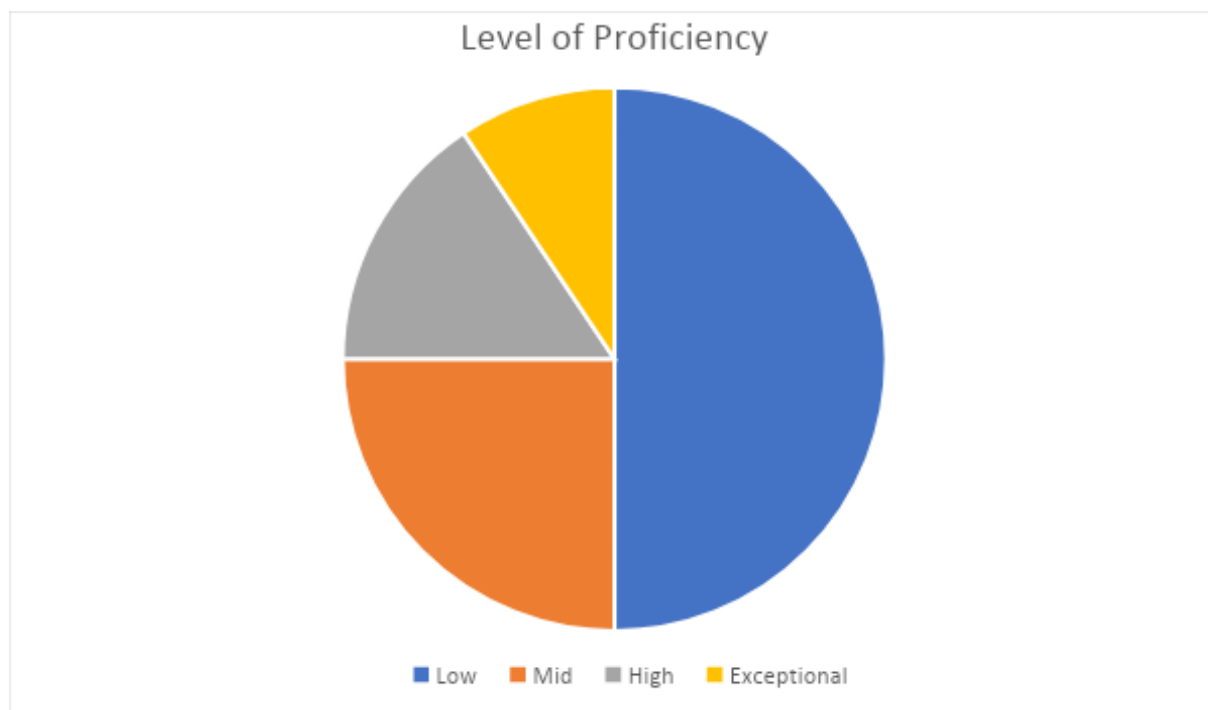
Taking into consideration the second question as a category, *Were students more knowledgeable after receiving 3Ls lessons?*, besides the data that showed the increased number of exited students, all the educators and teachers who implemented or observed the implication of the 3Ls, agree that while improving their language skills students tackled different generic topics of importance and researched with the teacher's assistance topics such as, *How do volcanoes form rocks?*. Thus, while trying to answer that question, and learning new vocabulary and grammar rules, the students found out more about a natural phenomenon and the lessons did not feel like imposed learning, but a discussion and tasks through which they acquire language skills.

The 3Ls curriculum provides an opportunity to differentiate the instruction based on the students' interests, readiness, and needs. During the word play, the teacher provides different tiers of words that are synonymous and asks the students to either write the word or draw it. During reading closely, students can answer the text-dependent questions or address the tasks in different ways, that is by writing, acting it out, or working with a more knowledgeable peer on a project. The part where differentiation is mostly highlighted is during differentiated tasks. A teacher should prepare materials for the different types of learners in the classroom. Yet, what Cuchiara and Fillmore state as the most important is "Although many of the tasks need to be scaffolded, they should not be overly scaffolded as to remove any cognitive demand. It is always important to remember that there is no learning without productive struggle." Teachers should make sure that each student is challenged during their work period.

Moreover, the reflection checklists and the vignettes show a difference when it comes to participation, self-motivation, confidence and enjoyment between the students from the two groups, and the coding of the categories goes in favor of group B.

In order to answer the second research question, *Does the 3Ls approach improve proficiency more than the traditional method?*, pretest results are analyzed as a covariate, and posttest results provide the answer to the question with regard to two hypotheses; null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis.

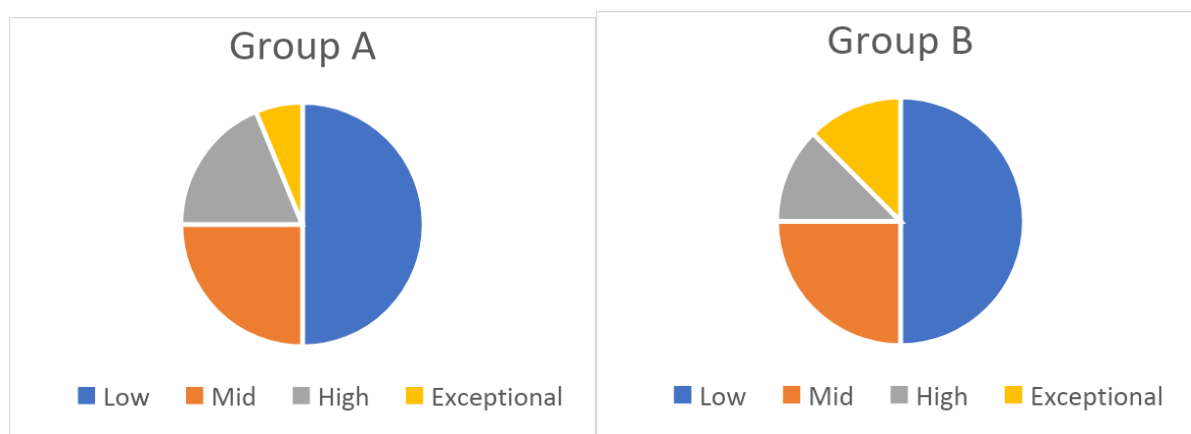
To begin with, the pretest results serve as a covariate because they explain any variability that might occur in the posttest results. This study regards the pretest scores as having two roles. The first one is to prove that 21<sup>st</sup> century students in North Macedonia enter first grade with at least a little knowledge of English, even some of them with a mid or high level in speaking and listening. The second role of the pretest as a covariate is to show the students' initial knowledge of English, so that the results on the posttests can be clearly analyzed. Thus, after screening a total of 32 students chosen randomly, but in the same grade level and from a similar socio-economic background, their scores showed that all students had knowledge of English.



Graph 1. The proficiency level according to the pretest conducted before starting the lessons

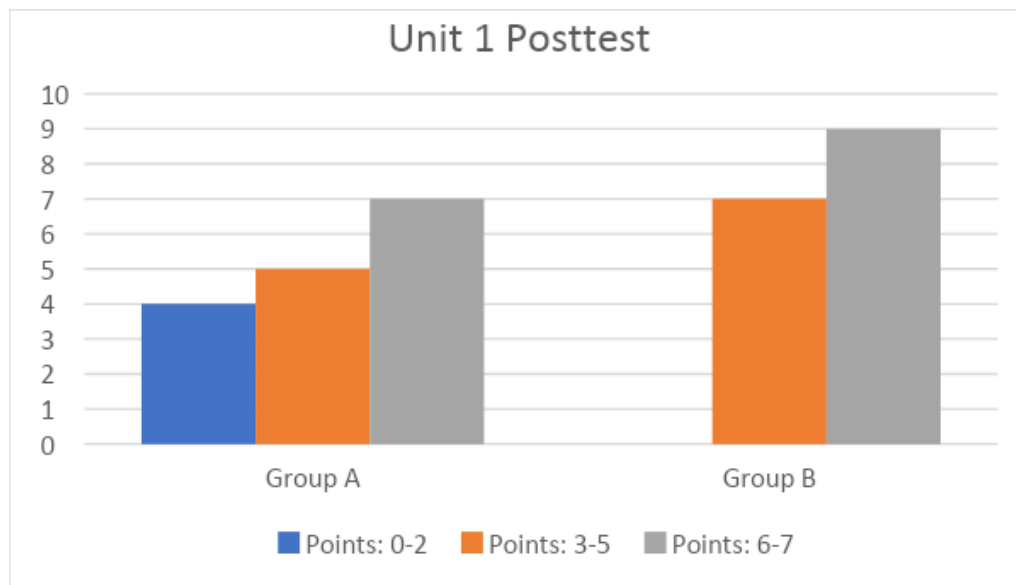
The pie chart shows that 50 % of the students that were tested had some knowledge of English. They scored low according to the scoring table. Low starts from 0 to 10, however, none of the participants in this study scored 0 in the pretest. Thus, having in mind these results, low refers to students who can name either objects, family members, or some animals. This shows that they have had little exposure to the language. Then, 25 % of the students scored mid which is a significant increase and it shows that students have already grasped some of the vocabulary such as colors, animals, family members, and some objects. 16 % scored high which shows a more

extensive knowledge of English, ability to form a sentence and understand a simple question, provide an answer and easily name all the colors, family members, objects and things in nature. 9 % of the students scored exceptional, which shows that those students were able to go through the test easily. Exceptional knowledge of English in the first-grade means that the student is able to form simple sentences, prove answers to questions either by pointing or stating, describe pictures in more detail. After obtaining the results, the students were divided into two groups. The teacher divided them according to their scores, but not according their placement level. The theory on which this selection was based was Vygotsky's sociocultural theory; one can learn from a more knowledgeable other and that does not have to be the teacher but working collaboratively with a peer who is more skilled can lead to efficient learning.

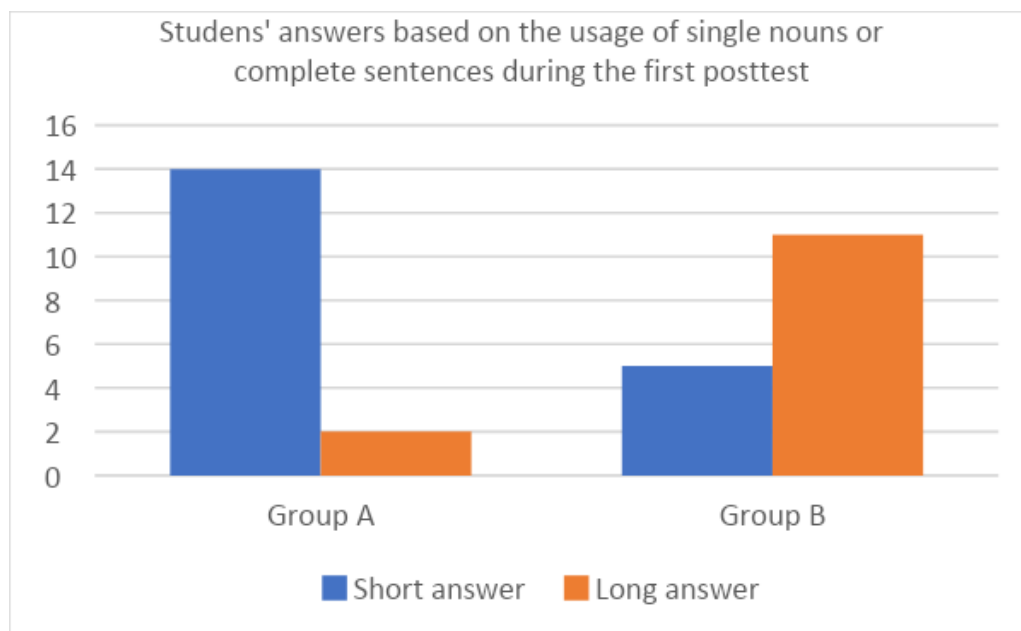


These pie charts show that between the groups there was little difference with regard to the proficiency level. Group A consisted of 50 % low, 25 % mid, 19 % high, and 6 % exceptional students. Group B consisted of 50 % low, 25 % mid, 13 % high, and 13 % exceptional students. The results on the pretest are important and they serve as a systematic factor so that the posttest results can be considered valid.

Both groups had 70 lessons in total; group A following the Ministry of Education's guidelines and curriculum, and group B following a 3Ls curriculum, however, its structure was based on the state's curriculum as well. The reason for that is because both groups took the same posttest. Four posttests were administered because both curricula consist of 4 units, shown in Appendices 2 and 3. After receiving lessons on Unit 1, the first posttest was administered. There were 7 questions in total, the administrator was not allowed to translate into Macedonian, which was not the case during the pretest, each correct answer was marked with 1, each incorrect with 0. The students had the following results.

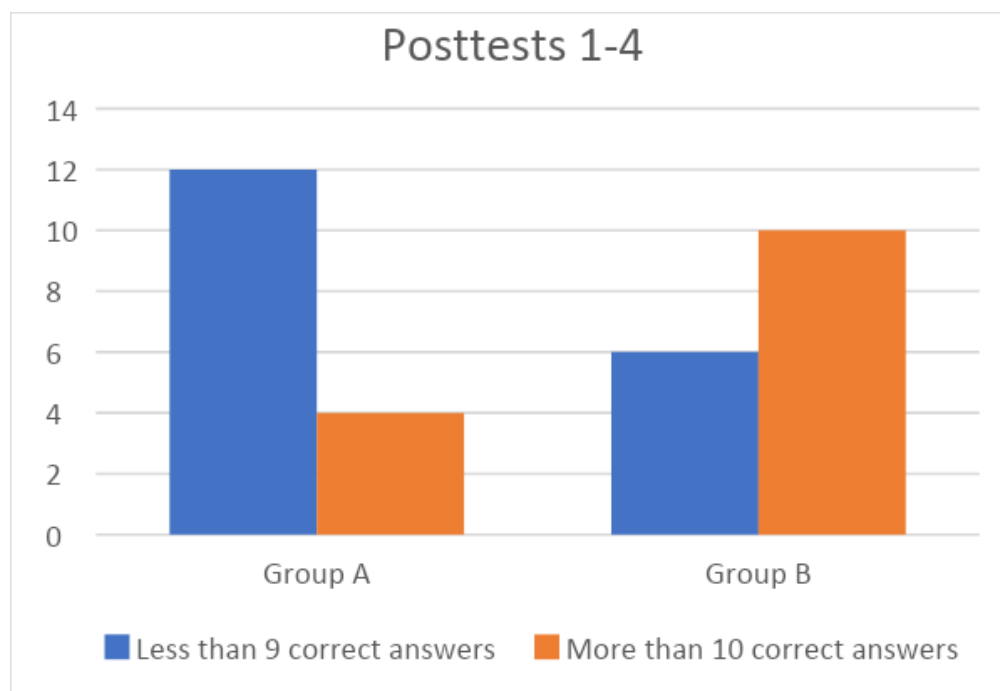


The results showed that no students scored below 2 points from group B, however, there are 4 students who scored 0-2 points from group A. On the vertical axis, it can be seen that group B had 7 students who scored 3-5 points on the range scale, and 9 students who scored high, i.e. 6-7 points. The results from the first posttest showed differences that need to be remediated, however, the lessons continued in the same manner, following the curricula and adhering to the standards listed in the planning phase. There was another difference when analyzing the results and it can be found in the administrator's notes as well; all the students from group B tended to use full sentences after posttest 2 when answering the questions with a few exceptions. While, students from group A, restricted their answer to one-syllable words.



The total sum of all posttests' scores at the end of the school year was 28 points. After summing up the scores from the four posttests that were administered, the following results were analyzed.





## Conclusion

This study was inspired by the author's teaching experience in two different settings; in a private language school and in a public school in North Macedonia. Being able to observe and deliver lessons and having experience with curricula developed by the Bureau for Development of Education from grade 1 to grade 9, the author started questioning the efficient application of methods and instructional practices, discussed students' dissatisfaction and the need to revise material from two or three grade levels behind.

This study's goal is to reject Pavlov and Watson's theory that human beings are born as blank slates and can be trained like animals, and to suggest that all curricula should take into consideration that regardless of the age of the student, they all come with a certain type of knowledge. Students have been having real life experiences long before they start going to primary school. Those real-life experiences have played an important role in their cognitive development and highly influenced their opinions, preferences, and thoughts. Besides their experience, all of them have been exposed to social interactions with other human beings and have an unfinished personality that should be expressed and further developed. Thus, another theory that this study refutes is the notion that students learn through rewards and punishments. This research attempts to highlight the need for students to fall in love with the learning process itself and accept that it never ceases. They should know the capital cities of the countries, but also realize and be able to explain why a certain capital city is crucial for the country. The lessons should foster their curiosity, nurture dialogue and discussion, encourage them to think critically, and work on their intrinsic motivation. Piaget's stages of development are taken into consideration and first-grade students are understood as human beings who are only aware of their own perspective, enjoy role-playing and being recognized as a central figure of all the happenings, yet some of them are shifting towards the next stage of logical thinking and are able to connect different ideas. Thus, the 3Ls curriculum even though it puts the student in the center



of the attention, it provides additional information that might be connected to their world and their everyday activities. Discussion and dialogue are prevalent throughout the 3Ls lessons and that practice is supportive of Vygotsky's social theory that interactions lead to learning. For the students to work in their ZPDs, the teacher's role is of a facilitator, and exposing them to rich input is also a demanding task for the teacher because they are the ones who need to decide when the right time to assist is to make it more comprehensible for the students. Another factor is to never let the students be completely confused or lost in a task. Thus, the 3Ls manages to create lessons that need active participants not passive absorbers of content that has already been too much scaffolded and does not present a challenge.

The students who were part of the experiment enjoyed the lessons immensely, especially group B, who were more privileged and had a classroom equipped with computers, they were shown lots of presentations, videos and pictures. They became more confident and prouder of their accomplishments. The reflection checklists serve as proof of the increased students' engagement and confidence, as well as the teacher's enjoyment while delivering the lessons and collaborating with the students. The posttests' results showed an increase in the attitude of the students from group B towards the lessons; relying on their verbal skills to produce full sentences regardless of the mistakes they would make. From the vignettes it can be easily noticed that students enjoyed the lessons and were exposed to rich content without realizing that they are studying and exploring complex topics.

The data provided by Cuchierra and Fillmore suggest that the 3Ls is a successful practice and especially when having in mind the scope of their research is a proven approach that results in success, efficiency, lifelong learning, democratic relationship between the teacher and the students, active participation, and willingness to be involved in dialogue.

All in all, the findings from the analysis of both types of data complement each other and show that a mixed-methods research is the right choice to address issues such as changes in education especially in rural or semi-urban places in an underdeveloped country that lacks in budget and professional development for teachers and educators in general. Students should have the same chances in school regardless of their residential status. Students from rural or semi-urban areas in North Macedonia should have the same access to materials and options for further growth and participation in events. While this is an issue that deserves attention, it is the goal of the study to raise awareness of the need for a change in the educational practices and curricula in North Macedonia, a change that will bring enjoyment, satisfaction, more knowledge, and equity.

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## The Humanities' Role in Addressing Climate Change Through Fictional Narratives

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### Abstract

Tackling environmental challenges has required the expertise of fields outside of science, namely the humanities. Literature, in particular, has largely contributed to global environmental protection. More specifically, this paper suggests that fiction stories have actively participated in helping scientists and nonscientists alike to shape better environmental sense for their readers. To illustrate, the texts of many influential environmental writers, such as John Muir and Rachel Carson, incorporate stories in scientific writing to successfully impact readers and develop planetary awareness and responsibility. In highlighting the role of literature and stories in making the environmental discourse effective for environmental scientists, this paper also turns attention toward the literary genre of speculative fiction. The environmentally-abundant writings of speculative fiction can actively challenge and expand our assumptions on many human and nonhuman issues. Additionally, since these narratives call for critical approaches that interpret their environmental meanings, ecocriticism can be a reliable interdisciplinary lens in this regard. The ecological literary approach facilitates both reading environmentally-focused fiction as well as connecting scholars and practitioners from different fields to collaborate under the encompassing field of the environmental humanities.

*Keywords:* science and the humanities, climate change, speculative fiction, ecocriticism, the environmental humanities

The academic disciplines in the humanities are becoming increasingly pertinent to the subject of the environment. Most of those who research the topic of the environment tend to approach it from a scientific perspective, but more recently, research on the environment is relying less exclusively on scientific information and data. The environmental dilemmas have grown in complexity, and it has become inadequate to tackle them relying on the natural and physical sciences alone. In other words, responding properly to climate change and the environmental cause, in general, has required the collaboration of experts from all disciplines of knowledge. Academic fields of the humanities such as philosophy, history, and literature have been largely contributing to the environmental discussion. It is, therefore, critical that scholars from various scientific disciplines become acquainted with what the humanities have to offer to the most perplexing environmental issues.

Although they both seek to understand the world, science and the humanities follow different methods of inquiry. Science is generally inclined to be objective, precise, rigorous, and factual while the humanities, in contrast, tend to be more subjective, complex, theoretical, and interpretation-based. In regards to the environment and natural elements, science and the humanities take different approaches in that science focuses largely on explaining the function of things rather than their meaning or value per se. Hubbel and Ryan (2021) succinctly put it in their *Introduction to the*

*Environmental Humanities*, when they say that “Science tells nothing about the value of nature, only how it functions. We turn to literature and the humanities generally to understand why nature is meaningful” (p. 176). That is, science and scientists can hardly explain why the environment and nonhuman species matter if their function in the ecosystem is not clear. Explaining the value, then, is just as important as explaining the function if we want to address climate change and other environmental issues.

When the world started acknowledging the existence of a global environmental crisis in the mid-fifties of the last century, the humanities gradually responded to environmental issues from within their fields. Researchers from different backgrounds slowly turned their attention to the new environmental insights within the humanities. Literature, a substantial subfield within the humanities, relates meaningfully to the environment in the sense that many literary works have an embedded environmental orientation. Most literary writers tend to move readers towards appreciating their place, natural environments, and nonhuman species. “Environmental literature shows us how to ‘see’ the places where we live, revaluing what we’ve overlooked or ignored, and entering into more reciprocal relationships of care” (Hubbell & Ryan, 2021, p. 183). This, in turn, influences the readers’ attitudes toward the environment. In other words, fiction stories in literature have the potential to shape a better understanding of planetary issues and contribute to environmental protection.

Scientific data and rigorous statistics assist us in comprehending the gravity of many environmental issues; however, they lack the power to influence readers emotionally. In his *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*, Adam Trexler (2015) suggests that the Anthropocene, or the age when human activities started causing global environmental changes, requires more than scientific modes of understanding. Trexler asserts that works of nonfiction “are more direct in their warnings, [...] they also lack the novel’s capacity to interrogate the emotional, aesthetic, and living experience of the Anthropocene” (p. 6). Compared to scientific texts, literature has a greater ability to influence readers. Literary stories, in particular, can widely contribute to changing human behavior and encourage environmentally conscious practices in their readers, who could be scientists, policymakers, activists, engineers, and specialists in other academic and professional domains.

Given their capacity to speak more powerfully, attributes of fiction and storytelling have been used by many non-humanities practitioners, such as John Muir. Also known as the “Father of the National Parks”, Muir was an ecological thinker, political spokesman, and conservationist. His writings have had a “lasting effect on American culture in helping to create the desire and will to protect and preserve wild and natural environments” (Miller, 2005, p. 174). Muir’s writing legacy has inspired people to care about the environment and work for its causes; it has sparked more activism for natural conservation to be followed. As a commentary on some of Muir’s letters, the author Terry Gifford (1996) elucidates that Muir has been more environmentally influential through his literary writings.

They were deepest in his affections, and under his playful prose-poetry it is not difficult to discover the Muir who in a few years was to arouse the whole nation to the importance of preserving for future generations these greatest and most ancient of all living things. His love for them had in it something personal, and



there are those who have overheard him talking to them as to human beings.  
(p. 139)

Muir's writings have been emotionally effective in touching readers from different backgrounds, one of whom is President Theodore Roosevelt. After he had read Muir's writings, Roosevelt met Muir and discussed environmental protection and parks policy (The Attic, 2018). As a result, the meeting accelerated efforts to conserve larger parts of Yosemite park and facilitated the work of the Sierra Club.

The use of literary style to speak for the environment has not been limited to a certain category of environmental activists or conservationists. Many scientists have also relied on stories to cause an impact on their readers. Commonly referred to as "the mother of environmentalism", Rachel Carson was an American marine biologist who revolutionized the global environmental movement in the mid-twentieth century. Unlike other environmental scientists in her era, Carson relied on a literary language to communicate her message effectively. Through the use of fables and stories, Carson was successful in influencing her readers. Her books, *Under the Sea Wind* (1941), *The Edge of the Sea* (1955), *The Sea Around Us* (1961), and *The Sense of Wonder* (1965) all combine scientific data with a literary style to have a great effect on the readers.

In her most influential book, *Silent Spring* (1962), Carson relies on a literary style to create a strong effect on her audience about the adverse environmental effects of DDT pesticides. Right from the beginning of her "Fable for Tomorrow", Carson (2002) writes: "There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings" (p. 1). The sentence hooks most readers from the very beginning of the book. Many scholars praise the fable and its power to persuade. David Rejeski (2007), for example, states in a paper entitled, "Why Nano Fear Will Not Disappear", that the "fable moved beyond the science to a dystopian vision of the future and may have been the book's most powerful section" (p. 1). The vivid presence of the narrative style is undoubtedly a major strength of Carson's text and is a deciding factor in the effectiveness of her words, which translated into action when the US government issued the decision to stop the use of DDT in 1972. *Silent Spring* is not an exception for Carson. Her other "letters and journals bring the reader into her personal environmental struggles, including her final effort to save land in the Maine wilderness that she loved" (Jolly, 2001, p. 643). Nobody can deny the role Carson played in starting a global environmental movement, a role that could have been delayed if she had not used narratives and prose within her scientific writing.

The use of stories might put writers at risk of being openly subjective about the environmental cause; however, an over-reliance on objectivity could be harmful to the environment as well. To explain, Niel Evernden, an ecologist and professor of environmental studies, shares an incident that exemplifies the risks of relying only on rational scientific knowledge in environmental contexts. Evernden narrates the time when he was sitting at a cafeteria table with some other biologists. As they were discussing the possibility of building a railroad through Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Canada, a line that would have passed through the only eighteen remaining nesting grounds of whooping cranes, one biologist at the table asked, "So what—what good are whooping cranes?" The fact that Evernden (1978) could not think of an answer irritated him the most:

What annoyed me most was that, for the life of me, I couldn't think of a single use for Whooping Cranes. They don't sing or eat harmful insects—you can't even claim them as a tourist attraction. Instantly, because our entire justification for existence of non-human nature was based on utility, our ability to defend the Whooping Crane disintegrated. To justify the birds, we had to fall back on—dare I say it?—subjective arguments. (p. 16)

Reductionist facts, dry numbers, and practical utility may be detrimental to the continued existence of many species. That is why we must consider subjective justifications in order to defend non-human species. For a more effective discourse on environmental protection, we need to turn to stories once again.

Environmental experts from non-humanities backgrounds are slowly shifting towards a literary style to better move their readers. That is, the role of fiction stories is becoming highly important in inspiring hope and change in the context of environmental protection. Denise Baden, an Associate Professor in Business Ethics at the University of Southampton explores the impact of stories on readers' behavior. Baden (2018) contends that "[t]he transition to a sustainable society requires profound changes, but to imagine how all of these aspects can come together is currently the domain of creative fiction. If we want a better world then the first step is to imagine one". The distinguished professor of literature and environment, Scott Slovic, supports this direction. Slovic (2008) argues that literature "has the potential to help readers reimagine their relationship with the planet and overcome crippling fears and feelings of alienation" (p. 153). Considering the prevalence and growth of environmental-themed stories. This necessitated the development of a way of reading and analyzing environmental themes in fiction.

To help readers and academics better understand literary texts with environmental implications, the field of ecocriticism, also known as ecological literary criticism, was established. Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) defines ecocriticism in the following manner: "Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment ... [It] takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (p. xviii). Ecocriticism emerged in the 1990s and was noted for being developed through two waves, the first of which was concerned with nature writing, particularly writings by the Romantic poets in Britain such as William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley, John Keats, and William Blake, as well as the transcendentalist writers in the US, namely Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The second wave is considered a mature development of ecocriticism and has been directed toward the environmental problems of the day. It encourages questioning deeper ethical and cultural dimensions of the present-day planetary challenges (Buell, 2005, p. 21-22). Given that ecocriticism has reached a mature stage and become a reliable lens through which we can study literary texts, it is important to clarify how it works and some of the questions it explores.

Like any critical literary approach, ecocriticism can be used as a lens to examine, investigate, and analyze literary texts. When dealing with the text, ecocritics may ask questions such as the following ones, that were laid out finely by Charles Bressler (2011):

- What do we mean by "nature," both in a given text and in our world?



- How is nature portrayed in a text?
- How are the characters in a text portrayed in relationship with nature?
- How do the characters interact with nature?
- How does nature interact with the characters?
- How does the text demonstrate how the microcosm (humanity) affects the macrocosm (nature) and how the macrocosm affects the microcosm?
- How does the actual physical setting of the text affect the text's plot?
- How are race, class, and gender illustrated in the text, and how are they related to nature or the land?
- What particular historical period is depicted in the text? How is this historical period related to issues of nature or the land?
- Is the text challenging its readers to environmental action and promoting changes in how we treat nature? Other classes? Races? Genders? (p. 237)

Looking into these questions may unleash profound environmental meanings within literary texts. There is a wide range of environmentally-oriented fiction, yet if one looks closely, they find it in speculative fiction with notable richness.

The literary genre that often depicts environmental issues in a timely and abundant manner is probably speculative fiction. Imarisha & Brown (2015) define speculative fiction as an umbrella term that refers to “science fiction, fantasy, and horror” (p. 185). Human-nature relationships, the implications of science and technology on the environment, or future scenarios of climate change are some of the issues that speculative fiction writers tackle in their stories. The professor of literature and ethnic studies at the University of California in San Diego Shelly Streeby (2018) writes that “radically transformed climates are at the heart of a lot of science fiction, so much so that a whole new subgenre called cli-fi has emerged. Cli-fi or climate change fiction is best situated within the larger category of speculative fiction” (p. 4). Speculative fiction texts are becoming an inevitable source of information for environmental specialists who wish to grasp the deeper complexities of the human factors that influence environmental issues such as climate change and its possible development in the future.

To illustrate, going through Michael Crichton's works of science fiction aids in gaining a better understanding of many world environmental problems and possible scenarios in the future. Crichton's novels have become well-known and made into blockbuster movies, including *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World*. While they are entertaining stories about the recreation of dinosaurs, they also inspire us to ask deeper what-if questions. Creating a park of DNA-recreated dinosaurs makes us ponder the implications of the idea and how humanity would react when awry scenarios occur. In so doing, Crichton encourages us to think more critically about science optimism, technological utopia, cloning animals, biogenetic incidents, the unpredictability of nature, the use of animals for profit, and humans' treatment of environmental disasters. Examining these events and themes in Crichton's works through an ecocritical lens opens up new channels to discuss environmental decisions, actions, and consequences.

The same could be applied to other novels by other science fiction writers and more broadly speaking, speculative fiction. Orson Scott Card's *Ender* series envisions futuristic humanity that interacts with alien species from other planets. In *Ender's*

*Game*, for example, the writer imagines a world where human communities are battling with alien species called the buggers. When the protagonist, Andrew Wiggin, destroys the planet of the buggers and exterminates a whole race, he feels deep grief and sorrow for the species he has annihilated. Applying an ecocritical reading to the Ender series would allow us to think meaningfully about human contact with alien environments from the future. This could, on a practical level, impact readers to think empathically about the environment and nonhuman species we take for granted and call forth more planetary responsibility.

Apart from Card and Crichton, there are other speculative fiction writers such as Margaret Atwood, Ursula Le Guin, and Kim Stanley Robinson. These, among others, have been known to dive into philosophical, ethical, political, emotional, and cultural dimensions of environmental dilemmas. Considering that speculative fiction today is becoming increasingly important in the discussion of the environment and its value on deeper levels, science practitioners ought to make use of fictional stories and metaphors to back up and give life to their statistical analyses and factual predictions. “Science fiction gets people thinking in a way that another report on climate change doesn’t” confirms Shelley Streeby (Ortiz, 2019). To put it another way, a science statement is less likely to have a desired impact compared to a speculative fiction story. As a result, scientists and other non-humanities specialists need to rely more on images existing in literary genres like speculative fiction.

Reacting to the environmental questions through literature and stories, nevertheless, is only one way among many others under the larger banner of the environmental humanities. “Drawing on humanities and social science disciplines that have brought qualitative analysis to bear on environmental issues, the environmental humanities engages with fundamental questions of meaning, value, responsibility and purpose in a time of rapid, and escalating, change” (Rose et al., 2012, p. 1). Given that the most troubling environmental issues today are humane and cultural in depth, the humanities are becoming increasingly important in this regard. The professor of environmental history, Sverker Sörlin mentions a 2012 synthesis report that supports this point, “We are still living in a world where cultural values, political and religious ideas, and deep-seated human behaviors still rule the way people lead their lives, produce, and consume, the idea of environmentally relevant knowledge must change” (p. 788). For that matter, current environmental discussions need to turn attention to what literature and the humanities can offer and benefit from the possible ways of reading and analyzing the environment in literary texts.

Today's environmental concerns, which comprise ethical and cultural complexities, necessitate more than a scientific grasp. Many scientists and non-humanities practitioners have been taking advantage of the creative stories that highlight the environmental situation in alternative and expressive narratives. Although they do not exist, the universes imagined in speculative fiction stories continue to be vital to debate in connection to our own. Climate change is more than just increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels. It is, in fact, impossible to disentangle climate change without addressing its varied images, contexts, and other factors. The contribution of the humanities then becomes of paramount importance and helps scientists in exploring how climate change and other disturbing environmental issues are perceived, represented, and communicated across various

narratives. Speculative fictional stories and ecological literary criticism both support and advance this direction.

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## **Tackling the Insufficient Food Supply in the Sufficient Chinese Hot-Pot Chain Restaurant Industry - A Summer Project**

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### **Abstract**

Purchasing is widely acknowledged as a critical factor for business survival and success. This study uncovers the traditional purchasing model that affects the cost of vegetables and eventually food quality, based on our summer field research on Chinese hot pot restaurants. Seventeen retail branches were studied, and we propose an innovative procurement model to reduce the total cost of purchasing vegetables. In the new procurement model, vegetables shall be transported from the vegetable base to the central processing plant for cost-down measures by centralized processing and cleaning. Compared to the traditional method, the innovative purchasing approach integrates upstream supplying resources and standardizes vegetable processing, contributing to cost reduction in vegetables and processing. In the research, the group collected data about food sales, prices from suppliers, and related processing to calculate aggregate procurement costs containing vegetables, delivery, and processing costs. The calculation indicates that the new method produces an additional 21,102 Chinese RMB in vegetable and delivery costs. However, it removes the need for a vegetable cleaner in each outlet, which could save more than 70,000 Chinese RMB. Therefore, we verified such an assumption with qualitative interviews with the managers of hot-pot chain restaurants and found that the actual saving can be around 53,356 Chinese RMB. In addition, the standardization and quality control of dishes and fuller utilization of staff have been overlooked in prior daily operation management. Finally, the proposed new procurement model can also be applied to global hot pot restaurants.

*Key words: purchasing, procurement model, saving*

### **Introduction**

The food industry is fragmented, highly regulated, and increasingly complex due to globalization (Pullman and Wu, 2021). In particular, because of the rise of E-commerce, the correlation between market activities and geographic environment moderates, and food control, including cost and quality management, becomes arduous compared with past times. Aktas and Bourlakis (2020) asserted that food supply chains are crucial to satisfying community needs and underpin environmental sustainability. Nowadays, approaches for more sustainable and circular food supply chains are also eagerly sought. However, the food supply chain has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, which reinforces the requirement to improve the food supply chain to support business development. The entire agri-food sector needs more attention in the context of the pandemic, as online work cannot be implemented (Sid et al., 2021).

### **Literature review**

According to the literature, Short Food Supply Chain is an emerging sustainable supply chain experiment that eliminates the intermediaries in complex supply chains and facilitates direct connections between farmers and end consumers (Weerabahu, Malaarachchi, and Samaranayake, 2021), thus as a promising sustainable alternative to industrial agricultural food supply systems (Wang et al., 2022). Lengthy supply chains generate high food prices in circulation, resulting in high rates of food waste (Lan and Wang, 2013). Moreover, the researchers suggest that direct agricultural supply is a feasible and innovative way to reduce the additional costs and loss of food supplies (Shi et al., 2011). Upon further inspection, it is founded that short supply chains are also applicable to the Chinese environment. Additionally, owing to the current slightly chaotic situation in the food industry, the catering industry also urgently needs to innovate and improve the food supply chain. Finding innovative methods to produce, distribute and consume food is a moral, financial, and environmental necessity (Cagliano, Caniato, and Worley, 2016).

### **Case Description**

The focused company is the “Chen-Ji-Shun-He (CJSH) beef hot pot”, which has 17 chain stores, mainly in Jiangsu (corporate website <http://www.gzcjsh.com>). Its advantages are good service, high-quality dishes, and a self-developed digital system that predicts demand for dishes, which helps them be in the lead. However, it still has some pain points that impede development and expansion. According to field research, the group identified the problem in procurement. The problem is that the traditional procurement method influences the quality of vegetables and costs. Traditional hotpot restaurants use regional distributors to supply vegetables. It has several negative impacts. Lan and Wang (2013) support that because the supply chain has many levels, the price of vegetables in the circulation link increases, and the attrition rate increases. In addition, decentralized suppliers may result in the uneven quality of vegetables among outlets. These pain points squeeze the profit margins and influence the standardization of dishes.

### **The Aims and Objectives**

Focused on pain points, there are two directions of research to solve them: reducing procurement costs and improving quality control and employee utilization.

### **Research Design**

The research subjects are small and medium-sized Chaoshan fresh beef hotpot chain stores with 17 outlets. The group mainly collected data from three stakeholders: hotpot restaurants, processing plants, and farms, including the number of vegetables needed, selling prices, and transportation costs.

**Table 1:** Interviews of different stakeholders

<b>Field</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Business Size (Number of branches)</b>
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<b>Hot Pot Restaurants</b>	Beibei Li	CJSH Beef Hot Pot	Project manager	17
<b>Processing plants</b>	Shubiao Chen	Suzhou youmile Food Co., Ltd	Manager	11
<b>Farms</b>	Lv Qing	Ougennik (Kunshan) Agricultural Technology Co., Ltd.	Manager	1
<b>Farms</b>	Yangyang Zhao	Yangyang Farm	Manager	1
<b>Farms</b>	Guishen Zeng	Xiao Zeng Agricultural Department store	Manager	1
<b>Farms</b>	Fengwei Chen	Shanghai Qing Agricultural Department store	Manager	1

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

The purpose of the interview is to collect data to validate whether our assumptions are correct. The interview method is one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Interview transcripts are in Appendix A. The group applies the qualitative research method, which includes observation and interviews. There are three reasons for qualitative research. First, it is difficult to obtain hot pot restaurant operation data for quantitative analysis. Second, the interactive method has a flexible structure, where the group can follow up on the answers given by the respondents in real time (Rahman, 2016). Finally, the group can have in-depth conversations with interviewees to gain more industry insights. In addition to the first-hand data obtained from observation and interviews, the group also gets second-hand data by searching industry reports.

### Data Collection

Through interviews, the group obtained the vegetable sales proportion of the CJSH hotpot restaurant in June 2021 (see Figure 1). Because the proportion of baby cabbages, potatoes, and lettuces account for the majority of the total sales, the research focuses on them.

To compare different methods in Figure 2 and Figure 3, the group calculates costs respectively. Cost calculation consists of vegetable cost, transportation cost, and processing cost. Detailed data is shown as follows.





**Figure 1. Sales proportion of different kinds of vegetables in June**

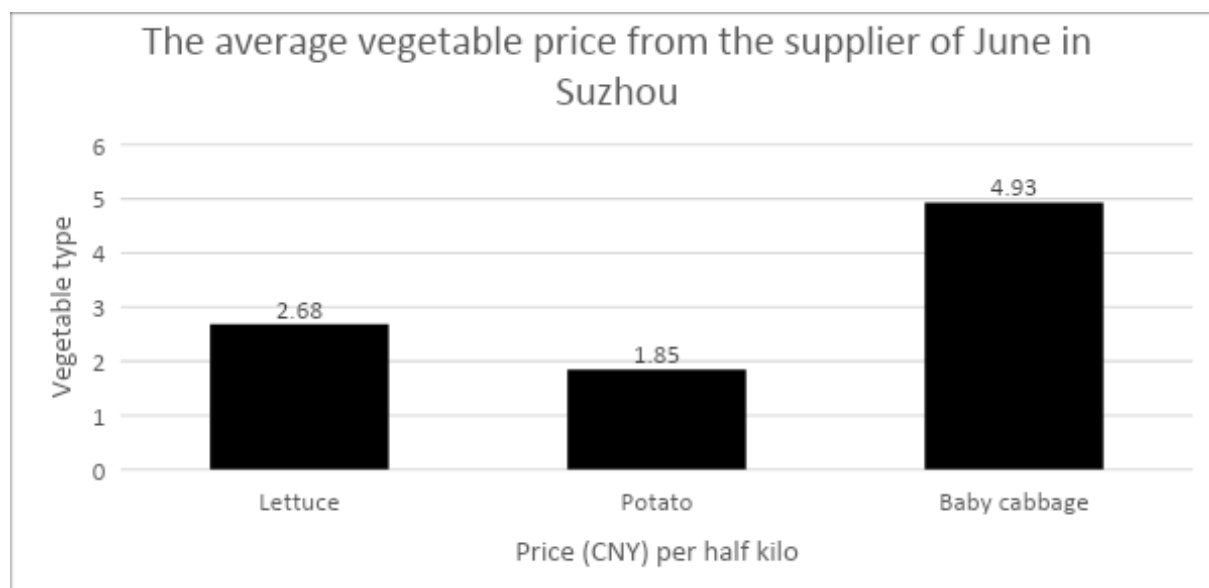
**Table 2: One day in June’s demand of 17 outlets of 3 kinds of vegetable**

Vegetable type	Sales (portion)	Weight per portion (gram)	June’s demand quantity (Half a kilo) (Demand quantity per day * 30)
Lettuce	3619	180	1448
Potato	4729	240	2522
Baby cabbage	9729	200	4324

Ps: Wastage exists and is accounted as 10%; June’s demand quantity = (portions sold per day \* 30 / 0.9) \*weight of portion / 500

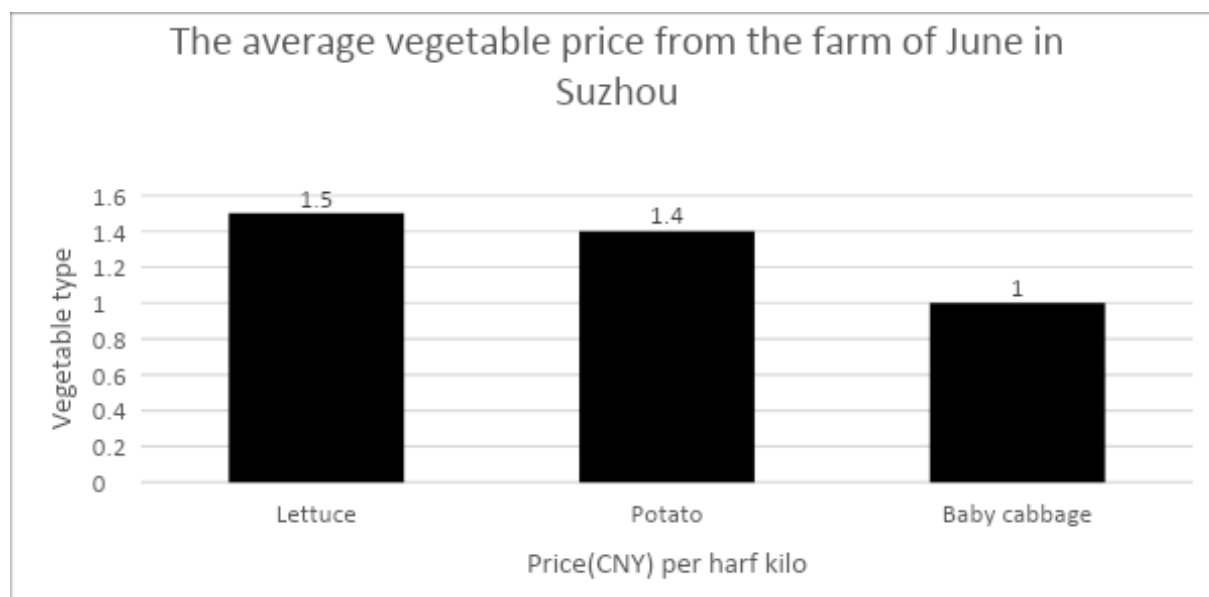
**Table 3: The average vegetable price from the supplier of June**

Vegetable type	Price (CNY) per half kilo
Lettuce	2.68
Potato	1.85
Baby cabbage	4.93



**Table 4:** The vegetable price from a farm in Suzhou

A farm in Suzhou	Unit price (CNY/half a kilo)
Lettuce	1.5
Potato	1.4
Baby cabbage	1



**Table 5:** Processing costs of two schemes

Processing type	Cost	Number
By labor	4500 per worker (monthly)	1 worker every store
By machine	24500 yuan per year	1

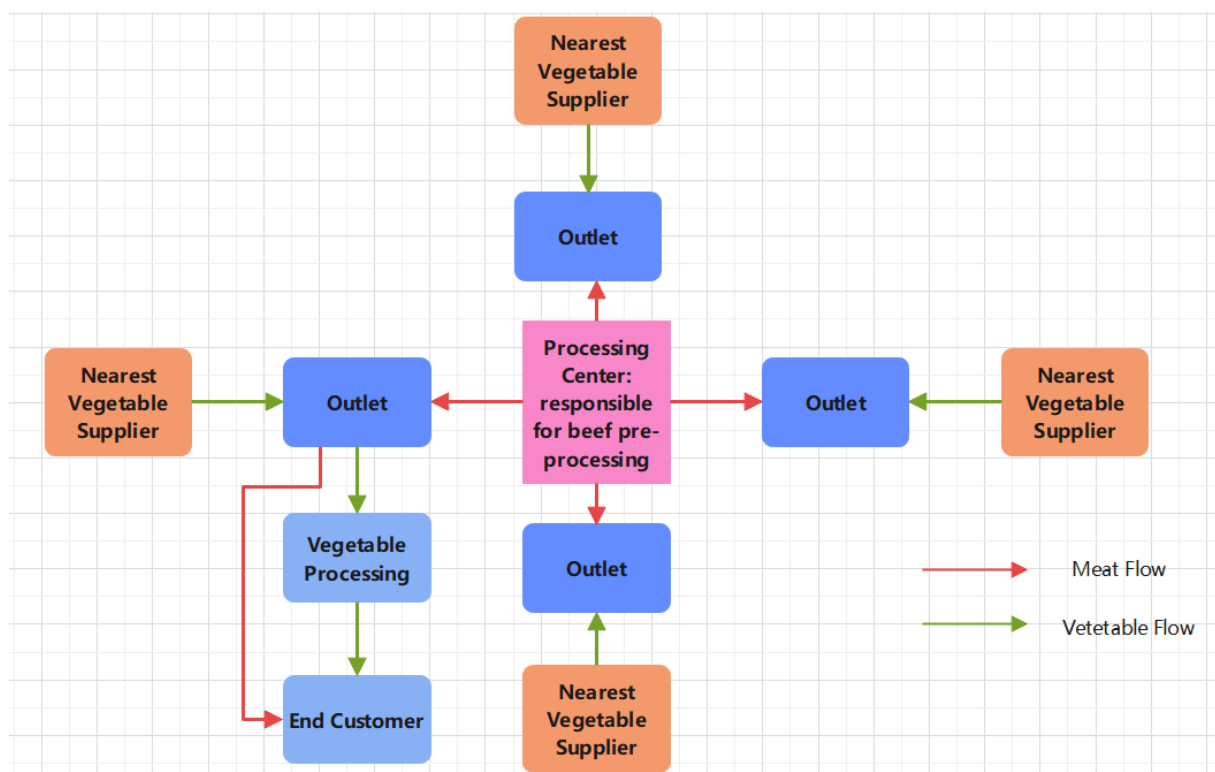
**Table 6:** Transportation costs of new schemes

Type	Cost
From vegetable base to processing center	400 per day
From processing center to stores	3.5 yuan per half kilo

## Data Analysis

### Traditional scheme

The traditional way of purchasing vegetables, shown in Figure 2, is that each outlet has its specific supplier. The suppliers would deliver the vegetables each day without charging an extra transportation fee as it is inherently contained in the vegetable price. Moreover, traditionally, the vegetables are processed manually by an employee at each outlet. Based on these, the fee of the traditional purchasing method per month is calculated in Table 7.



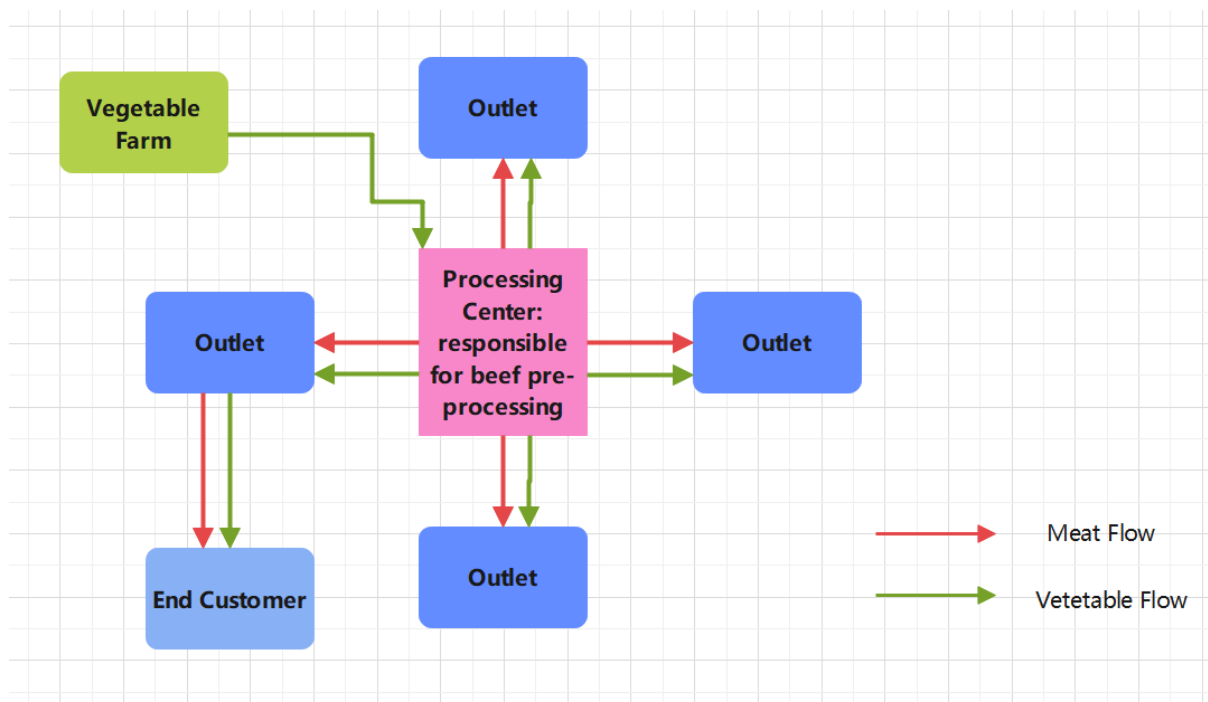
**Figure 2: Traditional scheme**

**Table 7: Total cost of the traditional method in June**

Vegetable	Unit Price	Demand Quantity for June (0.5kg)	Total Price (CNY)
Lettuce	2.68	1,448	3,881
Potato	1.85	2,522	4,666
Baby cabbage	4.93	4,324	21,317
Aggregate			29,864
Processing Cost	Unit Price (CNY/outlet)	Number of Outlets	Total Price (CNY)
Labor	4,500	17	4500*17=76,500
Total Cost (CNY)			106,364

The proposed scheme

The new purchasing scheme designed by the team (Figure 3) is that the company would purchase vegetables directly from vegetable bases like farms and cut the middle supplier from making profits. The original centralized beef processing center will be equipped with a vegetable washing machine. The washed, cut, and selected vegetables would be sent to each outlet together with the beef, which reduces the time and labor cost of processing vegetables in the outlet. The cost of the new scheme is shown in Table 8.



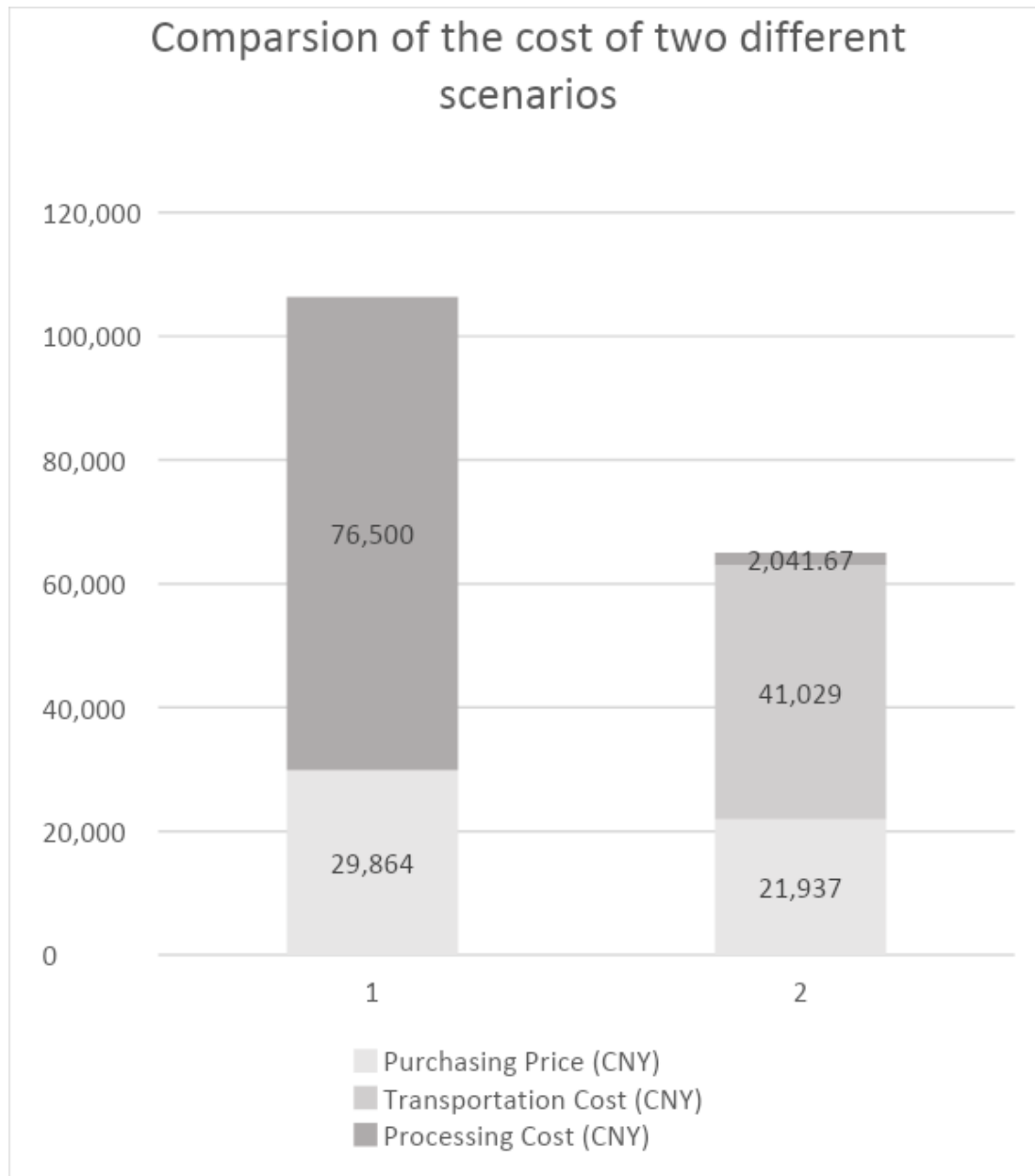
**Figure 3: The new scheme**

**Table 8: Total cost of the proposed method in June**

Vegetable	Unit Price (CNY/0.5kg)	Demand Quantity for June (0.5kg)	Total Price (CNY)
Lettuce	1.5	1,448	2,083
Potato	1.4	2,522	3,530
Baby cabbage	1	4,324	4,324
Aggregate			21,937
Transportation	Unit Price	Quantity for June	Total Price (CNY)
Delivery Fee (from vegetable base to processing center)	400 (CNY/Day)	30 (Day)	$400 \times 30 = 12000$
Delivery Fee (from processing center to 17 outlets)	3.5 (CNY/0.5kg)	$1448 + 2522 + 4324 = 8294$ (0.5kg)	$3.5 \times 8294 = 29029$
Processing Cost	Annual Cost (CNY)	Monthly Cost (CNY)	Total Price (CNY)
Machine	24,500	$24500 / 12$	2,042
Total Cost (CNY)			65,008

### Comparison

In comparison, the proposed method can save 53,356 CNY in total cost (Figure 4). Specifically, in the new scheme, thanks to the vegetable machine, the processing cost can be reduced by around 74,459 CNY, and the purchasing cost can be saved by 7,927 CNY because of the cut middle supplier. However, the new scheme can generate transportation costs because the middle supplier and the vegetable farm's pricing methods differ. Overall, the main contributor to the cost reduction is employee costs.



**Figure 4: Comparison of the cost of two different scenarios**

### Implication

This study mainly identifies three implications for researchers and small and medium-sized chain restaurant managers in achieving a sustainable food supply chain. Firstly, the research verifies possible cost reduction in raw materials and labor by shortening the food supply chain in the catering industry. Compared with CJSH's traditional logistic plan, the overall cost of the proposed method would decrease by 53,000 CNY. The main contributor to this reduction is the decrease in labor costs through replacing the manual labor in each outlet with the vegetable processing machine in the processing center. In the global catering industry, raw material cost accounts for 60% of the total cost, and personnel cost is predicted to rise with the growing salaries of positions like



the chef and the waiter (Grand View Research, 2021). The utilization of the central processing center and direct purchase from farms provide a direction for reducing raw material and labor costs for small and medium-sized chain restaurants worldwide. The proposed scheme could be implemented in small and medium-sized restaurant chains in other countries in Asia having similar eating habits and cultures.

Secondly, this method can increase restaurant operation standardization through several cooperative initiatives. In chain hot pot restaurants, one of the qualifications emphasized most by managers is standard vegetables with high quality in each outlet. In the traditional method, each store is supplied by its nearest supplier, whose vegetable quality is unlikely to be controlled the same. However, in the research method, the quality could be standardized by purchasing the same bulk of vegetables and then distributing the processed vegetable to different outlets. There are also opportunities for restaurants to build long-term cooperative relationships with farms to improve the stability of the supply chain (Monczka et al., 2016).

Thirdly, the research method also brings environmental benefits. The main principle of the proposed method is to reduce suppliers by centrally purchasing in bulk. The reduced purchasing process also implies reduced transportation distance and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. CO<sub>2</sub> emission is also a global issue highlighted by many scholars. Although CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from global transportation declined by 10% in 2020 compared to 2019, it is rebounding and will continue to rise after 2021 (Iea, 2022). With the expected growth of carbon emissions damaging the environment, the new procurement scheme advocates for shortening transport distance by reducing layers of food supply and dispersed transportation, which is beneficial to decreasing energy consumption and emissions. Therefore, the research provides possible approaches for enterprises to alleviate negative environmental impacts.

### **Research Limitations**

Prior to our group's research, limited research had been done on vegetable availability in hotpot restaurants, and there may be a lack of appropriate data models to support this study.

Data limitations also exist. The primary data comprising this model's vegetable prices, transportation, processing, and labor costs were collected mainly within the Suzhou region. These prices vary across regions in China. Additionally, the impact of time was not considered in data collection. Transport prices are affected by different seasons and weather conditions (Cassady, Jetter and Culp, 2007). Labor costs also rise in winter (Fink, Jack and Masiye, 2020). The models in the data may fluctuate accordingly, and fluctuations are ignored in this study.

Finally, the location of the processing plant is fixed in this model, which means that the corresponding transport costs are also fixed in the calculations. If the conclusions are to be applied to most hotpot restaurants in China in the future, more data will be required to support them.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A Hotpot restaurants interview

**Q** : Are your suppliers scattered?

**A** : Yes, by region. At present, each region has a fixed vegetable supplier, but it does not rule out changing into a unified procurement and distribution model after the establishment of our supply chain system in the future.

**Q** : Is the vegetable center a centralized processing place for vegetables?

**A** : Yes, the purchased vegetables will be processed, including washing, picking, cutting and plastic packaging, and then sent to the store, the store can directly produce. This allows for highly uniform standardization.

**Q** : Is your company going to build its own vegetable center?

**A** : Later construction may be carried out in the factory you visited last time, but this is not the company's plan in the short term.

**Q** : Where is the specific location of the factory we visited before? We want to investigate the cost of self-dispatch transportation.

**A** :

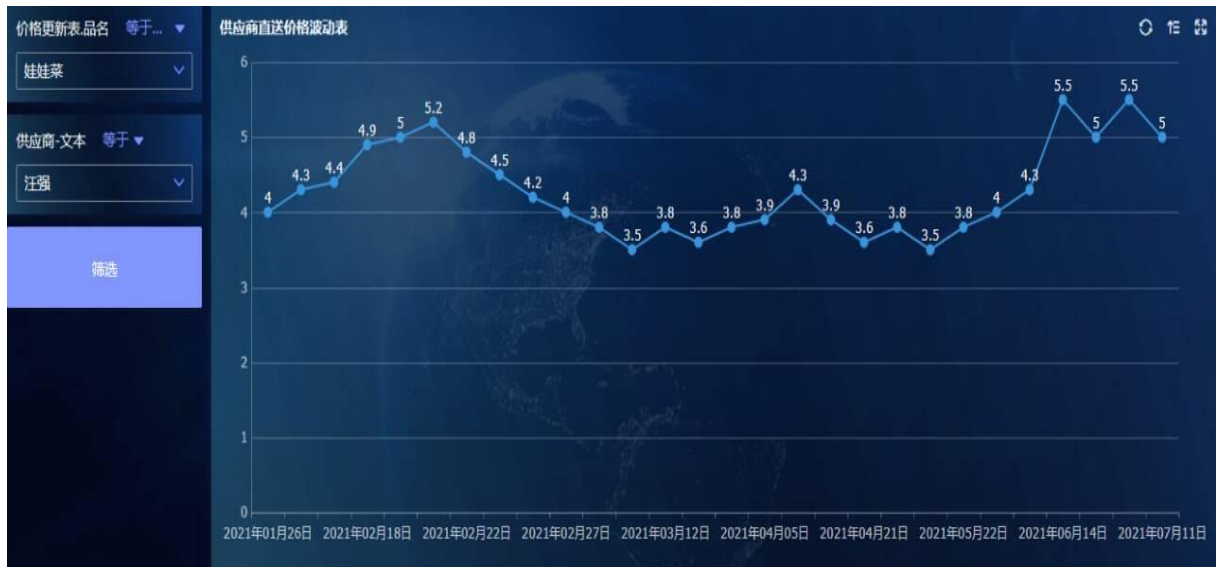


### Suzhou Youmele Food Company Limited

**Location:** Pingan Road, Haozhong District, Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province (From Tencent map)

**Q :** What about the price of vegetables?

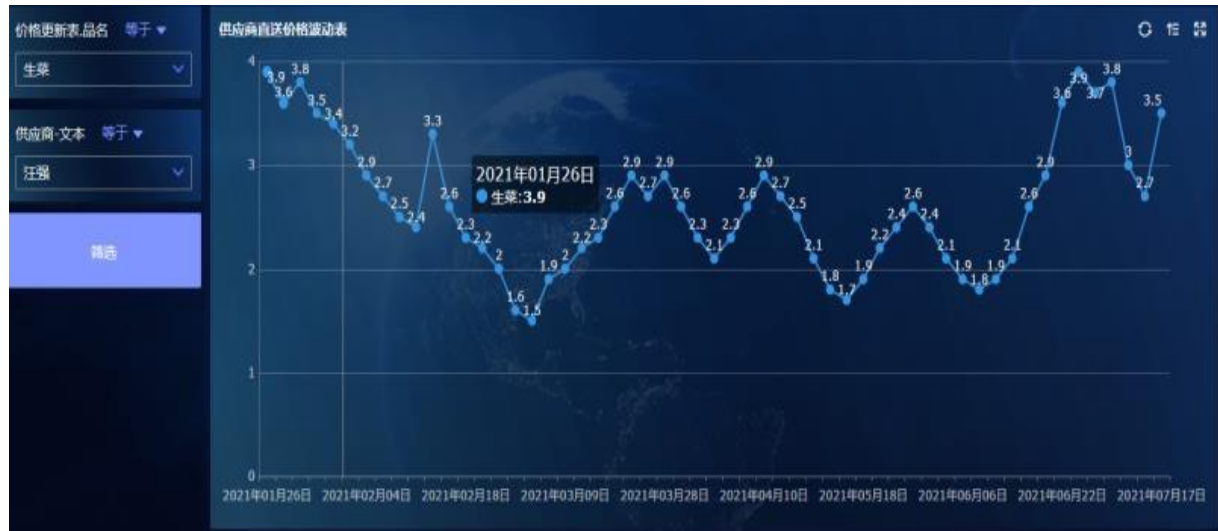
**A :** Price fluctuation table for supplier direct delivery of baby vegetables.



Price fluctuation table for supplier direct delivery of potatoes.



Price fluctuation table for supplier direct delivery of lettuce.



**A :** The price of vegetables varies with the seasons and there are grades of vegetables. We will require suppliers to provide us with the best quality products, so the unit price may be higher than your survey data.

**Q :** What is the price of the supplier?

**A :** Quotes from different suppliers on vegetables

蔬菜供应商价格对比表		Xiang Peng	Qiang Wang	Keke Cao	Siyu Qi	Zhikai Zhang	Xiuxia Li	Xianguo Tang	Summary
供应商	Suppliers	彭翔	汪强	曹可可	齐思雨	张志开	李修侠	汤先国	汇总
品种编号	品名 Vegetables	单位 unit	明细表单价 price per unit	明细表单价 price per unit	明细表单价 price per unit	明细表单价 price per unit	明细表单价 price per unit	明细表单价 price per unit	明细表单价 price per unit
010001	生菜 lettuce	斤	3.30	3.50	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.13
010002	蓬蒿菜 Chrysanthemum greens	斤	8.00	9.50	6.00	8.50	6.50	7.50	7.67
010003	菠菜 spinach	斤	5.70	5.90	6.00	6.00	4.50	5.50	5.60
010004	香菜 coriander	斤	13.00	14.50	11.00	12.50	7.50	10.00	11.42
010005	芹菜 celery	斤	3.00	3.00	2.80	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.97
010006	小葱 shallot	斤	3.00	3.50	3.00	2.80	3.80	2.80	3.15
010007	广东菜心 choy sum	斤	3.50	3.20	5.00	5.00	4.50	2.80	4.00
010008	金针菇 Flammulina velutipes	斤	3.00	2.60	2.50	3.50	2.20	3.00	2.80
010009	杏鲍菇 Pleurotus eryngii	斤	3.50	3.60	3.60	4.00	3.60	3.50	3.63
010010	海鲜菇 Hypsizygus marmoreus	斤	3.50	3.60	4.50	4.50	3.86	4.50	4.08
010011	香菇 shii-take	斤	9.00	10.00	10.00	9.50	8.00	9.50	9.33
010012	大蒜 Allium fistulosum	斤	2.20	2.90	2.50	2.30	3.00	2.20	2.52
010013	老姜 ginger	斤	4.80	4.90	4.80	5.50	5.00	5.00	5.00

**A :** This one is a horizontal comparison of prices between our suppliers. After referring to the prices, we'll negotiate with the suppliers.

**Q :** Well, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to interview us.

**A :** You're welcome.

**Farms interview**

**Q:** Can you introduce the supply processes from farm to restaurant?

**A:** The process is normally as follows.



Vegetable bases ---- Jiangqiao vegetable Cargo Center ----- Wholesale markets in Shanghai ---- clients

Generally they directly purchase. Especially, the restaurant could also negotiate the transportation fee.

**Q:** If we want to reduce supply process of the vegetable supply chain, which level of supplier do you suggest we choose?

**A:** You can investigate vegetable bases, and the quality is medium to above. The price is lower. But some green organic farms have higher prices.

**Q:** Is daily delivery possible?

**A:** Of course, the requirement is daily delivery.

**Q:** The quality of the food is usually the same as the dealer's ?

**A:** Pretty much the same.

**Q:** Should the price be based on its daily market price or fixed daily price based on the average price, if the restaurant has a long term corporation with it?

**A:** Long-term cooperation can be discussed, this is a very detailed thing, because the price fluctuates every day, so for example, the restaurant will talk about a relative price for long-term cooperation. In a general contract, one is to determine the price, and the other is to avoid the price risk in case of special circumstances.

### **Processing factory interview**

**Q:** I would like to ask if there is a vegetable cleaning machine in your factory.

**A:** No, manual cleaning.

**Q:** Do you know the price of the vegetable cleaning machine on the market now?

**A:** We don't use a lot of vegetables right now, so we haven't gotten to know the price yet.

**Q:** We are currently doing research, the goal is to reduce the cost of vegetables in hot pot restaurants, and we have come up with a plan to transport the vegetables to you in a unified manner for cleaning, and then distribute them to each hot pot restaurant. Do you think this plan is feasible?

**A:** Yes. Now there are some special vegetable companies, they can help clean the vegetables and deliver them uniformly. Restaurants can directly purchase clean vegetables, ship them to various restaurants, and the restaurant could just simply clean the vegetables. However, clean vegetables will cost a lot. Now this industry is very competitive, and the price has been compressed quite a lot. Similarly, the cost of processing clean vegetables in a food factory will also increase, but you can investigate the specific price space to see if it is worthwhile to carry out unified cleaning in the processing plant.

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## Moroccan Women on the Market: Working Towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

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### Abstract

Sustainable Development Goals, also known as SDGs, are a global project adopted in 2015 by the United Nations to better build world peace and dismantle a number of social and ecological injustices by 2030. The seventeen goals outline a number of universal challenges, and their implementers are committed to working toward a world of sustainability where no individual is left behind; from eradicating poverty and protecting the planet to reducing inequalities and empowering women. In 2017, Morocco, in spite of its lack of social balance, implemented a strategy to convert to a green and inclusive model. Although the Moroccan context is different from that of Western and other developed countries, the attempted policies require a significant evolution within various sectors of life, such as education, economy, marriage, environment, social awareness, and a multitude of other sensitive spheres. Society, however, is already witnessing remarkable progress regarding the situation of women, as it responds actively to current transformations in gender roles. With Moroccan women's entrance to the marketplace, also named 'Suq' in the Moroccan dialect, female members of society, especially in rural areas, have gained agency and independence, both financially and personally. On the other hand, traditions and inherited norms imprison women, preventing them from healing from patriarchal mindsets and discriminatory dimensions and impeding them from breaking the so-called glass ceiling. Therefore, a different approach must be implemented in the Moroccan context to eradicate the overall misogynistic gender understanding.

This exploratory research attempts to address a number of issues related to women's sustainable growth in the Moroccan marketplace as well as identify the many discriminations experienced by women there. In order to understand gender in the market and the overall desired sustainable growth, the qualitative study will adopt an intersectional perspective. As a result, the call to prioritize women and those who are furthest behind ensures a greater quality of sustainability, global growth, and local comprehension.

*Key words:* United Nations, sustainable development goals, Morocco, marketplace, gender, global understanding

Empowerment, according to Kabeer (1999: 346), is "the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability." In a context where women are expected to be obedient and submissive to male-dominated norms, Moroccan women tend to gradually seek autonomy, both financially and personally. Women in Morocco are overcoming gender barriers and categories by entering the market and earning money for activities that were previously provided as part of a family and societal responsibility. Morocco has experienced dramatic growth

in women's public presence over the previous decade, as well as a fundamental rearrangement of the gender-based distribution of work. Not long ago, women were only responsible for home tasks and assisting men in the fields. They couldn't travel anywhere or manage their money on their own. However, social change has taken place.

We cannot discuss empowerment without analyzing the concept of power. This sociological notion is extended by Foucault, as he extends the understanding of power to “all fields of the social sciences and the humanities” (Sadan, 2004, p. 37). The notion is not allocated to individuals or to institutions; rather, it is the means through which discourses are constructed and communicated. Instead of defining power as “a finite entity that can be located” (Rowlands 1998: 13), Foucault (1982) models power relations in terms of knowledge and language, which shape institutions and everyday practices in the form of social networks, with resistance as the necessary antagonist to power. Hence, Foucault views power from a post-structuralist perspective (Leder, 2012, p. 5). Women and power are disassociated in terms of social order, particularly in Morocco, where men are the main protagonists of the legal and social discourse, and women merely generate the reproduction cycle.

The entrance to the marketplace is not simply a result of financial necessity or generational development. Instead, it is the accumulation of years of damage and oppression. In 21<sup>st</sup> century-Morocco, a married woman, after gaining her husband's verbal permission to find a job, would face one of two situations. The first one is that her spouse would take control of her money and she would eventually become a slave to his financial needs. The other situation is that he would allow this pursuit of a career in the name of supporting the family. If approached by a friend or a neighbor, he would justify his permission as a must due to price increases, high rent expenses, or his inability to cope with things “nowadays”. Therefore, this study aims to explore the so-called Moroccan marketplace to examine women's behaviour and their gradual change toward sustainability.

The study of individual complexities and gender role change requires primarily examples, case studies, and an inclusive approach so as to not leave any components missing.

“Seeing poor women as individuals who pursue entirely independent and goal-oriented strategies, as is often the case in discourses on ‘empowerment’ and ‘choice’ in development, is to deny the complexities of their relational ties and the contingencies of lived experience.” (A. Cornwall, 2007, p. 158)

Cornwall addresses the issues of power dynamics where women often receive socially assigned submissive positions as well as being victimized and considered disempowered in the public sphere. However, some of the complexities Cornwall analyses in his theory are the fact that women are decision-makers in their households and that empowerment is not an issue. His reflection is based on the environment he administered, which is completely different from other contexts. Morocco, for instance, is one of the lowest-ranked countries with regard to gender equality and awareness. These conventions that Cornwall shares are far from being applicable to

Moroccan households. Men were, are, and will remain the most powerful agents in society if individuals are incapable of embracing change.

Throughout this paper, a reading of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals as well as Deborah Kapchan's *Gender on the Market* shall be employed to identify women's empowerment in the Moroccan marketplace. An intersection of reality and would-be reality is an interesting strategy to cover this exploratory study. To understand the cases in their respective contexts, gender analysis along with contextual frameworks are mandatory. Thus, this analysis not only follows the steps of Rao's study (2014), which questions the belief that economic empowerment will lead to an overall greater agency but also implements an intersectional approach to determine Moroccan women's challenges when entering the 'Suq'.

When viewed from the perspective of the study's aims, the United Nations seems to be an inspiring platform through which its goals work simultaneously with women's empowerment. The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945. Currently made up of 193 [Member States](#), "the UN and its work are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter" (Nations, n.d.). The organization is characterized by its welcoming features, which means that nations throughout the world may come together to debate common issues and seek ways to better serve humanity. It has launched numerous programs, funds, and initiatives, including *Sustainable Development Goals* adopted in 2015 and aiming at embracing an inclusive strategy to transition to a greener planet and dismantle injustices.

There are seventeen main goals, ranging from eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, and guaranteeing decent work and economic growth to spreading gender equality worldwide. The UN initiative attracted the eyes and attention of many countries. Though the goals are not legally binding, the governments of the UN member countries are expected to implement agendas, frameworks, and actions to accomplish their progress toward every sustainable development component. Each country holds the immense responsibility of improving its citizens' lives, rights, and environment. Morocco, however, joined the campaign only in 2017, challenging its society's deepest fear: change. Although the Moroccan pace is relatively slow, the decision-makers, along with an increasing number of citizens, accepted the challenge and gradually approached the transition.

Social change comes with many benefits, such as progress, new rights, cultural acceptance or tolerance, and equality. However, it also brings a great amount of criticism as well as resistance. Members of society tend to reject new ideas or approaches, justifying their behavior as a mere defense of their norms and traditions against western ideologies. Similarly, in Morocco, there are some people who do not agree with the occurring changes, especially in gender diversity or man-woman equality. The social balance in the Moroccan context is based on the dominance of males and the obedience of females. Although women gradually broke the glass ceiling in the 1950s by pursuing education while it was ruled and dominated by men, they were labeled as women of bad reputation, and unfit for marriage.

With female individuals defying the mainstream mindset and jeopardizing their social image to better serve future generations and guarantee their rights, their financial

dependence on their male partners remains one of the essential elements that triggers their misery and 'imprisonment'. When a woman marries, she immediately falls under the umbrella of traditions and may be subject to a number of conditions from her soon-to-be spouse, as he may allow himself to utter in the presence of her family members that he wishes for her to be a stay-at-home wife. If she happens to be working, he wants her to quit her job no later than the wedding. Nothing about these requests seems strange to the parties involved, as it is extremely common for the woman to follow her husband's wishes. He might even require her to withdraw from any grade of her education to free her time and take full care of her family. At such proposals, a woman is never allowed to speak or disapprove of the offered conditions since the men in her family own guardianship and responsibility for marriage-related decisions. The Moroccan constitution never granted men authority over women. However, since Morocco is mainly a tradition-oriented country, most decisions and practices usually are governed by norms and religion. Despite the fact that these events still take place in Moroccan society, slight changes are being incorporated.

Women in Morocco are far from being the only females in the world to be on the receiving end of similar injustices. In the Arab world, a woman's money might be seen as a man's business and, in one way or another, women are held accountable for trying to become independent. As demonstrated in Beijing's research, UN Women argued,

When women are poor, their rights are not protected. They face obstacles that may be extraordinarily difficult to overcome. This results in the deprivation of their own lives and losses for the broader society and economy, as women's productivity is well known as one of the greatest generators of economic dynamism. (In Focus: Women and Poverty | UN Women – Beijing+20, n.d.)

If it is fair to assume that women generally happen to have fewer advantages than men, poverty makes their situation considerably worse. They have less access to public services and care, and their health conditions are particularly dependent on men's blessings. It must be frustrating for a woman to wait for another person to pay for her shower or to be unable to buy her own period supplies. The problem itself is not unidimensional due to the complexity of the challenges involved.

If we were to study the situation of women in Morocco, we would understand that it is not simply a matter of gender, race, or class discrimination. Each of these types of discrimination, when considered separately, causes a lower level of injustice than they do together. In this study, it is fundamental to adopt an inclusive approach that takes into account the simultaneity of identity dimensions. Intersectionality names the struggles and stories of individuals and authenticates experiences. A wealthy woman's narrative is different from that of a poor woman. A rich Muslim woman residing in Morocco is seen differently than a poor woman living in a more developed country. Therefore, not only is it an issue of uniqueness, oppression, and privilege, but it is also a case of the comparative amount of discrimination. Taking the overlapping types of discriminations into consideration, we should be able to analyze the entrance of Moroccan women into the marketplace with respect to its complexities. "Without an intersectional lens, our efforts to tackle inequalities and injustice towards women are likely to just end up perpetuating systems of inequalities." (Intersectionality 101: What Is It and Why Is It Important?-Womenkind Worldwide, 2019).

*Gender on the Market*, a book by Deborah Kapchan, a professor of performance studies at New York University, is a project about Moroccan women's representational culture and how it both inspires and reflects current gender role shifts. The book illustrates how gender and economic relations are experienced and understood in women's aesthetic activities, beginning with their appearance in the marketplace (suq), which has been viewed as the most stereotypical of Moroccan patriarchal institutions. Kapchan sees the marketplace as a forum for transition where people enjoy a higher level of social license (p.3). Thanks to this transition, women can go shopping in the Suq, buy their children's gifts and school bags, and if their children are ill, they can afford to purchase their medications. They no longer have to ask or beg their husbands for money to buy what they desire.

Throughout the book, Kapchan displays a series of sectors where women were capable of showing agency and becoming autonomous. With their entry into the market, Moroccan women gradually made careers out of weddings and their planning. They first started cooking and cleaning as 'Tyabat', the Moroccan dialect word for cooks, and developed it into an extremely requested job area: "nagafat". Wedding planners, appeared on the job market to provide the bride and groom with the most sophisticated gowns and accessories. Noticeably, there have been several changes in the treatment of brides from the older styles of weddings to the modern ones, in which women are no longer hidden according to honor and shame ideals but are openly exposed. Covering women's faces and bodies is believed to be extremely protective and appealing to social standards in places where traditions and religion take precedence. What is more, women of marriageable age in Morocco are often chosen based on their physical attractiveness, social status, financial capabilities of their families, skin color, health, and whether or not they are veiled. The perfection of a woman's identity labels and categories is the intersection of an ideal prospect or purportedly future bride. Thus, this is where the intersectional method comes into play, since if we disregard this selection, the incidence of discrimination rises, eventually leading to a return to the inherited patriarchal system.

In Kapchan's book, the protagonist, Fadela describes tradition in terms of ideal purity untainted by foreign influence (p. 156). A woman, in the 18th and 19th centuries, in transition to getting married during her seven-day wedding is continuously living under a tent of cloth covered with veils and an earthy substance such as plants, and mud tightened around her forehead. She is not allowed to wear any makeup until the morning following her defloration, 'sbouhi', and she is prevented from seeing the groom until they officially get united. According to Kapchan, contemporary weddings are evolved forms of tradition, fashionable and inspired by western countries. Real opportunities for women are arising; female professionals happen to frequently govern brides instead of their female relatives.

The second well-known sector of the Moroccan market is housecleaning. Although maids and housekeepers are financially independent, they are still very vulnerable (?) In the Moroccan setting, where there is historical precedent of the physical abuse of children, servants, and women, the use of corporal punishment does not seem to surprise anyone. "The young maid is subject not only to social stigmatization but to physical abuse and finite salaries." (p. 232). Even when physical discipline is not enforced, female servants are often characterized as wicked or as females with



doubtful backgrounds, “bnat lhram”. Their salaries are of limited purchasing power and are still usually taken by their parents or other family members. However, in pursuit of social progress, the government guaranteed rights for this so-called minority.

Currently, cleaning ladies earn their own income. They have the power to bargain for their wages instead of just receiving their keep; fight their employer’s violence; and have more freedom: the freedom to choose where to work, when to start, and when to leave. Clearly, it is not the case for all working women. Some of them are still in need of help and liberty and are considered threats to the female homeowners. “Because of the maid’s physical proximity to the nuclear family, the middle class finds it necessary to exclude her psychologically.” (p. 232). However, the transition to a better environment is happening, and it is merely a matter of when.

Herbalists, the third sector mentioned in Kapchan’s book, cover a wide market area in Morocco. Kapchan argues: “Women are emerging as key players in these social performances. The enactment of artistic license by women orators brings the negotiation of gender, and definitions of honor and shame regarding gender into public focus.” (p. 103). ‘Achaba’ or a herbalist admits the shameful nature of her speech by rationalizing it, claiming that religion and medicine both address vital issues, such as sexual incapability, spinsterhood, or sterility publicly and with impunity. Shame in her speech lies in what is known to be taboos according to the majority of Moroccans. In this regard, discussing sexual intercourses, fantasies, or simply pleasure is perceived as ‘hchouma’ or shameful. The herbalist’s contribution is strongly manifested in dismantling restricted, hidden topics and giving voice to the unspoken. The expression ‘la haya2a fi din’, which means that there is no shame in religion, is frequently used to deflect the embarrassment that is elicited while talking about sexual deeds. On the one hand, female herbalists are despised by society since they sell herbs and provide health care recipes; on the other hand, they are perceived to be witches and sorcery experts. Therefore, they face instant exclusion from respected families and their gatherings. However, women’s power in this sector lies in the reality that the herbalist’s speech defies conventional rules of honor.

Society, then, is witnessing a significant change in the situation of women as it responds simultaneously to contemporary gender role adjustments. The marketplace is slowly becoming gender-tolerant as women are engaging in various sectors and are somehow not judged or oppressed because of their work. However, although herbalists and servants are increasingly tolerated and treated with respect, they are still viewed as women with questionable jobs and pasts. Morocco’s transition toward the United Nations’ sustainable development goals is significantly apparent in terms of decent work, economic growth, reducing inequalities, and gender equality, with women moving into paid employment outside their houses in ways that their mothers or grandmothers could only dream of. The rising number of women in the labor force reflects Morocco’s policy since Mohammed VI became king in 1999, when the new monarch declared a new phase in which the nation would concentrate on promoting women’s rights. Women moved to integrate the known to be male-dominated occupations and succeeded in eradicating the discriminatory entitlement. Sectors that used to be strictly reserved to men, as police, medicine, technical sectors, including IT and engineering, management and politics, have now become appropriate for women as well.

Although more women are working, they are still paid less than men. As well, at the top of industry and government, the faces remain stubbornly male. Women are still unable to pursue a pilot career nor simply drive a bus. To this day, no woman was capable to achieve head of government, who might play in favor of women's progress. However, when evaluating social change in Morocco, resistance and evolution are inevitable variables, that eventually would lead to a certain balance and sustainability. The suggested study aimed to identify the injustices raised against women in the Moroccan context and marketplace as well as give voice to their stories, intersections, and complexities. No matter how evolved the situation of women seems to be, the intersectional analysis remains rather difficult to adopt since the culture is complex.

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## **Love Thy Neighbors: Countering the Growing Impatience in International Politics- Ukraine-Russia Conflict**

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### **Abstract**

Globalization and rapid expansion of communication and information technologies have brought about tremendous changes in the ways the world traditionally interacted. This has eventually led to what is often called a 'borderless society'. However, the more the societies are growing borderless, the more strain is being put up on the concept of sovereignty and inviolability of territories. With the world continuing to embark upon wider areas of engagement, the principles of coexistence and interdependence have given way to narrow personal interests and hasty policy making. The paper, therefore, analyzes the existing Ukraine-Russia Conflict as a case study for bringing into light the growing impatience that is felt immensely now-a-days in international politics. Keeping in mind the indigenous political pursuits of a state, the paper seeks to explore the multitude of means through which national interests can be brought at par with the interests of the neighboring states and international community at large. In the end, the challenges faced by both the states have been analyzed to proffer suitable recommendations to address the future challenges.

*Key words: international politics, interests, challenges*

### **Introduction**

In International Politics, security is a key factor to determine interstate cooperation at regional level. The national security of one state is closely related to the national security of its geopolitical neighbors. Guided by this approach, the former colony of the Soviet Empire, Ukraine, has always been subject to external interferences in its national security policy owing to the presence of its powerful neighbor Russia on its border which sees changes in Ukraine national security policy as one in its own state. Since the demise of the Soviet Empire, the two states have always been at daggers drawn but the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 came as the last straw that broke the camel's back and with this the impatience in international politics further mounted up.

### **The Growing Impatience in International Politics**

The nature of international politics in global order has always been dynamic and unsettling. However, the structure of global politics at the end of the second decade of the 21st century has been more anarchic and complex than ever before. The repercussions of the Cold War can still be felt in international politics.

In the post- Cold War era, the world order cannot be regarded as purely unipolar or purely bipolar, instead it observed dominance of at least five states namely the United States, Europe, China, Russia and Japan. These states dominated international politics in one way or another. The challenges and turbulence it brought to

international politics can be gauged from the number of conflicts that took place in the post-Cold War era in which recently, Ukraine-Russia conflict has gained currency. Some of these conflicts have been between former Soviet colonies, for instance to name the few are war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and conflict in Chechnya. However, international politics also witnessed troubled relationships between the states that were not colonies of the Soviet Empire yet their international relations were equally turbulent. Within this category, conflicts in the wider part of the world can be cited (Kotlyar, 2020).

In Asia, four full-fledged wars between India and Pakistan over Kashmir dispute have been fought since 1947 with number of local skirmishes continuing till date (Iqbal & Hussain, 2018). The takeover of Taliban government over Afghanistan (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan [UNAMA], 2021) is another recent example. Likewise, the Persian Gulf war between Iraq and Iran (Alahmad & Keshavarzian, 2010), the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine (White & Adu, 2021), the ethnic confrontation between Tutsi and Hutu leading to Rwanda Genocide (Rieder & Elbert, 2013) and the ongoing conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Libya and many other Middle Eastern and African countries are some of the conflicts that manifest the growing impatience in international politics. The list of conflicts is by no means exhaustive and contemporarily it is supplemented by the Ukraine-Russia Conflict.

### **Western Dominance and the Former Soviet Empire**

After the collapse of the Soviet Empire, Russia was on weak footing to curtail the ever-growing Western influence. The region of Caucasus was formerly under the control of Russia but the United States managed to enter this energy rich region with the help of some of its Allies like Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine. Likewise, the Western dominance also kept growing stronger as NATO expanded further in Eastern Europe. In 1999, under the Clinton Administration, NATO expanded to bring in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. In 2004, further eight former Soviet states joined NATO including Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In 2008, NATO at one of its sessions in Bucharest, considered joining Georgia and Ukraine. France and Germany opposed this view for the fear of the Russian aggression. It was in this backdrop that Russia invaded Georgia in 2008. In 2009, Albania and Croatia joined NATO and this Western influence continued to grow.

The influence of the European Union is also of no lesser degree than NATO. The EU launched its Eastern Partner Initiative in 2008. Russia considered the program as hostile to its national interests. Russia perceives EU expansion as a stalking horse for NATO. Therefore, it can be stated that Western dominance causes instability in international politics. Particularly, one of the greatest challenges that now faces the world is the prevalence of interstate conflicts such as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine (Mearsheimer, 2014).

### **Identifying Causes of Ukraine-Russia Conflict**

The inducements for present confrontation are manifold. The confrontation has deep historical roots. It begins with Konotop Battle of 1659 where Ukrainian troops of Hetmanate defeated the Moscow Army. Later on, the Russian army under Tsar I secured their influence on Hetmanate territory. During the Ukrainian Revolution of

1917-1921, Russia made all attempts to prevent the establishment of the independent Ukraine. Further in World War II, the US spread its influence to territories of western Ukraine but the local population there largely resisted (Kotlyar,2020).

Russia under Putin has always been on critical terms with its neighboring Ukraine. Putin's political history is clearly indicative of the fact that for him the collapse of the USSR has been a painful fact. In this regard, his statement from 2005 can be aptly stated wherein he mentions collapse of the Soviet empire as the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.

The relation between two states especially worsened when in 2014, Russia began a military operation to capture the Crimean Peninsula. After the military operation had been carried on for a considerable period of time, ultimately on 15<sup>th</sup> March, a referendum was held wherein Crimea voted for joining the Peninsula to Russia. Three days later, on 18 March, the Kremlin signed a treaty on the admission of the Republic of Crimea to the Russian (Welt, 2021).

Violating the rules and principles of International Law, bilateral and multilateral agreements, the Russian Federation annexed the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol, occupied certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The two states signed the Russian Federation and the Ukraine on Cooperation in the Use of the Sea of Azov and the Strait of Kerch Agreement in 2003. However, Russia violating the terms of the treaty, annexed Crimea in 2014. On 19 February 2018, Ukraine filed a memorandum in the International Court of Arbitration against the Russian Federation in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which alleges Russia's violation of Ukraine's rights in the Black Sea and in the Sea of Azov, as well as in the Kerch Strait.

The two states have been on deteriorating terms since long and till date no development towards improvement in bilateral relationship can be observed.

### **Understanding Putin's Objection on NATO Eastward Expansion**

The threats that Russia senses due to NATO eastward expansion have been put in unambiguous words by Putin several times. As previously mentioned in the paper, several former colonies and several neighboring states of Russia have already joined hands with the West. It is in this backdrop that Russia perceives its geostrategic interests at stake. When it comes to Vladimir Putin's stance, he has put it straight by pointing at an analogy of Ukraine to Russia with Mexico and Canada to America. Putin interrogates America's reaction if missiles were deployed at its border through the states of Mexico and Canada. An apt interpretation of Putin's sentiments suggests that for Russia to wage war in Ukraine was a resort of last and unpleasant instance but forced by threats of national disintegration due to intervention of foreign elements, it took this step with heavy heart (Nigam, 2021; Roth, 2021).

### **Impact of Ukraine-Russia Conflict**



The crisis in Ukraine has set shockwaves to the world at large. As bombing continues in Kyiv, the nation-states across the globe continue to suffer in one way or another. This may turn out to be advantageous for some states but the proportionality of harm outstands the meager benefit it may produce for a lesser number of states. The impact of the conflict can be systematically categorized into two broader categories. One is on the regional level and the other is on the global level. On the regional level, its immense consequences are evaluated in the context of two South Asian States that are China and Pakistan. On the global level, its effects on Middle Eastern and African States have been taken within the scope of this paper.

### **Evaluating Impact on the Regional Level- South Asia**

By virtue of its geo-strategic and geopolitical importance, South Asia has always been the area of power struggle between great powers like the United States, China and Russia. In this backdrop, the consequences of Ukraine Conflict have been evaluated in the context of two South Asian States as follow:

#### **Pakistan as a Case Study**

The impact of the conflict on Pakistan and the country's response to it can be evaluated under the following heads:

##### ***Pakistan Position on Conflict***

Pakistan political history is marked with troubled relationships with its neighboring countries especially India, Afghanistan and Iran. Pakistan standing with the West is already on weak footing and the country is suffering with economic woes exacerbated by debts from the IMF and being on FATF. Pakistan faced a serious balance of payment crisis by the end of 2017-2018 and is still facing the same (Ali, 2022). It is in these conditions that the Ukraine-Russia war broke out and further led the country into tunnels of gloominess.

Under the prevailing situation, being a neutral third party is in the best interest of Pakistan. Likewise, Pakistan has so far adopted the policy of non-alignment in the conflict. If Pakistan takes a side in this dispute, it will be unable to enable the warring parties in negotiating and resolving the crisis.

##### ***Impact of Conflict on Geo-Political Relevance of Pakistan***

On the face of the globe, Pakistan occupies a fundamental geo-strategic position. Owing to this unique geographic location, it has enormous potential to perform a leading role in world politics. Pakistan is situated at a gateway to the Middle East and Central Asian States (CARs). In this regard, Pakistan's Gwadar and Karachi Sea Ports provide ideal port and transit facilities for CARs to establish their trade links with the outer world for the benefit of the entire region. Pakistan has served as a frontline state against the Soviet Occupation from 1979 to 1989, in post 9/11, its participation in US led alliances in GWOT and now post US withdrawal from Afghanistan.



Due to its conflict with Ukraine, Russia is now badly in urgent need of expanding its customer base. In this regard, Pakistan has remained a viable customer of gas and oil. Pakistan's own gas reserves are rapidly depleting and taking into consideration all these ongoing crises, Pakistan has signed an agreement with Russia to import natural gas. In the year 2015 and 2021, Pakistan also signed a Project with Russia that amounts to 2.5 billion USD. Under the project, a 1100-kilometer gas pipeline, known as the Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline Project, from Karachi to Punjab will be constructed. All these developments in bilateral relationship between two countries are apparently to its favor yet the impact of this seemingly friendly relationship between Russia and Pakistan remains to be seen (Owais, 2007).

### ***Economic Impact on Pakistan***

Throughout history, Pakistan has been on good terms with Ukraine and Russia and has sustained its bilateral economic ties with both. Pakistan exports to Russia in 1996 were just 13.1 M USD but in 2020 the export rate will increase as much as 279 M USD. On the other hand, Russia's export was just 67.6M in 1996 but in 2020, they have gone as high as 699M USD. Likewise, for a given year Pakistan exports to Ukraine have increased from 18.1 M USD to 573M USD and Ukraine export to Pakistan has increased from 2.98M USD to 82.1M USD (Qiser, 2022).

However, the ongoing conflict has brought this economic tie under huge strain. This is an especially alarming situation in a country like Pakistan which is already struggling with numerous problems.

After US, Europe, NATO and its allies, Germany and many other states have expanded sanctions on Russia. These sanctions will have an effect on the global market. Likewise, Pakistan will continue to suffer in many ways.

Pakistan, already suffering from a grappling economy, has record high inflation for a two years period from 2022 at around 10%. The inflation will in turn lead to a wage-price spiral, in which due to rising living costs, individuals demand more wages. This will exacerbate economic instability. Furthermore, if wages are not raised, as a last option businesses would have to lay off their workforces, resulting in an increased unemployment.

The disruption in the food value chain will be significant. Russia and Ukraine together constitute 21% of global wheat export in the year 2021. In the fiscal year 2021, Pakistan alone consisted of 39% wheat imports from Ukraine. It also imports corn, barley, grain, seeds among other items from Ukraine. This disruption in supply leads to high prices of food commodities. The inflation in the food market also relates to cut in supply of fertilizers. Likewise, there will be a surge in electricity rates too. One cannot deny that the natural outcome of high inflation, fewer jobs and more people falling below poverty line, their inability to make both ends meet will eventually deteriorate the law-and-order situation in the country (Shakil, 2022).

In the wake of global pandemic where the whole world suffered, the impact for poor countries like Pakistan was especially disastrous. It had not yet come out of the cascading effect of those crises that a new challenge in the form of Russia-Ukraine

conflict had ensued. It is now at Pakistan's wise disposal of all the means at hand that the country can counter this growing insurgency.

### **China as a Case Study**

In the Ukrainian-Russian Conflict, China's position can be evaluated with respect to three categories of interests. Firstly, China wants to sustain its brotherly ties with Russia. Secondly, Beijing would never want to give up on the West in pursuance of narrow national interest as its prosperous future is directly proportional to stable economic ties with the West. Last yet equally important to China is preservation of its commitment enshrined in its foreign policy to safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. China so far seems to be advocating a non-position on conflict by neither praising any state's stance nor condemning invasion of Russia. However, it remains uncertain how long China will maintain its policy of neutrality for as the tensions between two states continue to grow, the world-states will eventually be forced to open up about their choices (International Crisis Group, 2022).

### **Evaluating Impact on Global Level- Middle Eastern and North African States**

The reality of how vulnerable states are to the outcome of Ukraine-Russia conflict is actually a question of how much dependent the states are for their national existence on Ukraine and Russia. When it comes to Middle Eastern and African States, it is observed that Russia enjoys working ties with many states of Middle East and North Africa. For these states Russia provides high level diplomatic assistance, active military engagement, a stable source of food and energy security and arms and ammunition aid. Therefore, the probability of these states of non-allegiance to Russia is less likely yet if continued for a long time, Russia will soon not be in a position to provide assistance to Middle Eastern and North African States under the tightening sanctions and weakening diplomatic relationship with super powers of the world. It is then under this change of events that Russia will begin to lose its influence over these states and it is then that these states will have to make a choice whether to hold on to Russia or to let go of it (Wehrey, 2022; Rumley, 2022; Welsh, 2022).

### **Recommendations**

Following way outs can be adopted by both states to buffer their rapidly deteriorating relationships:

#### **A Sustainable Solution underpins Geo-Strategic Interests**

Primarily, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine requires an addressal of each state's specific national interest. Yet, the fact remains that conflict between two states cannot be considered as merely their own conflict rather the implications of conflict go well beyond the borders. Therefore, on a broader spectrum, the geo-strategic interest of states must be counted first when designing a policy-solution to war.

#### **Temper Antagonistic Rhetoric by beginning with less divisive topics**

Firstly, discussions should be carried out on less divisive topics encompassing issues on sub-regional level rather than on continent wide level. These less divisive topics can range from trade, maritime environment, issues related to Black Sea, the Baltic Sea and other narrower grounds. There can be no better solution to temper antagonistic rhetoric than willingness of European States themselves in making table talks and acknowledging legitimate concerns of Russians while also putting forward their own. This could be an important step because once discussions are underway, they might give way to topics of major concern.

### **Replacing “All or Nothing” Approach**

Sanctions to Russia are not a new thing. Bringing Russia suddenly under heavy sanctions may not be as effective as if the international community takes the approach of linking incremental sanctions to incremental relaxation of sanctions. This will be more effective than an all or nothing approach.

### **Provisions for Security Reservation**

The concept of ‘Security Reservation’ is based on the notion that energy should not be used as a weapon in times of war. It entails limitation on deployment of weapons only on a handful of positions and for calculated time. Practically, this step is hard to follow yet it makes sense if nations show willingness to adopt it.

### **Infusing Sense of Belonging on Inter-State Level**

States must now establish a new security architecture based on a sense of belonging, putting aside ethnocentrism and eurocentrism. Therefore, to overcome growing impatience in international politics, the state must adopt a more liberal outlook of acknowledging the nation's cultural, historical and ideological narrative.

### **Proactive Approach**

In order to deal with the complete subject-matter of national security, the state must establish pro-active negotiation capacity, through early-stage consultation and international community assistance.

### **Trust-Building**

It is certainly one of the most important reasons that two states have so far been unable to resolve their problems and all the efforts entailing negotiation and mediation have failed. It is advisable that the two must put forward their respective concerns in presence of the third-party mediators i.e. those states that enjoy a high degree of trust with both Ukraine and Russia.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, it can be stated that it is true that no conflict can be defined as totally local in the modern times, as the global community has to suffer from the consequences in one way or another. The impact of the Ukraine-Russia Conflict has

been felt in all parts of the world today. Russia sees Western expansion on its border as a threat to its sovereignty and it is willing to take all types of pain instead of acquiescence to Western order. On the other hand, Ukraine has its reasons to continue to resist Russia's interventions. It is the national interest which is at stake for both the states and, it is only through mutual understanding of both states' national security threats that any viable solution can be implemented. Adoption of humanitarian principles by both the states is favorable not only in promoting peace and brotherhood between them but for the international community at large.

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## The Yagua People: Indigenous Tribe of Peru

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### Abstract

The overarching theme of the project is the indigenous Yagua people of Peru, who live along the Amazon River. Despite the fact that the project focuses on their lives as a whole, taking their culture and way of life into account, the study focuses on a more significant challenge that the Yagua people face. Their health problems, as well as topics affecting the arrival of modern medicine and the muchacha phenomenon, are investigated thoroughly. Deforestation, drug trafficking and illegal mining are also discussed as prominent current issues. We chose to investigate the Yagua people as we had some exposure to the variety of the Peruvian culture through the virtual meetings with students from the ESAN University (Lima) during the Global Understanding course and prepared a research project for the XVII International Competition of research, practice-oriented and creative projects in English among university students organized by the Ural State Pedagogical University. The conducted small-size case-study research is based on the qualitative research method. We analyzed primary and secondary sources. The primary sources arise from a qualitative research we conducted through the survey research technique. We used the structured interview as a tool and we interviewed students from University of ESAN with whom we attended the Global Understanding Course together and their course instructor. We also interviewed the photographer Goran Jovic who had visited the tribe and has raised the awareness of their culture through his photographs. The secondary sources arise from an extensive internet search for data and available information online. The findings showed that majority of the surveyed Peruvian fellow-students were unaware of the Yagua people's existence, let alone their health challenges. Thus, we believe intercultural and cross-cultural contacts, partnerships, and collaborations can contribute in the raising awareness of various problems and can help us learn about various challenges people face around the world.

*Keywords: indigenous Yagua people, intercultural, challenges*

### Introduction

Indigenous tribes are of significant importance in many facets of our life that we are unaware of. Such issues might include climate change and global warming control, agriculture, natural resource management, biodiversity, and many more. With these communities purposefully sequestered, it's no wonder that many people are unaware of their existence, let alone their difficulties. The Yagua people of Peru live in such a tribe beside the Amazon. We have undertaken to investigate the peoples since we made contacts in Peru through the Global Understanding course. The goal of this study article is to promote awareness of the Yagua people's issues, which include the so-called "muchacha" phenomenon, their health system, and illicit mining, deforestation, and drug activities.

## **Factual Information**

The Yagua are an indigenous tribe of roughly 6000 people that live in Columbia and northeast Peru. They presently reside along the rivers Amazon, Napo, Putumayo, and Yavari. They date as far back as 1768. The Yagua tribe has been notified as a minority community, even characterized as “national minorities”, according to Toledo (1999). Furthermore, after reviewing several internet sources, we discovered that, while the Yagua language, which includes a range of Quechua vocabulary, is still spoken, it has been designated as an endangered language due to the fact that there are only around 6000 native speakers. Pena(2009, p. 20) quotes Thomas Payne’s findings by saying “As of the early 1980’s, Thomas Payne estimated that 75 % of women and 25 % of men were monolingual in Yagua. Spanish proficiency varies; we have observed a few instances of probable multilingualism stemming from the desire of Yagua-speaking parents to have their children speak only Spanish.” They are well-known for their culture of recognizing hardworking and competent workers. Having said that, it is crucial to remember that throughout history they have been legendary hunters, diligent farmers and they have become well-known for their exquisite. Basket weaving, pottery, and the manufacture of blowguns are examples of other crafts. The expertise required to accomplish such trades is passed down from generation to generation. Their parenting practices are not dissimilar to most social norms. They adhere to conventional gender conventions. Boys are required to provide for their families by hunting small animals, whilst girls are expected to keep the home in order. Yagua boys are taught to hunt small animals with a blowpipe, and they are very skilled at it.

## **Methodology**

We started the research by analyzing secondary sources from an extensive internet search for data and available information online. We focused mostly on other research papers and online books. This helped us come to knowledge of the most prevalent issues at the time concerning the Yagua tribe. After acquiring factual information, we moved onto the next part of the research; conducting a small-size case-study research that is based on the qualitative research method. Interviews were used as a primary source for acquiring data. We used the structured interview as a tool and we interviewed students from University of ESAN with whom we attended the Global Understanding Course together and their course instructor. We also interviewed the photographer Goran Jovic who had visited the tribe and has raised the awareness of their culture through his photographs and videos. The questions were formed around the information that was previously acquired. The interviews with the Peruvians were done by email, while the interview with photographer Jovic was done through social media; via Instagram. We wanted to first confirm the general facts about their way of life, beliefs and traditions, and next assess the interviewees’ understanding of the current issues that the Yagua people are facing.

## **Health Issues**

The Yagua people, like any other indigenous community, confront significant challenges in their healthcare system. The most notable problem is the insufficient introduction of modern medicine. Their system is comprised of a shaman, apparently

performing the role of a doctor, yet the two are polar opposites. Shamans are more concerned with the spiritual and intangible causes of sickness, and their job in the community is to explain to the patient what factors have caused their illness. In contrast to our professionals, who utilize biology and symptoms to establish a diagnosis, shamans are not able to do it in this way since they lack essential expertise and practice. Because it is the only way they know, the Yagua people turn to natural medicines for healing. There have been numerous attempts to apply modern medication but they have failed for a variety of reasons. For a start, it may not have been introduced appropriately. One should not try to utilize the medication as a substitute for their present ways; rather, it should be used as a supplemental treatment when traditional therapies are insufficient. "White medicine need not be seen as a substitute for shamanism, but as a therapeutic complement which can work concurrently with traditional pharmacopoeia" (Chaumeil, 1984, p. 52). Second, even if the medicine is broadly acknowledged by the public, price is not publicly available. It is too costly, especially given the Yagua people's economic position. More so, individuals are not given enough information to enable them to operate with modern pharmaceutical drugs. Lastly, in addition to their unique medical procedures, other issues like as hygiene and malnutrition have a role. They have been robbed of cultivable areas as a result of invaders seizing enormous swaths of land and abusing the Yagua people, but this is only one of numerous concerns. As a result, solutions to help improve Yagua's health tend to be largely preventative in character, such as immunization programs under pre-vaccine care, the establishment of indigenous health advocates, and a reevaluation of herbal medicine.

### **The "Muchacha" Phenomenon**

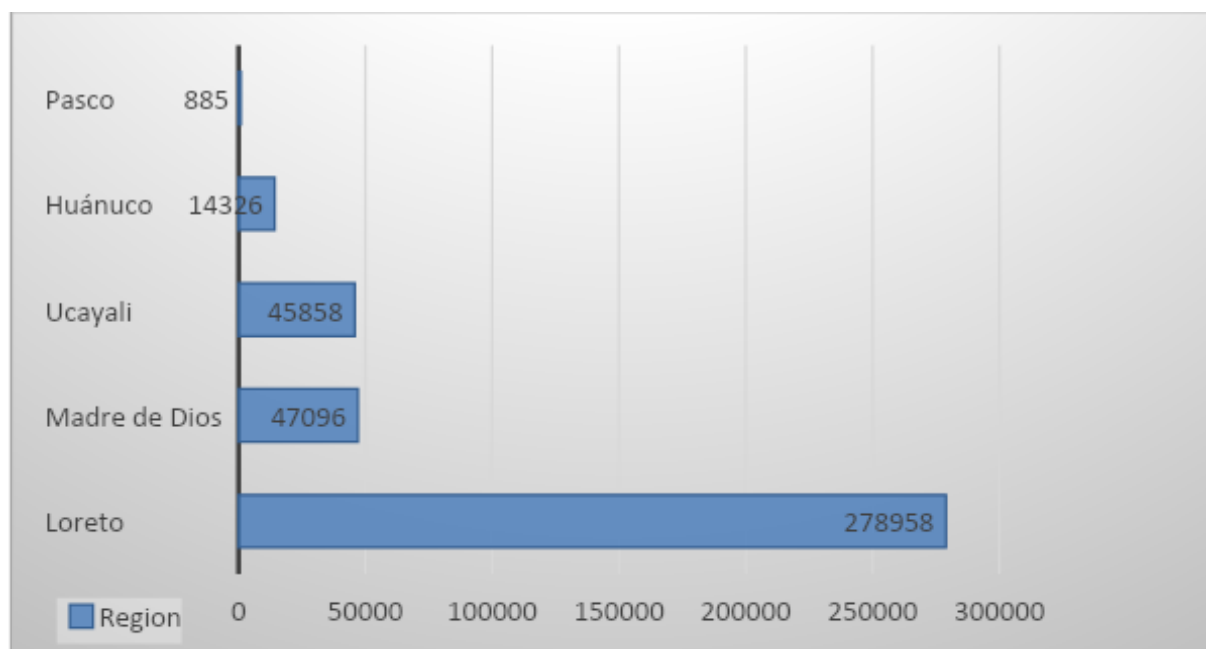
Peruvians have a saying that goes way back in time, and it states that the Yagua people are the cheapest labor in the Loreto area. The patronage system, which is the interplay of economic transactions based on the use of male labor (as seen with lumber, rubber, skins, and daily or seasonal work), has been prominent and constant throughout the years, until recently. In the last 10 years, the focus of attention has shifted from males to women, and that is where the concept of the muchacha or muchacha phenomenon is derived from. Until 1975, men left and women stayed; now, the converse is true. First and foremost, the market for "muchachas" or servants, is in trouble; examine the rising number of ads proclaiming "se necesita muchacha" (servant or aid sought) that one sees in the windows of Limenian or provincial residences. If it is true that the vast majority of females employed as maids are of indigenous descent, they will mostly migrate from the Sierra to the coastal area where there is the highest demand. However, many highland females are now refusing to work as domestics since they are itinerants selling food or clothes. Furthermore, and this is without a doubt the driving element, demand is significantly expanding as the Peruvian middle class emerges, which is extremely thirsty for the advantages of the well-to-do. Jean-PierreChaumeli (1984) has discovered that the people of Caballo-Cocha have been vocal that everybody wants a muchacha now. Aside from the devalued chores that are assigned to them (cooking, washing, and child care), the vast majority of Yagua muchachas are not compensated or educated. They are most typically kept in solitude in the patron's house. They may be seen at Caballo-cocha, sitting mutely by the window, hiding from passengers and reappearing once they have passed. In the presence of their new "adopted family," they learn to reject their roots and fully break connections with their community. With the existence of racial

consciousness in the minds of the Yagua women, new times are on the way. Until recently, women have been the most deprived of knowledge and abilities in society, and they are now regarded as keepers of the elders, customs, and the preservation of their language.

## Illegal Mining

Illegal mining has proven to be a major environmental crime for the indigenous peoples that live in the area of activity. The Yagua are one of these tribes. The ramifications of this heinous illegal conduct may be seen in areas such as Madre de Dios. Extensive online research led us to the discovery that not so long ago, reporters from Mongabay Latam visited San José de Karene, a town in Madre de Dios with an official name where the impacts of illegal mining could be witnessed. “According to the research, illegal mining has stolen 6,282 hectares (15,523 acres) of forest from the community” Praeli (2021, para. 31). The Mongabay Latam research demonstrated that, despite all attempts by communities to remedy the issue, unlawful mining has damaged 129 villages throughout the five areas analyzed. These communities face a paucity of remote sensing satellites as well as well-defined territorial boundaries. The seized territory can then be invaded and legitimized by outsiders. Catoteni and San José de Karene have also experienced this. Praeli (2021, para. 37) reports back and quotes Francis Quijie, who is a member of the governing board of San José de Karene by stating “Today, customs are no longer practiced. Even parents themselves do not handle this knowledge, and this is being lost due to mining. If we lose our customs, then it would not even make sense to call ourselves an Indigenous community.”

Figure 1: Illegal mining in hectares

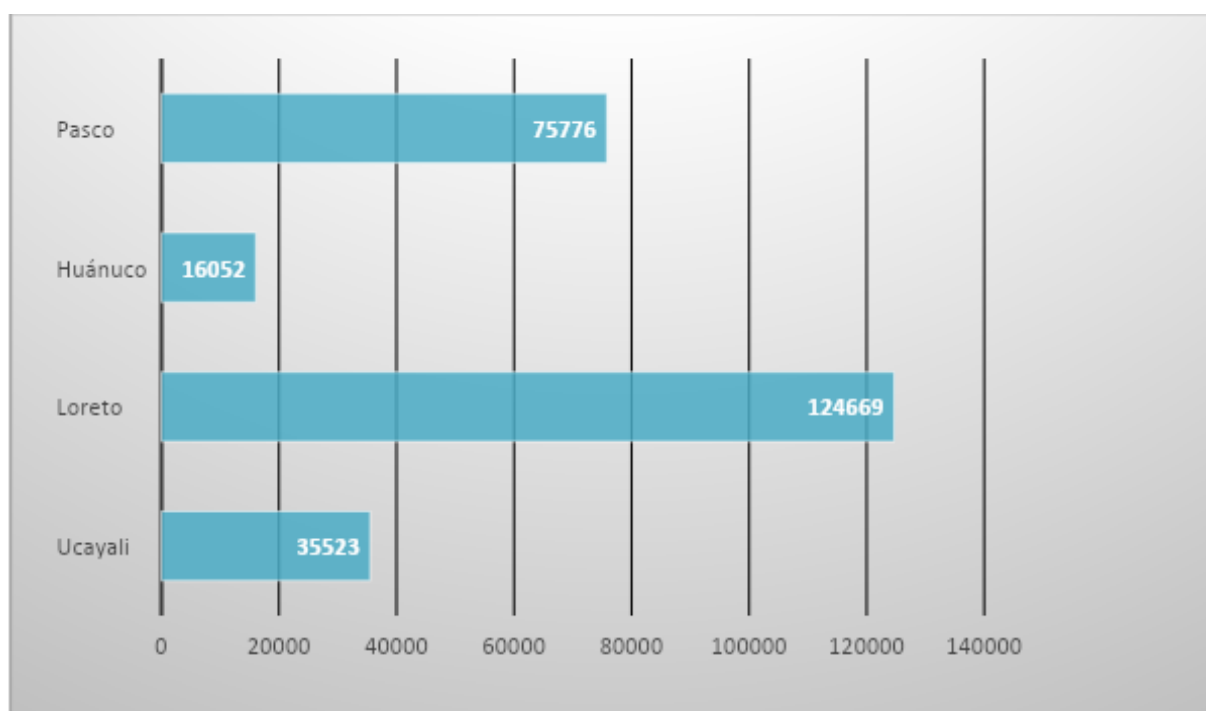


\*original information portrayed in the graphs belongs to Rigoberto Carvajal, who developed the graph for the Latin American Center for Investigative Journalism

## Drug Trafficking and Deforestation: the Link

Drug trafficking has become a problem in the recent two and a half years. The death of Arbildo Meléndez in April 2020, just after the start of the COVID-19 epidemic, signaled the start of the violence that would explode in the coming months. Meléndez was the head of the Unipacuyacu Indigenous community in Huánuco, which was made up of members of the Kakataibo ethnic group. So far this year, four Kakataibo chiefs and three Ashaninka leaders have been assassinated. In terms of the existence of criminal activities, particularly drug trafficking, Kakataibo lands in both the Ucayali and Huánuco regions have become the most critical places. There have been multiple reports from multiple journalists that have entered the area and witnessed wreckage in the region and deployed a drone to photograph what is thought to be a secret airfield. The residents of the town have claimed to be terrified.

Figure 2: Illegal coca crops in hectares in Loreto, Ucayali, Huánuco and Pasco



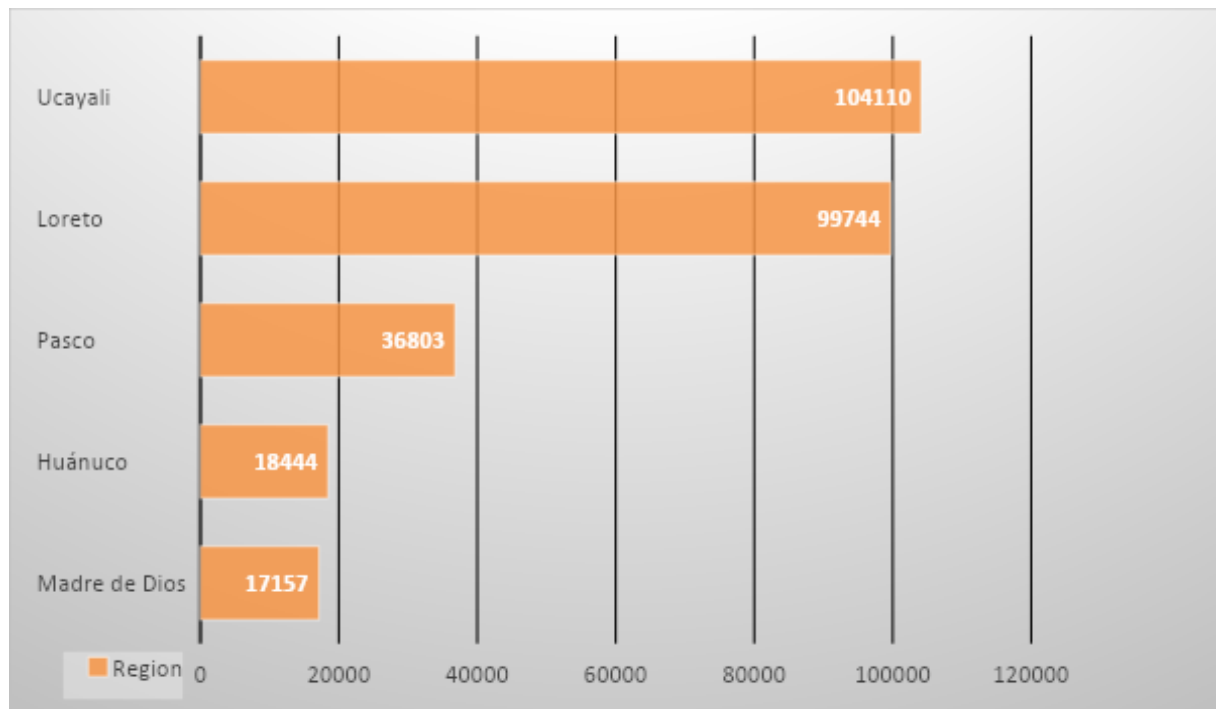
\*original information portrayed in the graphs belongs to Rigoberto Carvajal, who developed the graph for the Latin American Center for Investigative Journalism

Across Ucayali, indigenous tribes confront a similar situation. According to the reports by Pareli (2021), as a result of drug trafficking, at least 16 indigenous villages are threatened with deforestation. Statistics from 2020 may paint an even bleaker image, since Peru lost more forest land last year than it had in the preceding 20 years. "It's disgraceful," said IBC's Ráez (2021, para. 23) of Peru's rising deforestation, outpacing the 2019 rate by 50,000 hectares. Berlin Diques, president of the Ucayali branch of the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSEP) also spoke up last year by saying "During the pandemic, illegality has increased a lot, because while we were obedient and did not go anywhere, the criminals continued to advance". The Ministry of Environment indicated in a letter response to Mongabay Latam's inquiries that "the regions where the biggest spike in deforestation has been detected during 2020 have been Ucayali, Loreto, and Madre de Dios, compared to



2019." The motivators have been numerous. The government also reported that Indigenous people may have been disproportionately affected by forestry difficulties in 2020. They have been more vulnerable and prone to a range of diverse and unscrupulous agents who have exploited the situation as a result of the absence of control measures as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Per a government reporter's assessment of deforestation in Peru's five regions, about 276,000 hectares worth of forest land have been destroyed inside Indigenous areas in the previous ten years. Indigenous regions surrounded by deforestation have appeared, and many of its inhabitants have banded together to safeguard their territory. However, their rebellions have become exceedingly hazardous.

Figure 3: Forest Loss 2012-2020 in hectares



\*original information portrayed in the graphs belongs to Rigoberto Carvajal, who developed the graph for the Latin American Center for Investigative Journalism

### Collected Data from the Interviewees

As previously said, we conducted interviews with four Peruvian students, their ESAN University professor, and photographer Goran Jovic. It is crucial to highlight that three of the students and the professor were uninformed of the existence of such an indigenous group in the first place, therefore they were not much assistance, but rather aided in the goal to raise awareness of their presence and difficulties. One of the students who had visited the tribe confirmed whatever accurate information we had learned on the Internet, but she had nothing new to offer to what we already knew. She, on the other hand, mentioned the Yagua's deforestation problem. "Everything they do on a daily basis, everything that they use every day such as tools for hunting, or making baskets, or even their clothing, all comes from different types of trees. When I visited they showed us different techniques that they use and it was beautiful", she

commented. She also added: “the trees are their most precious source to be able to continue living and that is why this situation is so devastating to me”. Photographer Goran Jovic was asked the same questions as he had previously visited and lived with the tribe. He refused to comment on matters such as their health care system or the "muchacha" situation, but he was unaware of illicit mining and drug operations. Regarding their hygiene, he stated that the media's portrayal of them is erroneous; they are more exposed to their outside environment, therefore it is unavoidable for them to get dirty or muddy, but this does not imply that they have poor hygiene. He discussed with us more about their customs and way of life, since his mission is to raise awareness of such tribes' ancient practices and the necessity of understanding and accepting them. When asked how he felt being among such people, particularly the Yagua, he responded:” for me, it is a return to the simplicity of life, something that we in the modern world have somewhat lost along the way”.

## Conclusion

Raising public awareness for the difficulties the Yagua tribe faces that include the "muchacha" occurrence, their medical system, and illegal mining, forestry, and organized crime is the purpose of this research piece. Their health-care system struggles with the entrance and implication of modern medicine as a replacement for their traditional methods. With this in mind, as well as their rejection of the medicine, or simply poor conditions for it to be excepted, solutions to help improve Yagua's health do seem to be mainly precautionary in nature, like vaccination programmers under pre-vaccine care, the institution of indigenous caregivers, and a reassessment of traditional remedies. The "muchacha" phenomenon, or rather the development in the demand for such maids, poses a significant danger to the women of Indigenous descent. Nonetheless, with the presence of racial awareness in the Yagua women's thoughts, new times are on the horizon. Women were historically the most deprived of information and talents in society, and they are today recognized as the protectors of the elderly, traditions, and the retention of their language. Furthermore, new problems have risen in the past two years, especially since the epidemic of the corona virus. Illegal logging and drug trafficking have proven to be severe environmental disasters for the indigenous peoples that reside nearby. Both are related to the growing issue of deforestation. Indigenous territories encircled by deforestation have emerged, and many of its residents have come together to protect their land as a result of the consequences. Their uprisings, unfortunately, have grown quite dangerous. According to our empirical findings, the plurality of the polled Peruvian fellow-students was uninformed of the Yagua people and their challenges. As a result, we agree that intercultural and cross-cultural connections, partnerships, and collaborations may assist raise awareness of various issues and help us learn about the numerous challenges individuals experience throughout the world. It is critical to help them, just as they help us in ways we cannot comprehend.

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## Author Notes

**Teadora Stefanovska** is a first-year student at the University of American College's School of Foreign Languages in Skopje, North Macedonia. Teadora is also a permanent resident of Skopje. She and her partner chose to research indigenous tribes as part of an international competition on the same subject. They came in second place thanks to their research project. Her interest in the differences between cultures began at a young age, prompting her to constantly research the living standards and traditions of people like the Yagua. She believes that such projects can raise awareness and, as a result, help those who are less fortunate than others.

**Iskra Andreeska** is a first year student at University American College Skopje, at the faculty of foreign languages. She was born and raised in Ohrid, however, she is now located in Skopje for college. Iskra believes indigenous groups play an important role in today's world due to the fact that they constantly make efforts to protect our land and

biodiversity. By caring and raising awareness about indigenous groups and their problems, we also contribute to protecting their rights as well as our environment.

## **Singing: The Human Connection**

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### **Abstract**

Though music may not be a universal language, it is a facet that can help us understand each other across cultures, languages, and borders. This project explores the experiences in singing and teaching voice lessons of individuals in different parts of the world. It was designed as a case study not to analyze individual's experiences as a representation of the whole, but rather as a point of comparison between individual experiences in different parts of the world. Through interviews with people who have sung or taught singing in Italy, Chile, Canada, and the United States, cultural values and practices of singing are compared. This study was conducted over the course of several months using virtual meeting technology. Each interview was recorded with the express permission of the subjects and the recordings were analyzed after all the interviews were collected. The interview answers reveal several connections and contrasts between the individual subjects. Some interviewees found different aspects of singing and learning to sing more important than others, such as lesson pacing (technique versus repertoire) and preparation (performing versus rehearsing). There were also many similarities that resonated in each singer's experience around the world. For instance, all subjects discussed the mind-body connection that is experienced in singing. Even though certain values varied between subjects, this study highlights the connection that different individuals have with their voice as part of their identity as a human in the world.

Keywords: singing, global perspectives, human cultures

### **Introduction**

Music can be found in some way, shape, or form in nearly every human civilization across time. While that does not necessarily make music a universal language, there is something unique about music, and singing specifically, that it has an important place in nearly every culture. Studies have been conducted exploring the relationship between human culture and music. There are variations in the way people interpret music and in the function of music in their culture, society, and history (Feld & Fox, 1994). There are also variations in the ways human beings use their voice, both their speaking/singing voice and their vocal power to speak their truth (Feld & Fox, 1994). There are different cultural uses for the voice and a variety of associations and experiences that people share through singing. Throughout all these connections and differences, one aspect that can connect us is the human voice. Many studies have been done on the influence singing can have on language learning (see Good, Russo, & Sullivan, 2015; Ludke, 2009; Matsu, 2022; Zbikrowski, 2012). The literature review shows that there is a gap in publications of qualitative research focused on the perceptions and experiences of singers, teachers, and lovers of music.

This research explores the connections in singing through individual experiences around the world. In this study, five participants with different international singing

experiences were interviewed. They were asked about the logistics, philosophy, and culture of their voice lessons. Subjects had experiences singing or teaching voice lessons in Chile, Switzerland, Montreal, Ontario, Italy, and the United States. Each participant offers an individual perspective on their experience singing in each culture.

The background of this research comes from my personal experience singing internationally. As an undergraduate vocalist, I researched opportunities to continue my vocal studies while studying abroad in Valparaíso, Chile. A couple weeks into my semester, I arrived at my first audition to take voice lessons at a conservatory. I had a certain expectation for how the audition would be set up and what lessons would look like: there would be a piano; there would be a classroom or studio space; there would be a voice teacher at the piano or an accompanist; they would use [what I had been taught was] “standard” repertoire. I also assumed that it would not be a problem that I was only going to be there for 6 months. These assumptions and expectations quickly disappeared after not recognizing the set up inside the audition: no piano; a huge, crowded room inside of a palace-like space; no recognizable repertoire. Before I sang one note, I was asked to leave the audition. The conservatory model in Valparaíso required years of study with the same teacher, and I was hoping to study for a few months. Looking back on that experience now, I did not speak the musical and cultural language fluently and had not considered that cultural differences could extend to something like voice lessons.

This oversight sparked my curiosity: What are voice lessons like in other places? What do other people experience in solo singing lessons? Why do people sing?

The participants in this study shared their experiences in studying and teaching voice in different countries and cultures. Paola is a singer from Chile; Agnus is a singer who lived in Italy for 8-10 years and took voice lessons; Kerby is a singer from the US who studied abroad in Italy for a semester and took voice lessons; Catherine teaches and performs in the US and grew up singing in Ontario, CA; and Daniel is from and teaches in Ontario, CA and has studied/taught in Montreal and Switzerland. I asked what led them to want to study or teach singing, the logistical set-up of their voice lessons, what sort of repertoire/genres do they sing or assign to students, and lastly, what is important to them about singing. It is important to note that each individual person is not meant to represent the experience of an entire country or culture, but rather to serve as a tool in comparing individual experiences throughout the world and to aid in exploring the threads that connect us.

### **Experiences singing in Chile**

Paola is a Chilean singer from outside of Santiago. She studies voice in her university and through chorus. When I asked her why she chooses to sing, she told me that she has always loved music. Although she plays the guitar and the ukulele, she loves to sing the most because of the text and poetry. As singers, we have the luxury, responsibility, and privilege of communicating with text. This connection to the text that Paola expressed is not unique; other vocalists whom I interviewed shared this experience as well.



Paola's lessons take place in a group setting. The teacher instructs from the piano, and they are in a large recital hall space. Students typically sing art and folk songs in Spanish and sometimes English. Paola's favorite songs to sing are folk songs in Spanish. One reason for this could be that she is able to connect with the songs on a deeper level because it is her native language.

The last question I asked was, "What is important to you about singing? Why is it important to you that you sing?" This is what she said:

*[Translated, Original: Spanish] "For me singing is very, very important. I feel that music in general is for everyone. And I feel that it is part of my life because it is very powerful and strong. One connects with very profound things when one relates the song, the melody, and the lyrics with their life experiences. For me, it is a liberation. It is part of me."*

Paola touches on the idea that singing is something available for everyone and that she feels embodied when singing. These are observations that I found in other interviews as well.

### **Experiences singing in Canada and Europe**

Daniel is a countertenor who sings all over the world. It was natural for him to study music and teach voice because he grew up in a musical family. As both a performer and teacher, Daniel offers another perspective to this topic. When he meets a new voice student for the first time, the first lesson is often mostly talking: getting to know what their musical and non-musical interests are and why they are taking lessons. He said that he tries to not ask too much in the first lesson because it is important that they have a chance to sing. He chooses repertoire using the student's interests and experiences for guidance and he focuses on singing in languages that they speak so that they have a solid understanding of the meaning of the piece. This is one of the connections he shares with Paola, who expressed her preference for singing in her native language.

Daniel also has education and teaching experience in Europe because he studied in Switzerland and has performed in several countries. Curious about the differences he experienced, I asked about the contrasts between North American voice lessons and singing in Europe. He said his main observation was the fundamental understanding that the European singers have of the music from Europe. The example he gave was hearing Mahler's Fifth Symphony in Germany performed by German singers. He described it as an emotionally transformative experience because the singers were able to dig deeper into the meaning of the music due to stronger cultural connections with the music and the text. The relation that can be made when there is a deep understanding of the culture and language of a piece is a reoccurring theme in these interviews.

I asked Daniel why he teaches singing and why his singing is important to him. His response is as follows:

*“I really think that we want to explore a really safe and life-affirming teaching... I really mean the pedagogy: literally how we think of vocal technique and repertoire learning. I think all these things can support health. I think we can just go ahead and heal the world.”*

Similar to Paola, Daniel touches on his experience of singing being a universal sensation. His answer varies as he explores this observation through the lens of teaching vocal technique and repertoire. Daniel equates singing to supporting health which has been explored in other studies as well.

I also interviewed my voice teacher and research mentor, Dr. Catherine Gardner, about her experience in teaching music in the United States in comparison to her experience growing up singing in Ontario, Canada. Catherine was in many choirs and took piano lessons when she was younger. In university she focused on vocal performance, but when she started teaching private lessons after graduation, she realized that she really loved it. She said that she learned things about her own voice while teaching others. When I asked about how she chooses repertoire, she told me about the graded system of music in Canada called the Royal Conservatory of Music. Students progress through the books and each book has repertoire picked out by voice teachers that are appropriate for each level. This is a resource that comes from voice teachers who have a better awareness for the needs and ability levels of voice students. Catherine also emphasized the importance of choosing repertoire that is diverse and represents composers of color, LGBTQIA+ composers, and minorities in traditional western music.

Her response to the final question about the importance of singing resonated with much of what had been touched on in other interviews while adding some new ideas as well:

*“For me as a person, the awareness of my experience being a human in my body I think is something that singing has brought me that I don’t know if I would have found if I was not a singer: How do I feel? Am I breathing? How do I feel about this poetry? How do I want to express it? Just being in touch with my feelings and my physical body. I think we all can benefit from being aware of who we are in our bodies. But then I also think we get the privilege of expressing beautiful poetry, text, and a whole range of feelings to audiences or whoever is listening to us who maybe do not have the same tools to express that but have all those feelings. It feels good as a singer to say out loud these words that express the human experience and then also to know that the audience is taking that in and helping them process being a human in the world.”*

Catherine, similarly to Paola, talks about the experience of feeling embodied through singing because it is a physical experience. She also expresses how important it is to communicate the poetry and text through song.

### **Experiences singing in the United States and Italy**

My last two interviews were with Kerby and Agnus. Kerby is a voice teacher in the US who studied for a few months in Italy during her undergraduate degree with an Italian voice teacher. Kerby described her voice lessons as taking place in the school where they lived and took their other classes. One distinct difference she noticed in her Italian

lessons in comparison to her lessons in the US was the schedule. Her voice lessons in the US always began and ended on time whereas in Italy, “things took the time they took.” If they were at a stopping point early, the lesson ended earlier, if they needed more time, they took more time. The biggest take away she learned from those lessons (that she still incorporates into her singing and teaching) is the emphasis on style and the importance of the story in the song that her Italian teachers taught. During her time in Italy, she mostly sang in Italian in order to gain a deeper understanding of Italian music and culture. Kerby discussed the influences of a larger culture on her singing experience. This may be because she is thinking more about the differences and factors that impact those experiences, coming from a different culture and frame of reference.

I asked Kerby about why she sings, and she shared:

*“One of the biggest reasons I love singing right now in my life...is because I feel like it really connects me to my body. I feel very mindful and embodied when I am singing. I’ve always been really attracted to the balance of science and art that is singing... the balance of technique and thinking and logic with the endgame of music which is to make meaningful artistic music. I also feel this duty to keep it alive...with online media it becomes a little bit more difficult to consume art that is meant to be experienced live with bodies in the room. I feel very drawn to this idea of staying in the art so that it doesn’t die, and some people are reminded that it’s awesome and that it’s worth the ticket price and the communal experience.”*

Similar to Catherine and Paola, Kerby is impacted by the physicality and the experience she has in her body as she sings. She also presents the experience of being on the receiving end of a live performance and how important it is to her as a performer and audience member.

The last participant, Agnus, studied in Italy under different circumstances than Kerby, however, there were a lot of similarities between their stories. Agnus went to Italy to study Italian and took lessons in Italian to practice her language skills and vocal technique. She focused on the old Italian art songs because she wanted to learn them the “Italian way.” When I asked her about what she meant by the “Italian way,” she gave an answer that was similar to Kerby’s: singing the song with style and with a true understanding of what the text means. She studied with three different voice teachers while she was in Italy, travelling back and forth over a period of 8-10 years.

For Agnus, these are the important elements of singing:

*“The communication part [is important]. I think the words and how to get the meaning across, I mean the music of course is important too, but the words are so very important. I think that comes across with the Italian teachers, they want those words to come out and the sense of the song. I guess it’s a communication thing.”*

Her response focused on the ability to communicate the feeling and meaning behind the text expressively, similar to Catherine’s response.

## Conclusion

This study highlights the similarities and differences found in five individual singing experiences around the globe. Each participant described the importance of feeling fully embodied while singing. Many observed the responsibility and privilege of expressing poetry and its meaning through their voice and music. Some participants described the value of singing in their native languages while others preferred to sing in a diverse selection of languages. Some participants found value in having a deep understanding of the text and being able to communicate effectively due to their familiarity with the language. They also elaborated on the differences in structure and logistics of the lesson, including group versus individual lessons, emphasis on different repertoire and techniques, and the types of pedagogy used.

Personal perspectives of bodily autonomy and awareness of self through the experiences of singing and teaching singing is a subject that deserves further exploration. There have been many studies done about the scientific and neurological aspects of singing and few about the emotions and sensations felt while singing. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of singers' experiences performing, studying, and teaching in their body and in the world.

An expansion of this study could include voices and perspective from other parts of the world including but not limited to Asia, Africa, Australia, Central and Eastern Europe, and other parts of Latin America. Although there were differences in the participants' experiences in learning and teaching singing in their respective cultures, much of the structure and repertoire remained similar to the western music tradition that has integrated into much of the world due to factors such as colonization (Ingle, 2017). This research opens further questions about the value of singing in other languages, the meaning that can get lost in the translation and presentation of songs, and how history has affected the value and use of singing around the world.

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### Author Notes

**Marguerite Olivia Hemedinger** earned a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and a Bachelor of Arts in Hispanic Studies from East Carolina University in North Carolina, United States of America. Hemedinger presented the research titled *Singing: A Human Connection* at the 2022 Research and Creative Achievement Week conference at East Carolina University and at the 2022 Global Issues Conference.

## **Cultural Appropriation and Cancel Culture: A Global Survey**

Chiamaka Ezedimbu, Dr. Emeka Agba, Prof. Femi Olufunmilade

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### **Abstract**

A cultural practice that might be once unique to a particular set of people can go global. In a globalizing world, cultural diffusion has become a widespread phenomenon. This global dispersal has led to clash of cultures, giving rise to defenders - people who want to defend their culture from outsiders they view as threats i.e. outsiders with no plans to give credit to origins of the borrowed culture. This leads us to the concept of 'appropriation', which, literally, means to take something and adapt it for use in another context. This sets the background for the emergence of the concept of 'cultural appropriation'. While cultural appropriation may be novel in theory, it is not so in praxis. It can be seen in the things that constitute our day to day life. This is unlike the shallowness of the definition that most people, especially active social media users, use. Recently, it is mostly used in accusation, and is perceived as malicious intent, even in cases where none is intended. The misinterpretation of cultural appropriation is being used as an outlet for online jungle justice, 'cancel culture'. A situation where people take law into their hands and backlash individual or group that say or perform actions that are deemed unacceptable. This paper scrutinizes the misuse of cultural appropriation as a concept and how it causes more cases of cancel culture. This study finds that cancel culture is heightened with the increased misuse of the concept cultural appropriation online and tries to proffer solution to this rising phenomena.

*Key words: global, culture, appropriation*

### **Introduction**

Various scholars have discussed the concepts of cultural appropriation and cancel culture, but as different topics. Cultural appropriation has been discussed as hypersensitivity, traced to capitalism as its root, even invalidated by some scholars under claims of globalization. Some even discussed how it is a good thing and people cannot thrive without it, because it has acted as the leverage upon which civilization grew. Alanna (2019) discusses the root of appropriation as failure to give credit (profit) to the black creator, whereas the white appropriator gets it all, the money, the fame and credits. She talks about the inevitability of appropriation and that cultures will interact 'by choice or by force', and acts of appropriation are mostly not deliberate. Since the beginning of time, appropriation has been present and acted as key to growth of civilization. Her work acts as a compass of clarity to fully understand the concept of cultural appropriation and how there is more than meets the eye. On the other hand, cancel culture keeps thriving according to Dershowitz (2020) due to moral clarity. This is a concept that is built on the theory that 'America is systematically racist, and a white-supremacist project', so there is no other side of the narrative. This idea makes it clear that there is only one way to see things and anyone who disagrees is racist, morally inferior and politically incorrect. Today, this theory has shifted and now it includes all races, with racial minority pointing against the majority. His work explains how 'an American problem' has shifted to a wider scope, and now is spreading at a global pace. Advocates are rising irrespective of the country, to defend their 'truth', thus feeding



extremists. Kovalik (2021) explained how people fail to acknowledge that we are all flawed, and despite it, still deserve love. There is no need to destroy all they have built in a moment, because of allegations, which even when cleared, they are unable to rise from. The importance he placed on free speech and expression is not overstated and should be closely examined. Ridding people of these rights is one of the consequences of cancel culture, although its advocates do not consider it.

The research paper will essentially talk about increase of cancelling people online linked with defense of the wrong concept of cultural appropriation, which is embroiled in cultural discrimination. This is an exaggerated form that acts as an anger outlet and takes away the rights of the recipient. People tend to see cultural appropriation in every situation and retaliate with cancelling the person with the problematic behavior. This behavior has gone too far and left netizens (internet users) threading carefully, in order to avoid being cancelled, leaving them with restricted freedom to practice their rights of free speech, expression, and pursuit of beauty.

### **Cultural Appropriation**

To properly look at this growing social phenomenon, it is only right that we have an understanding of the concepts, starting with culture. According to Oxford Dictionary, culture can be defined as the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society. It is a particular way of life, an expression of a particular way of life (Storey, 2018). This is an identifying factor of a group of people, for example the Igbo culture. This is the way of life that is used to identify the Igbo people from Eastern Nigeria, in Africa. Culture covers anything from religion, food, language, clothing and accessories, down to behavior, how we greet elders, our perception of right or wrong, among others. Now to cultural appropriation. Appropriation is not a new word. It means to take something and find use for it in another context. This word, appropriation, has mostly been used to describe the use of money. That is, taking something from somewhere to find use for it elsewhere. So with this prior understanding of culture and appropriation, putting the two words together, cultural appropriation, simply put, would mean the adoption of customs, ideas and other elements of one cultural group by another. Cultural appropriation is found everywhere; in food, dressing, writing, artworks, etc. It is important to know that these acts of appropriation are usually not intentional. It most often becomes a touchy topic when the culture appropriated is that of indigenous people or racial minority. Cultural appropriation is considered harmful when: there is a violation of property right (theft), and attack on the viability or identity of cultures or their members. Profit made off the culture in question, especially when none of the profit is remitted to the insider (member of the culture) creator, is a reason for profound offense. Even without profit in the question, an attack on the members of the culture, or the culture itself, that is in form of mockery or wrong representation, is considered an attack on one's identity and is also a reason for offense.

### **Misconception of Cultural Appropriation**

Any teen and young adult conversant with the internet will find that this is not a new term. As these words are found on most pages, on websites, in the comment sections, and elsewhere. Cultural appropriation has become so common a word on the internet, that its meaning today has become twisted and vague. It has shifted from its original

meaning of bracketing racial minority exploitation to defining anything people do that is not culturally associated with them. The twisted definition of cultural appropriation that most people use, has created an outlet for cultural racism and discrimination. This outlet is embodied in cancel culture. Though cultural appropriation is not the only cause, it is becoming a fast rising reason for ‘cancelling’ people online. It is a reason of concern because people who hide under the umbrella of cultural appropriation, most times, do not fully understand the concept. They just criticize anyone that does anything that is seen as not locally associated with them, and they forget this is inevitable because of globalization. It is important to bring to the fore, that civilization and globalization we have today is a product of cultural appropriation. This concept may sometimes be bracketed as cultural exchange, cultural assimilation or cultural diffusion. But in all it simply means that culture is fluid. Culture moves, and this movement is the reason we have the alphabets, mathematics, the calendar, and so many things as we know them today. Cultures change and this change allows us to embrace each other as one humanity. Cancel culture advocates do not see or consider this aspect, due to the fact that a good percentage of them are ignorant of the concept of cultural appropriation and are just on the bandwagon train. Globalization has moved cultures around on a global scale. Cultural diffusion is seen in our everyday life. This could be something as simple as craving Chinese food accepted in your country when you’ve never been to China and so have no idea of the techniques and ingredients used, hanging up an African dream catcher without knowing it, just because you thought it looked pretty, learning French and imitating the accent with no plans to travel to France, etc. These are examples of cultural appropriation that are overlooked. Appreciation is not considered an option and blind backlash is given to an innocent or a victim of exaggeration. It has become the norm of cancel police to consider any use of anything from another culture problematic. Cancelling people because others are too, pointing fingers and making victims of people appreciating other cultures is in a sense a threat to globalization. Because all these accusations will eventually limit cultural spread and create a stagnant society, where different cultures and races are enclosed in their own bracket.

### **Who is Considered Appropriating?**

After looking at misconceptions of cultural appropriation, it is normal for questions like who exactly is appropriating, to arise. This section will be looked at from two points; who the internet think is appropriating and who is really appropriating.

#### *Who the internet think is appropriating?*

The internet, made up of misguided people, are quick to point fingers, call out and cancel any person involving themselves in any other culture outside their cultural bracket. They are quick to pick offence about the subject, and project their feelings as being hurt. It is important to note that ‘it is common for people to frame their objections to cultural appropriation in terms of offense.’ (Young & Brunk , 2012. p. 5). This is usually the case, as no profound harm or offence is caused but cancel police pick up the case and portray it in terms of offense, as if they are looking for a reason to be offended. They then advocate that others should be offended too, with their preaching. In the end people act offended so they are not left out and cancel the victim without full understanding.

### *Who is really appropriating?*

This paper aims to correct the misuse of the word cultural appropriation, which does not invalidate the fact that indeed cultural appropriation in its rightful sense does exist. It is important to understand when exactly an outsider (a non-member of a culture) is appropriating, and when the outsider is appreciating. What constitutes cultural appropriation is mostly profit made either in cash or kind, which is acknowledgement. To be sure someone is appropriating there are certain important questions to be asked. Is this person making a profit of this culture? Is this person making a caricature or a stereotypical image of this culture? Is this person claiming to be an expert on the culture and making false claims? These are important questions to be asked before pointing out a person as an appropriator and cancelling the person. Outsiders having the wrong representation of the culture. The representation of, against its misrepresentation (Brunk & Young, 2012, p. 100), because it is general knowledge that outsiders do not have the knowhow to decide if what have been appropriated is authentic. When an outsider is engaged in portraying a caricature image of another's culture, this is a reason for profound offense, because it is a direct attack on a person's identity, when an outsider sheds light on a culture in a bad and stereotypical manner. People who engage in these activities, making a profit of or mocking a culture, are the true appropriators whose activities are embedded in a place of exploitation.

### **Cancel Culture**

Cancel culture refers to the mass backlash to individuals that take actions deemed unfit by the public (Ethantofyu, 2021), usually on social media. Cancel culture is a fairly new term, though recently scholars have been tracing its use in past times. The tide of cancelling people is becoming terrifying on social media, as anyone can be cancelled even by the slightest allegation. Even in cases where cancelled persons are able to prove innocent, if given the chance (which is rarely), the consequences of being cancelled stay with them for a long time. They are left handicapped and unable to defend themselves. In this era of cancel culture, public opinion is becoming more important than the truth. Accusation is considered conviction. An example of this can be seen during a discussion once held with a friend who made a statement that goes thus; 'people start to think and talk'. This statement explains how speculations are made on accusations without any verification. Such speculations spread and in turn feed cancel culture. It will not be denied that the advocates of cancel culture are well meaning, it is just clear they lack understanding, and this lack causes extremism. In this era where public opinion has an elevated place, especially via social media as Dershowitz says 'the truth can't even find its shoes'. It has become hard to sort the right from the bundle of wrongs. Although cancel culture has been linked with other concepts such as political correctness, moral clarity, and others (Dershowitz, 2020), understanding how it is related to cultural appropriation is also crucial. This generation of highly culturally sensitive people have made this relation prominent. Cases of cancelling have been on the rise because of cultural appropriation, where in most cases, the reason pointed out as cultural appropriation is usually very trivial, and not even cultural appropriation in its rightful sense. Cancel culture is an enemy to free speech as its advocates 'want what they want and they want it now' (Dershowitz 2020). To get to their goal they will ignore due process and leave the recipient with no say, because public opinion is on their side. Leaving such unfortunate person with no rights

whatsoever to express themselves. These cancel culture advocates are very vocal about free speech and use it as the basis of their claims to cancel people, while forgetting they are stripping people of the same rights of free speech, when they give them no room for explanation because they are blinded by their “truths”. A simple accusation is enough to get a person cancelled. The advocates of cancel culture are impatient, so there is seldom need for veracity, because they believe accusation is conviction. This statement by Alarilla (2021), ‘If you think about it, cancel culture is really an American thing that’s being spread like a virus all over the world via social media’, is not wrong. Starting out as a problem of the United States because of the diverse nature of the country, the internet has acted as medium and spread it to the rest of the world. This spread is causing problems to these cancelled people, especially the innocent of the lot.

### **Consequences of Cancel Culture**

Discrimination and ostracism is on the rise because of cancel culture which is closely linked with cultural appropriation. Thus, it is quickly becoming another form of cyberbullying. An example of cancel culture can be seen in the case of Shay Mitchell, the 34 year old *Pretty Little Liars*’s actress, who was called out for cultural appropriation after she posted on Tiktok (a social media platform) the outfits for her photo shoot that had her sporting braids. The comment section of the video was filled with hateful comments, where people told her to remove it and other hurtful words were hauled her way. People failed to see that she was appreciating the look and she looked great, all they saw was she is Canadian and braids is not Canadian, so she should not be wearing braids. She was called out and not allowed to express herself. Another example can be seen when Korean singer, Lisa, wore braids for her song ‘Money’. She had to tender an apology, an apology for expressing herself. Even the black community online came forward to express that they did not find it offensive (Alarilla, 2021), but of course were shut up with claims that they do not speak for everybody. Other cases abound on the internet. These barrage of hate comments, and sometimes threats, are cases of cyber bullying that those cancelled face. Online jungle justice is carried out against them. Discrimination is also one among the consequences cancelled persons face. They are barred from attending events, boycotted when their works are released, lose fan following, and face many other acts of discrimination. Cancelled people lose their rights to due process, especially the innocent. They are not given the space to prove innocent after these accusations are rendered. People out of fear of being cancelled hide and refrain from saying and doing anything that might cause them to be cancelled. Racism is another effect cancelling is having, especially in its relation with cultural appropriation. Racist persons from minority cultures can use this as an outlet for their racist moves. Lastly, cancel culture due to cultural appropriation is narrowing the boundaries of individuality because of fear/threat of backlash.

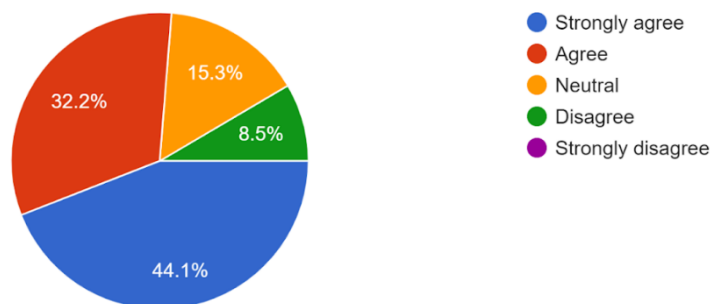
### **Statistics**

A total of sixty people from different parts of the world responded to the online survey. Respondents were ten to fourteen at 3.3, fifteen to nineteen at 31.7%, twenty to twenty-four at 50%, twenty-five to twenty-nine at 13.3%, and thirty and above at 1.7%. The respondents are active social media users. 33.3% of the respondent population did not

know about cultural appropriation, and 45% did not know about cancel culture, prior to the survey.

Cancel culture can be toxic.

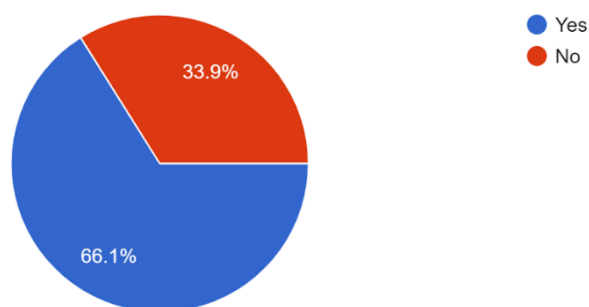
59 responses



Out of 60 respondents, 59 responded to the question of if cancel culture can be toxic. 26 persons representing 44.1% of those that responded strongly agreed that this is the case with cancel culture, and 19 persons at 32.2% agreed. This number goes to show that the good cancel culture advocates claim to do is just counterproductive and in reality creates more problems than it solves. Cancel culture in actuality is mostly toxic, because its advocates tell people the reason why they should cancel someone and not give them room to judge for themselves if that act of cancelling is wholly necessary.

Do you think cancel culture is a form of bullying?

56 responses



Going forward, the numbers for the question if cancel culture is a form of cyberbullying had 37 persons affirming to this. Cancel culture has become an outlet for people to victimize others, victims. Cancelling is already cyberbullying in a sense, but once it is paired with cultural appropriation, it skyrockets. Cancelled persons are not allowed the opportunity to clear up the situation and are just shut out.

### Other Findings

6.8% opined that cultural appropriation affected their culture and made them upset. 28.8% opined that it affected their culture, but it was not considered a big deal. 23.7% opined that it did not affect their culture, but understood the concept, thus are upset by it. 40.7% opined that it did not affect their culture, and they do not think it is a big deal.

26.7% have a personal experience regarding cultural appropriation, 73.3% do not.

31.9% have cancelled someone, 68.3% have not. 22% of the number that have, made this choice influenced by social media.

12.3% lied about cancelling someone, and kept following the online persona of the cancelled person.

16.1% strongly agreed that cancel culture is beneficial for checking people's behavior, 19.6% agreed, 33.9% were neutral, 21.4% disagreed, and 8.9% strongly disagreed.

5.3% strongly agreed that cancel culture brings about beneficial effects, 21.1% agreed, 43.9% were neutral, 14% disagreed, and 15.8% strongly disagreed.

The most picked reason for cancel culture was cultural appropriation, with bandwagon activity as a close second.

## **Conclusion**

This paper is another addition to what other scholars, critics, and activists of free speech and cultural diffusion in globalization have started. Their work aimed to make people understand that cultural spread is inevitable, and should not just be considered cultural appropriation, because since the onset it has been the foundation of civilization. This is why there is a need to point out and cure this cancer called cancel culture. The number of innocent victims of cancel culture is on the rise, because of the misused concept of cultural appropriation. As a problem most prominent on the internet, which is a hub that connects the whole world, it is important that people be aware of the consequences. It is breeding an age of silence online where people only respond to bandwagon activity and shy away from voicing and expressing their individuality due to fear of being cancelled, a situation that brings whatever hard work of cancelled individual in the past to come crashing down and become invalid. The cankerworm of misused concept of cultural appropriation and the increase in cancel culture advocates will only leave room for the passing on to the oncoming generation of social media users wrong internet etiquette. It is time for us to rise and speak against the extremism of cancel culture. Some people are oblivious to the consequences of their actions and just follow the tide of bandwagonism. Powerful public opinion has seen the trend of cancel culture becoming more than a phase and showing potentials for continuity. This makes it important that this problem be explored and solutions proffered. If not, what would be left is an intolerant society caused by cancelling.

## **Recommendations**

Enlightenment talks have not shown much of a difference; instead, other countries outside the United States have joined the spread of cancel culture as they nitpick, in



the bid to find a cultural appropriator. This method has proved unfruitful because most people are so fixated on the past, they forget the current generation is innocent of the allegations thrown their way. But little result should not stop us from speaking on people's excesses. We should rise to challenge these advocates of cancel culture, who wield their free speech as a weapon against others. A little can go a long way, so this paper acts as one of many wakeup calls that wishes to draw people's attention to the vice of our generation. The exposure is important to make people understand the difference between cultural appropriation and appreciation. That cultural diffusion as the foundation of civilization should not be casually considered cultural appropriation. Using cancelling as a weapon wielded against even the innocent is simply wrong, therefore it should be called out. This is why this paper is joining the many voices of this generation, in our fight to cut down these excesses.

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## Hospital Waste Management and the Associated Hazards

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### Abstract

Generating waste from hospitals poses danger for public health and the environment around the world such as nosocomial infection, Covid-19, toxic and hazardous waste. the air pollution caused by burning waste at insufficiently high temperatures risks for affecting communities by the release of carcinogens. By 2030, the United Nations through the UNSDGs program projects to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination in which hospital waste management plays an important role. Waste management in hospital around the world still a big challenge which needs a real effort for an efficient improvement. The aim of our study carried out over two months has targeted the general diagnostic of waste management in a local hospital at Tlemcen city (central laboratory, medical-surgical emergency and catering service). For that we have used a questionnaire that considers the infectious waste management and household waste, based on 162 questions extracted from a professional manual and focusing on Algerian regulation and international standards. After analyzing the causes of each nonconformity by cause-and-effect method and estimating their criticality, in fact, the obtained results have shown that the evaluation rate of the waste management in compliance with our questionnaire at the central laboratory is about 21%, at the medical-surgical emergencies about 16%, then for the catering service estimated to 29%. That led us to conclude that despite the deployed efforts by the hospital, the waste management according to the adopted managerial standards and regulation should be reviewed. Finally, we finished our study with improvement recommendations to resolve the observed noncompliances.

*Keywords:* hospital, waste management, hazards

### 1. Introduction

Healthcare activities generate an increasing quantity of waste; thus, they should be treated with specific restrictions linked in particular to their infectious nature. Regarding the Sustainable Development Goal and its target 3.9 (“Reduce the amount of deaths produced by dangerous chemicals and the pollution of the air, water and soil”), we came to point out that medical waste is one of the most serious public health concerns of the 21st Century (UN, 2022). The management of this waste is part of the policy of continuous improvement of the quality and safety of the healthcare. It also contributes to preventing adverse events related to the activities of health establishments, in particular the prevention of nosocomial infections (Binder et al, 2009).

Hospitals are responsible for their produced wastes. They must ensure that the handling, treatment and disposal of their waste will have no harmful consequences on health or the environment. For this, rigorous management of all waste from health care activities is essential to avoid accidents likely to occur throughout the disposal chain and to ensure the protection of the environment (ICRC, 2011 and ISO 14001).

According to the World Health Organization, inadequate management of healthcare waste can lead to serious illnesses for healthcare workers, waste disposal staff, patients and the general population. The most significant risk from infectious waste is related to the risk of accidental needlestick injuries, which can cause hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV infection. A considerable number of other diseases can, however, be transmitted by contact with infectious waste from health care activities (WHO, 2005).

The aim of our study within the Hospital of Tlemcen concerns the central laboratory, medical-surgical emergencies and catering, to make a general diagnosis of the current system for managing solid infectious risk health care waste, to detect points for improvement, to analyze the causes and finally to propose recommendations and solutions. The diagnosis is based on a questionnaire taken from Algerian regulations, the international standard ISO 14001 and the observations of experts such as the medical waste management manual of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC,2011).

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Setting and sample size

Our diagnosis was carried out within Tidjani Damerdji University Hospital of Tlemcen among three services: the central laboratory, medical-surgical emergency, and catering. The targeted hospital is a non-profit public higher-education institution located in the city of Tlemcen (population range of 140.000 inhabitants in 2008), It insures many medical treatments and surgeries for patients. This hospital has a total of 2,536 employees. The tool used in our study is a set of 162 questions extracted from the Algerian regulations and the observations of the expert's manuals and guides (ICRC 2011). Questions constitute rules to respect throughout all the stages of the management system of medical waste and household waste. To calculate the estimated rate of the total compliance for the total rules, we attribute some used vocabulary herein below for our scale formula:

$$\text{Total compliance rate (\%)} = \frac{[\text{instruction (\% oral + \% written)} + \% \text{ achievement} + \% \text{ control}]}{4}$$

4

### 2.2. Vocabulary

Herein below are some definitions and vocabulary used for our methodology to estimate the rate of the conformity or compliance regarding the rules.

- *Rule*: Questions of respect related to the management of hospital waste and/or technical system for preventing risks according to the Algerian regulation and the international standards and guides (ISO14001 and ICRC, 2011).
- *Instruction*: Measures taken by the hospital for eliminating and preventing waste risks and hazards. It could be communicated in the workplace orally or displayed as a written document.
- *Oral instruction*: Any type of waste management awareness, information, or training, with proof of participation (attendance sheets, training certificate, awareness monitoring register, etc.)

- *Written instruction*: Any written waste management instruction (e.g. written procedure, working method in document or software format, etc.)
- *Realization*: It is the execution of spoken and written instructions in the workplace.
- *Control or monitoring*: This is the monitoring of the implementation of oral and written instructions in the workplace, as well as the subsequent actions for the remedy of failures (ISO 14001, 2015).
- *Compliant (C)*: Corresponds to 60-100%, if the observed situation is fully in compliance with the rule.
- *Noncompliant (NC)*: Corresponds to less than 60 %, if the observed situation is not in compliance with the rule.
- *Not applicable (NA)*: If the observed situation is not relevant to the rule (ISO 14001, 2015).

### 3. Results

Estimated rates based on the diagnosis of the situation of the hospital waste management regarding the rules represented by the total of 162 questions are shown in table 1 below:

*Table 1.* Some questions and their evaluations of the compliance rates used among the diagnosis

Place : Central laboratory						
Question (Rule)	Diagnosis of the situation				Total %	Conformity
	Instruction		Realization	Monitoring and correction		
	Oral	Writing				
Is the waste collected in rigid containers, yellow in color and resistant to perforation?	75%	75%	90%	11%	60%	C
Do the containers bear the mention of the nature of the waste?	80%	90%	95%	5%	68%	C
Are workers wearing gloves ?	80%	80%	80%	1%	60%	C
Are the containers marked by the mention of the nature of the	80%	90%	95%	5%	68%	C



waste in an easily readable way?						
Is waste from infectious care activities incinerated?	95%	95%	95%	10%	74%	C
Does the facility have an incinerator?	95%	95%	95%	10%	74%	C
<b>Rules regarding the protection measures</b>						
Face protection – visor-Eye protection – goggles protection ?	80%	50%	80%	25%	59%	C
Respiratory protection – masks?	80%	50%	80%	25%	59%	C
Are personal hygiene measures respected? (Hand washing before and after each activity)	95%	95%	95%	25%	78%	C
Is the waste collected in holders or containers equipped with yellow plastic bags?	60%	85%	60%	1%	52%	NC
Is there a special burial pit designed on site? (Cover waste with lime)	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	NC
Choice of products generating less	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	NC

waste, less packing?							
Are the personnel in charge of pre-collection informed of the risks involved in handling waste?	10%	1%	50%	5%	17%	NC	

C: compliant ; CN: Noncompliant

*Laboratory services.*

The following graphs present the rate of evaluation of the management of the WHAIR (Waste from health activities with infectious risks) at the central laboratory of the studied hospital. First of all, we note that the sorting of waste (31%) requires improvement of the control or monitoring step which must be reinforced. As to the elimination of the sharp waste, the collection represents only 29% and storage (23%), and in this case the collect and storage system need more appropriate means to improve the situation. As well as the rate of evaluation of activities related to infectious waste, we note that the collection and storage system must be maintained and reinforced by appropriate means. For the treatment, we note a value of 7%. Figure 1 presents the weakest point in the management which requires a thorough revision. With regard to anatomical waste, the means of collection (7%) and storage (4%) show poor control of the situation, and the treatment rate (21%) is still insufficient. To conclude, Figure 2 shows the evaluation rate of the elimination of the WHAIR by the category, and it is revealed that all the values are lower than 50%, which implies to put in place several points of improvement of the situation.

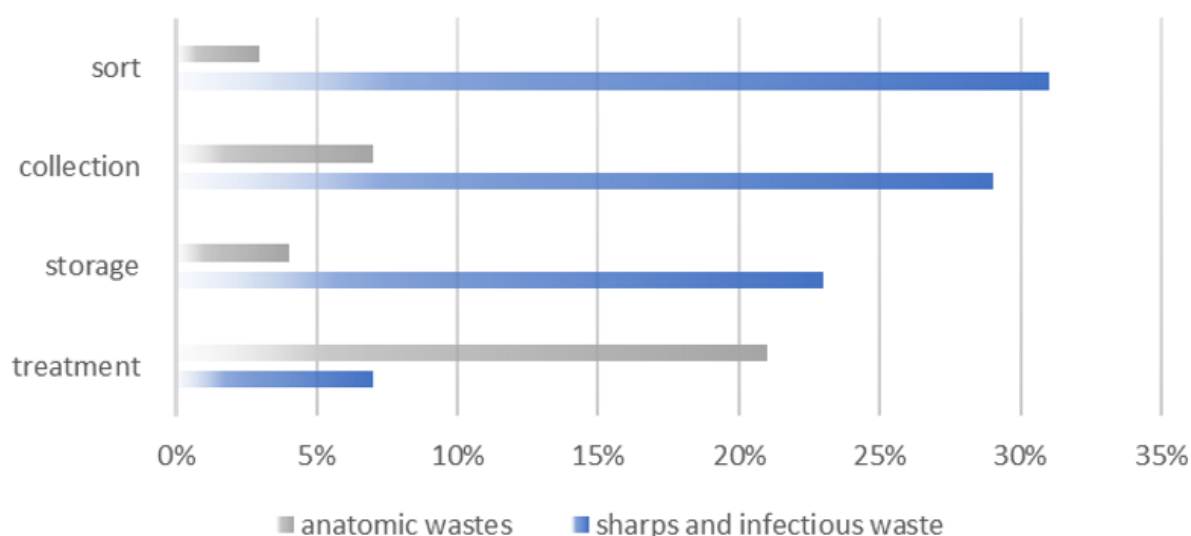


Figure 1. Evaluation rate of anatomic and sharps infectious wastes treatment

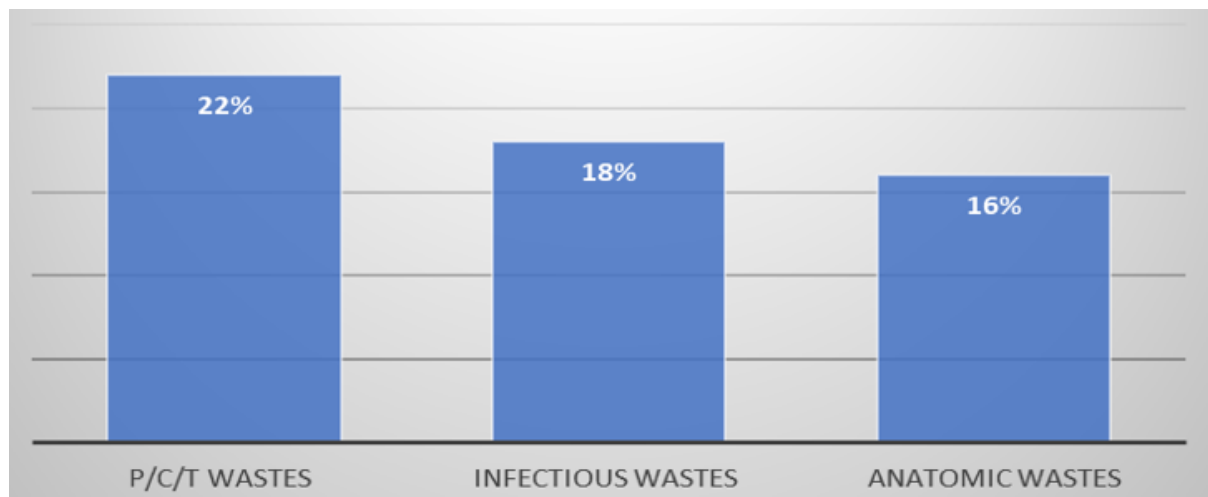


Figure 2. Evaluation of elimination rates of the WHAIR by category

*The medico-surgical emergencies*

In Figure 3, graphs present the rate of evaluation of the management of the WHAIR at the medico-surgical emergencies of the studied hospital. First of all, we note that the sorting of waste (17%) requires support and regular monitoring. For sharp and sharp waste, the collection system (29%) and storage (19%) must be filled by providing the necessary means. Considering the rate of evaluation of infectious waste, we note that the collection and storage system must be maintained and reinforced essentially by the awareness for instructions related to sorting, collection and storage. For the treatment we see a value of 5%; this very low figure presents the weakest point in the management which requires a thorough revision. Concerning anatomical waste, the means of collection (7%) and storage (7%) reveal poor control of the situation, and the treatment rate (39%) is still insufficient, also including an omnipresent deficit in the periodic control of the subcontractor whose ultimate objective is to improve the situation.

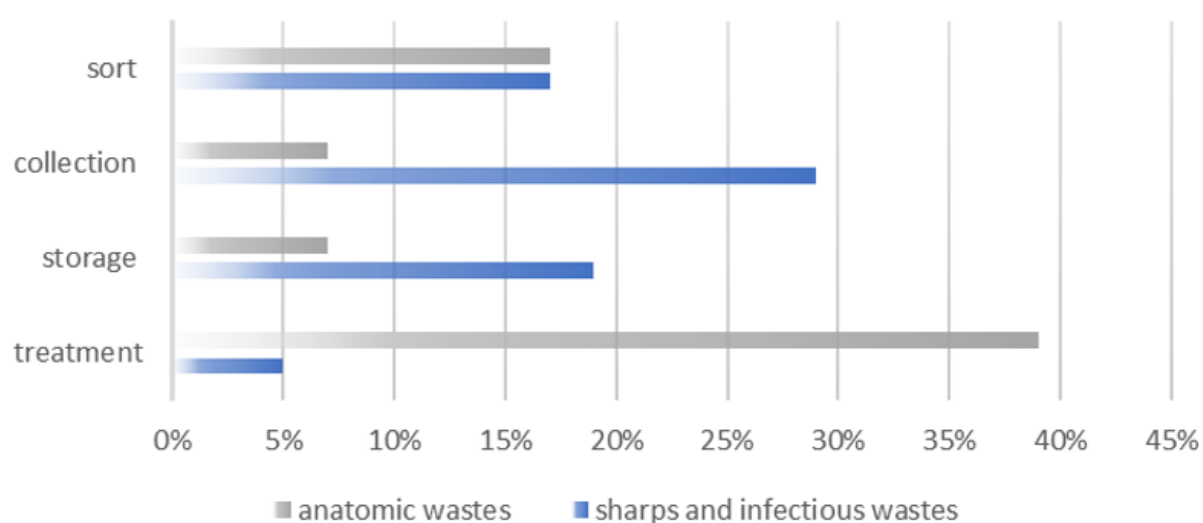


Figure 3. Evaluation rate of anatomic and sharps infectious wastes treatment from the medico-surgical services.

To conclude, Figure 4 shows the overall evaluation rate of the WHAIR management system is less than 50%, which implies putting in place several points to improve the situation. So, in general, we do not see a big difference between the two services, but there are some variations in certain stages of the waste disposal circuits.

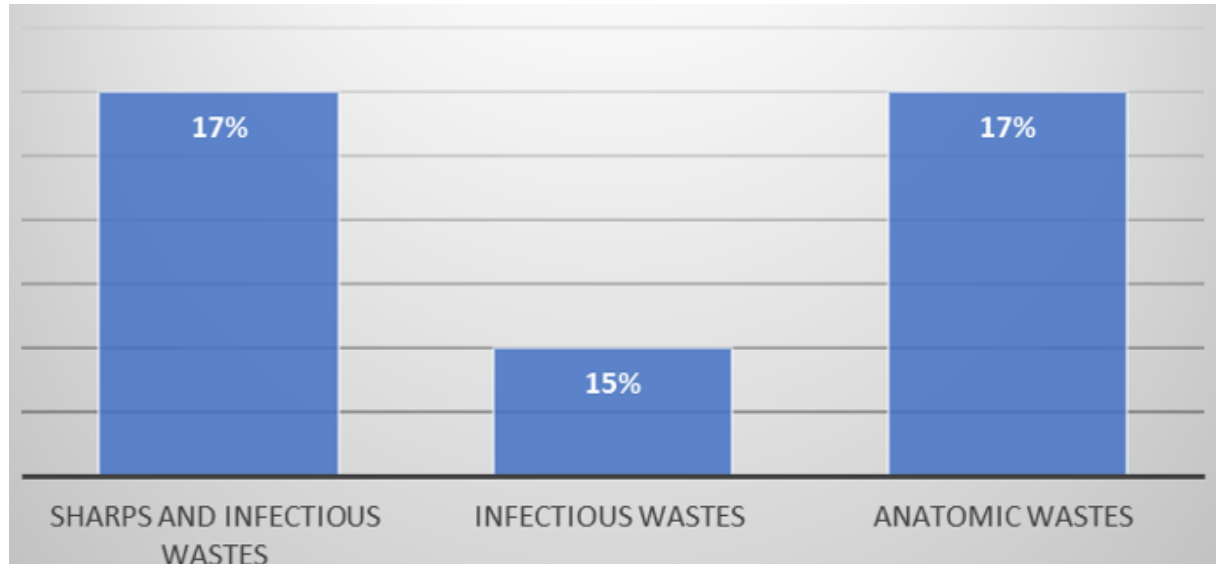


Figure 4. Evaluation of elimination rates of the WHAIR by category from the medico-surgical services.

*Catering service:*

Regarding the catering service, in Figure 5, we can note the inexistence of an efficient sorting of household waste apart from respecting the color code of the pre-collection bags (black) which are collected and transported in the same way as care waste and with the same means.

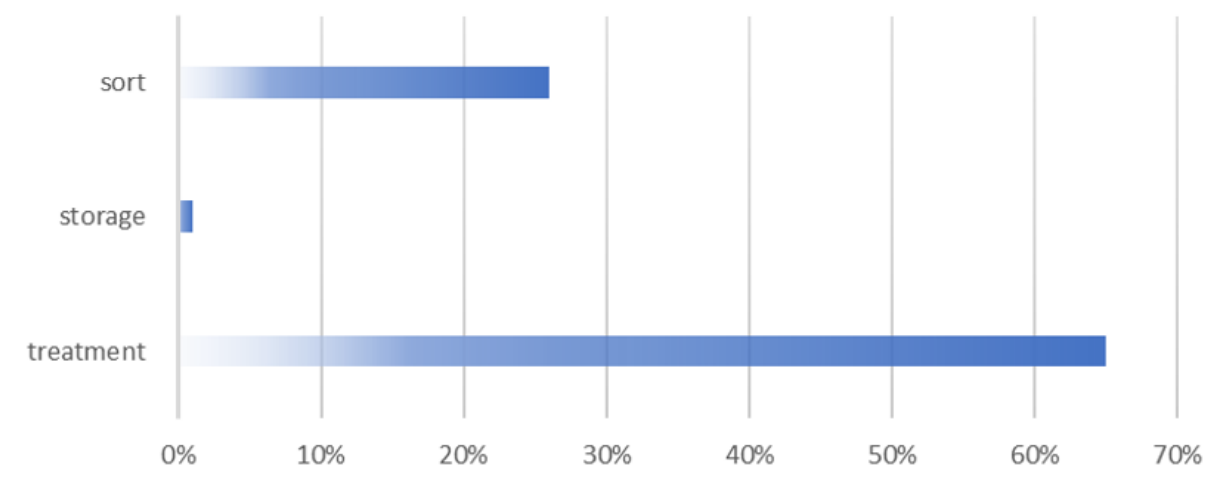


Figure 5. Evaluation of rates of the household wastes treatment.

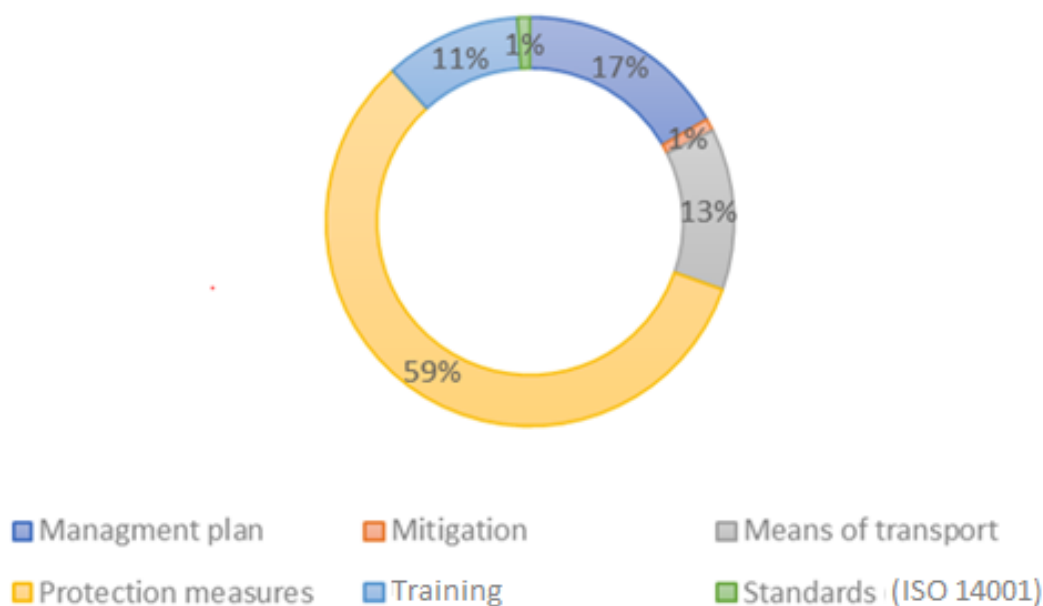


Figure 6. Overall waste management system rates

The graph in Figure 6 presents the overall percentages of the hospital waste management system at the studied hospital. According to these results, we note that only the availability of protective measures is higher than 50%, the development of a management plan (17%) requires planning and decisions to be set in place, the management of the means of transport with a value of (13%) reflects a need for financing and maintenance, and we note that the direction of the hospital must make more effort and provide support in terms of staff training (11%). Finally, we note that the management of waste and the protection of the environment at the hospital need more improvement to be in compliance with ISO 14001 environmental management system standard.

#### 4. Discussion

In our study, we focused on the hospital of Tlemcen as a sample for diagnosis to evaluate the situation vis-à-vis the hospital waste management. Our results demonstrate positive points and negative points related to the waste management.

Firstly, in general, concerning the observed services, our diagnosis showed a weakness related to the sorting of waste; this needs to be more controlled because there is a lack of guidance on sorting and appropriate color codes for waste collection bags as required by the Algerian regulation (J.O n°35; n°77 and 78). Secondly, waste collection is itself influenced by sorting at the base; we have noticed that the collection does not follow the sorting chain because the bags of waste, in general, are mixed arbitrarily. The pre-storage place is not well equipped to satisfy the primary objective of waste treatment, so it is susceptible to the risks of contamination. Regarding household waste, we noted a deficit of sorting household waste. For example, the

waste is mixed (paper and boxes, food, bottle, etc.), only fragile bags are used which risks leaking, liquid discharges are retained with the solid waste in the bags, and sometimes boxes are used to accumulate waste. The pre-storage is close to the service where there is a risk of contamination, the rest of the food is mixed with the waste (plastics, glasses, etc.), and the place of pre-storage is accessible to any surrounding animals (cats, rats, etc.). Concerning the positive points, the situation from the past is improving, and those responsible try to find many solutions to improve the situation by engaging all inside the workplace to respect the minimum conditions to prevent risks, accidents and hazards related to the hospital waste (Larabi, 2015). To reduce the impact of the wrongful disposal and handling of the waste on the environment, several actions and improvements are highly required such as developing an awareness program for personnel involved in waste-generating activities and displaying posters in the work premises to raise awareness of the importance of sorting waste throughout the disposal chain and the risks associated with improper waste disposal. Concerning the management, it is recommended to take inspiration from the rules of standard ISO 14001 and make specific objectives to reduce hazards and negative impact on our environment and ensure periodic monitoring and controls to correct anomalies and achieve the objectives related to the protection of the environment. After that, all the non-compliances should be resolved by developing periodic reports of the situation, which will be reviewed and validated and improve the environmental management system by the leadership and the management as well as insure updating, developing and reviewing the documentation of the waste management and disposal system (drafting of procedures, energy, operating mode, etc.).

## 5. Conclusion

Hospital waste management involves many actions from all the staff in the workplace. Several countries struggle to maintain a clean system without risks and hazards generated by hospital waste. The big challenge is to be in compliance with rules referring to the international standards and the local regulation. Our study focused on the hospital of Tlemcen as a sample for diagnosis to evaluate the situation regarding the hospital waste management. Our results demonstrate positive points and negative points related to the waste management. The obtained results have shown that the evaluation rate of the waste management in compliance with our questionnaire at the central laboratory is about 21%, at the medical-surgical emergencies about 16%, then for the catering service estimated to 29%. That leads us to conclude that despite the deployed efforts by the hospital, the waste management systems should be reviewed according to the adopted managerial standards and regulations.

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## **Increasing Trend of Suicide Among Youth: A Social and Psychological Problem**

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### **Abstract**

Suicide among young people appears to be a severe issue that requires immediate attention and concerted global initiatives. Suicide is now a leading cause of death in all parts of the world. According to a World Health Organization (WHO) estimate, low and middle-income countries account for approximately 77% of all suicides worldwide. Pakistan, which is also a developing country, has seen an upsurge in the number of suicides among its youth, but official suicide numbers in the country are still unclear. Pakistan neither submits suicide fatality numbers to the WHO nor compiles national suicidal statistics. Certain social and religious factors make reporting and collection of data on suicide difficult in Pakistan, however, research of several studies reveals that household problems are the leading cause of suicide in Asian countries. The research paper is divided into two sections: (1) variables that contribute to the rise of child and teenage suicide, and (2) evidence-based therapy of child and adolescent suicide. Academic success, physical condition, mental health and well-being, economic status, financial difficulties, and overall life enjoyment are all crucial matters to consider. According to a survey, the leading cause of mortality among persons in 2019 was suicide. As a global goal, WHO has prioritized the lowering of suicide moral. This paper indicates that the only way forward is to eliminate all risk factors through integrated and multi-sector prevention programs, with essential prevention methods that can be population-based as well as targeted to high-risk sub-groups.

*Keywords:* suicide, adolescent suicide, national suicidal statistics, suicide morality

### **Introduction**

Suicide is a major public health concern among young people. It has now become an incredibly major societal issue in all modern societies. It is the second biggest cause of death among people aged 15 to 29. According to World Health Organization report (2019), almost 703,000 people commit suicide globally in 2019 (WHO, 2019). Several frequent elements interact to increase a person's proclivity to commit suicide. Personal, social, psychological, cultural, biological, and environmental aspects can all be considered. According to the WHO, 75 percent of suicides occur in poor and middle-income nations as opposed to Western ones (Shekhani et al, 2018). Furthermore, Covid-19 has exacerbated the situation and produced a serious mental health challenge around the world. Pakistan, as a developing country, witnesses a high suicidal rate; however, official statistics on suicide in the country are still lacking due to different socio-cultural and religious stigmas (Shekhani et al, 2018). Moreover, this article examines the reasons of adolescent suicide as well as techniques for preventing it.

### **Causes of Suicide among adolescents**

There are two major factors which lead to suicide among adolescents. These are,

1. Psychological factors
2. Social factors

## **Psychological Factors**

### ***Mental Health Problems and Psychiatric Disorders***

According to the study of Shaffer and Craft (1999), the 90% of adolescent who committed suicide had suffered from one or more psychiatric disorders such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or schizophrenia. These disorders brought a person to highest risks of committing suicide but due to combination of any of these two disorders, for instance depression and schizophrenia, will lead to highest risks of suicide. Among all other disorders, depression is the most common disorder resulting in the suicide among adolescents

### ***Poor Coping Skill***

According to research adolescents who are involved in suicidal behaviors seem to behave more aggressively and impulsively, have lack positive coping and problem solving skills, feel less supported by family and friends, and have a general feeling of hopelessness. They perceive their life as worthless and meaningless as they do not feel like any change or improvement in their life. They become hopeless and lack interest in any healthy activity. They do not know how to manage all the difficulties of the life and end up by committing suicide. Trait impulsivity, observed using self-report measures, has been shown to predict suicidal ideation and suicide attempt among adolescents and young adults.

## **Social Factors**

### ***Family Conflicts***

Suicidal cases associated with family disputes are most common all over the world. Peer support and school environment are necessary elements for healthy life. Disruption and unhealthy environment of home makes thing more complex for adolescents. Peer relationship with a child has major impacts on the life of adolescents. When there is lack of support of parents, the adolescents feel insecure and unsafe. They lack the power to cope up with problems, which develops the sense of fear, uncertainty, and self-doubt among them and it increases with age. Bullying, social pressure and physical maltreatment during childhood and early adolescence causes higher risks of suicide among adolescents.

### ***Social Media Usage***

As cited by U.S department of health and human services in a report of September, the suicide rate for pediatric patients rose by 57.4% from 2007 to 2018. The report stated that problematic use of the internet causes poor mental outcomes (Allie Squires, 2020). The excessive use of internet results in sleep problems, eye vision issues, headache and it changes person's emotions at the same time. The adolescents who use social media more often exhibit lack of low self-esteem, an inferiority complex, a negative body image, and risk-taking behaviors. Teens who reported using social networking sites for more than two hours per day were substantially more likely to have negative mental health outcomes, such as anxiety and suicide thinking, according to Pew Research Center research from 2015.

### ***Employment***

Unemployment is an identified risk factor for suicide in a developing country. The research shows that the suicide rate increases with an increase in unemployment. It is the well-known cause of social stress among adolescents as the family tensions increase with time. Most companies employ the people with better experience. Companies do not prefer adolescent but due to the heavy responsibilities on their shoulder, adolescents feel hopeless and worthless. They lose the hope for struggling and ending up their life becomes the only best solution to them.

### ***Poverty***

Poverty is also the main cause of suicide in developing countries. Due to poverty some people do not have sufficient resources to fulfil their own needs and the needs of their family. It is stated that the risk of suicide is 37% higher in the countries which are facing the problems of poverty than developed countries. People living in poverty are having a stressful environment, worrying about how to fulfill needs of the family members. Adolescents who grow up in poverty live the life full of abuses and stress. They face many challenges to survive in the environment and get the experience of isolation, hopelessness and stress due to the limited opportunities.

### ***Substance Use or Abuse***

According to the research of Groves, Stanley and Sher (2007), the substance abuse also has an impact on the rates of adolescent suicide, as it causes self-destructive behavior (Groves et al, 2007) The Abuse of prescription and illicit drugs, excessive alcohol consumption, self-mutilation, and numerous dangerous or violent sexual experiences were all or part of the self-destructive activities. The combination of different mental disorders and substance use by adolescents can cause fatal results. According to research of Kolves and De Leo (2017), substance use increases the suicidal thoughts among males 17 times more than in a normal person who commits suicide without taking drugs ( Kolves et al, 2017).

### ***Gaming and Suicide - An Emerging Connection***

These days, access to a game just requires a small installation due to advancement in gaming industry. Even though we are all aware of the enjoyable aspects of gaming, there is also a darker side to it. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey from 2007 to 2009

found that teens who spend five hours or more using social media feel depressed, have more suicidal thoughts, and plot suicide more frequently (Erick Messias et al, 2011). The excessive use of the internet and gaming causes depression, self-doubts and lack of coping power. Adolescents who play games are more likely emotionally less stable, having aggressive issues, severe anger, guilt, envious and mentally less stable. As they spend more time in gaming, they do not feel any need for social interactions so they even stop interacting with their parents and siblings. Sometimes, losing games makes them more aggressive and they start getting self-doubts, which leads them to commit suicide.

### **Facts and Figures About Suicide Worldwide**

Suicide is the fourth most common cause of death for persons across the globe between the ages of 15 and 29 and happens throughout life. Every suicide is a tragedy that has an impact on the survivors as well as the families, communities, and entire nations. According to World Health Organization report (2019), almost 703,000 people commit suicide globally in 2019. (WHO, 2019). Men have a greater suicide rate than women, on the other hand women often have higher rates of suicidal thinking and action (Helene. S, 2019). The death rates, which are lower in women than in males, seem to be the source of the discrepancy. According to Denning et al. (2000), males prefer weapons and hanging whereas women choose drug overdose and carbon monoxide poisoning. This may explain variations in suicide death rates, as males tend to utilize more fatal methods such as weapons and hanging which offer minimal prospect of rescue or survival compared to drug overdose, carbon monoxide poisoning, or self-harm. It is observed that men are more impulsive than women, which is demonstrated by the fact that men are more likely to engage in aggressive behavior, accidents, injuries caused by violence, drug usage, and criminal activity, all of which have been connected to impulsivity. The greatest rates of suicide are seen in East European and East Asian nations, while the lowest rates are found in Latin American and Muslim nations. (John. S, 2018). In low and middle-income nations, suicide rates were highest (77 percent), while high-income countries have the highest age-standardized suicide rate (10.9 per 100 000). In 2019, the rate in lower-middle-income countries was slightly lower (10.1 per 100 000). (WHO, 2021). China and India account for the majority of global suicides, while South Korea has seen a significant increase in suicide rates over the last decade. (Steve. M, 2018)

### **Suicide in the Context of Pakistan**

Pakistan, a country in South Asia, has the sixth-largest population in the world despite its tiny size geographically. Pakistan has a 97 percent Muslim majority, but there are sizable religious minorities there as well, including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians. In 2008, there were 782,000 suicides worldwide, which accounted for 1.4% of all deaths and 15% of reported injury deaths (Sadiq et al, 2017). According to WHO report (2019), more than one in every 100 deaths (1.3%) in 2019 was the result of suicide (WHO, 2019). However, only about half of the world's nations have allowed the WHO to gather data from them. The WHO received no data from Pakistan about suicide mortality.

## **Legal Aspects of Suicide in Pakistan**

Islam views suicide as a sin, and as Pakistani law is based on Islamic principles, engaging in suicidal conduct or attempting suicide is a crime subject to fines and/or imprisonment. The Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, contains the penal provision known as Section 325, which is in force all across the nation. According to the law, "Anyone who tries suicide or commits any act that contributes to the commission of such an offence will be punished with simple imprisonment for a time that may not exceed one year, or with fine, or with both." According to the legislation, attempts at suicide and suicides must be reported to the police for further investigation.

## **Suicide Prevention**

### ***Treatment***

Suicidal thoughts frequently have a treatable underlying mental health condition. If this is the case, the patient should consult a psychiatrist or another medical professional with expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. Likewise Suicidal thoughts may occasionally be related to an underlying physical health issue. To find out if this is the case, the person would undergo blood testing and other examinations. Treatment for suicidal thoughts and behavior is based on one's individual circumstances, including suicide risk and any underlying issues that might be driving them (Jo Robinson, 2016).

### ***Media***

Adults frequently use social media and most of the interactions take place on digital platforms nowadays. In comparison to the virtual world, face-to-face discussion takes far less time (Prakash Singh, 2019). The quick introduction and advancement of smartphones is to blame for the sudden rise in young people's use of digital media. Therefore, it is preferable to approach them through social media or digital media by conducting awareness campaigns.

### ***Youth Participation and Engagement***

Youth participation and engagement among different preventions programs can reduce the suicide risk. Adolescent pregnancy, delinquency, substance misuse, and depression are all risk factors and correlates of suicide that have been demonstrated to be effectively prevented and/or reduced by school-based programs using a health promotion approach. (Heather L Ramey 2010). Additionally, these programs foster interpersonal problem solving, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social support as protective factors against suicide

### ***Family Support***

Family members and other caregivers have a crucial role in preventing suicide and can become involved in a variety of ways. They can boost a person's life's protective aspects, for instance by aiding in the development of interpersonal relationships and



life skills. They can also urge the person to seek and adhere to therapy, offer support during suicidal crises, and aid in keeping the person safe (John Wiley, 2021).

### ***Restriction of Access to Common Means of Committing Suicide***

By way of restricting access to common means of suicide, which include firearms, poisonous gas, pesticides and other, has been proven effective in reducing rates of suicide. Among all means, firearms are the most commonly used means. Overdose of medicinal drugs is another method which can be minimized by decreasing the amount of drugs. Many suicide attempts take place in the course of a short-term crisis, so it is essential to consider someone's access to deadly means during those durations of increased risk (Marco Sarchiapone et al, 2011).

### ***Education***

Interventions in education at the school level greatly reduce young suicidal thoughts and attempts (LynsayAyat, 2022). Hence awareness through education is much needed at school and college level because teens are more likely to have suicidal thoughts (Christina M. Cammart, 2020)

### ***Health Facilities and Health Workers***

To prevent the risk of suicide before it occurs two main categories of strategies can be supported and implemented by health workers.

The Prevention strategies that health workers may consider include:

1. Increasing access to mental health screening tools for self-assessment.
2. Increased access to mental health services (e.g. employee assistance programs) and easier access to employee support services (e.g. mental health, medicines, and financial advice) (Hope Tiesman, 2021).

### ***Poverty***

Suicide rates are on peak in those nations where rates of poverty are high. It has been observed that 75% of suicides occur in low and middle earning nations (J. Bantjes, 2014). Research has shown that suicidal behavior is also linked to financial status of the individuals (Government of such nations need to take control of unemployment and provide basic resources and jobs to meet the needs of people so that they live their life fairly in a better way and they do not commit suicide in order to solve their problems (Maria Cohut, 2020).

It indicates that suicide among young people is a major issue that calls for quick attention and organized actions on a worldwide scale.

### ***Conclusion***

When someone commits a suicide, psychological issues are key contributing factors. Mental illness is a significant psychological risk factor for a suicide. However, other risk factors are also significant; they often have to do with societal systems and particular stresses. Pakistan, an Islamic nation, is one of the nations that forbids suicide. Suicide attempt is a crime in Pakistan under Section 325 of the Penal Code, which needs to be reassessed. The concept of social and public health recognizes the possibility of preventing suicide. Modifying attitudes about suicide through educational initiatives and legal tools is an important step in such a strategy.

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