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Exploring the Role and Impact of Mergers and Acquisitions in the Growth of Small and Medium-sized Audit Firms in Malaysia

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Abstract:

This study aims to provide insight into the role and impact of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) on the development of small and medium-sized audit firms in Malaysia. By analysing the current situation of the Malaysian auditing industry and combining the theory and practice of M&A, this article reveals the challenges and opportunities faced by small and medium-sized audit firms in the current market environment. The article elaborates on how M&A can serve as a strategic choice to help these firms achieve the goals of scale expansion, resource integration, service capability enhancement, and market share expansion. At the same time, it also provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of M&A on organisational structure and cultural integration, human resources integration, client relationship maintenance, financial risk, and legal compliance.

Keywords: Mergers and acquisitions, Malaysia, small and medium-sized audit firms

1.0 Introduction:

In the context of global economic integration, the auditing profession, as an important part of the market economy, is facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. As an important economy in Southeast Asia, the development of Malaysia's audit market is of great significance in enhancing the overall economic environment and corporate governance. Small and medium-sized audit firms account for a significant portion of the Malaysian audit market, and they are an important force driving the development of the audit profession. However, in an increasingly competitive market environment, how small and medium-sized audit firms can break through the development bottleneck and achieve sustained growth has become an urgent issue. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A), as an important corporate development strategy, have been widely used in various industries in recent years. For small and medium-sized audit firms in Malaysia, M&A is not only an effective way to achieve rapid scale expansion but also an important means to improve service quality and enhance market competitiveness. Through M&A, small and medium-sized audit firms can integrate advantageous resources, broaden service areas, and improve the ability to withstand market risks. However, M&A is not an overnight process, which involves many factors and challenges. During the M&A process, issues such as how to conduct effective due diligence, assess M&A risks, set a reasonable M&A price, and post-merger integration and management need to be carefully considered. In addition, M&A may have far-reaching effects on the organisational structure, corporate culture, human resources, and client relationships of small and medium-sized audit firms.

2.0 Status of Small and Medium-sized Audit Firms in Malaysia

2.1 Overview of the Audit Industry in Malaysia

Malaysia, as a Southeast Asian country with a rapidly growing economy, has a company law that requires both private and public companies to undergo regular audits and submit the audit report as a required document to the Registrar of Companies. This stringent statutory requirement not only ensures the transparency of a company's financial information, but also greatly enhances the trust of external stakeholders such as credit institutions, investors, and suppliers in the company's financial position. Auditing is not only a legal obligation, but also a bridge to build long-term trust between the company and its partners^[1].

In terms of tax policy, Malaysia has a relatively low corporate tax rate of between 18 and 24 percent, which provides strong support for companies to remain competitive in the international market. In addition, to attract foreign investment, the Malaysian government has implemented a series of policies to encourage foreign investment without restricting the repatriation of capital and profits. This open economic policy has further promoted the interest of both

domestic and foreign investors in Malaysian businesses and has led to a thriving auditing industry.

In terms of GST, Malaysia has replaced the Goods and Services Tax (GST) with the Sales and Services Tax (SST) at rates ranging from 5 per cent to 10 per cent. Capital Gains Tax (CGT), on the other hand, is levied at rates ranging from 5 per cent to 30 per cent. It is worth noting that there is no dividend tax, estate tax or inheritance tax, making Malaysia an ideal choice for investors and entrepreneurs.

The auditing and accounting requirements for companies are also clearly defined in Malaysian law. Companies are required to keep an annual report of accounts audited by an authorised auditor in Malaysia and accounting and other records must be retained for a minimum of seven years. This requirement ensures that a company's financial records and reports are complete, accurate and reliable, providing a solid foundation for long-term growth.

In terms of annual audit, the due date for annual audit of a Malaysian company is usually within 18 months of incorporation. The secretarial firm will notify the client of the annual audit two months in advance to ensure that the company is able to complete this important statutory procedure in a timely manner. In addition, the due date for the annual review is six months after the financial year end date set by the company. This system is designed to take into account the pace of the company's operations while ensuring the timeliness and effectiveness of the audit.

However, if a company fails to conduct an annual audit, it will face the risk of a fine. Such fines will not only increase the financial burden of the company but may also affect the company's reputation and market position. In addition, during the validity period of the company registration, if the company decides not to continue with its operations, it can apply for the cancellation of the company to the Registrar of Malaysia and the Malaysian Inland Revenue Department (MIRD) three months in advance. This system provides an orderly exit mechanism for companies and also protects the rights and interests of external stakeholders.

2.2 Definition and Characteristics of Small and Medium-sized Audit Firms

In China, small and medium-sized auditing firms, especially small accounting firms, are clearly defined as smaller auditing organisations focusing on the provision of specialised services in accordance with the relevant provisional regulations of the Ministry of Finance. These firms, in contrast to large national accounting firms, have a relatively small business volume and their service scope is usually limited to a specific region, closely rooted in the local economic

and social environment. In terms of service types, small and medium-sized audit firms provide a wide variety of services, including annual audits, financial fund audits, final accounts audits, exit audits, and financial responsibility audits. These services cover all aspects of business operations, providing comprehensive and detailed financial supervision and consulting services to local SMEs. When it comes to competitive advantages, small and medium-sized audit firms have gained a foothold in the market by virtue of their locality and flexibility. They understand the dynamics of the local economy and the needs of businesses and are able to respond quickly to changes in the market and provide customised solutions to their clients. In addition, long-term relationships have created a deep foundation of trust between small and medium-sized audit firms and their clients, and this stability has provided them with strong support in the highly competitive market. In terms of business scope, small and medium-sized audit firms mainly focus on basic business such as special audits and capital verification and are less involved in high-end markets such as audits of annual reports of listed companies. However, with the acceleration of global economic integration and the entry of more multinational corporations into the Chinese market, large accounting firms have a growing client base, but also face fierce competition from their international counterparts. In contrast, small and medium-sized audit firms are actively exploring new market opportunities and seeking broader development space while maintaining their existing clients and business. Talent is the core resource of the auditing profession, and small and medium-sized audit firms face certain challenges in this regard. Due to their small size, they often find it difficult to attract and retain high-quality professionals. In order to improve service quality, create a service brand and maintain independent development, small and medium-sized audit firms need to increase their investment in talent, and enhance the professional quality and comprehensive ability of their own teams through multi-dimensional talent development strategies such as recruitment, training and incentive mechanisms^[2].

Overall, small and medium-sized audit firms play an irreplaceable role in the auditing industry because of their unique competitive advantages and service positioning. They are not only the reliable partners of local small and medium-sized enterprises, but also an important force in promoting regional economic development and maintaining market order. In future development, small and medium-sized audit firms need to continuously adapt to market changes, and strengthen talent training and technological innovation to better serve their clients and society.

2.3 Challenges Faced by Small and Medium-sized Audit Firms

Small and medium-sized auditing firms face multiple challenges in today's rapidly changing economic environment. These challenges come not only from

external market competition and regulatory requirements, but also from internal issues such as talent shortage and resource allocation. Increasing market competition is a reality that small and medium-sized audit firms can hardly avoid. With the continuous opening up of the audit market and the acceleration of the internationalisation process, large accounting firms and internationally renowned audit firms have entered the market, and they have dominated the market by virtue of their strong capital, advanced technology and rich experience. This puts small and medium-sized audit firms under tremendous pressure to secure clients and business. Increasing regulatory requirements have also posed challenges to small and medium-sized audit firms. In recent years, governments have strengthened the regulation of the auditing profession, and the requirements for audit quality and independence have become higher and higher. Small and medium-sized audit firms are often difficult to meet these requirements due to their small size and limited resources, resulting in restrictions in undertaking business. In addition, the shortage of talents is another important challenge faced by small and medium-sized audit firms. The auditing profession is a highly specialised field that requires the support of talents with extensive accounting, financial and legal knowledge. However, small, and medium-sized audit firms often find it difficult to attract and retain good talents due to their relatively low profile and remuneration. This has led to a lack of adequate professional support for the firms in the process of undertaking and executing business, affecting audit quality and efficiency. Difficulties in resource allocation are also a problem that small and medium-sized audit firms need to face. Due to their small size and limited capital, small and medium-sized audit firms often do not invest enough in purchasing advanced equipment, developing new technologies and conducting staff training. This puts the firms at a disadvantage when competing with large accounting firms and makes it difficult for them to provide high-quality and efficient auditing services^[3].

3.0 Merger and Acquisition Theory and Practice

3.1 Concepts and Types of Mergers and Acquisitions

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are an important means of enterprise development strategy, through the purchase, merger or acquisition of other enterprises, in order to achieve resource integration, business expansion or to achieve specific strategic objectives. This behaviour has become increasingly frequent in modern economic activities and has become an important way for enterprises to grow rapidly, optimize resource allocation and enhance competitiveness. M&A is not only a simple transaction between enterprises, it involves many aspects, including financial, legal, business, cultural and other levels of integration. Successful M&A can bring many benefits to enterprises, such as expanding market share, acquiring new technologies or resources, and improving operational efficiency. However, M&A is also a complex and high-

risk activity that requires careful planning and execution by enterprises. In terms of the types of M&A, they can be divided according to different dimensions. Firstly, horizontal M&A refers to the M&A behaviour that occurs between enterprises in the same industrial chain. This kind of M&A usually occurs between competitors, and the merger can reduce competition, expand market share, and achieve economies of scale. For example, the merger of two firms operating similar businesses in the same region can share resources, reduce costs, and improve market competitiveness.

Vertical M&A, on the other hand, involves firms between suppliers and customers. This type of M&A helps firms to strengthen their control over the supply chain, reduce transaction costs, and improve the stability and efficiency of the supply chain. For example, an automobile manufacturer's acquisition of its key component suppliers ensures a stable supply of components, reduces procurement costs and improves overall profitability.

Peer-to-peer mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are mergers and acquisitions that take place between firms in similar industries. This type of M&A helps enterprises to expand their market share, integrate industry resources, and increase industry influence. Through M&A of similar enterprises, new customer resources, sales channels, and market share can be acquired quickly, thus achieving rapid expansion. Cross-border M&A, on the other hand, involves between firms in different industries. Such M&A is usually done to enter new markets, acquire new technologies, or diversify. Cross-border M&A requires companies to have strong cross-industry integration capabilities to cope with the differences and challenges between different industries. In addition, M&A can also be categorised into acquisitions, mergers, and amalgamations depending on the mode of transaction. Acquisition refers to the purchase of equity or assets of one company by another; merger refers to the combination of two companies to become a new company; and merger is the absorption of one company by another, but the latter ceases to exist legally. Each of these transaction methods has its characteristics and is suitable for different M&A scenarios and strategic objectives.

3.2 Mergers and Acquisitions in the Auditing Profession

The auditing profession, as an integral part of economic activity, provides financial health checks, risk assessments and compliance validation for businesses. With globalisation and intensified market competition, the auditing industry is also facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities. In this context, mergers and acquisitions (M&A) have become one of the important tools for the development of the auditing industry. The application of M&A in the auditing industry is firstly reflected in the scale expansion. By acquiring small or medium-sized firms, large audit firms can rapidly expand their client

base and increase their market share, thus enhancing their overall competitiveness. This scale expansion not only helps audit firms to provide a wider range of services nationwide or even globally, but also improves the efficiency and quality of auditing through resource integration. In addition to scale expansion, M&A is also an effective way for audit firms to diversify their business. With the increasing complexity of business activities, clients' demands for audit services are becoming more and more diversified. Through M&A of audit firms with specific industry expertise or technological advantages, large firms can quickly supplement their own business lines and provide more comprehensive and professional services. For example, M&A of firms specialising in information technology auditing can help traditional audit firms to quickly build up their audit capabilities in the information technology field^[4].

In addition, M&A plays a role in optimising the allocation of resources in the auditing industry. The auditing industry is an industry that is highly dependent on talent and knowledge. Through M&A, audit firms can absorb and integrate the excellent team and expertise of the acquired firms, thus enhancing their overall strength. This resource integration not only helps to improve audit quality but also enhances the firm's innovation and market adaptability. However, the application of M&A in the auditing industry also faces many challenges. Cultural differences are a major challenge to overcome in the M&A process. Different audit firms often have different corporate cultures and management modes, and how to achieve cultural integration and teamwork after M&A is an issue that audit firms need to seriously consider. Resource integration and business integration brought about by M&A are also a complex and arduous task. Audit firms need to quickly integrate resources and adjust business structure after M&A to ensure that the synergies of M&A can be effectively utilised.

We made full use of questionnaires, a traditional but effective data collection tool. We designed detailed and specific questionnaires for different sizes and types of firms in the auditing industry, covering various aspects before and after the M&A, such as firm size, scope of business, client structure, staffing and so on. Through the large-scale distribution and collection of questionnaires, we obtained a large amount of valuable first-hand data, which provided a solid foundation for the subsequent data analysis and model construction. Information resources from public channels were deeply explored. By collecting the official websites of major audit firms, annual reports, announcements, and industry research reports, we collated a large amount of M&A-related data and cases. These data not only cover the basic information of M&A transactions, such as transaction time, transaction amount, transaction parties, etc., but also include detailed data on business integration and market performance after M&A. The acquisition and analysis of these public data provides us with an important

perspective to examine the impact of M&A in the auditing industry from a macro point of view.

To gain a deeper understanding of the specifics and issues in M&A practice, we also used in-depth interviews. We carefully selected many experts and executives with rich experience and deep insights into the auditing industry and conducted face-to-face in-depth exchanges with them. During the interviews, we not only learned in detail about the specific practices and experiences of their firms in the process of M&A, but also had in-depth discussions on the impact of M&A on the development of the industry, the challenges they face, and other topics. These interviews provided us with a large number of vivid and real cases and opinions, which greatly enriched the content and depth of our research.

Further, we made in-depth use of the regression analysis technique, a technique that plays a central role in this study by helping us meticulously explore the specific impact of M&A activities on audit firms at multiple levels. Regression analysis serves as a powerful statistical tool that reveals the quantitative relationship between independent and dependent variables and ensures an accurate estimation of the effect of a particular variable by controlling for other underlying factors.

In our study, the key to regression analysis is the construction of a comprehensive and accurate regression model. This model not only incorporates M&A activity as the core explanatory variable, but also considers a range of other factors that may affect audit firm performance, such as the market environment, the competitive dynamics of the industry, and the resource situation within the firm. By introducing these factors into the model as control variables, we can more accurately strip out the net effect of M&A activity itself on various aspects of firm performance.

In the construction of the model, we pay special attention to the impact of M&A on three aspects: firm scale expansion, business diversification, and resource allocation optimisation. For scale expansion, we assess the specific contribution of M&A to firm size by analysing the changes in the number of clients and the size of revenue of the firm after the M&A. For business diversification, we examine the new practice areas and the diversity of service types added by the firm after the M&A to measure the role of M&A in promoting business diversification. As for the optimisation of resource allocation, we assess the adjustment of the firm's staff structure, distribution of professional skills, etc. after the M&A to determine whether the M&A has promoted a more effective allocation of resources.

Through careful model setting and meticulous variable selection, we conducted regression analyses and came up with a series of important findings. The results

of the regression analyses show that M&A activities play a significant role in promoting the expansion of audit firms' scale, as evidenced by the significant increase in the client base and market share of the firms after M&A. At the same time, M&As also significantly contributed to the diversification of firms' business, enabling them to provide a wider range of more specialised services, thereby enhancing market competitiveness and risk resistance. In addition, the regression analysis also shows that M&A has a positive impact on the optimisation of resource allocation, which improves the operational efficiency and profitability of firms through the integration and optimisation of resources.

4.0 The Role of M&A for Small and Medium-sized Audit Firms in Malaysia

4.1 Enhancement of Service Capabilities

In Malaysia, the auditing industry is becoming increasingly competitive, and small and medium-sized auditing firms must continue to enhance their service capabilities to gain a foothold in the market and sustain their growth. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are an effective way for these firms to enhance their service capabilities. Service capability, in short, is the ability of a firm to meet the needs of its clients. In the field of auditing, this includes an in-depth understanding of the client's business, an efficient and accurate auditing process, a professional team, and continuous technological innovation. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) can bring significant improvements in these areas to small and medium-sized audit firms. M&A can help small and medium-sized audit firms to rapidly broaden their service areas and expertise. By acquiring other firms with specialised expertise, small and medium-sized firms can immediately gain access to the acquired party's expertise and experience in a particular industry or field. This fusion of expertise enables the firm to provide more comprehensive and in-depth services to clients and to meet their increasingly complex and diverse needs.

M&A can lead to optimisation of audit processes and technology. During the M&A process, small and medium-sized audit firms can be exposed to the advanced audit methods, techniques, and tools of the acquired parties. By integrating these resources, small and medium-sized firms are able to improve their own audit processes and enhance the efficiency and accuracy of their audit work. This technological enhancement not only helps firms complete more audit assignments in a limited amount of time, but also improves audit quality and enhances clients' trust and satisfaction with the firm. Mergers and acquisitions provide small and medium-sized audit firms with the opportunity to attract and retain talented individuals. During the M&A process, the firm can absorb the excellent team and talents of the acquired party. The addition of these new members not only injects new vigour and innovative thinking into the firm, but also improves the overall professionalism of the firm. At the same time, through the provision of more attractive career development opportunities and benefits,

small and medium-sized firms can better retain these talented people to ensure the continuous improvement of service quality. M&A also helps small and medium-sized audit firms to build a more complete service system. Through mergers and acquisitions, the firm can obtain the merged party's customer resources, business network and service channels, so as to build a more comprehensive and efficient service system. The improvement of this service system enables the firm to respond more quickly and accurately to changes in client demand and provide more personalised and customised service solutions. In summary, mergers and acquisitions have a significant effect on the enhancement of service capabilities of small and medium-sized audit firms in Malaysia. By broadening service areas and expertise, optimising audit processes and techniques, attracting and retaining talented people, and building a more complete service system, small and medium-sized firms can rapidly improve their service capabilities and better meet the needs and expectations of their clients. However, mergers and acquisitions also require careful assessment and meticulous planning to ensure their success and a win-win situation for both parties. In the future market competition, those small and medium-sized audit firms that can skillfully use M&A strategies to enhance their service capabilities will be more likely to stand out and become market leaders.

4.2 Expanding Market Share

In the Malaysian audit market, small and medium-sized audit firms face many challenges, one of the most prominent of which is their limited market share. Constrained by size, resources, and brand awareness, these firms often find it difficult to compete with large and international audit firms, resulting in a prolonged period of ineffective market share expansion or even the risk of marginalisation. However, through M&A strategies, small and medium-sized audit firms can achieve rapid market share expansion, thus stopping the bleeding in the market^[5].

The most direct effect of M&A is to help small and medium-sized audit firms to rapidly increase the number of clients and the scope of services, and thus expand their market share. By acquiring other audit firms or related business entities, small and medium-sized firms can immediately gain access to the existing client base and business network of the acquired party. The addition of these new clients and businesses not only brings new sources of revenue to the firm, but more importantly, they increase the firm's exposure and influence in the marketplace. This increased exposure and influence helps small and medium-sized audit firms build a more professional and trustworthy image in the minds of potential clients, thus attracting more clients to choose their services. In addition, M&A also helps small and medium-sized audit firms to break the geographical constraints and achieve cross-regional and even cross-border market expansion. In a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country like

Malaysia, locality has always been an important factor limiting the growth of small and medium-sized audit firms. However, through mergers and acquisitions of audit firms in other regions, small and medium-sized firms can quickly enter new geographical markets and expand their service coverage. This cross-geographic market expansion not only helps firms diversify their risks, but also allows them to respond more flexibly to market changes and client needs in different regions. In spite of directly increasing the number of clients and service coverage, M&A can also indirectly expand market share by enhancing the brand awareness and reputation of small and medium-sized audit firms. During the M&A process, small and medium-sized firms can learn from and absorb the successful experiences and excellent practices of the acquired parties in brand building, marketing, and client services. The introduction of these experiences and practices will help small and medium-sized firms to enhance their brand image and market competitiveness, and then stand out in the fierce market competition.

It should be noted that although M&A can bring a stop-gap effect of market share expansion for small and medium-sized audit firms, there are certain risks and challenges inherent in M&A. For example, issues such as cultural integration, teamwork, and business integration after an M&A require firms to invest a great deal of time and effort to resolve. Therefore, when considering M&A strategies, small and medium-sized audit firms need to fully assess their strengths and the market environment and formulate a well-thought-out M&A plan to ensure the successful implementation of the M&A and the long-term stable development of the market.

In conclusion, M&A has a significant stop-gap effect on the expansion of the market share of small and medium-sized audit firms in Malaysia. Through the M&A strategy, small and medium-sized firms can rapidly increase the number of clients and the scope of services, break geographical constraints, and enhance brand awareness and reputation, thus achieving effective market share expansion in the highly competitive market. However, M&A also requires careful assessment and meticulous planning to ensure the success of the M&A and the long-term stable development of the market.

4.3 Increased Brand Influence

In the Malaysian auditing industry, brand influence is one of the key factors in the success of a firm. For small and medium-sized audit firms, it is particularly important to enhance brand influence as it is directly related to the firm's visibility, client trust and market share. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are an effective way for these firms to rapidly increase their brand influence. Brand influence refers to the firm's status and recognition in the market and in the minds of clients. A firm with a strong brand influence is often able to attract and

retain clients more easily and gain more business opportunities. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) can bring about a significant increase in brand influence for small and medium-sized audit firms. M&A helps small and medium-sized audit firms expand their brand exposure. By acquiring other firms with a certain degree of visibility and market share, small and medium-sized firms can rapidly increase their exposure. Clients, partners, and industry participants of the acquired party will take an interest in the newly merged entity, thereby increasing the firm's visibility in the marketplace. This increased exposure helps small and medium-sized audit firms build a more professional and trustworthy image in the minds of potential clients. Mergers and acquisitions can lead to an increase in brand reputation. During the M&A process, small and medium-sized audit firms can learn from and absorb the successful experience and excellent practices of the acquired party in brand building, marketing, and client service. The introduction of these experiences and practices will help small and medium-sized firms to enhance their brand image and market competitiveness. At the same time, the good reputation and word-of-mouth of the M&A parties will be passed on to the newly merged entity, further enhancing the firm's position in the market and in the minds of clients. M&A provides small and medium-sized audit firms with more diversified brand communication channels. Through M&A, firms can gain access to the media resources, social networks, and other communication channels of the merged entity, thus expanding the scope and influence of brand communication. Such diversified communication channels enable firms to interact and communicate with different types of audiences more flexibly and enhance the emotional connection and sense of identity between the brand and the audience. M&A also helps small and medium-sized audit firms build a stronger brand foundation. Through M&A, firms can acquire intangible resources such as brand equity, corporate culture, and values of the acquired party. The integration and fusion of these resources helps the firm to form a more unique, distinctive, and attractive brand image. This solid brand foundation lays a solid foundation for the firm's future brand development and market expansion.

However, M&A also requires careful evaluation and meticulous planning to ensure the success of the acquisition and the long-term stable development of the brand. In the future market competition, those small and medium-sized audit firms that can use M&A tactics to enhance their brand influence will be more likely to stand out and become market leaders.

5.0 Impact of M&A on Small and Medium-sized Audit Firms in Malaysia

5.1 Integration of Organisational Structure and Culture

In the Malaysian auditing industry, small and medium-sized auditing firms often opt for mergers and acquisitions (M&A) as a strategy to seek greater room for growth and competitive advantage. However, M&A is not just a business merger,

but also a deep integration of organisational structure and culture. This integration has a profound impact on the future development of the firm. M&A has had a significant impact on the organisational structure of small and medium-sized audit firms. Originally independent firms needed to form a new, more efficient, and unified organisational structure after the merger. This means that departmental settings, division of responsibilities, and management processes need to be reintegrated. Such integration not only helps to reduce duplication of efforts and waste of resources and improve work efficiency, but also enables the new entity to respond more flexibly and quickly to market changes and client needs. Through the integration of organisational structure, small and medium-sized audit firms can form a stronger and more competitive team to better serve their clients. Mergers and acquisitions have a profound impact on a firm's corporate culture. Each audit firm has its own unique corporate culture, and these cultures need to be integrated during the M&A process to form a new and unified cultural system. This integration of cultures not only helps to enhance the sense of belonging and identity of employees, and improve team cohesion and collaboration, but also can lay a solid foundation for the long-term development of the firm. A positive and healthy corporate culture can attract and retain excellent talents and provide a constant impetus for the firm's sustainable development. However, the integration of organisational structure and culture is not an easy task. During the M&A process, various difficulties and challenges may be encountered. For example, cultural differences between different firms may lead to barriers in communication and collaboration among employees; employee resistance to M&A may affect the smooth progress of integration; and slow progress of integration may lead to damage to business. All these difficulties and challenges require a lot of effort and time from the firm to overcome.

5.2 Human Resources Integration and Management

In the tide of the market economy, mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activities of enterprises are becoming more and more frequent, and the key to the success of M&A often lies not in the integration of capital, technology or markets, but in the effective integration and management of human resources. As pointed out by the famous management scientist Peter F. Drucker, the appointment and dismissal of the company's top management is directly related to the success or failure of M&A. This is because excellent talents are not only the intangible assets of an enterprise, but also its magic weapon to win in the fierce market competition. Integration of human resources, that is, in the process of mergers and acquisitions, through the rational allocation and optimal combination of both sides of the human resources, in order to achieve the purpose of improving the overall performance and enhance the competitiveness of enterprises. In this process, some basic principles must be followed, such as smooth transition, prioritising motivation, protecting talents, reducing costs, and combining in

various ways. These principles are established to ensure that post-merger human resource management is neither too radical nor too conservative but is able to find the best balance between stability and change. In order to achieve a smooth transition, the acquirer needs to carefully design the human resources integration plan to avoid the impact of too fast or too slow integration pace on the workforce. At the same time, it is important to eliminate the psychological pressure on employees through effective communication strategies so that they can understand and accept the changes brought about by the M&A. In selecting the top management of the target company, more care should be taken to ensure that they not only possess leadership skills, but also are able to promote cultural integration and teamwork between the M&A parties. In terms of talent protection, the acquirer needs to identify and retain key talent that will be valuable to the business. This is often achieved by providing attractive career opportunities, compensation and benefits, and a favourable working environment. At the same time, M&A parties should also focus on optimising human resource costs, reducing unnecessary labour costs and improving the overall return on human resource investment through reasonable staffing and incentive mechanisms. It is worth mentioning that digital human resource management plays an increasingly important role in the M&A process. Using digital technology, enterprises can analyse human resources data more accurately and formulate more scientific human resources integration plans. At the same time, digital tools can also help enterprises improve the service quality of HRM, save costs and optimise management efficiency. For example, through the application of human resource information system (HRIS), enterprises can more conveniently carry out employee information management, salary calculation, performance appraisal and other work, thus improving the level of human resource management after merger and acquisition ^[6].

Human resource integration and management have an important strategic position in M&A. Behind a successful M&A case, there is often a well-planned and executed human resources integration plan. Therefore, for enterprises aiming to achieve leapfrog development through M&A, attaching importance to and strengthening human resources integration and management is undoubtedly the key to ensuring the success of their M&A.

5.3 Customer Relationships and Business Continuity

In the modern business environment, customer relationships and business continuity are key success factors for any organisation. There is a close link between the two and together they affect the long-term stability of a business. Customer relationship is more than a simple buying and selling relationship, it involves trust, co-operation and win-win situation between the business and its customers. A good customer relationship can bring a stable customer base for the enterprise, improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, and thus increase

market share and profitability. In a competitive market, the establishment and maintenance of customer relationships is particularly important. By providing quality services, personalised solutions and continuous care, companies can establish a deep emotional bond with their customers and make them loyal fans of the company. This relationship not only helps to build a good reputation in the market, but also brings continuous business opportunities. Business continuity, on the other hand, refers to the ability of an organisation to maintain normal business operations in the face of various challenges and changes. This includes the ability to adapt to the external environment, the flexibility of internal processes, and the ability to respond to crises. In the modern business environment, enterprises face many uncertainties, such as changes in market demand, competitors' strategic adjustments, and changes in policies and regulations. All of these factors may have an impact on the business continuity of an enterprise. Therefore, enterprises need to have the ability to respond quickly and adjust flexibly to ensure the continuous and stable development of their business.

There is a mutually reinforcing relationship between customer relationship and business continuity. On the one hand, a good customer relationship can bring a stable business base and reduce the risk of customer loss, thus helping to maintain business continuity. On the other hand, the guarantee of business continuity can enhance the customer's trust and dependence on the enterprise, and further consolidate and expand the customer relationship. For example, in the face of emergencies or crises, if the enterprise can respond quickly to protect the interests of customers from losses, then this responsible attitude and action will undoubtedly win the recognition and respect of customers, and thus deepen the emotional ties between customers and enterprises. In addition, the joint role of customer relationship and business continuity is also reflected in the enterprise's strategic planning and decision-making. Enterprises need to fully consider the factors of customer relationship and business continuity when formulating development strategies and making major decisions. Through in-depth analysis of customer needs and market trends, enterprises can formulate development strategies that are more in line with market reality and customer needs. At the same time, focusing on ensuring business continuity in the decision-making process can ensure that enterprises will not suffer losses due to business interruption when implementing new strategies or adjusting business strategies.

5.4 Risk of Cultural Conflict

In the wave of mergers and acquisitions (M&A), corporate culture differences are an often overlooked but critical factor. When two audit firms with very different corporate cultures merge, they face not only the integration of business, people and resources, but also the deeper challenge of how to integrate the two very different cultures into a harmonious and efficient whole.

Corporate culture, as the values, beliefs, codes of conduct, and ways of working shared within an organisation, is the core soul of the organisation. In small and medium-sized auditing firms, corporate culture is often closely related to the history of the firm, the philosophy of its founders, and the shared experiences of its employees. Therefore, when two firms with deep cultural roots come together, the cultural differences between them may cause a series of problems.

Differences in values can lead to friction and conflict among employees. For example, one company may emphasise teamwork and a spirit of sharing, while the other focuses more on individual competence and a sense of competition. Such differences may lead to communication barriers, difficulties in cooperation, and even the formation of cliques in daily work, affecting the overall efficiency and cohesion of the team.

Differences in work styles may also present challenges. Each company has its unique work processes and habits, such as decision-making mechanisms, project management styles, and reporting systems. When these processes and habits need to be harmonised or adjusted after an M&A, employees may feel confused, uncomfortable, or even resistant. This not only affects employee productivity but may also lead to interruptions or delays in critical operations.

Differences in communication styles should also not be overlooked. Some companies advocate open and direct communication and encourage employees to give their opinions and suggestions, while others are more conservative and cautious, emphasising hierarchy and authority. Such differences in communication styles may lead to poor information transfer, increased misunderstandings, and even a crisis of trust in the early stages of an M&A.

The difficulty of cultural integration stems from these deep-seated differences. If not handled properly, culture clashes may gradually evolve into conflicts and confrontations within the organisation, leading to the loss of key employees, a decline in customer satisfaction, and even damage to the overall image and reputation of the company. More seriously, culture conflict may weaken the synergies and resource integration advantages brought about by M&A, making the value of M&A greatly reduced.

5.5 The Challenge of Integrating Issues

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A), as an important means of strategic development of enterprises, are often pinned high hopes on the synergistic effect of "1+1>2" through the integration of resources. However, in practice, the integration of M&A has often become a roadblock to the realisation of this beautiful vision. Among them, business integration and personnel integration are particularly critical, and their challenges and impacts cannot be ignored.

In terms of business integration, the two companies after M&A often have their independent business systems, customer groups, and market positioning. How organically integrate these different business elements to achieve resource sharing and complementary advantages is the primary challenge faced after an M&A. If the business integration is not proper, it may lead to a series of negative impacts. Firstly, the problem of wasted resources comes to the fore. Both parties may overlap or compete in certain business areas, and failure to integrate effectively may lead to duplication of investment, idle equipment, and other waste of resources. Secondly, inefficiencies arise. Poor business integration may lead to cumbersome internal processes and slow decision-making, affecting the company's overall operational efficiency. More seriously, the risk of customer churn increases. Mergers and acquisitions may trigger customer concerns about service quality, pricing systems, etc. Failure to communicate, explain, and guide promptly during the integration process may lead to customer loss and damage to the company's long-term interests.

In terms of personnel integration, M&A is often accompanied by adjustments to organisational structures and changes in positions, which is undoubtedly a great challenge for employees. Improper handling of personnel integration issues may trigger a series of chain reactions. Firstly, the risk of loss of key talent is exacerbated. M&A may cause some employees to feel uncomfortable or dissatisfied with the new environment and new positions, thus giving rise to the idea of leaving. The loss of these key personnel not only affects business continuity but also may take away important customer resources and trade secrets. Secondly, team stability is compromised. The uncertainty brought about by M&A may lead to low employee morale and disaffection, affecting team cohesion and combat effectiveness. In the long run, this will harm the company's overall performance and innovation ability.

In summary, the issues of business integration and staff integration after mergers and acquisitions have a profound impact on the development of small and medium-sized audit firms. These issues are not only related to the effective use of resources and the improvement of operational efficiency but also to the long-term competitiveness and market position of the firm. Therefore, in the process of M&A, the company must attach great importance to the integration issues and formulate a thorough integration plan to ensure the smooth implementation of the M&A and the achievement of the expected goals.

5.6 Analysis of Financial Risk

In the complex process of corporate mergers and acquisitions (M&A), financial risk is a particularly prominent and unmissable issue. Both omissions in financial due diligence and pitfalls in financing may have a significant impact on the future development of the company.

When an M&A party conducts financial due diligence on a target company, any inadequacies or inaccuracies may lead to a misjudgment of the target company's true financial position. Such a misjudgment may manifest itself in an overestimation of the value of the target company's assets and an underestimation of its liabilities and potential risks. For example, if the target company has undisclosed liabilities or lawsuits that were overlooked during due diligence, the acquirer may face sudden financial pressure after the transaction is completed. This will not only directly affect the financial position of the acquirer but may also undermine its overall business layout and market reputation.

On the other hand, mergers and acquisitions often require substantial financial support, which usually involves a variety of financing channels, such as bank loans, equity financing, or bond issuance. However, a series of financing risks may arise if the M&A party has limited financing capability or poor financing channels due to changes in the market environment. A shortage of financing may lead to the disruption of the M&A process and may even force the M&A party to abandon a project in which it has already invested significant resources. At the same time, high financing costs may also increase the operational burden after the M&A and reduce the profitability and competitiveness of the company.

In addition to the above direct impacts, financial risks may also trigger a series of chain reactions. For example, post-merger financial distress may lead to a decline in investor confidence, which in turn may affect the company's share price and market valuation. This in turn may exacerbate the difficulty of raising capital, creating a vicious circle. In addition, financial risks may also affect the company's supply chain and customer relationships, undermining the basis for mutual trust and cooperation with other business partners.

Therefore, in the process of M&A, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of financial risks and to respond to them effectively. This is not only related to the success or failure of the M&A transaction but also affects the long-term stability and development of the company. The M&A party must treat every step of the process with a high degree of caution and professionalism to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information, as well as the safety and stability of the funds. Only in this way can they remain resilient and flexible enough to achieve sustained and healthy development in an intensely competitive market.

6.0 Conclusion

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) have played a pivotal role in the development of small and medium-sized audit firms in Malaysia, with far-reaching and multifaceted implications. This strategic move has not only provided these firms with unprecedented opportunities for expansion, resource consolidation, and

business diversification, but has also been accompanied by a series of complex and challenging issues such as organisational structure and cultural integration, loss of core talent, financial management, and risk control.

In Malaysia, small and medium-sized audit firms are often faced with limited resources and insufficient market presence. Through mergers and acquisitions (M&A), they can quickly gain access to the resources and client base of other firms, thereby achieving rapid expansion. Such expansion not only enhances their bargaining power in the market but also provides them with a more diversified scope of business, which helps to counteract the market risks associated with a single line of business. For example, a firm that originally specialised in tax consulting can immediately expand its range of services by acquiring a firm that specialises in financial auditing, attracting a wider client base.

However, mergers and acquisitions are not always easy. There are often significant differences between firms in terms of organisational structure, corporate culture, and business model. How to integrate these different elements to form a unified and efficient whole is the first issue to be resolved after M&A. In addition, the loss of core talent during the M&A process is a risk that cannot be ignored. The departure of key employees may take away important customer resources and business knowledge, which will have a serious impact on the post-merger integration work.

In terms of financial management and risk control, M&A also brings a series of new challenges. Post-merger firms need to integrate the financial systems of both parties within a short time to ensure the accuracy and transparency of financial information. At the same time, the risks faced by the firm also rise due to the increase in business scale and complexity. This requires the post-merger firm to establish a more complete risk management system to cope with various risk events that may arise.

Small and medium-sized audit firms should take a series of specific measures when implementing M&A strategies. (1) They need to conduct sufficient due diligence before M&A to fully understand the target firm's financial status, business composition, staff structure and other key information, so as to lay a solid foundation for the subsequent integration work. (2) Firms should formulate a detailed M&A and integration plan, with clear integration goals, steps, and timetable, to ensure that the integration. (3) The firm should also pay attention to talent retention during the M&A process and stabilise the core team by providing competitive remuneration and benefits and clear career development paths to ensure business continuity and stability.

Looking ahead, small, and medium-sized audit firms will face more M&A opportunities and challenges as the Malaysian economy continues to grow and the market environment continues to change. It is therefore important for these firms to continuously enhance their strengths and capabilities to adapt to the changing market demands. At the same time, they should also actively explore new M&A modes and strategies to better grasp market opportunities and achieve sustainable development.

For future research directions, academics and practitioners can further focus on key issues in the post-merger integration process, such as cultural integration, talent management, risk control, etc., to provide more valuable guidance and suggestions for the M&A practices of small and medium-sized audit firms. Meanwhile, case studies and empirical analyses can also be considered to explore the applicability and effectiveness of different M&A strategies in different market environments, to provide stronger support for firms' M&A decisions.

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Factors Predicting the Brand Equity of Chinese Hot Pot Restaurants in Klang Valley, Malaysia

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Abstract

This paper delves into the landscape of consumer behavior and purchasing decisions in response to heightened business competition, emphasizing the escalating significance of brand equity in influencing consumer choices. It explores the correlation between brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, and their collective impact on brand equity. The theoretical foundation draws upon Aaker's Brand Equity Model as a guiding framework, examining its relevance in elucidating brand equity dynamics in diverse cultural and market settings. Through empirical analysis and a survey-based approach involving 395 respondents in the Klang Valley area, this research investigates the interplay between brand-related factors and brand equity in the context of Chinese hot pot restaurants. Findings suggest that brand loyalty emerges as the most influential factor contributing to brand equity in this specific market segment. The study identifies an unexpected inverse relationship between perceived quality and brand equity, indicating a need for further exploration and nuanced understanding. Additionally, brand awareness and brand association exhibit substantial significance in shaping brand equity, emphasizing the pivotal role of brand management strategies and consumer perceptions in influencing purchase decisions. These findings provide a foundation for strategic decision-making and marketing initiatives to foster brand equity in a competitive market environment, thereby offering guidance for businesses seeking sustained consumer loyalty and market prominence.

Keywords: Brand equity, consumer behavior, purchase decision-making, Chinese hot pot restaurants, market strategies.

1.0 Introduction

The increase in business rivalry has changed consumer buying behavior and the purchase decision-making process resulted in more prominent weight on the brand than on the actual features offered (Khandelwal et. al., 2019). In this new era of intense competition, brand equity has been noticed as the major factor contributing to competitive advantages and as a sustainable marketing strategy for many companies (Yang et. al., 2020). Brand equity is a term used to describe the value of having a recognized brand, based on the idea that firmly established and reputable brands are more successful (Veselinova and Samonikov, 2018). The value of brand equity derives from consumer perception of the brand name of a particular product or service, rather than from the product or service itself (Luffarelli et. al., 2019).

Companies viewed brand equity as one of the most critical components of business strategy where significant resources were allocated to build positive brands for customers (Trent and Mohr, 2017). Chinese hot pot brands have been noticed as a rapidly growing cuisine in Malaysia in recent years where it was first popularized by 'Haidilao', a famous brand originating from China (Ambler, 2018). Sarker et. al. (2018) indicated that the One Belt One Road (OBOR) strategy adopted by China in 2013 has greatly accelerated China's brand expansion around the globe including Malaysia. Feng et. al. (2018) claimed this was "Chinese hot pot fever" to Asia consumers towards Chinese hot pot restaurants which portrayed the current landscape of the hot pot restaurant industry in Asia. Since the emerging catering industry of Chinese hot pot, it has received significant attention from investors and demand from consumers (Yu and Wang, 2020). With the growing popularity of Chinese hot pot restaurants in Malaysia, determining the relevance of branding to consumers between different Chinese hot pot brands may serve as a context for developing advanced marketing strategies, which subsequently would lead to obtaining consumer loyalty (Wang, 2019).

Department of Statistics Malaysia (2018) reports that food and beverage services in Malaysia generated a gross production of RM 82.8 billion in 2017 with an annual growth rate value of 11.7 percent. Additionally, Lim (2019) supported that more than 160,000 food and beverage establishments in Malaysia as of 2015 with a staggering annual growth of 5.1 percent in size making it the highest growth rate among sectors in Malaysia. In these current times of innovation-fueled and intense marketplace, brand equity plays an important role in any organization or business to stand out from the competition (Lee, 2019; Singh and Islam, 2017). Brand equity has been recognized as the utmost important factor in influencing consumer buying behavior where brands form a sturdy relationship with consumers and stand out among the competition

(Shahid et. al., 2017).

However, it is not clearly understood which and what marketing efforts at branding thrive in driving the volume and maintaining a steady stream of consumers (Woo et. al., 2020).

From the above discussion, it has become clear that the conceptual and empirical research efforts addressed a wide variety of motivators that drive brand equity in Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley. The main purpose of this study is to examine how the proposed factors which are brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association contribute to brand equity of Chinese hot pot restaurants and study the significance of these factors influence brand equity.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Perspective – Aaker’s Brand Equity Model

Aaker’s brand equity model is one of the most widely applied theoretical frameworks in studies of brand equity, and it has been successfully applied in a variety of academic research to identify its significance towards brand equity in many different countries (e.g., Aadil, 2018; Azzari and Pelissari, 2020; Babatunde and Bukola, 2018; Oppong and Phiri, 2018). In the field of brand management, Aaker (1991) stated that brand equity enhances consumers’ ability to interpret and process information which improves confidence in purchase decisions resulting in effective competitive advantages. The focus in the Aaker brand equity model is accentuating recognition influence purchase intention instead of emotions influence purchase intention which is emphasized by the Keller brand equity approach (Brijesh and Masuma, 2020). Aaker (1991) emphasized brand value is controlled by stated four components that result in value creation for both customers and the firm in a diversified way. Olaleke (2017) stated that Aaker’s approach to brand equity is one of the most conceptualized among theorists and serves as a fundamental theory where derivatives can be developed to justify the components of Aaker’s brand equity approach.

2.2 Brand Equity

Brand equity in general can refer to the total value of the brand as a separate asset where the aggregation of assets and liabilities connected to the brand name, design, and symbol results in emotional attachment of consumers towards the specific brand (Veselinova and Samonikov, 2018). Formisano et. al. (2020) describe brand equity as the notion of a brand as a source of significance and value that improves consumer responses to the marketing mix and sustains a premium by introducing perceptual barriers that reduce comparison on price and

product features. Brand equity is an essential component of an organization's identity and the making of long-term brand equity relationships between organization and consumers is often rewarded (Tybout and Calkins, 2019). Several studies on the relationship between brand equity and consumer purchase intention have indicated that brand equity has a significant influence on consumer purchase intention (Azzari and Pelissari, 2020; Wright et. al., 2017). These studies were further strengthened by Aaker (1991) in which brand equity as a positive influence towards consumer purchase intention resulted in superior competitive advantages. The increased competition and development of global brands have indicated the necessity of brand equity research to academics and practitioners to constitute optimal strategy when entering the international market and stand firm in the domestic market (Merz et. al., 2018). An in-depth examination of the relationship between brand equity and the business market allows organizations to actively engage with the customer base in such a way that drives consumer satisfaction and maintains long-term relationships (Seo and Park, 2018). The current phenomenon of the increasingly competitive market and consumer preference migration has formed a crucial task for organizations to search for valuable practices to create strong brand relationships with consumers for sustainability and competitive advantages (Ansary and Hashim, 2018). Joo (2017) further acknowledged that brand equity is a value premium that fosters consumers' attachment to the specific brand and is even willing to pay a high price and deliberately against the cost performance index which subsequently benefits the industry in the low-cost high-sale performance index.

2.3 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is one of the core constructs of factors that influence brand equity proposed by Aaker (1991) in gaining and maintaining long-term competitive advantages (Doe, 2020). Brand loyalty occurs when consumers perceive the brand offers the right attributes, images, or quality at the appropriate price (Mehta, 2020). Tybout and Calkins (2019) stated that brand loyalty could also occur due to a long history of using the same product and confidence that has formed because of long usage. In addition, brand loyalty is viewed as the constructive mindset of consumers towards a brand which can be biased according to various conditions that stimulate purchase intention (Amodeo, 2018). Based on previous literature, brand loyalty is concluded as an important factor that determines the brand equity of Chinese hot pot restaurants. In this regard, the current study intends to examine the direct link between brand loyalty and brand equity in the proposed context, leading to the development of the first hypothesis:

H1: Brand loyalty has a significant influence on brand equity in Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley.

2.4 Perceived Quality

Stylidis et. al. (2020) described from a marketing standpoint, that perceived quality refers to a customer's impression of a product or service's overall superiority over rivals in terms of its intended objectives. Perceived quality is usually based on underlying dimensions which include characteristics of the products to which the brand is attached such as performance and durability (Rajagopal, 2018). Furthermore, Mohammad (2018) stated that perceived quality is highly associated with other key brand equity measures, including specific functional benefit variables. Perceived quality can also be defined as the consumer's assessment of a product's or service's overall superiority or excellence, and it is mostly a subjective assessment of the product based on customer perceptions (Ishaq, 2020). In this regard, the current study intends to examine the direct link between perceived quality and brand equity of Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley, leading to the development of a second hypothesis:

H2: Perceived quality has a significant influence on brand equity in Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley.

2.5 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the driver of consumer decisions when differentiating between competitors resulting in competitive advantages (Angelini, 2018). Brand equity is created when customers are exposed to a product or service, and this influences their perceptions and attitudes (Shabbir, et. al., 2017). Brand awareness is closely related to a brand's capacity to exist and leaves traces in the brains of consumers, resulting in the ability to recognize the brand in a variety of market circumstances (Gunelius, 2018). Hence, consumers recognize a brand from prior exposure to its products or services resulting in it as a salient tool of brand equity (Gunelius, 2018). Businesses must create brand awareness because it has the power to influence potential consumers to make purchase choices (Olaleke, 2017). In this regard, the current study intends to examine the direct link between brand awareness and brand equity of Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley, leading to the development of a third hypothesis:

H3: Brand awareness has a significant influence on brand equity in Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley.

2.6 Brand Association

Brand associations consist of different attributes such as brand name, lifestyle, benefits, country of origin, and product class (Veselinova and Samonikov, 2018).

Brand association is anything that is linked in memory to a particular brand resulting in positive brand image results that enhance brand equity (Dube and Rossi, 2019). Rhine (2018) described brand association as including brand-related feelings, insights, feelings, emotions, beliefs, experiences, and attitudes. Links to a brand are more pronounced when it is based on multiple exposures and experiences (Lieven, 2018). Consumers then rely on brand associations to process, arrange, and remember signals from memory to make purchase decisions (Oppong and Phiri, 2018). Thus, the relationship between brand equity and brand association cooperated, which helps brand maintainers enhance the brand affiliation between customer and brand (Gabrielli et. al., 2021). In addition, the study by Yang et. al. (2018) revealed the relationship between the brand association and brand equity is positive and significant. In this regard, the current study intends to examine the direct link between brand association and brand equity of Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley, leading to the development of a fourth hypothesis:

H4: Brand association has a significant influence on brand equity in Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley.

3.0 Conceptual Framework

The research framework (Figure 1) below depicts the link between brand equity and brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association proposed in the previous section and presents the hypothesis to be tested.

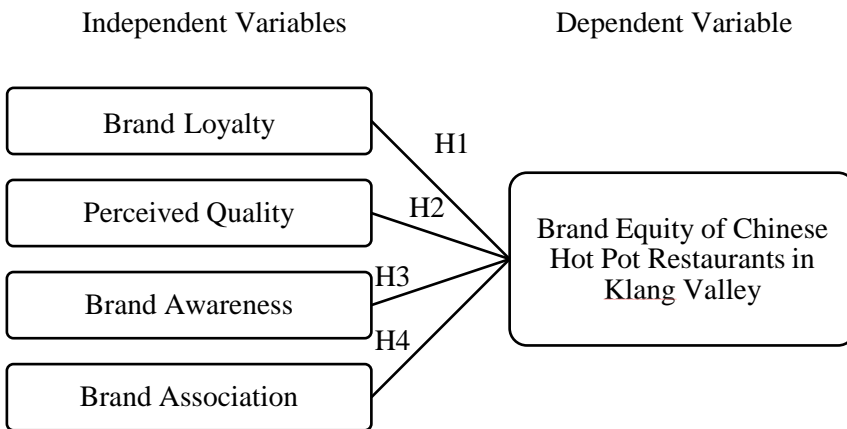


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

4.0 Research Methodology

A survey was employed in this study to obtain categorical data that would be used for statistical testing of the hypotheses. This approach is employed because

it has the advantage of being able to collect data from a vast geographical region at a reduced cost (Sekaran and Bougie, 2020). The subsections that follow detail the data-gathering process and create measurements.

4.1 Data Collection Method

A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed for this study and survey questionnaires were prepared using Google Forms and distributed to a wider and extended network through social media platforms. The survey is targeting consumers of Chinese hot pot restaurants in the Klang Valley area specifically. A total of 395 responses are recorded in the results of the survey. The adaption of questionnaire design for this research with the segmentation of three sections which are demographic information, dependent variable (brand equity), and independent variables (brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association) with 4 questions in each variable.

A 5-point Likert scale of measurement is applied in this study from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree.

5.0 Result and Discussion

Preliminary data analysis, factor analysis, and reliability analysis are analyzed using SPSS version 28 and tested hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H4.

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the summary of the demographic information of respondents collected from the survey.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic	Number of Responses	%
<u>Current Place of Residence</u>		
Klang Valley	395	100.0%
	395	100.0%
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	172	43.5%
Female	223	56.5%
	395	100.0%
<u>Age</u>		
25 years old or below	49	12.4%
26 - 40 years old	277	70.1%
41 years old or above	69	17.5%

	395	100.0%
Monthly Household Income		
Less than RM4,850	39	9.9%
Between RM4,850 to RM10,970	192	48.6%
Above RM10,971	164	41.5%
	395	100.0%

5.2 Hypothesis Testing

Table 2: Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.793a	0.629	0.625	0.45676

The R2 value of 0.629 is more than 0.5 which dictates that the conceptual framework is acceptable, and model fit. Furthermore, the adjusted R2 value of 0.625 explained about 62.5% of the brand equity towards Chinese hot pot restaurants can be explained with the four independent variables under study. However, the remaining 37.5% variation could not be explained by the predictors, but it can be explained by factors not investigated in this study. The model summary of the multiple regression analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 3: Multiple Regression ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	137.764	4	34.441	165.084	<.001b
	Residual	81.365	390	0.209		
	Total	219.129	394			

Table 3 shows the result of multiple regression ANOVA. At 95% confidence level, the p-value of less than 0.001 demonstrated that there is a statistically significant relationship between independent variables and dependent variables.

Table 4: Coefficients of Variables

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Tol.	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.286	0.19		1.502	0.134		
	Brand Loyalty	0.795	0.069	0.688	11.526	<0.001	0.267	3.739
	Perceived Quality	-0.133	0.065	-0.104	-2.057	0.040	0.373	2.68
	Brand Awareness	0.133	0.059	0.119	2.260	0.024	0.345	2.899
	Brand Association	0.134	0.049	0.122	2.718	0.007	0.469	2.131
a.	Dependent Variable: Brand Equity							

Table 4 revealed the result of the coefficient of variables. Brand loyalty has the highest beta of 0.795 indicating it has the highest influencing power towards brand equity followed by brand association (0.134), brand awareness (0.133) and perceived quality (-0.133). All independent variables under study as shown in table 4.8 are less than 10 which indicates well-distributed data with no tendency of severe multicollinearity issues such as type 1 error. In addition, Schindler (2018) mentioned that a Variance Inflation Factor of higher than 5 has the potential for skewness. Hence, the multicollinearity test on variables under study revealed that all independent variables are below 5 to further ascertain that there is no potential skewness, and no multicollinearity issue exists in this study.

6.0 Discussion and Implication

The objectives of this study are to find out the relationship between brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, and brand equity in the context of Chinese hot pot restaurants in the Klang Valley. Firstly, the research findings revealed that brand loyalty has the highest influencing power on brand equity among all other independent variables. The influence exerted by brand loyalty in determining brand equity when it comes to Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley is consistent with the studies of Doe (2020) and Anber (2017). In support, Naggar and Bendary (2017) emphasize the existence of the direct relationship between brand equity and brand loyalty whereby both variables advocate the role of service performance from the consumer perspective, in reducing perceived risk, hence building loyalty that stimulates repeat purchases. Furthermore, Sharma and Jain (2019) uncovered that the significance of brand loyalty towards brand equity is attributable to the inability of consumers to differentiate brands which eventually fueled the purchase behavior towards brands with previous experience. Since brand loyalty was shown to be the most

influential factor in the analysis when compared to other variables, the recommendations to improve brand loyalty in Chinese hot pot restaurants were assessed to be the most important and effective. Patria (2018) proposed that building a community via social media for the products or services offered as a measure of after-sales relationship can foster brand loyalty with the continuous improvement of perceived quality to encourage consumer purchase intention.

Secondly, research findings uncovered that perceived quality remains connected in the relationship with brand equity, but the relationship has become inverse where every unit increase in the perceived quality variable will result in an expected decrease in the brand equity variable. In the recent study of the restaurant industry by Spotts et. al. (2020), the findings uncovered that brand equity through effective brand management can overpower the fundamental importance of perceived quality that initially served as the foundation of brand equity. Even though, Jeronimo et. al. (2017) claimed that perceived quality remains an important variable of brand equity as it determines the experience received by consumers whereby such experience will transform into brand loyalty subsequently.

Thirdly, research findings revealed that brand awareness with a p-value of 0.024 and a beta value of 0.133 has the third most influential power on brand equity in Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley. In addition, research findings also indicated that brand management such as brand exposure, visual presentation of the brand and brand stylistics play important roles in building brand awareness among consumers. Marcin et. al. (2018) stated that brand awareness has become one of the most significant criteria in evaluating brand strength, with brand strength leading to brand equity because of its strength. Brand awareness leads to the development of brand equity in the minds of consumers through brand exposure in the market, which has specific impacts on consumer perception and attitudes (Shabbir, et. al., 2017). Hence, Andrei (2018) argued that the construction of brand equity through stylistics and senses shall be designed in a way that can convince consumers in the long term to perceive the unique brand value by providing memorable experiences.

Therefore, the exposure of the brand to the consumers is crucial for Chinese hot pot restaurant operators to obtain brand awareness. The utilization of technology in the modern era such as social media to increase the presence of the brand with a catchy and memorable brand presentation to consumers can further enhance brand awareness (Patria, 2018).

Finally, a brand association has a significant and positive relationship with brand equity with a p-value of 0.007 and a beta value of 0.134 making this variable the second most influencing power on brand equity under study. Corporate social responsibility practiced by preferred Chinese hot pot restaurants is one of the criteria that is being put to the test as part of brand association.

Oppong and Phiri (2018) provided a connection that to make a purchase choice, consumers rely on brand associations to process, organize, and recall signals from memory which subsequent purchase decisions will build brand loyalty that transforms into brand equity.

In the modern era where information can be accessed easily, consumers are becoming more conscious of the surrounding environment and society which has led to the increasing demand for corporate social responsibility by preferred brands (Huang et. al., 2021). Norzalita (2020) ascertained that Klang Valley consumers are more conscious of social responsibility as compared to other states due to the state's development status in Klang Valley and a higher level of education. Asim and Suresh (2019) suggested that corporate social responsibility as part of brand association produces significant strength in the competitive market to consumers in the modern era that results sustainable advantage called brand equity.

There are several limitations identified in this research. Although the research fulfilled Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size measurement, a greater sample size will increase the accuracy of the result and minimize the deviation of the data result. One of the biggest drawbacks of questionnaires being distributed online is that the non-computer or internet-savvy respondents are not likely to access the questionnaires which could lead to unequal distribution of income groups and opinions between income levels (Nayak and Narayan, 2019). Although the research did not specify the targeted ethnic group with Chinese hot pot restaurants as the context of the study, it may keep other ethnic groups such as Malay and Indian away from the research due to differences in food cultures and eating habits. This research focuses on the Klang Valley district whereby does not represent the general options of Malaysia and may not respond to the market in other states.

7.0 Conclusion

The results of this study indicate the emergence of valid and reliable variables that affect the brand equity of Chinese hot pot restaurants in Klang Valley. The food service industry in Malaysia is saturated and the increase in business rivalry has changed consumer buying behavior and purchase decision making resulting in more prominence weight for brand equity. The focus of this research is to define and provide insights into the impacts of brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association towards brand equity.

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Factors Influencing Employee Performance of Chinese Automobile Companies

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Abstract

This paper delves into the intricate relationship between employee personal performance, team performance, and organizational effectiveness in the context of the automobile industry in China. The research adopts a systemic viewpoint to understand employee behavior within organizations. Through a comprehensive literature review, it investigates the influence of remuneration, rewards, training programs, and the work environment on employee performance. Notably, it elucidates how these factors, especially remuneration, rewards, and training, affect employee performance, using statistical analyses and multiple regression models. The findings reveal that remuneration, rewards, and training significantly influence employee performance, whereas the working environment exhibits limited impact. Among these factors, remuneration emerges as the most influential, followed by rewards and training. This study contributes to the existing literature by offering empirical evidence on the specific influences of these factors and their relative importance in enhancing employee performance. Practically, this research underscores the importance of implementing effective strategies related to salary incentives, employee training, and performance feedback mechanisms within organizations. By prioritizing fair compensation structures, structured training programs, and robust communication channels, companies can significantly boost employee performance and organizational success in the competitive automotive industry of China.

Keywords: C, Systemic Viewpoint, Employee Behavior

1.0 Introduction

Employee personal performance and team performance, organizational performance are interrelated, inseparable. The level of employee performance directly affects the company's profitability and future business development direction, its importance is beyond doubt (Elnaga, 2013). Summarizes the four key factors that affect the performance of the staff based on the double mastery of theory and practice.

Compensation elements are used to identify valuable work characteristics, based on these characteristics of enterprises to determine the position of a wage level. It is a valuable feature of organizational tasks that is included in many different positions that contribute to the organization's strategy (Imran, 2014). Incentives as a factor affecting employee performance to change the work of the staff to play a role in the enthusiasm (Ying, 2004). To make the incentive play a role, the organization should be based on the needs of individual employees' structure, personality, and other factors, and select the appropriate incentives and methods. Environmental factors that affect job performance can be divided into two types environmental factors within the organization and outside the organization (Imran, 2014). Whether it is the internal environment of the organization or the external environment, will affect the staff's workability (skills) and work attitude (work enthusiasm, etc.), affecting the performance of employees (Woods, 2013). Staff training refers to a certain organization's needs to carry out business and nurture talent, using various ways to staff purposeful and planned training and management activities, open internal training, and so are common staff training and business form training (Ying, 2004). Employee training is the most important basic way and an excellent way to directly improve managers' competence and staff skills and provide enterprises with new working ideas, knowledge, information, skills, growth of staff and professionalism, and innovation. Human resource development is a more important investment in human capital than physical capital investment (Elnaga, 2013).

At present, the research on the influencing factors of employee performance is limited to the individual level, and there is no limitation on the factors influencing the performance of the employees from the system point of view (Holmes, 2011). Based on the perspective of system analysis, the behavior of employees in the organization is a decision-making process that is influenced by many factors. Therefore, in addition to the individual differences, the study of the factors influencing the performance of the employees must also consider the work, group, and organizational factors. Individual differences, job tasks, work groups, and organizations determine the performance of an employee by direct or indirect action path and the effect of their differences. So, the researcher set the research objective as employee performance influencers in the automobile industry in China.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Impact of Remuneration on Employee Performance

Over the years, it has been found that good remuneration is one of the policies that organizations can take to increase their job performance and thereby increase organizational productivity (Soud, 2014). In addition, with the current global economic trends, most labor employers are aware that, to organize the competitiveness of the staff's performance in determining the success of the organization has a long way to go. Different definitions have been advanced on salaries and wages usually to show the differences that exist between both terms (Calvin, 2017). Surbhi (2015) also defines wages as a fixed amount paid to employees regularly for performance and productivity, while wages are paid on an hourly basis. An increase in an employee's pay depended on changes in the cost of living and employees regarded the increase in pay as entitlement without accounting for their performance, or that of the organization (Elijah, 2014). The pay of the staff depends on the skills and abilities they have, and what is worth working for.

Research literature shows that the performance of pay can indeed affect employee performance. But there are places where there is a negative impact on performance pay. The performance of the pay-per-performance is due to the large remuneration compared to the fact that the junior employee manages to accept what is considered controversial. Effective performance plans have had a positive impact on employee motivation. However, the preferences of the reward vary from one individual to another, so it is important to understand the individual and what motivates them not to provide them with practical rewards.

2.2 Rewards as a Motivation Tool for Employee

Rewards can play an important role in employee performance. A good employee feels that the company's value lies in trying to improve their good work (Hameed, 2014). The manager's responsibility therefore includes "combining good incentives with meaningful work, setting performance goals, and using effective incentive systems ... to create the desired atmosphere and culture (Duah, 2011).

People often think that the ultimate responsibility of managers is to motivate their employees. 'While rewards may serve as incentives and those who bestow rewards may seek to use them as motivators; the real motivation to act comes from within the individual' (Duah, 2011). This is because managers can only react with the return of the staff to motivate them to perform but cannot force them. Therefore, the responsibility lies in the individual choice of execution or behavior. To this end, managers and employees must play a key role in the incentive process of management and incentives. Therefore, effective motivations can only be achieved when managers and employees cooperate.

Herzberg adds some important factors to the models provided by Maslow and Porter. In other words, he changed these theories and then criticized them; it was one of the most important and best-motivating theories to date (Gohari, 2013). Herzberg's theory is widely known as one of the main theories of incentive factors and thus has practical and theoretical consequences. Getting basic benefits and salaries and having the right working environment do not make employees happy and happy with the job. Thus, focusing on his theory, employees try to find higher demands on their psychological minds, such as appreciation, improvement, and a higher sense of responsibility.

Rewards are divided into two categories: external and internal returns. External incentives are "many external things that managers can provide to encourage employees to increase productivity, including money, benefits, bonuses, promotions, flexible schedules and so on. The inner return is personal inside, in many ways less tangible. They are very subjective because they represent the personal feelings feel the work and value. The inherent "reward" is inherent in the content of the work itself, including" motivational characteristics ", diversity and autonomy and feedback, and employee participation in decision-making. Note that five can be summarized as healthy relationships, meaningful work, ability, progress, and choice.

2.3 Effects of Training on Employee

Employees are the main assets of any organization. Their positive role in the success of the company cannot be underestimated. Therefore, the provision of these unique assets through effective training is essential to maximize job performance. While allowing them to face the challenges of today's competitive business environment (Nassazi, 2013). As a result, senior management recognizes the importance of investing in training and development to improve employee performance.

To allow employees to prepare their jobs as required and to provide training to optimize the potential of employees. Most companies invest in applying long-term planning to build new skills in their workforce so that they can cope with the uncertain conditions they face in the future, improving employee performance through superior motivation and commitment levels (Elnaga, 2013). In general, training affects the organization's competitiveness, income, and performance.

There may be poor performance of the staff and other reasons the workers may not feel motivated to no longer use their ability, or there may not be enough confidence in their ability, or they may face work and life conflict (Ramya, 2016). There are different ways to define training terminology.

It can be defined as systematically developing the knowledge, skills, and behavior that employees provide to ensure the task or work, or simply to improve the performance of existing work (Angela, 2014). Therefore, the rapidly changing business environment requires lifelong learning as an important coping strategy. The business environment changes from time to time to continuously enhance the skills and capabilities of the staff to improve the performance of the job, grow, and adapt to the rapidly changing economy of the organization's environment to remain competitive (Ramya, 2016).

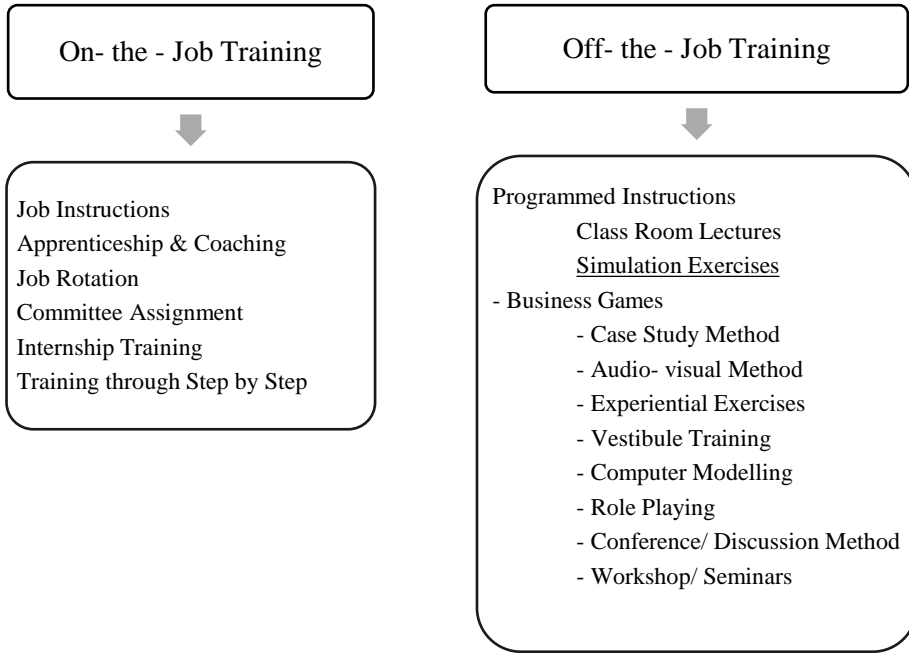
2.3.1 Training and Development

Training and development are an indispensable strategic tool for effective personal and organizational performance, so organizations are spending money and are confident in gaining a competitive advantage in business. However, for any organization to achieve its stated goals and objectives in this highly competitive world, the full and relevant training and development of staff cannot be overemphasized (Falola, 2014). The organization is expected to identify the training needs of its employees and design training programs to help optimize the use of employees to achieve organizational goals. Training and development are a technical use for transferring employee skills, knowledge, and competencies to improve employee performance in current and future tasks. To achieve its stated goals and objectives, the organization cannot carry out effective and optimal performance training for its employees.

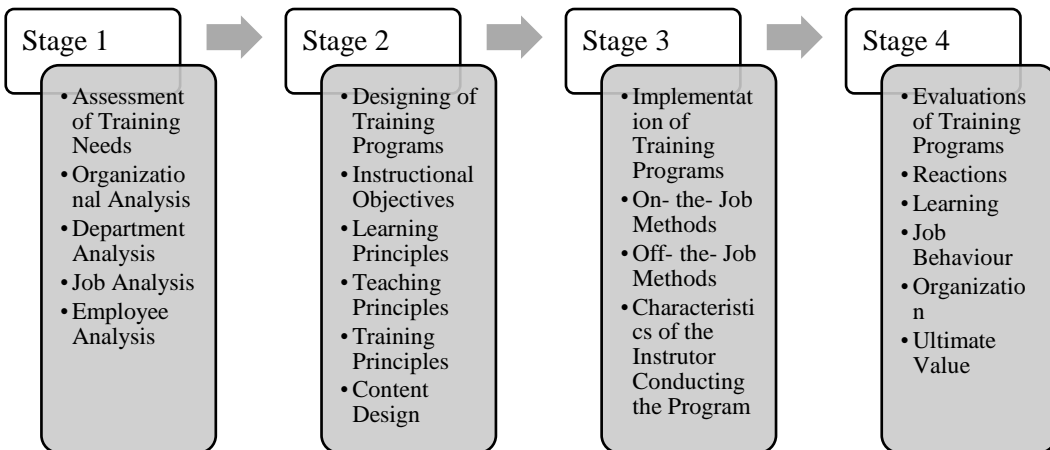
2.3.2 Related Theories of Employee Training and Development

A variety of theories are proposed to explain the relevance of training needs in any organization. In social learning theory, employees acquire new skills and knowledge by observing other staff who are confident of them and believing in trustworthiness and more knowledge. This theory suggests that training and learning are influenced by human self-efficacy and the ability to successfully learn new skills that can be encouraged, verbal persuasion, logical confirmation, and observing the influence of others. The theory of reinforcement argues that training is a strategic tool that makes work interesting and a way for employees to design the best performance for improving the quality of their employees, and ultimately to improve the performance, innovation, and creativity of their employees. The company's resource-based view (RBV) advocates organizations to attract and retain human resources, gain a competitive advantage, identify relevant training for them, and continually improve their capabilities to achieve optimal performance. Through this meaning, the effectiveness of training and learning depends on the work-related knowledge, skills, abilities, abilities, and behavior patterns that are critical to greater performance, all of which will necessarily affect the organization's success (Falola, 2014).

Types of Training



(Kulkarni, 2013)



(Kulkarni, 2013)

2.2 The Impact of Working Environment on Employees

The working environment plays an important role in the performance of the staff. Controversy is that the work environment is critical to employee performance or positive results. In the world, there are international organizations to debate the rights of employees. Most people spend 50 percent of their lives in the indoor environment, which greatly affects their mental state, behavior, ability, and performance. Assuming better results and improved productivity are the result of a better working environment.

A better office physical environment will promote the development of employees, and ultimately improve the productivity of employees (Bushiri, 2014). The new challenge for management is to create a working environment that attracts, retains, and motivates employees. And a few years ago, was completely different, so that employees were satisfied. Many professional factors affect the performance of employees. Personality, workplace preferences, and the relationship between the outcome variables, performance, and commitment affect the performance of employees in the workplace. Research shows that the work environment has a significant impact on employee performance and attitudes to determine whether employees are faced with the same problem (Tetteh, 2012).

The working environment affects the morale, productivity, and participation of employees - positive and negative. The working environment in most industries is unsafe and unhealthy. These include improperly designed workstations, inappropriate furniture, poor ventilation, improper lighting, excessive noise, inadequate safety precautions in emergencies, and lack of personal protective equipment. People who work in this environment are prone to occupational diseases which affect the performance of their employees. As a result, due to the working environment, productivity is reduced. The greatest impact of the quality of the staff's working environment lies in their motivation and subsequent performance. How they are in contact with the organization, especially in their immediate environment largely affects their error rate, innovation level cooperation with other employees, absence, and ultimately stay in work for how long. Creating a working environment for employee productivity is critical to increasing profits for your organization, company, or small business. Work, workplace, and work tools, the workplace becomes an integral part of the work itself. Management decides how to maximize employee productivity around two key areas: the infrastructure of individual motivation and the working environment (Mathews, 2016).

2.4.1 Characteristics of Work Environment

Surface and open communication: Essentially, it makes the staff feel that they are appropriate in the organization. However, staff the concept, mission, and values of the organization (Jain, 2014).

The stability of working life: work and personal life must have a certain balance between. In general, a sense of balance will improve employee job satisfaction (Tripathi, 2015).

Fairness: Employees need to determine whether their performance is a fair return. Fairness means that the consequences of the performance are determined by the quantity and quality of the performance (Joubert, 2015).

Consistency: Consistency refers to predictability. Subordinates want to know how their supervisors react in a given situation. According to management research, consistency is the only most effective criterion for building your leadership (Mavin, 2010).

2.4.2 Physical Work Environment and Employee Performance

In the physical work environment, several factors m affect the performance of employees. These factors are lighting in the workplace. Some affect the performance of employees, the other interference is the noise, which will cause discomfort to the staff, thereby reducing the performance of employees. In addition, employee satisfaction may also lead to employee performance. Therefore, to satisfy employees, the actual workplace factors need to be applied to all workplaces (Rorong, 2016). Temessek (2009) said that functionality helps functional and aesthetic aspects of the work environment's decor and design, ultimately helping to improve the employee's experience and need better performance (Jayaweera, 2015). In addition, once employees become the source of the workplace, the work staff potential is great, and it will affect the performance of employees (Naharuddin, 2013). Employees may be affected, depending on the tasks they give and the environment in which they work. Through a good environment, employees can use their energy and attention to work (Augustin, 2013).

3.0 Research Methodology

In this study, a simple random sampling quantitative analysis method was used to study the main variables that affect employee performance. To avoid prejudice and to maintain an objective answer, the data I collected to answer depends on a well-designed questionnaire. Randomly assigned to the Chinese car manufacturer BYD employees. The questionnaire is divided into two parts, the first part is a personal feature, which contains four questions: gender, position, education, and income; the second part deals with 20 objective issues that affect employee performance. The 5-level rating scale is strongly agreed, agreed, mild, disagree, strongly disagree. The number of samples is 150, the

respondents fill out the questionnaire, the collection of information for 2 weeks. This company in China's auto industry are representative. 150 employees represent some of their views on the factors that affect employee performance. The general characteristics of sampling are as follows:

This company was founded in 1995 and is a Chinese car brand, that mainly produces commercial and domestic cars. This company car follows the independent research and development, independent production, and independent brand development line, determined to create a truly inexpensive national car, product design not only learns from the international trend of advanced concepts but also in line with the aesthetic concept of Chinese culture. There is only one instrument used in collecting the relevant data that is used in the questionnaire. It is very difficult to accurately measure the factors that may affect employee performance. Thus, the researchers developed a measurement method based on the HH Renmers Purdue Rating Scale and Dean Elliott. Questionnaires are the most efficient and convenient method of quantitative analysis, and the method is based on a set of problem-collection responses. And there are many ways to collect face-to-face interviews, phone, and e-mail data as face-to-face.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part is the characteristics of the participants. The second part is the position of the company where the participant is located, as well as the department. The third part deals with some objectivity issues that affect employee performance. I assigned questionnaires and, based on face-to-face interviews, collected data using SPSS analysis. In this study, the data was analyzed by IBM, SPSS software 22.00, the analysis points included descriptive analysis, normality tests, effectiveness tests, reliability tests and some tables, charts, etc., as well as statistical procedures, including test assumptions Such as the two-test, an ANOVA, a multiple regression, and variance analysis.

4.0 Research Findings

4.1 Research Sample Background Information

A total of 180 questionnaires were distributed in the survey. 150 questionnaires were included in the final sample pool. The rate of recovery was 83.3%. In the 150 questionnaires, there were 60 men, and 88 women and there were 2 missing cases. The sex ratio had little significant difference, indicating that the samples of this study were selected well.

Gender					
		frequency	%	Valid %	Accumulated %
Valid	1	60	40.0	40.5	40.5

	2	88	58.7	59.5	100.0
	total	148	98.7	100.0	
Missing	system	2	1.3		
Total		105	150	100.0	

About the age of the sample, 42.7% concentrated in 21-30 years old, 53.3% concentrated in 31-40 years old. The distribution ratio of this age is reasonable, which accords with the actual age of most employees. This shows that the selected samples are reasonable.

Organizational Service Tenure					
		frequency	%	Valid %	Accumulated %
Valid	1	1	.7	.7	.7
	2	64	42.7	43.2	43.9
	3	80	53.3	54.1	98.0
	4	3	2.0	2.0	100.0
	total	148	98.7	100.0	
Missing	system	2	1.3		
Total		105	150	100.0	

As to the education of the samples, 55.3% have a college degree, and 40.0% with master’s degree or above. The sample selected by this research institute has a high degree of education. The sample has a more reasonable degree, which is conducive to the development of this study.

Education					
		frequency	%	Valid %	Accumulated %
Valid	1	1	.7	.7	.7
	2	4	2.7	2.7	3.4
	3	83	55.3	56.1	59.5
	4	60	40.0	40.5	100.0
	total	148	98.7	100.0	
Missing	system	2	1.3		
Total		150	150	100.0	

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability refers to the measurement results of the degree of consistency or reliability, to estimate the impact of measurement errors on the whole test results. For the same content or variable measurement, consistency checks for all measurements. In the measurement, by measuring the size of the error, we then

evaluate the reliability. Reliability for understanding the authenticity of the scores in the test scores and the proportion of errors in the measurement. The greater between the measurement and the true score gap is large, and the result is a lack of reliability, indicating not reliable. The questionnaire to measure whether the real researchers want to measure the content of reliability is the premise. The higher the reliability, the measurement result is more reliable. The coefficient is higher, and the test content is more consistent. In general, if the reliability coefficient is above 0.8, then the reliability is high; reliability can be reached more than 0.7 referring to good reliability; above 0.6 for reliability can be accepted at least.

The standard for reliability

Reliability	Result
>0.8	Very good reliability
>0.7	Good reliability
>0.6	Acceptable reliability
<0.6	Unacceptable reliability

Factors	Items	Reliability	Results
Factor 1: remuneration	3	0.914	> 0.7, good reliability
Factor 2: rewards	3	0.909	> 0.7, good reliability
Factor 3: training	3	0.806	> 0.7, good reliability
Factor 4: environment	4	0.648	> 0.6, acceptable reliability
Employees performance	3	0.869	> 0.7, good reliability

As the data shown in the table, the reliability of most variables is greater than 0.8, indicating a high reliability and reliability of each scale. Although the environment has reliability which is lower than 0.7, most of the variables are greater than 0.8, indicating that the scale has a reasonable and acceptable reliability.

		Correlation				
		Remuneration	Rewards	Training	Environment	Performance
Remuneration	Pearson correlation	1	.861**	.173*	.250**	.568**
	significant value (two tails)		0	0.035	0.002	0
Rewards	Pearson correlation	.861**	1	0.136	.194*	.560**
	significant value (two tails)	0		0.097	0.017	0
Training	Pearson correlation	.173*	0.136	1	.426**	.261**
	significant value (two tails)	0.035	0.097		0	0.001
Environment	Pearson correlation	.250**	.194*	.426**	1	.253**
	significant value (two tails)	0.002	0.017	0		0.002
Performance	Pearson correlation	.568**	.560**	.261**	.253**	1
	significant value (two t tails)	0	0	0.001	0.002	

According to the results of the Pearson correlation test, remuneration, rewards, training and working environment were positively and significantly correlated with employee performance.

4.3 Multiple Regression

A study on the dependent variable, with two or more than two independent variables is what we call “multiple regression”. Also known as multiple linear regression, the number reflects the phenomenon or things in a variety of phenomena or things change and corresponding changes in the laws.

model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.467	.219	.211	.7259632
2	.539	.290	.276	.6952209

R represents the goodness of fit, the closer to 1, the better the fitting effect. In this study, it is around 0.5, showing that the degree of data fit is reasonable.

Anova					
model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.

1	regression	75.950	1	75.950	69.915	.000
	residual	159.689	147	1.086		
	total	235.639	148			
2	regression	82.534	2	41.267	39.352	.000
	residual	153.105	146	1.049		
	total	235.639	148			
3	regression	87.489	3	29.163	28.543	.000
	residual	148.150	145	1.022		
	total	235.639	148			

According to the result of Anova analysis, values of dependent variables are significantly different in different levels of independent variables, indicating a good model fit.

Excluded variables						
model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial correlation	Collinearity statistics	
					tolerance	
1	Environment	.119	1.708	.090	.140	.937
	Training	.170	2.506	.013	.203	.970
	Rewards	.277	2.096	.038	.171	.259
2	Environment	.059	.787	.432	.065	.786
	Rewards	.285	2.202	.029	.180	.258
3	Environment	.065	.877	.382	.073	.785

Coefficients								
model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% CI	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			lower	upper
1	(constant)	2.227	.234		9.512	.000	1.764	2.689
	Remuneration	.516	.062	.568	8.362	.000	.394	.638
2	(constant)	1.064	.518		2.055	.042	.041	2.088
	Remuneration	.489	.062	.538	7.948	.000	.368	.611
	Training	.232	.093	.170	2.506	.013	.049	.415
3	(constant)	1.025	.511		2.004	.047	.014	2.036
	Remuneration	.265	.118	.292	2.242	.027	.031	.499
	Training	.237	.091	.173	2.594	.010	.056	.418

	Rewards	.260	.118	.285	2.202	.029	.027	.494
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Stepwise regression results show that the salary, reward, and training the significant regression coefficient (P value (SIG) is less than 0.05, and the coefficient is positive), indicating that the three variables can lead to higher performance, because the compensation coefficient is the biggest influence on the performance of the maximum salary, followed by reward, finally training. The working environment of the coefficient is not significant, and therefore cannot bring employee innovation.

4.4 Conclusion of Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Result
Remuneration has an impact on employee performance	Supported
Rewards have an impact on employee performance	Supported
Training has an impact on employee performance	Supported
The environment has an impact on employee performance	Not supported

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Research Findings

The design model, questionnaire, data collection, and influencing factors of job performance were studied. This paper puts forward four may have an impact on job performance factors: remuneration, rewards, training, and, working environment, but by the end of the multiple regression, remuneration, rewards, and training have a significant influence on employee performance, while working environment has no significant impact on employee performance. Among the three factors that have a significant impact on employee performance, remuneration is the most influential incentive, and finally training.

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英国商业实践中的可持续发展策略研究

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摘要

英国商业实践在可持续发展方面展示了其对环境保护、经济增长和社会福祉的综合考虑。研究探讨了可持续发展的理论基础，包括其定义、三大支柱以及国际框架和目标。英国企业如何通过策略如能源使用优化、循环经济推广、社会责任提升和供应链管理来贯彻可持续发展原则，进而减少对环境的影响，同时促进社会和经济的进步。案例研究突出了Unilever和Tesco在可持续战略实施中的领导作用，显示了英国商业实践中可持续性的前瞻性和实际应用。

关键词：可持续发展，英国商业实践，环境保护

A Study of Sustainable Development Strategies in UK Business Practice

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Abstract

UK business practices demonstrate their combined consideration of environmental protection, economic growth and social well-being in terms of sustainable development. The study explored the theoretical basis of sustainable development, including its definition, the three pillars, and the international framework and objectives. How can UK companies implement the principles of sustainable development through strategies such as energy use optimization, circular economy promotion, social responsibility promotion and supply chain management to reduce their environmental impact while promoting social and economic progress. The case study highlights the leadership of Unilever and Tesco in the implementation of a sustainable strategy, showing the prospective and practical application of sustainability in UK business practice.

Keywords: Sustainable development, UK business practice, environmental protection

引言

在面临全球气候变化和资源枯竭的挑战下，可持续发展已成为国际社会的重要议题。作为全球可持续发展的积极参与者，英国扮演着关键角色，通过推进环保政策、鼓励商业创新和强化社会责任感，引领着全球向可持续目标迈进。英国商业实践中的可持续发展策略，不仅关乎环境保护和资源节约，也涵盖经济和社会的全面发展。

一、可持续发展的理论基础

（一）可持续发展的定义和三大支柱

可持续发展是一种发展方式，旨在满足当前世代的需求，同时不损害未来世代满足其需求的能力。这一概念在 1987 年的《布伦特兰报告》中首次被提出，并逐渐成为全球性的行动指南。可持续发展的核心理念围绕三大支柱展开：环境、经济和社会。环境支柱强调保护自然资源，确保生态系统的健康与多样性，这包括但不限于减少污染、保护生物多样性和促进对自然资源的合理利用。经济支柱则聚焦于确保经济活动的持续增长和稳定，同时推动创新和公平竞争，以实现长期的经济福祉。社会支柱关注提高生活质量，包括教育、健康、平等和社区参与等方面，旨在建设一个公正、包容和有凝聚力的社会。这三大支柱相互依赖，共同构成了可持续发展的基础框架。为实现这一目标，需要跨领域的合作，包括政府、私营部门和民间社会的共同努力。通过这种多方参与，可持续发展旨在寻找经济发展、社会包容和环境保护之间的平衡点，以确保人类活动对地球的影响在自然界的承受范围之内，并为所有人创造公平的机会和条件。

（二）可持续发展的国际框架和目标

联合国可持续发展目标（SDGs），是在 2015 年联合国可持续发展峰会上确定的，旨在引导全球发展至 2030 年。这一框架包括 17 个目标，涵盖广泛的社会、经济和环境问题，从消除贫困、实现粮食安全、改善健康和教育，到促进清洁能源使用、减少不平等以及采取行动应对气候变化等。这些目标旨在为全球可持续发展提供一个共同的蓝图，促进所有国家和利益相关者之间的合作，确保人类的发展不以牺牲地球健康为代价。SDGs的设计体现了一种全球性的愿景，认识到各个目标之间存在着深刻的相互联系。例如，减轻气候变化的影响（目标 13）、直接关联到清洁能源（目标 7）的推广和海洋资源的可持续利用（目标 14）。通过这种相互关联的方式，SDGs鼓励采取综合性策略，以实现经济增长、社会包容及环境保护之间的和谐。实现SDGs要求国际社会进行前所未有的合作与协调，涉及政府、私营部门、民间社会及个人层面的参与。这一框架强调每个国家和地区都需要根据自身的实际情况和能力，制定和实施适应性强的国家策略和计划。同时，联合国系统和其他国际组织提供技术支持和建议，确保各方在实现这些目标的过程中能够取得进展^[1]。

（三）可持续发展在企业战略中的角色

可持续发展在企业战略中占据着核心地位，转变了传统的商业模式，将环境保护、社会责任和经济增长融为一体。在当今社会，企业不仅仅被看作是利润的创造者，同时也承担着对环境和社会产生积极影响的责任。这种转变意味着企业必须在其战略规划中纳入可持续发展的原则，以确保长期的商业成功与全球福祉的增进。纳

入可持续发展的企业战略，涉及对公司运营的全方位审视，包括但不限于能源使用、原料采购、生产过程、产品设计以及废物管理等方面。通过优化这些流程，企业不仅能减少对环境的负面影响，还能在提高效率和降低成本方面获益。此外，对社会责任的重视可以增强企业与消费者、员工和社区的联系，建立起企业的良好声誉和品牌忠诚度。企业采取的可持续战略还包括创新产品和服务，特别是那些能够解决环境问题、改善社会福祉的解决方案。这种创新不仅符合市场趋势，更能打开新的商机和增长领域。例如，发展绿色技术和可再生能源项目不仅有助于减少温室气体排放，也为企业带来了新的收入来源。在全球化的商业环境中，供应链管理也成为实现可持续发展的关键环节。企业通过确保供应链的透明度和公正性，不仅能够保障资源的有效利用，还能提升整个行业的可持续标准。此外，通过环境、社会和治理（ESG）报告的发布，企业能够向投资者和公众展示其在可持续发展方面的承诺和成果。

二、英国商业环境概述

（一）英国经济的特点和商业环境

英国经济展现了多元化和创新的特点，其商业环境以稳定的政治体系、成熟的法律框架及开放的市场经济为基础。作为世界上最大的经济体之一，英国在金融服务、创新科技、制造业和教育等领域享有国际声誉。伦敦，作为全球金融中心之一，吸引了世界各地的投资者和企业家。在商业环境方面，英国政府提供了一系列优惠政策，旨在鼓励企业成长、创新和国际贸易。这些政策包括税收优惠、创业支持以及研发投资的财政激励^[2]。此外，英国拥有高效的企业注册和设立程序，为企业提供了便捷的营商条件。英国的教育系

统和研究基础设施在全球享有盛誉，为企业提供了一流的人才和创新能力。这种强大的知识经济背景推动了在生物科技、信息技术、可再生能源和其他高科技领域的企业发展。同时，英国政府对于科研和技术创新的投资进一步加强了这些行业的国际竞争力。英国的地理位置也为其商业环境增添了优势，位于欧洲和美国市场之间的战略位置，为企业提供了便捷的国际贸易通道。尽管英国脱欧带来了一定的不确定性，但政府积极与世界各国谈判，旨在确保贸易和投资的连续性与稳定性。商业环境的另一特色是对可持续发展和社会责任的重视。英国企业越来越意识到可持续发展对于长期成功的重要性，许多公司积极采取措施减少环境影响，提高社会福祉。政府和非政府组织在推动可持续商业实践方面也发挥了积极作用。

（二）英国政府对可持续商业实践的政策和激励措施

英国政府通过一系列政策和激励措施，鼓励企业采用可持续商业实践，这些政策旨在支持环境保护、促进社会福祉和实现经济增长的和谐。政府的行动计划包括立法措施、财政激励、以及为企业提供资源和指导，以促进可持续发展的实现。立法措施方面，英国政府制定了一系列环境法律和规定，要求企业减少碳排放、提高能效和采用环保材料。例如，碳定价机制对碳排放量大的企业施加成本，激励它们寻求更清洁的能源解决方案。同时，政府推出了严格的废物管理和回收政策，要求企业负责其产品生命周期内的环境影响。在财政激励方面，英国政府为那些采取行动减少环境影响和提高社会责任的企业提供了各种激励。这包括减税、补贴和资金支持，特别是对于那些在清洁技术、可再生能源和能效提升方面进行投资的公司^[3]。此外，政府还设立了专门的基金，支持绿色创新和可持续

发展项目。政府还通过提供信息、资源和指导来支持企业的可持续发展努力。这包括举办工作坊、发布最佳实践指南和提供咨询服务，帮助企业理解可持续发展的重要性，学习如何在自身操作中实施相关策略。这种支持不仅限于大型企业，中小企业也能从中受益，增强其可持续发展的能力和竞争力。英国政府还积极参与国际合作，支持全球可持续发展目标（SDGs）。通过与其他国家和国际组织的合作，英国旨在推广可持续商业实践，共同应对全球性的环境和社会挑战。

（三）英国商业对环境和社会的现状及其影响

英国商业对环境和社会的现状及其影响体现在多个层面。随着可持续发展议题逐渐上升至公众和政策制定者的重要议程，英国企业开始积极调整其商业模式和运营策略，以减轻对环境的负面影响并在社会责任方面作出贡献。环境层面上，英国商业的影响可见于能源消耗、温室气体排放以及资源利用等方面。许多企业开始采用更为清洁、可持续的能源解决方案，如风能和太阳能，以减少碳足迹。此外，废物管理和循环经济的概念被广泛接受，企业通过减少生产过程中的废物、提高资源效率以及促进产品回收利用，来降低其对环境的影响。社会层面上，英国商业对于提高就业质量、促进社会包容性以及增强社区参与方面发挥着积极作用。企业通过建立更加公平的劳动实践、提供培训和教育机会、以及支持地方社区发展项目，来增强其社会责任。此外，许多企业也在加强内部的多样性与包容性，力图创建一个支持性和尊重的工作环境。尽管取得了一定的进展，但英国商业在环境和社会方面的影响仍面临挑战。环境污染、资源过度开采以及社会不平等等问题依然存在，要求企业和政

府采取更为坚定和创新的措施。例如,对于那些能源密集型的行业,转向低碳解决方案仍是一项重大挑战,而提高供应链的透明度和公平性也是许多企业努力的方向。

三、英国商业实践中的可持续发展策略

(一) 能源使用和碳排放

英国在能源使用和碳排放方面的转型体现了对可持续发展和气候变化应对的承诺。国家级的策略和政策强调向可再生能源的过渡以及温室气体排放的显著减少。英国政府设定了雄心勃勃的目标,旨在到 2050 年实现净零碳排放,这一目标推动了国家能源结构的根本性转变。在可再生能源方面,英国利用其地理优势,大力发展风能和海洋能。特别是在风能领域,英国已成为世界领先的国家之一,无论是陆上还是海上风电,都取得了显著的发展进步。此外,太阳能和生物质能的使用也在增加,为英国的能源多样化和可持续性贡献力量。为了推动这一转型,英国政府实施了一系列政策和激励措施,包括设立清洁能源补贴、推动绿色金融和投资,以及制定对企业碳排放的严格规定^[4]。此外,通过碳定价机制,如碳税和碳交易系统,政府旨在通过市场机制鼓励减排,并促进低碳技术的研发和应用。碳排放的减少还体现在交通和供暖等领域的改革。英国推广电动汽车和其他低碳交通工具,同时鼓励建筑的能效提升和使用可再生能源供暖,以减少这些领域的碳足迹。英国的努力不仅限于国内政策和实践,还积极参与国际合作和领导气候变化的全球行动。通过在重要国际会议上发挥领导作用,如担任联合国气候变化大会(COP26)的主办国,英国致力于推动全球范围内的气候行动和可持续发展目标的实现。

（二）资源管理和循环经济

在英国，资源管理和循环经济的概念已深入人心，成为国家可持续发展战略的关键组成部分。政府与企业共同努力，致力于提高资源效率，减少废物生成，以及促进废物的回收和再利用。这一方向不仅响应了全球减少资源消耗和避免环境污染的呼声，也体现了英国在推动绿色增长和建设低碳经济方面的领导力。英国政府推出了多项政策和计划，旨在激励企业和公众采取更加可持续的资源管理措施。例如，通过对废物填埋征税，鼓励更多的废物被回收而非填埋处理。此外，政府还推动了包装减少和循环利用的措施，要求生产商负责回收在市场上销售的产品包装材料。企业层面，英国许多公司已将资源效率和循环经济原则融入其商业模式。通过设计可再利用或可回收的产品，以及采用更高效的生产流程，企业能够减少原材料的使用，降低生产成本，同时减少对环境的影响。许多领先企业还通过与供应链伙伴合作，确保原材料的可持续采购和使用，以及废物的有效回收利用。英国的循环经济策略还包括推动消费者参与。通过教育和宣传活动，增强公众对资源节约和回收重要性的认识，鼓励消费者选择可持续生产的商品和服务，参与废物分类和回收。此外，一些地方政府和组织实施了创新的废物回收计划，如社区回收站和二手商品交换市场，进一步促进了资源的有效利用^[5]。

（三）社会责任和社区参与

在英国，企业社会责任（CSR）和社区参与被视为促进可持续发展和建设更加包容社会的重要途径。英国企业越来越认识到，除了追求经济利益外，还需承担起对社会和环境的责任。这一观念已深植于许多企业的核心战略之中，体现在对员工的公正待遇、环境

保护、社区支持和慈善活动的投入上。英国政府鼓励企业通过各种方式对社区作出正面贡献，包括但不限于创建就业机会、参与社会服务项目、支持当地教育和健康计划以及投资于社区发展。这些活动不仅帮助了社区的弱势群体，也增强了企业与社区的联系，提升了企业的公众形象和品牌价值。英国的许多企业已将社会责任纳入其业务模式，开展多样化的社区参与项目。例如，一些公司通过与慈善组织合作，捐款支持社会福利项目，或通过员工志愿服务计划，鼓励员工参与社区服务，从而积极影响社区发展。此外，企业也通过环保项目贡献社会，如减少碳排放、推广可持续生产方式、以及实施绿化项目等。英国还见证了一些创新的社会企业模式，这些企业不仅追求盈利，更致力于解决社会问题，如促进社会包容、改善教育和卫生条件。它们通过提供社会服务或环境友好产品，为社区带来直接的好处。

（四）供应链管理

在英国，供应链管理的绿色化、公平贸易以及道德采购已经成为许多企业战略决策的核心。这一转变不仅反映了对环境保护和社会责任的承诺，也符合越来越多消费者和投资者对可持续发展和道德商业实践的期待。英国企业在构建绿色供应链、推动公平贸易和实施道德采购方面所做的努力，展现了其在全球可持续发展议程中的积极角色和影响力。绿色供应链管理在英国得到了广泛的推广和实践，企业不仅关注自身的环境影响，也越来越关注其供应链中的环境标准和实践。这包括评估和选择那些采用环保生产方法、减少能源消耗和废物产生的供应商。例如，许多英国零售商已经与供应商合作，减少包装材料的使用，同时优化物流和运输以降低碳排放

[6]。公平贸易是英国许多企业采用的另一项重要策略，特别是在食品、饮料和纺织品等领域。通过公平贸易，英国企业确保生产者和工人在发展中国家能够获得公正的待遇和合理的报酬，同时提倡环境保护和可持续的生产实践。英国消费者对公平贸易产品的需求不断增长，促使更多企业采纳这一模式，加强了全球供应链中的社会责任和环境责任。道德采购则体现在企业选择符合高道德标准的商品和服务。这涉及确保供应链中不存在强迫劳动、儿童劳动和不公正的工作条件，同时也强调对原材料来源的负责任管理，如避免采购因违反环保法律或导致生态破坏而开采的资源。许多英国企业通过实施严格的供应商审查和评估程序，来确保其采购活动不会对人类或环境造成负面影响。

（五）绿色产品和服务

在英国，开发和推广环境友好型产品与服务已成为众多企业可持续战略的重心。这一趋势不仅反映了消费者对健康和环境保护日益增长的关注，也符合英国政府在气候变化和可持续发展方面设定的宏大目标。通过绿色创新，英国企业不仅能够减少对自然资源的消耗和环境污染，还能开拓新市场，提升竞争力。英国的绿色产品和服务涵盖了广泛的领域，从可再生能源技术、节能家电、生物可降解包装，到有机食品和绿色交通解决方案等。企业通过采用可持续的材料，优化生产流程，减少能源和水的消耗，以及降低废物产生，来实现产品的环境友好性。此外，绿色服务，如共享经济模式的推广、绿色金融和投资服务，也在英国蓬勃发展，为消费者提供了更多选择，同时推动了经济的绿色转型。英国政府通过制定相关政策和提供财政激励，如税收优惠、资金补贴和研发支持，鼓励企

业在绿色产品和服务的开发上进行投资^[7]。例如，英国的清洁增长战略旨在通过技术创新和绿色解决方案，推动经济增长的同时减少环境足迹。市场推广方面，英国企业采取了多种策略来提高绿色产品和服务的可见度和吸引力。这包括利用环保标签和认证来验证产品的环境表现，采用绿色营销手段来提升品牌形象，以及通过社交媒体和其他数字平台增强与消费者的互动和沟通。这些做法不仅帮助消费者做出更加环保的选择，也促进了绿色消费的文化。

（六）报告和透明度

在英国，报告和透明度在可持续性发展的议程中占据了核心位置，特别是在可持续发展报告和环境、社会及治理（ESG）信息披露方面。随着社会对企业在环境保护、社会责任和良好治理方面要求的提高，英国企业越来越重视通过报告机制增加透明度，以此来建立和维护公众信任，提升品牌价值，并吸引负责任的投资。英国政府和相关监管机构为此设定了一系列指导原则和要求，鼓励或要求上市公司及大型企业定期发布可持续发展报告和ESG报告。这些报告内容不仅涵盖了企业的经济表现，更重要的是包含了企业在环境保护、社会责任和治理结构上的表现和进步。例如，关于企业如何减少环境足迹、提高资源效率、促进员工福利以及维护高标准的商业道德和透明度等方面的信息，都需要被详细披露。此外，英国的一些行业协会和非政府组织也在推动这一进程，通过制定行业标准和最佳实践，帮助企业在报告和信息披露方面达到更高的水平。这些组织提供的工具和资源，如可持续发展报告指南和ESG绩效评估框架，为企业提供了实用的指导，帮助它们有效地报告其可持续性绩效。企业对于报告和透明度的重视反映了一个更广泛的趋势，即

投资者、消费者和其他利益相关者对企业社会责任和可持续发展的兴趣和要求不断增长。通过发布详细的可持续发展和ESG报告，企业不仅能够展示其在社会和环境方面的努力和成就，还能够识别和管理与其运营相关的风险和机会^[8]。

四、英国企业的案例研究

在探讨可持续发展的英国企业案例时，Unilever和 Tesco 是值得关注的典范。这些公司不仅在商业实践中体现了可持续性，而且在推动整个行业向更环保和社会负责的方向发展中发挥了重要作用。

Unilever 是一家全球性的消费品公司，其可持续发展战略深入到公司的核心。Unilever 的可持续生活计划(Sustainable Living Plan)旨在通过改善健康和福祉、减少环境影响、增加正面社会影响来实现长期的商业成功。该公司承诺到 2030 年将其产品的环境足迹减半，并帮助 10 亿人改善健康和福祉。Unilever 还与多个组织合作，如与英国外交、联邦和发展办公室合作的 TRANSFORM 项目，旨在通过提供改善健康、生计、环境或福祉的产品和服务，帮助撒哈拉以南非洲和南亚的数百万人。此外，Unilever 还在其物流和产品配方中采取行动，以减少温室气体排放，并与供应商合作，推动整个供应链的可持续性。

Tesco 是世界上最大的零售商之一，也是英国最大的超市连锁店。Tesco 的“Little Helps Plan”响应了全球挑战，如不平等、人权、气候变化和食品浪费，并通过联合国可持续发展目标(SDGs)来促进所有人的可持续未来。Tesco 特别关注负责任的消费和生产目标(SDG 12)，并致力于到 2030 年减少全球食品浪费一半。Tesco 还

在其商店和分销中心投资了超过 7 亿英镑用于能源和制冷效率的改进，这些投资不仅减少了排放，而且提高了运营效率。

这些案例展示了英国企业在可持续发展方面的领导力和创新。通过这些实践，这些公司不仅提高了自身的竞争力，也为社会和环境的可持续发展做出了积极的贡献。

五、结论

英国在推动可持续商业实践方面的努力和成就，为全球提供了宝贵的经验和启示。通过实施一系列创新和前瞻性的可持续发展策略，英国企业不仅在环境保护方面做出了贡献，同时也促进了社会福祉和经济的稳健增长。这些实践强调了企业在追求经济利益的同时，也需承担社会和环境责任的重要性。英国的案例表明，通过积极采取可持续措施，企业可以在增强自身竞争力的同时，为社会和环境的可持续发展做出积极贡献。

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Re-Investigating the Migration-Globalisation Overlapped Relations: The Case of Jordan, Amman

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Abstract

Globalisation and migration are non-static topics that change over the years and impact societies differently, seemingly the reason behind the consistent need for further exploration. In this sense, this article aims to reinvestigate the relations between migration and globalisation by studying their characteristics in general and within the specific case of Jordan. The case of Jordan was chosen since it is considered the top country destination for migrants with a high globalisation index. The case discussion highlights that globalisation is not only an extra reason that raised global migrants, but both migration and globalisation share similar characteristics that reveal a similar impact.

Keywords: Migration, globalisation, migrants, economic globalisation, political globalization

1.0 Introduction

The migrant, according to the United Nations International Migration Agency, is a person who moves across international borders regardless of their legal status (Kalita and Chakraborty, 2019). Nevertheless, due to the distinction and diverse nature of human behaviours, migration studies will always require further investigation and evaluation to comprehend the constant change of global social structures (Curran and Saguy, 2001). Globalisation has been known as the process of global standardisation or unification, considering it a severe threat to homogenising countries due to its influence in damaging the cultural particularity of each region (Weinstein, 2005; Salazar, 2010). In the last decade, migration has become a salient feature of globalisation, which was noticed first by Kofi Annan, who stated that “*Over the past decade globalisation has increased the number of people with the desire and capacity to move to other places*” (Annan 2006; p.963). The relationship between both has been interpreted differently among studies. Nevertheless, their constant re-interpretation is always recommended due to the dynamic nature of globalisation and migration, which change from one year to another and from one context to another (Kahanec and Zimmermann, 2008). This paper considers the case of Jordan to be suitable for defining globalisation and migration. On the one hand, the UNSD (2018) has declared that in 2015, Jordan became the highest emigration destination, which corresponds with its historical background, especially for its capital, the city of Amman. On the other hand, the KOF Globalization Index of Jordan by Gygli et al. (2019) estimated the region's high level compared with the world average. Nonetheless, Al-Zyoud (2009) highlighted the recognisable shortage in discussing globalisation within the Jordanian context and recommended further investigation. Accordingly, Jordan becomes a suitable region to investigate the understanding of both globalisation and migration.

2.0 Research Background

2.1 Globalisation in the Context of Jordan

Globalisation is a concept that has been used to describe and explain the world in recent years. It has been widely defined and explained yet remains a hard-measurable phenomenon. Xuç (2009) explained that this ambiguity is due to the multi-dimensional nature of globalisation that lacks definite boundaries with several dimensions, including political, geographical, and cultural global components of societies. Therefore, ensuring the exact impact of globalisation on a particular aspect is still challenging. In 1990, Giddens defined globalisation as “*the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa*” (p.64). Appadurai (1996) added that it can shrink distances and shift key relationships between processes and customers. Following this

sense, Anheier and Isar (2007) defined it as shifting objects, concepts, or even people across different regions.

Despite the noticeable consensus in understanding the nature of making the world one (small village), several debates have appeared and discussed by Block and Cameron (2002). Firstly, some consider globalisation to be an in-progress phenomenon that changes its aspects over time, while others consider it a done-deal concept. The second disagreement is regarding the impact of globalisation. Some people believe it is a progressive concept towards a better life, and others see it as a burden of late modernity to strip away the authentic meanings in our lives gradually. Thirdly, globalisation was seen as Western domination of the rest of the world, although many people see it as an expansion of American imperialism. Finally, the authors highlighted the argument that globalisation is a way of life that should be adopted, which contradicts the view that it is only one sociological description of events.

Moreover, the historical background of globalisation was also a debatable topic between the two main views. On the one hand, several studies believed that globalisation is a 19th-century phenomenon that followed the Industrial Revolution and developed until the 20th century (Xuç, 2009). On the other hand, studies highlighted that it goes way back to the 15th century when European countries started their global colonisation map (Block and Cameron, 2002). Each perspective is trying to estimate when the world starts to be influenced by one nation; however, this influence would not be applied without the idea of 'connectivity.' Tomlinson (1999) argued that globalisation refers directly to connectivity by its rapid development of global networks that characterise modern living. This connectivity has increased over the years in ways almost everyone can notice in his/her daily life practices, including our usage of smart devices and the types of food and clothes we consume. These everyday practices clearly show that the global world becomes more connected each year.

People's reactions to such connectivity vary according to their understanding of global culture and its impact on different life aspects, making the world a 'single place', as Robertson (1992) phrased it. From the economic perspective, globalisation has locked national economic affairs into the global economic system, restricted individual states' autonomy and caused local problems to drift to global ones (Tomlinson,1999). With the continuous growth of global connectivity, the world has become more unified economically and politically. This phenomenon has led to the claim that globalisation has become a significant threat to the cultural identity of any region since it tends to drive it towards the global culture.

Despite this negative attitude towards globalisation that cannot be entirely refused, John Tomlinson (1999) argued that the idea of universalising culture is

not limited to globalisation, but it has been imagined many years before. For instance, the medieval European map of the world "Ebstorf Mappa Mundi" in 1284 by Gervase of Ebstorf imagined the world through the notions of Aristotelian form and the Roman imperial topographical style (Figure (1)). Tomlinson explained that the map was inspired by Noah's story from the Bible and reinforced the Christian myths of the beginning of life that represented a unified Christian world, indicating the superior thinking that ignored the non-Christian world.



Figure 1: The Ebstorf Map. **Source:** (Pischke, 2014)

Moreover, John added another universalising example of the Communist Manifestation in 1848/1969 by Marx and Engels, who created a bold social image of global culture in the future society, which ignored nations' divisions, religious beliefs and other local attachments visualising the world with a universal language. The author mentioned that Marx's social image combined the power of transnational capitalism with the Eurocentric attitude towards other cultures, which welcomed the destruction of non-European civilisations. Similarly, to the mentioned examples, globalisation tends to prioritise Western culture over other cultures, ignoring the diverse identities of the rest of the world. Tomlinson also emphasised this: "*The dominant cultural perspective on globalisation today is the fear that globality will bring not unity but merely uniformity: a 'homogenisation' of culture deriving precisely from the triumph of capitalist commodification*" (p. 8). Thus, globalisation as an idea to connect the world and unify it within one ideology is not a new agenda. On the contrary, it is an old tendency that grows over the years and appears with each dominant nation.

Another perspective by Ronald Robertson (1992) considered this image of globalisation as a part of its mythology that misleads the people to understand globalisation as a concentration only on the macro-sociological issues and neglects the micro-sociology or any local matters. Giddens (1991) added that globalisation is an expression aspect of time-space distinction where an event in one pole often creates divergent or opposed occurrences in the other.

Robertson argued that Giddens's discussion might not explain the global-local complexity due to the confusion between globalisation and globality where the first considers the consequence of modernity and the latter facilitates the diffusion of general modernity. In this sense, the complexity and the confusion in understanding globalisation are underlined, especially regarding time and space.

2.2 Migration Trends

Sinha (2005) argued that several studies, such as Clarke (1987) and Demko (1970), explained that migration has elements and causes shaping it as a complex concept and an ambiguous component of population change. This statement has made it a problematic term to define with precise definitions and universal criteria; however, migration, in general, is related to human adjustment in a new location. Dudley (1970) added that population migration is the expression of human interaction in space in terms of commodity, referring to relocating the residential area of a group of people. In the same sense, Ogden (1984) described migration as a crucial aspect in understanding the geographical composition of human society. Similarly, Eisenstadi (1953) interpreted migration as the physical transition from one society to another (either as individuals or groups), which usually combines abandoning specific social settings and establishing a new one in a new region. Through this transition, migrants bring their practices, behaviours, patterns, customs, and languages to the host country. As a result, smaller communities recreate their original culture in the migrated country, like Chinatowns in New York and Los Angeles or Arab Street in Malaysia (Anheier and Isar, 2007).

This multi-ethnicity is more recognisable in urban communities, which normally enriches the city values, but it might also threaten the local community's culture and social structure (Ciarnienė and Kumpikaite, 2008). This threat of superimposed cultural aspects can exceed job security and public safety, where the indigenous community may view migrants negatively as an outsider risk that needs to be avoided and demolished (Kahanec and Zimmermann, 2008). Gang (2010) emphasised migrants' tendency to live together in enclaves, primarily where former migrants have located, to preserve their lifestyle, language, and communication and ultimately create a cooperative environment. Bharucha, R. (2007) added that this concentration usually leads them to be slum-dwellers, resulting in more discrimination from the native community. Therefore, native

citizens tend to be more racist towards migrants (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg, 2009), which might raise the question behind the increased welcoming and encouragement of many countries to new emigrations.

Ciarnienė and Kumpikaite commented on this dilemma that countries open their borders not only for moral and ethical reasons but also for economic reasons, where migrants will contribute to collecting more taxes, sustaining the workforce, and protecting industries, especially those that rely on foreign working labour.

However, the locals' rejection of migrants has led to several issues, including religious pressure where the locals are forcing the newcomers to change their beliefs in the claim of blending within the community, as mentioned in UK Essays (2018). This understanding added other aspects, as Shrivastava (1983; p.157) pointed out, that migration is a tool for cultural diffusion and social assimilation that might create "communities within the community".

Lee (1970) added that it relates to the theoretical explanation of a spatial population movement where people might change their residence permanently (or non-permanently) and voluntarily (or non-voluntarily). Zelinsky (1971) also explained that migration only relates to a permanent or semi-permanent change in residency, excluding any other changes such as students, holidays, etc. Therefore, the term refers to the geographic mobility that follows changing residency to a different political region for a long period (more than a year) (Sinha, 2005). In other words, migration revolves around two main dimensions: space and time, where a group of people shift their social and cultural settings from one region to a different area.

2.3 From Globalisation to Migration

According to Alina Hyz (Xvç), in 2009, people always changed their residence to different areas, searching for a better life, which has increased rapidly after economic globalisation since families usually migrate to enhance their income or decrease the danger of their economic status. Ciarnienė and Kumpikaite (2008) emphasised that emigration has happened since immemorial, but in recent years, they have become more global on an unprecedented scale. Hyz added that through the globalisation of the economy, markets and produced technologies in any district had divided fragile social and economic regulations that replaced the usual sources and created new labor populations who actively sought to raise their incomes. This finding was indicated first by Piore (1979), who explained that international migration results from permanent demand for foreign labour. Additionally, Hyz commented that while poor economies in developing countries drove the people towards migration, the post-industrial revolution in developed countries produced a new demand for secondary labour markets that the locals avoided. This phenomenon has generated skilled international labour migration, which became a significant element in

explaining the link between migration and globalisation, as Ciarnienė and Kumpikaite (2008). The authors added that globalising emigration resulted in different categories of migration, including skilled migrants. This term demonstrates the changeable nature of migration due to the impact of globalisation that brought the globe closer to communication and technological development, which enhanced the network between migrants and non-migrant populations who share information and encouraged global migrations. As such, with the help of globalised communication, several groups of people hear the news of their compatriots who managed to build new lives in the host countries, encouraging the rest to follow. Castles (2002) explained that this idea could be considered one of the global dark sides that resulted in human trafficking and smuggling, not to mention the hundreds who died in the process. The author argues that the impact of globalisation can be recognised in four types of migration. Firstly, the astronaut phenomenon has been considered a new type of migration where the whole family move to a big country like Canada or the United States of America for security or economic reasons, and the breadwinner returns to the home country to work living in a back-and-forth lifestyle.

Secondly, there is return migration, which is not new but has been growing due to globalisation that trended temporary migrations. Retirement migration is another emerging type of mobility resulting from globalised transportation and communication. Rich people from hard-origin environments are looking for more attractive places to live despite the high living costs. The last type is posthumous migration, which reflects the cultural and psychological complex experience of the migrants who plan to return their bodies after they die in their home country. Although this sentimental relation with the original homeland is not new, it has been improved with the ease of transportation.

In the 21st century, global migration has grown rapidly to include the lives of over 160 million people in almost every country of the world, as UK Essays (2018) argued. Several studies relate this rapid global spread with the political conflicts within the last decade, where globalisation has played a negative role. Min and Wimmer (2007) demonstrate the link between globalisation and the surge in violent wars and conflicts that accompanied the Cold War by weakening the state's capacity to uphold controlling violence. Consequently, the impact of geopolitical changes from the Cold War era until the current day has increased the untraceable refugees rates that usually result from political conflicts where refugees cannot return to their homelands (Castles, 2002). Another dimension was also suggested by the authors regarding cultural and cultural capital. Cultural capital refers to societies' knowledge, which globalisation has made reachable by the world, as in the case of the Western lifestyle. Social capital, on the other hand, represents the migrants' connections to reach a safe and affordable environment, which frequently is linked to their compatriots who managed to create a bridgehead in the host country, making it easier for the

newcomers to establish new lives there and find a job opportunity, as mentioned earlier.

Accordingly, it can be noted that globalisation has generated a new demand to accept migrants for economic reasons. In addition, globalisation has affected political violence during the last decades since it was carried out in several cases by ideas, technologies, practices, and capabilities of globalisation (i.e., political globalisation) (Devetak and Hughes, 2007). In this sense, it is noticeable that the Arabian Spring in the Middle East or other countries that faced severe political conflicts have created a significant reason and motive for seeking asylum in Europe, Canada, North America, and other countries seeking a decent life. Therefore, globalisation directly impacts increasing global migration, primarily due to economic and political reasons, which indicate the cause-and-effect relationship between globalisation and migration. This statement suggests that migration can be a consequence of globalisation, as some early studies such as Overbeek (1995) have implied.

2.4 From Migration to Globalisation

Far from globalisation influences, people migrated for centuries to either enhance their income or search for safe shelter, like the previous argument. Ciarnienė and Kumpikaite (2008, p.42) argued that the acceleration of global migrations could identify the migration-globalisation relationship. Ritchey, since 1976, highlighted that the main possible explanation for emigration is the response to the market needs in many countries. Beals et al. (1967) added in their study on Ghana that global migration was directly related to area earnings, which underlines the link between migration and economy again, in line with economic globalisation. This type of globalisation is encouraging free trade across the world, threatening employment, wages, and job insecurities. Consequently, this led to emigration on the international level instead of the domestic ones (Ciarnienė and Kumpikaite, 2008). Hence, migration has become a crucial part of the globalisation process.

Moreover, Gallaway (1967) suggested that migration has two different conceptual distinctions: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary migration relates to people who have the option to remain in their existing jobs or move to a better one. At the same time, involuntary migrants are workers who have been dismissed from their current jobs, whether for poor performance or any other reasons which might force them to leave the country to search for another job. The latter type is recognisable in the case of Saudi Arabia, where foreign people who were born in the country or lived most of their lives there got fired from their jobs and were forced to pay high taxes, pushing them to migrate back to their home country. Hence, several studies highlighted that seeking a safe living place has significantly motivated migration over the years. People had to leave their home country to protect their identity, religion, ethnicity, and culture

(Sanders, 1982; Hardwick, 1993). This phenomenon is noticeable in history as it resulted in hybrid communities in many countries, including the United States, Canada, European countries, etc., and one country that contains different ethnic and religious minorities is Jordan.

3.0 Migration- Globalisation relation in Amman, Jordan

3.1 Globalisation in Amman

Al-Zyoud (2009) is one of the few studies that discuss globalisation within the context of Jordan Amman. The study highlighted the description of globalisation as an image of Americanization or Westernisation in terms of economy, culture, and even ideology, where the claim of absolute freedom is adopted in every aspect of life. Nonetheless, the author generally explained the common understanding of globalisation from a neutral perspective explaining the impact of globalisation within three dimensions. Firstly, the economic dimensions justified the strong emergence of globalisation, especially in the last thirty years with the technological revolution that enhanced communication means and outside investment.

Secondly, the political dimension replaced authorisation with people's tendency for democracy, political pluralism, and individual freedom. The third dimension is the cultural one, where values, traditions, and habits have become more standardised, consumption patterns have magnified, and peoples' ideologies and ways of thinking have become more unified. Despite these negative impacts of globalisation, several definite objectives were also discussed, including speeding up capital turnover, solving humanitarian problems that need an international response, enhancing the public reaction to environmental and health problems, improving labour mobility, and liberalising the financial sector.

Since the study focused on the teachers' perspective, it investigated their definition of globalisation and its influence on Jordanian society. The results revealed the negative position regarding globalisation, which was defined mainly as an American or Western method to control the Arab's cultural and political life; in other words, a modern approach to indirect colonialisation. In this sense, globalisation was considered a process to demolish the Jordanian social and cultural structure. Al-Zyoud elaborated that globalisation did have a negative influence on Jordanian society. It first decreased social and moral local values. It has threatened the new generations' sense of identity to Arabic and Islamic ideologies, not to mention its direct link to political conflicts in the surrounding countries, which led to rapid migrations in the country. Nevertheless, the author argues that globalisation positively influences Jordanian society, where it has liberalised the community and made it more open and accepting of diversity, besides the development of scientific and economic progress in the country.

Moreover, many Jordanian communities link the rapid architectural development in the capital with economic globalisation that has shifted architectural projects to international style, neglecting the contextual skyline and traditional architecture. This argument is still a live debate among the architectural community, especially after launching the visionary image of the development project (2012) in the Al-Abdali district (Figure (2)) (Al-Azhari and Al-Najjar, 2012).

This image has been considered a wake-up call for professionals to notice the impact of capitalism on the built environment, which has been directly linked to the economic globalisation that is explicitly damaging the city skyline and, ultimately, the city's cultural heritage. Gigli et al. (2019) confirmed the globalisation threat in the Jordanian region by estimating the KOF Globalization Index that compares the globalisation index of the world with Jordan (see the graph of Figure (3)). The graph shows that the globalisation index grew from 1970 to 2015, exceeding the world average and reaching its peak in 2007. Despite the slight decrease, it remained within the high average in the last decade.



Figure 2: The vision of Alabdali's project of high-rise buildings.
Source: (Al-Azhari and Al-Najjar, 2012)

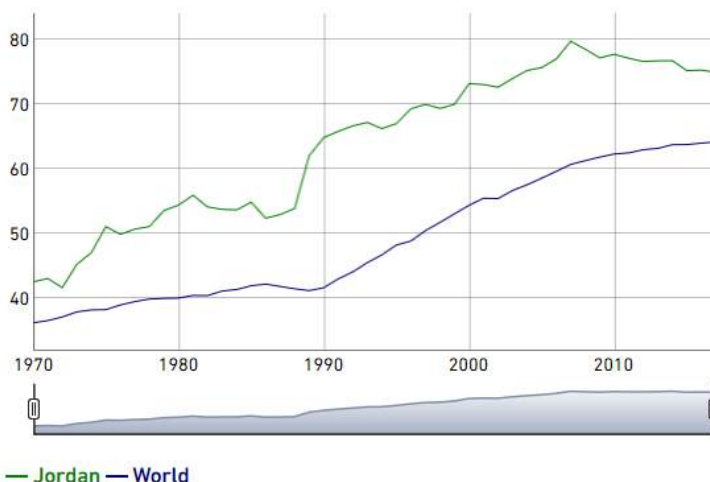


Figure 3: KOF Globalisation Index of Jordan. **Source:** (Gygli et al.,2019)

3.2 Migrations in Amman

Amman is the Capital city of Jordan, and, like any capital city, it contains the country's highest population. Nevertheless, returning to its history, it was built by migrants who created a community of hybrid identities: Jordanian nationalist, tribal, Palestinian, Circassians, Armenians, and other Arab nationalities. Kohlmayer, in his book *Atlas of Jordan* (2013), described Amman's historical layers where Roman remains in Amman (Downtown amphitheatre and other historical sites) were abandoned until the Circassians came to the city and renewed the life there as a village (1878 -1884).

Other villages were founded after that by new migrants of Circassian and Chechen (1901- 1906), which provoked the need to construct new roads to link these villages together. Kohlmayer described Circassians as a mosaic community that combines different languages. These social and economic aspects reached in 1904 over 2250 families (from Muslim Circassians) only around Amman and over 25,000 scattered around Syrian and Lebanon. In 1915, a range of researchers discussed that it was the date when the Armenian Christian refugees arrived, running away from the war in ex-Soviet Armenia. Nonetheless, their population was tiny compared with the Circassians. Therefore, it can be noted that Circassians can consider the founders of Amman city, where they developed the historical remains. In his article, Abu Ghneimeh (2010) described that although they arrived at the area with their *primaevial* customs and farming instruments, they managed to farm the land and build life in the city. Kohlmayer confirmed that Circassians were the group of people responsible for agriculture and participated in the armies during the Ottoman time.

The book continued to describe Amman's timeline, explaining that in 1948, the first Arab-Israel conflict occurred and resulted in the foundation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. As a consequence, over 70,000 Palestinian refugees fled to Jordan, who varied in religion and skills (almost 84% were Muslims, and the rest were Christians besides their varieties as farmers, employees and traders). Another Palestinian group with over 375,000 population fled to Jordan in 1949. As such, the author argued that these several layers have merged and co-existed with the indigenous tribal locals (Bedouins), who gradually moved from living in the wild to the city over time. Each migrant group brought his/her culture, identity, religion, language, and traditions, creating a dynamic social structure where people had to co-exist for years.

From 1975 to 1990, the book mentioned that both political problems created more refugees in the Jordanian area; Lebanon's war resulted in refugee groups along with another 240,000 non-refugee Palestinians. Another political conflict within the Gulf area influenced Jordan in (1989-1991) when 250,000 Jordanians of Palestinian origin were living in Kuwait and moved back to Jordan after the Gulf War. The Syrian-Lebanon crisis in 2000 also brought newcomers from both nationalities to Jordan, while in 2003, almost 13,000 to 34,000 Iraqi residents came to invest in Jordan, noticeably improving the country's economy. A year later, a new group of Circassian minorities, over 20,000 and 80,000 people, moved to Jordan. In 2005, almost 32,000 of the Druze arrived in Jordan, most probably from Lebanon. Lastly, the book mentioned the 2007 Arabs and non-Arabs comers who headed to Jordan searching for jobs and reached almost 900,000 in 2006.

These numbers have generally increased after the Arab Spring, when many families from Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and other countries fled to Jordan and settled there. Thus, a recent study in 2018 by Division the UNSD declared that by the latest statistical research in 2015, Jordan had become the top destination country where migrants choose to live, work, or settle (Figure (4)). It is noteworthy to mention that Jordan is also considered by every visitor one of the most expensive countries; however, this challenge did not affect the migrants' population growth who, despite their religions, backgrounds, and different identities, still choose the country above the others.

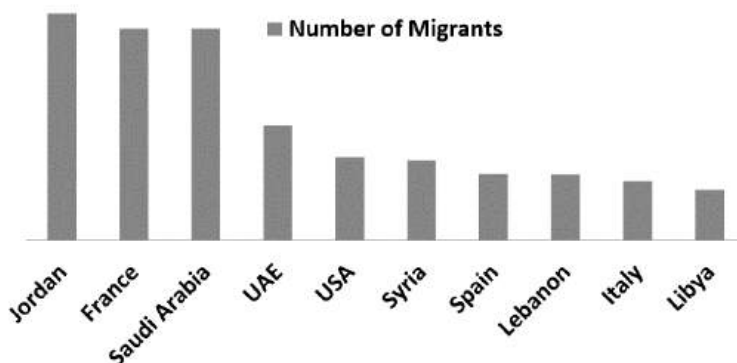


Figure 4: The statistical figure of the top 10 countries for migrants in 2015.
Source: (UNSD, 2018)

4.0 Discussion

Globalisation has been defined differently; nevertheless, a consensus can be noticed in considering it as a global process that shifts ideas, people, cultures, and objects among the countries neglecting the borders. On the other hand, migration can be defined as a group of people shifting from one region to another over borders along with their social structure, cultural ideologies, and traditional skills. Both migration and globalisation go in a parallel direction where globalisation directly affects the countries economically and politically, raising and increasing global migration rates over the years. Sanderson (2009) emphasised that globalising investments and trades integrate human and natural resources of different countries into a global political-economic context, which causes more international migration. Thus, even though globalisation did increase global migrations (Beals et al., 1967), it cannot be said that migration is a consequence of globalisation (Overbeek, 1995) since it has existed from the beginning of civilisations; Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, and other empires (UK Essays, 2018).

While Shrivastava (1983; p.157) argued that migrations have created "communities within a community", the case of Jordan suggests a different perspective. Following the case of Jordan in general and Amman in specific, it can be noted that Amman was mainly founded by migrants, starting with Circassians, and ending with groups from almost all Arab countries. Nonetheless, the Jordanian culture and social structure are dominant in the city, which suggests the co-existing of the migrated groups in a way that melts cultural diversity and creates a hybrid culture that a foreigner cannot distinguish easily. Additionally, this combined cultural image did not bury the unique traditions of each group of these migrants since anyone can see the Circassians still preserve many aspects of their traditions until the present day.

Similarly, on the religious level, a person can observe Christians' and Muslims' worship buildings standing next to each other, holding respect for both groups.

Similar to the Iraqis who came to Jordan with their wealth and invested in the country, other migrants with good financial status opened restaurants and several shops and employed others who needed financial aid. This has created a balanced situation where migrants are not a burden but an asset to the country. In addition, Jordan has the highest education level among Arab countries, resulting in many skilled graduates, who generally will occupy the first level of labour markets (Alkailani et al., 2012). This could be the reason why many Egyptian and non-Islamic workers fled to Jordan for years, working in building construction or second-level jobs.

Accordingly, this article argues that migration is a form of globalisation in which people shift their ideas, beliefs, and traditions to a different community and usually to a different region. Additionally, similar to globalisation that might unify cultural diversity, migrants usually blend in the region despite how conservators they are. It seems that every new generation is heading towards merging with the prevailing culture of the community due to the fact of being a migrant and the impact of globalisation. This also emphasises that both globalisation and migration are directly linked and connected.

5.0 Conclusion

Despite the diversity in defining globalisation, a consensus is recognisable in considering it as a global process to move people, products, and ideas across regions, neglecting borders and making the world a small village. According to the literature, globalisation as the idea of unifying the world into one ideology is neither American nor Western, but it was traced back to the beginning of life, which questions the idea of considering globalisation as a recent phenomenon. Moreover, migration is also a situation that starts at the beginning of life due to the human tendency to seek a decent life, yet Overbeek (1995) and similar studies consider it to be a result of globalisation. Investigating the case of Jordan has brought migration and globalisation closer since they share similar characteristics. Both are directly affected by economic and political sectors, shifting people's culture, beliefs, and traditions, influence the social structure, neglect the political borders, and blend different ideologies into one. Therefore, this article argues that migration and globalisation are two sides of the same coin.

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The Importance of Preserving the Historical and Cultural Monuments of Armenia

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Abstract

The Republic of Armenia is rich with historical and cultural monuments, which are permanent witnesses of the Armenian culture, history, and creative spirit. Historical and cultural monuments represent an excellent potential for the country's development, apart from the fact that they are part of the national and world heritage. Hence, their conservation, preservation, and presentation are immensely important. This paper aims to identify and present the essential aspects of preserving and using Armenia's historical and cultural monuments. The article discusses the following major points: to classify the historical and cultural monuments of Armenia; to define the role and significance of historical and cultural monuments; to analyze the key factors related to the use and preservation of the historical and cultural monuments of Armenia; to present the historical and cultural monuments of Armenia in the context of the sustainable development.

Keywords: Historical and cultural monuments, heritage, preservation and presentation

1.0 Classification of historical and cultural monuments of Armenia

Historical and cultural monuments, as the most important component of historical and cultural heritage, have an invaluable role and importance for every country (Conrad & Fehlings, 2023). Historical and cultural monuments of the territory of the Republic of Armenia include more than a thousand historical structures, forts, fortresses, residences, more than one thousand and two hundred monastic complexes, churches, cathedrals, chapels, sanctuaries, residential, public, and industrial building, tens of thousands of monuments of memorial and monumental art, lithographic inscriptions, petroglyphs, the chronology of which covers from the Stone Age to the present day. They are spread over the entire territory of Armenia, including about four thousand conservation-territorial units with a total area of about fifteen thousand hectares. Immovable monuments of history and culture are the structures with historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural value, their co-structures and complexes with the territory they occupied or historically connected with them, the elements and fragments of archaeological, artistic, lithographic, ethnographic nature (Gwardzińska, 2018; Eyvazova, 2019).

Monuments with exceptional historical and cultural value can be included in the list of world cultural heritage by international standards. Thus, pearls of Armenian medieval architecture such as the Geghard monastic complex, monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin, Churches of the Mother See of St. Etchmiadzin, ruins of Zvartnots Church were included in the UNESCO list of World Cultural Heritage, and 2010, UNESCO took the Armenian cross-stones (called Khachkar, as shown in Figure 1.1) under its protection. These monuments are a valuable part of world culture and are distinguished by several features. A brief introduction of the monuments included in the list of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage objects is presented.



Figure 1.1: The remained monument, Khachkar

The monastery complex of Haghpat is a typical example. The complex (as shown in Figure 1.2) was built in the 10th through 13th century. It is in the Lori region and lies on a plateau encircled by gorges. This complex is one of the most significant cultural centers of medieval Armenia. The complex includes the monastery of St. Nshan (as shown in Figure 1.3), two churchyards, three chapels, a refectory, a bell tower, a library, gravestones, and Khachkars. This church is one of the best examples of a new architectural direction adopted throughout the medieval period of Armenia.



Figure 1.2: The monastery complex of Haghpat



Figure 1.3: The monastery of St. Nshan

Meanwhile, the Sanahin represent cultural values from ancient days to modern society. The medieval complex of Sanahin (as shown in Figure 1.4) is located in Lori, Armenia. The monastery of Sanahin was one of the region's most important cultural and educational complexes, which had a school with a huge adjacent library. The general structure consists of St. Astvatsatsin and

Amenaprkich churches, three churchyards, a bell tower, a library, and the St. Gregory chapel. More than 50 Khachkars (cross-stones) have been preserved in the territory of this monastery complex. The appearance of the Sanahin is shown in Figure 1.4.



Figure 1.4: The medieval complex of Sanahin

Additionally, the remains of ancient churches symbolize the religious history of Armenia. The Etchmiadzin Cathedral (as shown in Figure 1.5) is the mother church of the Armenian Apostolic church and one of the best examples of the early Christian era architectural monuments. It was built in the early 4th century. The bell tower and the complex museum were constructed in the 17th and 18th centuries. The museum also has a large collection of manuscripts and artworks from different periods. Likewise, the Zvartnots Cathedral demonstrates the architectural structure affected by the religious culture. The Zvartnots Cathedral was built from 641 to 661. It is one of the distinctive examples of Armenian church-building history.

This building was a three-stored cylindrical structure with gradually dwindling floors and five entries and was covered by sculptures of grapevines and statues. Unfortunately, Zvartnots collapsed in the tenth century. How it happened is still debated, though most argue for one of two theories: an earthquake or attacks arising from repeated Arab raids. The remaining ruins of Zvartnots were uncovered at the beginning of the twentieth century (as shown in Figure 1.6).



Figure 1.5: The Etchmiadzin Cathedral



Figure 1.6: The Zvartnots Cathedral

The Geghard is taken as an example of an ancient monastery. The monastery complex of Geghard (as shown in Figure 1.7) is one of the oldest monasteries in Armenia. The main chapel was built in the 12th century, while the monastery complex was founded in the 4th century. It used to be known as Ayrivank because its structure was partially carved out of the adjacent mountain. The name commonly used for the monastery today, Geghard, meaning "the Monastery of the Spear", originates from the spear which had wounded Jesus at the Crucifixion, allegedly brought to Armenia by Apostle Jude (Thaddeus). The complex is truly unique as cliffs in the Azat River gorge surround it. The combination of architecture and nature makes it a fascinating sight.

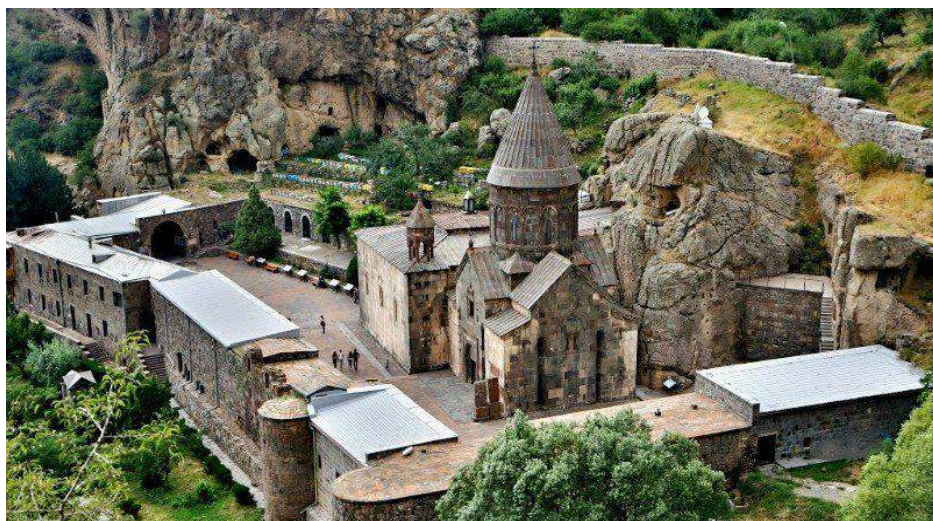


Figure 1.7: The monastery complex of Geghard

Moreover, there are historical sites on the Tentative List of UNESCO, such as the monastery of Noravank and Tatev (as shown in Figure 1.8) with the adjacent areas of the Vorotan Valley. Regarding distribution, the historical and cultural monuments are spread over the entire territory of the Republic of Armenia. The map of heritage (as shown in Figure 1.9) shows the distribution of historical and cultural monuments.



Figure 1.8: Tatev monastery



Figure 1.9: Spatial distribution of RA historical and cultural monuments

2.0 The role and significance of historical and cultural monuments in Armenia

The essence of a monument is brought to life through its purposeful utilization. According to the Law on the Protection and Use of Immovable Monuments of History and Culture of the Republic of Armenia (Mucci, 1998). The monuments mainly serve scientific, educational, cultural, and cognitive purposes and their original and adaptive functional purpose. The use of monuments for economic and other purposes is allowed if it corresponds to the monument's original purpose and inherent characteristics, does not damage the integrity of the monument, and does not degrade or spoil its historical, scientific, and artistic value.

Moreover, the management and use of the monument must be done with the awareness of the uniqueness of its historical and cultural value and the irreversibility of possible losses (Giambruno & Pistidda, 2022). Ancient and medieval city centers, settlements, fortifications, castles, burial grounds,

cemeteries, defunct bridges, reservoirs, churches, monastic complexes, and other structures, as well as monumental works of art related to them that are not subject to full restoration and use in their original form, are used exclusively for scientific, educational, cultural, and cognitive purposes within their initial functional significance.

The immovable monuments of history and culture have been and remain one of the best symbols for the Armenian people always to present the world themselves as silent witnesses from centuries, and the efficient ways of organization of their preservation and use can act as a catalyst for the development of tourism in the region (Vardapetova, 2018). In terms of sustainable development, historical and cultural monuments are used as recreational resources for the region's economic development, which can be efficient in serving their preservation as well (Yegemberdiyeva et al., 2020). Additionally, the management of monuments in the context of sustainable development allows for maintaining a balance between resources and visitor demands.

In terms of education and entertainment, the presentation of historical and cultural monuments among people of different ages and socio-economic groups facilitates the possibility of creating an environment that can provide knowledge and awareness about the conservation and protection of the monuments. The emergence of interest in them is due to the cultural and cognitive demands of society and their properties as recreational resources (Karakashian, M., 1998). Historical and cultural monuments are irreplaceable and endowed with attractiveness and uniqueness.

Attractiveness is the main property of tourism resources, and uniqueness can ignite a sense of interest. These elements are what give the tourist attractions global significance and value.

The basis for the use of historical and cultural resources and various facilities for tourism purposes is the tourists' and travellers' interest and their impression (Tovmasyan, G., & Gevorgyan, M., 2022). The interest in discovering new destinations and attractions through culture, history, and art, and gaining knowledge increases continuously among travellers. Hence, as a result, steady growth is observed in the field of historical and cultural tourism. This, in turn, contributes to preserving historical and cultural monuments. The flow diagram is presented in Figure 2.1 to illustrate this connection graphically.

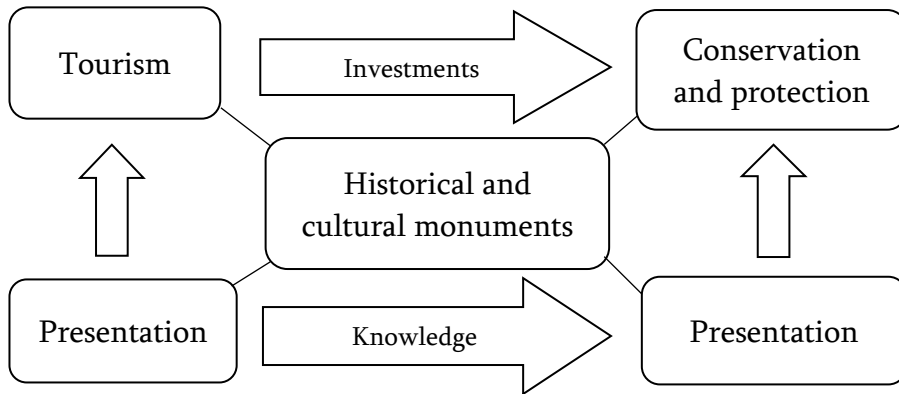


Figure 2.1: Graphical connection for historical and cultural monuments

As shown in Figure 2.1, the rich historical and cultural heritage of Armenia includes immovable monuments of history and culture. It is an important prerequisite for developing tourism, particularly cognitive, historical, cultural, and religious tourism (Rapp, 2017). A great historical heritage from centuries, hundreds of thousands of monuments, monasteries, cultural centers, temples and cross-stones, and scenic places of nature appear to resemble a captivating exhibition within an open-air museum.

Concurrently, Armenia has a unique opportunity to contribute to creating and promoting a so-called combined tourism product (for example, combining historical and cultural tourism with rural, ecotourism, and adventure).

Most of Armenia's historical and cultural monuments are located in regions where tourists can get acquainted with local traditions, customs, and traditional Armenian cuisine while enjoying nature. Thus, through historical and cultural monuments based on historical and cultural tourism, in combination with other types of tourism, a unique tourist product can be presented. There are great prerequisites for the development of agrarian tourism in Armenian regions. Additionally, the location of historical and cultural monuments near natural monuments has great potential for the development of ecotourism, which is currently the main direction of the sustainable development of international tourism (Semenova et al., 2017).

3.0 Analysis of the key factors related to the use and preservation of monuments

There are several key factors regarding the processes implemented in protecting historical and cultural immovable heritage, such as registration, study, preservation, restoration, and use of historical and cultural monuments. As such, the development of cooperation between international organizations such as UNESCO ICOMOS and the National Commission, of Armenia is an important factor as well in terms of the effective solution of problems of preservation, restoration, and purposeful use of historical and cultural heritage (Movsesian et al., 2020). Regarding the preservation and presentation of the monuments, it is essential to consider the restoration of the monuments to prevent further deterioration of historical and cultural monuments or to bring them back to their original structure and appearance. It's worth mentioning that the Department of Historical and Cultural Monuments Preservation and the Armenian Society for the Preservation of Historical Monuments have restored and reconstructed more than 300 monuments using different restoration methods. In terms of maintenance and service, it is important to ensure a positive experience for the visitors to Armenian attractions and, in this manner, contribute to the preservation of Armenian monuments, creating a sustainable source of income for the further development of these sites, strengthening the connection between communities and their nearby monuments. In the age of information technology and technological development, it has become easier to inform and spread awareness about the rich and diverse Armenian cultural, historical, and natural heritage among the residents of the communities living in the vicinity of the monuments, the Armenian public in general, as well as the international visitors arriving in Armenia (Tovmasyan, 2020). Another important factor is organizing various events and activities to support raising awareness and preservation of Armenian monuments, including research, professional networking, conferences, and workshops.

In addition, providing historical and cultural monuments, special protection areas, and other places of exceptional tourist attraction with the necessary infrastructure is of great importance regarding their use and preservation. The most essential economic infrastructures of Armenia that directly or indirectly affect the development of tourism are the hotel industry, the transportation, and the telecommunications sector. These factors are directly related to the geographical location of the tourist destination, which plays an important role as one of the factors of its attractiveness. It is necessary to enrich tourist routes so that they are not limited to a natural or historical-architectural object and combine the natural, historical, architectural, and ethno-cultural prerequisites for tourism development. It is also crucial to consider that the competitive advantages of the tourism sector are currently mainly formed in the information field. Information technologies act as modern innovative resources for

increasing competitiveness. Modern technologies designed for developing and selling tourism products can provide up-to-date information about the availability of vehicles, tickets, transportation accommodation, etc. in a short time. Thus, developed infrastructure is important from the point of view of tourism which in turn will contribute to the preservation and continuous use and presentation of monuments (Pant, 2005).

4.0 The presentation of monuments for sustainable development

Historical and cultural monuments are objects of world cultural heritage and important tourist destinations, which, if effectively managed, can have a great impact and potential for local economic development. It contributes to preserving historical and cultural heritage, including monuments, and achieving sustainable economic development, as mentioned by the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Program in 2013 (Liburd & Becken, 2020). The development of sustainable tourism with the presentation of the world cultural heritage is done through the awareness, capacities, and balanced participation of all the associated parties, preserving this heritage and its global value and, in parallel, providing the necessary income from tourism for its preservation, the development of the local population and for society in general meanwhile ensuring a quality experience for visitors.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that tourism is the only sector of the economy that directly and indirectly impacts the development of almost all the branches of the economy. It hugely impacts such sectors of the economy as agriculture, transportation, construction, consumer goods, etc. It also contributes to developing science and culture, deepening intercultural cooperation and international contacts. Tourism is developing at a stable pace in the Republic of Armenia.

In recent years, it has become one of the economy's most rapidly and dynamically developing branches. Priority is given to developing inbound and domestic tourism, in which historical and cultural monuments act as an important resource. Therefore, it is necessary to implement measures that will satisfy the needs of travelers and contribute to the increase in employment prospects, the development of international relations, the preservation of touristic resources and the environment, and the rational use of historical and cultural monuments. It is essential to ensure sustainable development of the sector without harming natural and cultural values. This procedure develops mechanisms that contribute to the development of the sector while preserving historical and cultural monuments for future generations (Alberini & Longo, 2009; Barthel-Bouchier, 2016). In sustainable development, it is important not only to preserve and transfer historical and cultural monuments as a national and

universal value to the next generations but also to transfer the skills of their use and management.

In conclusion, the role and significance of Armenia's historical and cultural monuments in terms of the national and world cultural heritage is invaluable. They are considered valuable assets in the country's economic development as an important component of domestic and inbound tourism products. It is essential to ensure sustainable development, preserve and transfer this heritage to future generations, and present the values and beauty of culture and history to the world.

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Discursive Dynamics in Heritage Interpretation: A Study on Negotiating Narratives in Panam Nagar, Bangladesh

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Abstract

In the field of heritage studies, interpretation transcends the simple presentation of information; rather, it involves an intricate discourse with history and personal and collective memory. This paper delves into the discursive dynamics of heritage interpretation at Panam Nagar, a site emblematic of Bangladesh's layered history and community identities. This site was once a bustling town during the colonial era, but now stands as a silent witness to the passage of time and changing socio-political landscapes. The study employs critical discourse analysis to unravel the complexities in the negotiation of narratives within this heritage site. Central to this study is the exploration of the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) and its implications in shaping public understanding of Panam Nagar. The paper critically assesses how dominant narratives are constructed, maintained, and occasionally challenged within the heritage space. It particularly focuses on the interplay between colonial legacies and national identity narratives, uncovering the often subtle processes of inclusion, exclusion, and emphasis in heritage storytelling. The study further investigates the audience's reception of these narratives, identifying gaps between the intended interpretation and public perception. This is achieved through visitor surveys and analysis of their interaction with the interpretative materials present at the site. The paper proposes a framework for more inclusive and participatory heritage interpretation practices, emphasizing the need to integrate diverse narratives, especially those marginalized in the current discourse. This approach contributes to a richer understanding of the site's past and fosters a more inclusive dialogue about heritage and identity in contemporary Bangladesh.

Keywords: Heritage Interpretation, Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD), Panam Nagar, Narrative Negotiation, Participatory Heritage Practices.

1.0 Introduction

Heritage sites are recognized as an important contributor to the cultural sector in Bangladesh (Rayhan, 2011). Despite many of the significant sites being listed and protected by government agencies and authorities, the need for heritage management and attempt at proper conservation is not getting enough attention from the government (Niaz Morshed, 2014), nor the sites are properly interpreted by the audience. Since there is a limitation at the degree of heritage preservation in the context of Bangladesh, this study will analyze whether the current interpretive process in this case site plays any significant role in representing and negotiating subject matters and will suggest scopes for expansion and potential alternate interpretations. This paper aims to critically reflect upon the discursive nature of heritage interpretation and explore its existing framework and logical organization to find out scopes for improvement in terms of its existing gaps and discourse regulations. In doing this, the focus of this paper is to explore how narratives are constructed and negotiated within this context.

Panam Nagar, situated approximately 26 kilometers away from Dhaka city, is an abandoned town with a rich historical tapestry dating back to the colonial period. This township, developed during the British colonial era, represents a unique architectural and cultural heritage within Bangladesh. Characterized by its distinctive street-front buildings and the encompassing moat, Panam Nagar stands as a testament to the region's past – a period marked by significant trade and cultural exchanges. The site's historical narrative encompasses the intricacies of colonial rule, the interplay of various social classes, and the transitions that shaped present-day Bangladesh. As such, Panam Nagar is not only a physical embodiment of historical architecture but also a symbol of the complex socio-cultural dynamics of the past. Its recognition and preservation by the Department of Archaeology in Bangladesh underscore its importance in the nation's heritage landscape.

To critically analyze the interpretation in the context of the heritage site, central to this investigation is the concept of Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD), a framework that helps in understanding how certain narratives are prioritized while others are marginalized or omitted in heritage sites. By scrutinizing the prevailing interpretative approaches at Panam Nagar, the study aims to uncover the underpinnings of these narratives and to challenge the dominance of AHD in shaping public history and memory. The research seeks to critically assess how history is presented to the public and to explore alternative narratives that could offer a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the site's past. The methodology employed in this study combines qualitative approaches with critical discourse analysis to dissect the narratives and interpretive strategies at Panam Nagar.

Primary data collection involves on-site observations, interviews with stakeholders including local community members, visitors, and officials from the Department of Archaeology, as well as analysis of the physical interpretation tools present at the site. Additionally, the study draws upon a range of secondary sources, including historical documents, academic journals, and government records, to construct a comprehensive understanding of the site's historical and cultural background. This multi-faceted approach ensures a thorough investigation of both the tangible and intangible aspects of heritage interpretation at Panam Nagar.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first part illustrates the overview of Key concepts such as Heritage Interpretation, AHD, and Narrative Theory while identifying the gap within the existing literature. The second part discusses a brief history of the site signifying its heritage value and focuses on the meaning and responses of the existing interpretation. The third part is the 'analysis' of the relevant context to locate the gaps and investigate the limitations of the interpretation to clarify whether it purposefully excludes socio-political narratives or restrains accessibility and participatory involvement of groups in favor of or to reinforce Authorized Heritage Discourse. Based on this analysis, the fourth part explores the potential to suggest an inclusive framework for heritage interpretation. It should be noted that being a township, the site is large in scale, and most of the buildings within the site are inaccessible to its audiences; as a result, the scope of this study is limited to the accessible public spaces including the exterior part of the buildings of the site.

2.0 Literature Review

Interpretation is considered a strategic tool as the core aim of it is to manage the visitors while also informing them about the past. According to ICOMOS, 'Interpretation can include professional and popular publications, public lectures, on-site installations, formal and informal educational programs; community activities; and on-going research, training, and evaluation of the interpretation process itself' (2007). The principle of interpretation of a heritage site includes access and understanding, acceptable evidence sources, authenticity of the evidence, sustainability and inclusiveness, and continuation of research, evaluation, and training (ICOMOS, 2017). So, a successful interpretation offers scopes for the audiences in fostering personal and collective engagement with a resource's significance, guiding them to a focused understanding through cohesive concepts rather than mere factual recounting (Jameson Jr, 1997).

Thus, in shaping visitor experiences at heritage sites, interpretation can stimulate personal reflection on identity and social relations across time (Burnett, 2001). Yet, interpretation often offers a singular narrative, overlooking the diversity of visitor interests, which may be educational, emotional, or recreational (Poria,

Biran, & Reichal, 2006). Moscardo (2010) suggests that storytelling enhances visitor engagement more effectively than factual presentations. Meanwhile, Black (2001) emphasizes the need for clear thematic interpretation aligning with site objectives. Poria et al. (2006) advise that visitor perceptions should guide the marketing and presentation of heritage sites, with distinct interpretive approaches catering to varying visitor motivations. Tilden's principles of interpretation underline the progression from understanding to appreciation and protection (Tilden, 2007). It can be further stretched to advocating for interpretive writing that engages visitors and meets scholarly aims, utilizing multisensory media for transparency. Austin (2002) indicates that visitor expectations and reactions to site presentations can influence management practices, necessitating feedback mechanisms to assess interpretive effectiveness. Heritage managers are encouraged to adopt 'responsible interpretation,' presenting multifaceted narratives (Poria, Biran, & Reichal, 2006). Interpretation techniques have been studied for their effectiveness, suggesting the importance of having interpretive goals and objectives (Timothy, 2011).

On the other hand, Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) often emphasizes monumental architecture and material culture, shaped largely by Euro-American values. This discourse has been critiqued for its limitations and exclusivity, as it often overlooks the intangible elements of heritage that are significant in many cultures (Harrison, 2013). Rudolff and Buckley (2016) have called attention to the "problem of Eurocentrism" and "the problem of inclusion" as central issues within the heritage sector. Waterton and Watson (2015) further distilled these concerns into the concepts of "identity", "community", "authenticity", and "commodification".

The AHD's focus on materiality has marginalized other forms of heritage, such as the non-monumental cultures or traditions like those seen in the Imperial Shrine at Ise in Japan, which is periodically rebuilt, thus defying Western notions of age and permanence (Logan, Craith, & Kockel, 2016). Despite bringing these issues to light, the AHD has struggled to propose effective solutions for more inclusive heritage practices.

The democratization of heritage, emphasizing public participation over expert opinion, has been advocated as a solution to these limitations (Logan, Craith, & Kockel, 2016). Morgan et al. (2010) criticized the US National Register of Historic Places for prioritizing tangible heritage, arguing for a system that also values intangible heritage. Atkinson (2008) highlighted the dynamics in Hull, where community groups sought recognition for their heritage against the singular narrative offered by official heritage recognition.

Ludwig (2016) found that in England, despite a theoretical shift towards inclusivity, material concerns remain predominant in practice, with alternative narratives often excluded from official heritage lists. Conversely, in New Zealand, public interest and activism have influenced heritage preservation, though this has sometimes led to new forms of expert dominance rather than true community engagement (Trapeznik & McLean, 2000). Thus, while there is growing recognition of the issues within AHD, further research and practical reform are necessary to ensure heritage interpretation is truly inclusive, recognizing the full spectrum of heritage values.

While studies have highlighted how colonial and post-colonial narratives within heritage sites are often fraught with tensions and competing interpretations (Harrison, 2013; Graham B. A., 2000), in the context of South Asia, Ananya Kabir, and Dipesh Chakrabarty have contributed significantly to understanding how colonial legacies continue to shape heritage interpretation. Their works explore how post-colonial societies grapple with and often renegotiate their colonial pasts within the framework of national identity and cultural heritage. These studies underscore the need for a more nuanced approach that acknowledges the layered histories and multiple narratives inherent in heritage sites (Chakrabarty, 1992; Kabir & Williams, 2005).

Despite the rich discourse on heritage interpretation and AHD, there remains a noticeable gap in the literature specifically addressing Panam Nagar. While general themes of colonial and post-colonial heritage in Bangladesh have been explored by several scholars, focused studies on Panam Nagar are relatively scarce. The existing literature primarily addresses the architectural and historical significance of the site but does not delve deeply into the interpretive narratives and audience reception at Panam Nagar. This lack of specific focus on Panam Nagar's heritage interpretation presents a unique opportunity for this study to contribute to filling this gap. By focusing on the discursive dynamics at this specific site, the research aims to add a new dimension to the understanding of heritage interpretation in the context of Bangladesh's colonial and post-colonial heritage.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context of Panam Nagar

Panamnagar is a distinctive township from the British colonial period, featuring fifty-two street-front buildings arrayed along a 600-meter street, all encircled by a U-shaped moat. This settlement served as a domicile for the affluent Hindu trading community. Ray (2016) delved into the annals of Bengal's ancient cities, examining accounts from historical travelers like James Taylor and W.W. Hunter, and identified Panam as a crucial hub for 'cotton, chiefly English piece goods' trade and for moneychangers.

Despite its proximity to Sonargaon, the erstwhile capital during the Muslim Sultanate period, Husain (2007) notes that Panam bears scant archaeological hallmarks from the pre-Mughal era.

The architectural legacy of Panamnagar's centennial buildings stands as 'tangible proofs' of its rich historical fabric, marking the township's prosperous past (Vijeo-Rose, 2014). Referencing the Burra Charter guidelines (Australia ICOMOS Incorporated, 2013), the township's cultural heritage significance is multifold: historically, it holds associations with several pivotal periods, including the Mughal and Sultanate regimes, the British colonial era, the partition of Bengal, Indo-Pakistan warfare, Hindu-Muslim riots, and the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Socially, it is significant for both the community that resided there and the surrounding populations, encapsulating their shared identity. The township also possesses spiritual value for the Hindu minority and boasts a unique aesthetic derived from its street-front buildings and the adjoining landscape. In recognition of its value, the Government of Bangladesh's Department of Archaeology officially listed and protected Panamnagar in 2004 (Husain, 2007). Figure 1 provides a site map of Panam Nagar, illustrating the township's layout and heritage structures, as documented by Professor Dr. Qazi Azizul Mowla (2008).

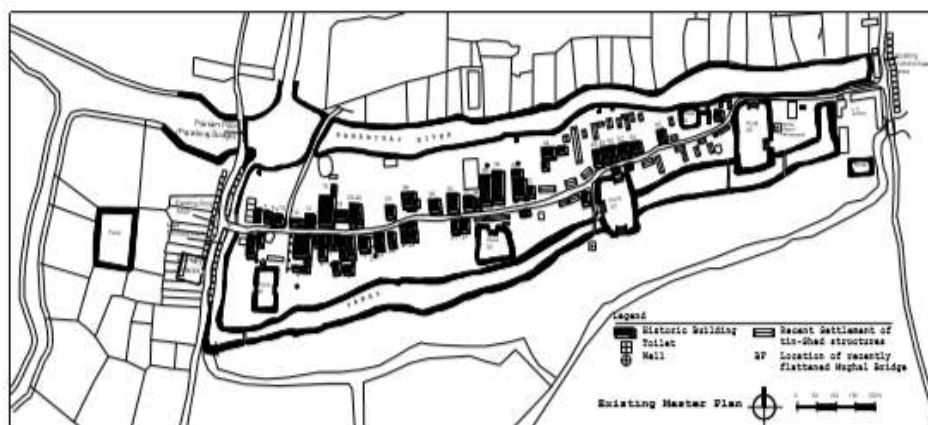


Figure 1: Site Map of Panam Nagar.
Source: Professor Dr. Qazi Azizul Mowla

At the entrance of the heritage site, a prominent open book-shaped installation presents a bilingual narrative in Bengali and English.

This 'official' interpretation predominantly recounts the history of 'Subarnagram', the broader district, rather than detailing the specific site which is part of it. It traces the district's evolution from a Hindu regime hub in the thirteenth century to its significance during the Sultanate era in the early seventeenth century. The installation also touches on architectural styles, noting European and Mughal influences, the primary use of brick and lime mortar, and the site's decorative features. However, it only briefly mentions significant buildings within Subarnagram, not within the immediate site. Despite its status as a national heritage site, the site lacks supplementary interpretive materials, programs, or activities to further engage visitors with its rich history.

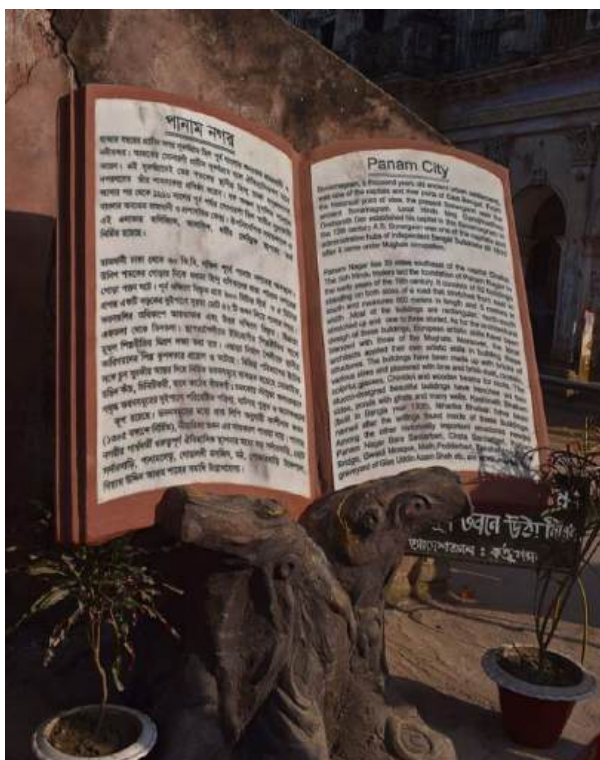


Figure 2: The installed Interpretation Panel. Source: Author.

4.0 Research Design

This study employs a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach, as articulated by Norman Fairclough (2003) and Ruth Wodak (2015), to scrutinize the narratives and interpretive strategies at Panam Nagar. CDA is particularly adept at revealing the underlying power relations, ideologies, and social inequalities embedded within textual and communicative practices.

In the context of heritage interpretation, CDA enables a nuanced examination of how historical narratives are constructed, presented, and perceived, paying special attention to the roles of AHD in shaping these narratives. This approach aligns with the study's objective to explore the discursive dynamics in heritage interpretation and to understand the processes of narrative negotiation at the site. The data collection for this study is multi-pronged, encompassing on-site observations, interviews, and document analysis.

1. **On-Site Observations:** Visits to Panam Nagar were conducted to gather first-hand information about the current state of heritage interpretation at the site. This involved examining interpretive materials such as plaques, information boards, and other forms of public engagement tools present at the site.
2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders, including local community members, visitors, heritage professionals, and officials from the Department of Archaeology. These interviews aimed to gather diverse perspectives on the site's interpretation and its impact on public understanding of Panam Nagar's history.
3. **Document Analysis:** A thorough review and analysis of relevant documents was undertaken. This included historical records, government documents, previous academic studies, and policy papers related to heritage management and interpretation in Bangladesh.

The analytical process involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative analysis was used to interpret the data gathered from interviews and on-site observations. This analysis focused on identifying themes, patterns, and discrepancies in the narratives and perceptions about Panam Nagar. Quantitative analysis was employed to evaluate visitor survey data, using statistical tools to discern patterns and trends in visitor responses and perceptions. This mixed-method approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the heritage interpretation at Panam Nagar, capturing both the nuanced details of individual narratives and the broader patterns evident in visitor perceptions.

5.0 Analysis and Findings

The components of interpretation and representation of this site can be broken down into the following, based on the frameworks suggested by Shanks and Tilley (2016):

Table 1: Components of Interpretation and Representation

Components	Details
Objects	The 52 buildings and their facade, A Temple, The 'Panam' Street, and The Surrounding Moat.
Audiences	Audiences from different ages and educational backgrounds, both local and foreign.
Human Subjects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The absent community who once owned the township 2. The community that used to settle after the abandonment 3. The neighboring community who are associated with religious rituals at the temple 4. The Department of Archaeology (DoA) as the custodian of the site 5. Local management and an advisory committee formed with DoA members, civil representatives, and regional government officers.

5.1 Interpretation

Although the interpretive panel highlights the buildings being constructed and inhabited by the affluent merchants, it doesn't clarify when and how the township was abandoned. Since Panamnagar is not connected with neighboring heritage sites in a designed trail, the logical organization of the texts might be irrelevant in the sense that 'Sonargaon' is being more prioritized than the site itself. While visiting the site it was evident and the study of Husain (2007) also illustrates that Panamnagar is mostly misunderstood by the audiences as the ruined old capital of Isa Khan from the 16th century. It may seem reasonable to assume that the lack of relevant and necessary information at the physical installation is the primary reason for the decontextualization of interpretation for the audience but to analyze the situation critically, the following three issues that are deeply located within the heritage context and will be analyzing those issues in light of theoretical premise to locate the gaps: the political history, social perspectives, and spatial context.

5.1.1 Interpretation of Political History

While 'Sonargaon' district was predominantly known for its historical significance from the pre-Mughal era, the establishment and emergence of Panamnagar in the early 19th century revived this once-affluent district during the British Colonial period (Husain, 2007; Shaikh, 2009). The British colonial period was not only an expansion of the European power to South Asia, but it also associated trade, commerce, and exchange of culture with the people at that time. (Shaikh, 2009) showed in his studies of historical imprints that Panam became an important place for commercial and business activities under the East

India Company. Focusing on the context of Eurocentric colonialism over Asia and other parts of the world (Loomba, 1998) emphasizes two attributes of modern colonialism that also align with this context. Firstly, it has a connection with Western capitalism and secondly, the complex relationship between the colony and the metropolis impacted to restructuring of the economy of both by the flow of natural resources. This notion of colonialism is a challenging discourse from the different perspectives of the people, (Shohat, 1992) and the study denotes that not all people were in the same extent of ‘oppression’ by the colonizers in the same way. The significant and aesthetic architecture of Panam is undoubtedly a ‘proof’ of the economic development, wealth generation, and profit in the business of the community that inhabited the locality. At the same time, it also clarifies the inhabitants of not being at the bottom of the social hierarchy and the township was developed as a byproduct of the close interaction with the discourse of power.

Although 1947 marks the end of colonialism of the British Raj in the Indian region, (Loomba, 1998) suggests that it doesn’t necessarily imply the demise of colonialism, at least to the communities who were at the bottom of the social hierarchy. On the contrary, a decline of the economy was prominent in the merchant community residing in Panamnagar when their products were no longer exported to the ‘metropole’.

The contemporary notion of the Bangladeshi government in disinheriting the colonial affiliation could be seen in recent political decisions where signs, buildings, and monuments that depict the colonial affiliation are being erased, removed, and dilapidated due to negligence. Although this notion was previously subliminal, it had been bolstered by the proclamation by the Prime Minister herself regarding the preservation of ‘unnecessary’ colonial heritages in the long-term planning for the new urban development (Bdnews24, 2014; BanglaNews24, 2014; Daily Manabzamin, 2014; Daily Samakal, 2014).

This phenomenon is directly reflected in the interpretation installation of this site, where the ownership of the Hindu merchants and their affiliation with the colonial power is completely censored to the global audiences as the English transcription of the bilingual interpretation omits the sentence ‘the development of this township was done under the colonial influence in colonial period’. This issue can also be explained as regulating meanings in the representation of superiority and achievement which doesn’t support the government’s manifestation. Here the government’s understanding and dominant attitude toward controlling the interpretation of heritage can be referred to as the conventional notion that (Smith, 2006) explains as ‘Authorized Heritage Discourse’ or AHD.

5.1.2 Interpretation of Social Perspective

While analyzing the interpretation of the site from its inhabitant's and local's viewpoints, another form of a hegemonic aspect of AHD can be identified which brings us to the second context- the social perspective of Panamnagar where the people of the community being the subject for interpretation associated with displacement, eviction, and separation. Although several houses were constructed in the early 19th century, the businessmen who held the ownership of the houses started residing here permanently from the beginning of the 20th century (Husain, 2007).

The concept of 'local' in this site has been influenced by a political and economic discourse that significantly originates, as (Long, 2000) suggests, with the center of power and influence. The capitalist and bourgeois class who dominantly inhabited this place during the colonial period faced the form of 'disinheritance' which primarily began in nature due to the decline of trade and commerce at the end of colonialism and sooner it started to take the shape of hostility when territorial integrity of the two mutually exclusive religious communities was dissolved in illegal occupation and forceful eviction. Compared to the European nation-state formation, and romanticism, which (Graham B. G., 2016) refers to as the nexus of Nationalism, here the ethnic consciousness among the citizens has impacted in forming of religion-based states which reshaped and reformed national identities and eventually changed the social identity of the community residing in Panam.

Further decline of this settlement started when political conflict took shape in riots during 1965 at Indo Pakistan and the people of this community found themselves as (Butalia, 1998) refers - in the 'wrong state' and had to abandon this land. The tension and riot acted as a catalyst to stir the process of 'othering' once the legitimately settled community went into exile. After the partition, the legitimacy of the cultural heritage was on the verge of threat and changed its meaning over time when the site was authorized by the non-Hindu majority. After the liberation war in 1971, some of the residents who occupied the buildings, yet it is debatable, claimed to be the successors of the previous owners. This community can be referred to (Watson, 2019)'s definition of the 'others'. This community left their footprints for about forty years and has been forcefully evicted thrice from residing at this site from 2006-2008 (Alam, 2019) and is now bearing the identity of outsiders.

The local marginal people who once lived in the site most of the time refrained from entering for prayer at the public temple inside the site. Also, since the theorization of the national identity of Bangladesh in a sense is underpinned by the spiritual discourse of 'muktijuddher chetona' or 'the spirit of liberation war', this site has another interpretation of what (Graham B. A., 2000) refers as

‘heritage of atrocity’, since the Pakistani Army adopted this site as military camp associated with the genocide during the war in 1971.

5.1.3 Spatial Context-based Interpretation

Studies (Shaikh, 2009) show that the rich and ornate collection of motifs and decorations in the building edifices are the fusion of Mughal, Greek, Roman, Renaissance, and Colonial styles which makes the site unique and at the same time mystic to its audiences. In his studies (Mowla, 2008) describes four types of buildings that are seen on both sides of this street which are unique in a way by following a pattern language of symmetry, axially, façade treatment, and opening. (Farida Nilufar, 2015) her studies of searching the genotypes confirm that the settlement resembles the urban residential house forms of Dhaka. A visual symphony of the richly detailed edifices along the Panam street created by each of the houses also reflects the subtle competition of the community to reflect their socio-economic status.

Besides the remarkable architectural and archaeological significance, it is evident that the local community’s attachment and memories (Harvey, 2008) referred to as the ‘collective past’ are embedded within the fabric of the site. (Pabon, 2003) her studies suggest architectural ‘phonocentrism’ is guided by materiality and often acts as a ‘trap’ by focusing on the tangibles and creating deception to the cultural significance that might be built on emotion and lacks physical evidence. All the buildings have been sealed by the Department of Archaeology since 2015 (Alam, 2019) and the visitors are restricted to observing the internal architectural accouterments by the ‘others.

Several times the evicted people attempted to reclaim the land and formed protests. The establishment of their contested identity can be reflected in the graffiti drawn on walls and boundaries within the site.



Figure 3: Graffiti on the wall of the buildings.
Written in Bengali: We will never leave Panam.

5.2 Audience Reception and Perceptions

‘Interpretation’ can be conceptualized as the process of making meaning of the sense of experiences and then to represent that meaning or sense. This actualization process of understanding is a balanced repetitive movement that aims to achieve ‘greater truth’ and is a progression of dialogues between the whole and the parts of a work and acquisition and rejection of ideas that are underpinned by time factors and reassertion of foreknowledge and historicity which (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999) refers as ‘Hermeneutic Circle’. To analyze audiences’ primary understanding of the meaning of the site, a site survey and sampling of opinion from the visitors have been done. While defining the relationship between ‘time’ and ‘modernity’, (Harrison, some definitions: heritage, modernity, materiality, 2013) suggested that the objects from the past are in continuous threat of declination and cessation.

To measure the relevance and meaningfulness of the interpretation, we have recorded the audience’s pre-existing understanding of Panam being an old city, explained the historical background, continuous threats of cessations and heritage significance through informal discussion with individuals and groups and documented their responses for alternate interpretation.

Table 2: Responses from the Visitors

Audiences' Category	Number of Respondents	Objective of Visit	Pre-visit idea of the site	Suggestion for alternate interpretation after explanation
Family	7	Leisure/ Picnic: 4 Educational Purpose: 2 For Prayer:1	Houses of Merchants: 1 Houses of Sultans in the Muslim Period: 1 Palace/ Jaminders: 5 Administrative Offices: 0 Sacred Place: 0 Unknown: 0	Inclusion of map: 5 Revising contextual texts:7 Community involvement: 0 Activity-based planning: 0
Groups	5	Study Tour:2 Corporate Tour: 1 Site Seeing: 2	Houses of Merchants: 0 Houses of Sultans in Muslim Period:1 Palace/ Jaminders:3 Administrative Offices: 0 Sacred Place: 0 Unknown: 1	Inclusion of map: 3 Revising contextual texts:5 Community involvement: 0 Activity-based planning: 0
Individuals	21	Research: 2 Photography: 7 Trespassing: 7 Hawkers: 4 For Prayer: 1	Houses of Merchants: 1 Houses of Sultans in the Muslim Period:3 Palace/ Jaminders: 9 Administrative Offices:1 Sacred Place: 2 Unknown: 5	Inclusion of map: 9 Revising contextual texts:7 Community involvement: 15 Activity-based planning: 2
Foreigner/ International Visitors	3	Research:1 Educational Purpose: 2	Houses of Merchants: 1 Houses of Sultans in the Muslim Period: 2 Palace/ Jaminders: 0 Administrative Offices: 0 Sacred Place: 0 Unknown: 0	Inclusion of map: 3 Revising contextual texts:3 Community involvement: 3 Activity-based planning: 3
Children	12	Trespassing: 6 Playing in the Open Spaces: 5	Houses of Merchants: 0 Houses of Sultans in the Muslim Period: 10 Sacred Place: 2	Inclusion of map: 9 Revising contextual texts:5 Community involvement: 0 Activity-based planning: 0

The pre-understanding and understanding after visiting the site were recorded from the audience. From the responses, it can be understood that very few of the visitors have a prior understanding of the cultural significance of the site. Based on the respondent's suggestions alternate interpretations and expansion of the primary interpretation as adding maps and images and logical organization of the texts have been derived. Also, to interpret the unseen, community involvement, and potential activity-based planning to enhance the understanding of this cultural heritage were also given priority by some of them.

The surveys, comprising questions on visitors' background knowledge, interest in the site, and feedback on the interpretative approach, highlighted varying interpretations and connections with the heritage narratives. For instance, locals displayed a deeper emotional connection to the site, often interpreting it considering personal or community histories. Tourists, on the other hand, showed interest in the broader historical and architectural aspects, but often lacked depth in understanding local cultural nuances. Students and heritage professionals provided more critical feedback, often pointing out gaps in narrative inclusivity and interpretive depth. The data analysis utilized statistical tools to identify patterns in visitor responses. It became apparent that engagement levels varied significantly depending on the visitor's background and prior knowledge, indicating a need for more tailored interpretive strategies.

A comparative analysis of the objectives outlined in interpretive materials against visitor feedback revealed notable gaps. Many visitors, especially those from marginalized groups or with limited historical background, found the narratives either too narrow or disconnected from their perspectives. The interpretive materials, while rich in historical information, often failed to resonate with visitors who sought more inclusive and relatable stories. The analysis highlights the need for interpretive strategies that not only inform but also connect with diverse audiences on a personal level. The gap analysis underscores the importance of understanding visitors' backgrounds in shaping their perceptions and underlines the necessity of incorporating multiple perspectives to make heritage interpretation more inclusive and effective.

6.0 Conclusion

The study at Panam Nagar reveals the complexities in heritage interpretation within a post-colonial context. It uncovers how current interpretive practices, while rich in historical detail, often overlook the diverse narratives and emotional connections that visitors seek. Many visitors come to Panam Nagar seeking a glimpse of the past, a form of 'nostalgia' as described by Boym (2001), longing for refuge from modern life's alienating aspects. However, the current interpretation does not fully cater to these needs, leading to a gap between intended and perceived narratives.

To address these shortcomings, the following recommendations can be proposed:

- a. **Revision and Expansion of Interpretive Materials:** This involves updating and broadening the current interpretive materials to include a more diverse range of narratives.
- b. **Digital Storytelling and Interactive Exhibits:** Using digital platforms and interactive exhibits to create dynamic, engaging experiences that resonate with visitors' desires for deeper connections with the past.
- c. **Community-Led Tours:** Empowering local communities to share their narratives, adding authenticity and depth to the visitor experience.
- d. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Encouraging collaboration among various stakeholders, including local communities, historians, and visitors, for a continually evolving interpretation of the site.
- e. **Addressing Resource Constraints:** Recognizing challenges such as limited funding and human resources, strategies should be designed to be resource-efficient while maximizing impact.

Finally, the findings of this study are crucial for advancing heritage studies, underscoring the importance of adopting more inclusive and participatory methods in heritage interpretation. The insights gleaned from Panam Nagar offer valuable guidance for enhancing engagement and deepening the understanding of diverse cultural histories at heritage sites, particularly those with post-colonial legacies. Future research should focus on several key areas: evaluating the long-term impact of updated interpretive approaches on visitor perceptions at Panam Nagar; conducting comparative studies of heritage interpretation practices at other colonial-era sites to explore varied narrative approaches; investigating under-researched historical narratives to broaden the scope of interpretation at Panam Nagar; and exploring effective strategies to address resource constraints in the implementation of more comprehensive interpretive strategies.

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马来西亚华人企业的社会资本与跨文化交流互动研究

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摘要

马来西亚华人企业凭借其深厚的社会资本和有效的跨文化交流策略，在全球化的商业环境中展现了显著的适应性和竞争力。文章通过对人际关系的构建与利用、信任与合作的文化特征、社会认同与团体归属感的分析，探讨了社会资本在企业成功中的关键作用。同时，文章也深入讨论了跨文化交流的实践与挑战，包括沟通策略、语言差异的克服以及文化适应和冲突解决。通过案例研究，文章揭示了社会资本和跨文化交流之间的互动关系，以及这种互动对企业策略的影响，强调了在全球市场中，深化社会资本和有效进行跨文化交流的重要性。

关键词：马来西亚华人企业，社会资本，跨文化交流，人际关系网络

A Study on the Interaction between Social Capital and Cross-cultural communication in Malaysian Chinese Enterprises

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Abstract

With their profound social capital and effective cross-cultural communication strategies, Malaysian Chinese enterprises have shown significant adaptability and competitiveness in the global business environment. This paper discusses the key role of social capital in enterprise success through the analyses of the construction and utilization of interpersonal relationship network, the cultural characteristics of trust and cooperation, social identity and the sense of group belonging. At the same time, the article also deeply discusses the practices and challenges of cross-cultural communication, including communication strategies, the overcoming of language differences, and cultural adaptation and conflict resolution. Through case studies, the article reveals the interaction between social capital and cross-cultural.

Keywords: Malaysian Chinese enterprises, social capital, cross-cultural, interpersonal relationship network

引言

马来西亚华人企业，作为该国经济发展的重要力量，拥有着悠久和丰富的历史背景。自 19 世纪中叶华人大量迁移到马来西亚以来，他们凭借着艰苦创业的精神和对商业的敏锐洞察，在多个行业内取得了显著成就。如今，这些企业不仅在本土市场占有一席之地，也在全球化浪潮中寻求更广阔的发展空间。面对经济全球化的挑战和机遇，马来西亚华人企业依托其独特的社会资本和跨文化交流能力，展现出了令人瞩目的适应性和竞争力，成为研究跨文化管理和国际商务的重要案例。

一、马来西亚华人企业的社会资本分析

（一）人际关系的构建与利用

在马来西亚华人企业的社会资本框架内，人际关系网络展现了其对企业成功的重要性。这种网络不仅仅是表面的交往，而是基于深厚信任和共同利益的长期合作关系。企业通过参与和主办各种商业活动、慈善活动和文化交流，有效拓展了社交圈，与行业领袖、政府官员及其他商业伙伴建立了联系。这样的活动不仅增强了企业间的相互理解，也促进了文化价值观的共享。网络的构建依赖于共同的文化背景和语言优势，这在马来西亚多元文化的背景下尤为重要。华人企业利用这一点，通过文化纽带强化内部联系，同时也作为一种桥梁，促进与其他文化背景企业的交流^[1]。通过这种方式，企业不仅在本土市场树立了坚实的基础，也为国际化战略铺平了道路。利用人际关系网络，企业能够访问到更广泛的资源和信息。在快速变化的市场环境中，及时获取行业动态、市场趋势和政策变化信息至关重要。这些信息通常通过非正式渠道在信任的网络内部分享，

为企业决策提供了宝贵的第一手资料。同时，网络中的支持也体现在解决资金、技术和人才等方面的需求，使企业能够灵活应对市场的挑战。人际关系网络还促进了品牌的传播和形象建设。通过网络的力量，企业能够更有效地推广自己的产品和服务，建立正面的公众形象。在竞争激烈的市场中，良好的企业形象和品牌认知度可以大大增加消费者的信任和忠诚度，从而提升市场份额。

（二）信任与合作的文化特征

在马来西亚华人企业的社会资本中，信任与合作的文化特征显现出其深远的影响力。这种文化特征不仅根植于华人社区内部，也影响着与外部环境的互动。信任构成了人际关系网络的基石，而合作则是这一网络能够成功运作的关键。信任的建立源自长期的交往和相互理解。在业务合作之初，双方可能通过较小规模的交易或项目开始，逐渐累积信任。这种方式确保了合作的可持续性，减少了风险。信任的深化进一步促进了信息的开放共享，使得合作双方能够在互相了解的基础上作出更为明智的决策。合作的文化特征在马来西亚华人企业之间表现得尤为明显。这些企业倾向于与信任的伙伴建立长期的合作关系，相较于短期的利益，更重视合作带来的长远价值。在此基础上，合作伙伴共同面对市场变化和挑战，分享资源，共担风险，以实现双方或多方的共赢。文化认同感在信任与合作的过程中发挥着重要作用。共同的历史背景、语言和价值观让华人企业家们更容易找到共鸣，建立起密切的合作关系。这种文化上的共识使得合作更加顺畅，减少了误解和冲突的可能性。此外，合作不仅限于华人企业之间。随着全球化的深入，马来西亚华人企业也越来越多地与其他文化背景的企业建立合作。在这个过程中，信

任和合作的文化特征促使华人企业家学习如何跨文化沟通，如何在维持自身文化特性的同时，理解和尊重合作伙伴的文化差异^[2]。

（三）社会认同与团体归属感

社会认同与团体归属感在马来西亚华人企业中扮演着至关重要的角色。这一概念深深植根于共享的文化、历史和价值观之中，为企业及其成员提供了一种深刻的连结感。在多元文化的马来西亚社会中，华人企业通过强化内部的社会认同，建立了一个相互支持、共同发展的社群环境。社会认同的形成始于共同的背景和经历，这不仅包括语言和传统，还涉及到共同的经商理念和生活方式。这种认同感促进了企业内部成员之间的紧密合作和相互支持，形成了一种独特的企业文化。在这样的文化中，每个成员都感受到了自己是这个团体不可或缺的一部分，增强了他们对企业的忠诚和归属感。团体归属感的增强，进一步推动了企业内部的信息共享和资源配置的高效性。当企业成员认为自己是一个紧密联系的集体的一部分时，他们更倾向于无保留地分享知识和资源，协助彼此解决问题。这种内部的团队协作精神对于企业的创新和灵活应对市场变化至关重要。此外，社会认同和团体归属感还有助于构建企业与外界的积极关系。在与其他企业和社区互动时，强烈的社会认同使得华人企业能够以一种团结一致的姿态出现，更好地维护自身的利益和价值观。同时，这种归属感也吸引了拥有相似背景和价值观的个人和组织，促进了跨企业甚至跨文化的合作和交流。

（四）社会资本对企业绩效的影响

社会资本对企业绩效产生了深远的影响，这一点在马来西亚华人企业的发展实践中得到了充分体现。社会资本，作为一种集合了

人际关系网络、信任、合作以及社会认同与团体归属感等要素的非物质资源，为企业提供了一系列促进增长和提升竞争力的机会。社会资本通过强化人际网络，为企业开启了获取关键资源的渠道。这些资源包括但不限于资金、技术、信息以及人才。特别是在信息日益成为企业核心竞争力的今天，通过社会资本建立的广泛网络使企业能够快速获得市场动态、技术进展和消费趋势等关键信息，从而做出更加精准的战略决策。此外，基于信任和合作的社会资本促进了企业间的协同效应，降低了交易成本。在信任的基础上建立的合作关系减少了对复杂合同和法律手段的依赖，使得合作更加顺畅，加速了业务流程，提高了运营效率^[3]。这种高效的合作模式不仅提升了企业自身的绩效，也为整个产业链的优化和升级提供了动力。同时，社会认同与团体归属感增强了企业的内部凝聚力，激发了员工的工作热情和创造力。员工感到自己是企业重要的一部分，更加积极地参与到企业的发展中，为企业创造更多价值。这种积极的工作态度和高度的参与度直接反映在企业的生产效率和服务质量上，进一步推动了企业绩效的提升。最后，社会资本通过增强企业的社会形象和品牌认知，为企业赢得了更广泛的市场接受度。一个在社会中拥有良好声誉的企业，更容易吸引顾客、合作伙伴以及优秀人才，这些都是企业持续成长不可或缺的要素。

二、跨文化交流互动的实践与挑战

（一）跨文化沟通的策略与实例

跨文化沟通的策略在全球化的商业环境中至关重要，尤其对于马来西亚华人企业而言，它们往往需要与来自不同文化背景的合作伙伴进行有效沟通。实现有效的跨文化沟通，首要的策略是增进对

不同文化背景的理解和尊重。这包括了解合作伙伴的文化习俗、价值观及沟通习惯。通过文化敏感性培训，企业能够提升员工的跨文化意识，避免文化偏见和误解，为顺畅的沟通铺平道路。举例来说，马来西亚华人企业在与中东合作伙伴交流时，深入了解伊斯兰文化和宗教习俗，避免在商务会议中安排涉及酒精的活动，体现了对伙伴文化的尊重。另一个策略是采用适当的沟通方式。在一些文化中，直接表达意见被视为效率的体现，而在其他文化中，则可能被认为是粗鲁的。因此，调整沟通风格以适应不同的文化环境是至关重要的。例如，与东亚伙伴沟通时，采用更为委婉和间接的表达方式，更容易获得积极响应。技术的运用也是跨文化沟通中的一个重要策略。利用翻译软件和跨文化沟通工具，可以帮助克服语言障碍，确保沟通的准确性。同时，使用视频会议和社交媒体等现代通讯工具，可以增进远程合作伙伴之间的相互理解和联系。最后，建立共同的沟通目标也是跨文化沟通的关键。在商务合作前明确共享的目标和期望，可以帮助所有参与方集中注意力解决问题，而非被文化差异所分散。通过定期的会议和反馈机制，保持沟通的持续性和开放性，有助于及时发现并解决由文化差异引起的误解^[4]。

（二）语言差异与交流障碍

语言差异在全球商务交流中常常构成重要的交流障碍。这种差异不仅限于不同的语言文字，还包括各种非语言沟通方式，如肢体语言、表情和沟通风格等。在马来西亚华人企业与国际伙伴进行交流时，这些差异尤为显著，需要通过有效的策略来克服。语言本身的不同导致直接的沟通困难。即使在使用共通语言（如英语）进行沟通时，不同国家和地区的口音、俚语以及行业术语的差异也可能

造成理解上的障碍。例如，一些专业术语在不同的文化背景下可能有着不同的含义，这就要求双方在交流前对这些术语达成共识，以避免误解。非语言沟通方式的差异同样会影响交流的效果。在某些文化中，直接的眼神接触是表现诚信和兴趣的方式，而在其他文化中，过多的眼神接触可能被视为不礼貌或侵犯隐私。同样，身体语言如握手、拥抱等在不同文化中的接受程度不同，未经注意可能会引起尴尬或不适。此外，沟通风格的差异也是一个重要因素。一些文化倾向于直接和开放的沟通方式，而其他文化则更偏好间接和含蓄的方式。在不了解这一点的情况下，即使信息被传达了，其真正的意图也可能会被误解。

（三）文化适应与冲突解决

文化适应与冲突解决是跨文化交流中至关重要的组成部分，特别是对于在全球化环境下运营的马来西亚华人企业而言。面对来自不同文化背景的合作伙伴，企业必须发展出有效的策略以适应多元文化的商业环境，并妥善解决文化差异所引发的冲突。文化适应涉及对合作伙伴文化习俗、信仰和价值观的理解和尊重。这不仅要求企业在外显的商业行为上做出调整，如遵守当地的商业礼仪、节假日安排，还包括对内在价值观的认可和适应。有效的文化适应能够促进双方的相互理解，建立起基于尊重的合作关系，从而提高合作效率和满意度。当遇到文化冲突时，采取积极的解决策略尤为关键。一种有效的方法是开展文化敏感性培训，让企业成员了解不同文化背景下的行为模式和交流风格，以增强跨文化交流的能力。此外，设立跨文化沟通平台，为企业内外的成员提供讨论和解决文化差异问题的空间，也是解决文化冲突的有效手段。在具体冲突解决过程

中，采用中立的第三方调解者可以帮助双方以更加客观公正的视角审视问题，找到双赢的解决方案^[5]。调解者的角色不仅限于解决冲突，还包括促进双方深层次的文化交流和理解，帮助构建长期稳定的合作关系。最终，文化适应和冲突解决的关键在于培养一种开放和包容的态度，认识到文化多样性是国际商务中的一大财富。通过积极适应不同的文化环境并有效解决冲突，马来西亚华人企业能够在全局市场中建立起强大的竞争优势，实现可持续发展。

（四）政策与法规对跨文化交流的影响

政策与法规在跨文化交流的过程中扮演着重要的角色，影响着企业的国际合作模式和沟通效率。这些规定为跨国经营的企业设定了法律框架和行为准则，直接影响着企业如何与不同文化背景的合作伙伴进行有效沟通。首先，国际贸易政策和法规定义了跨国企业间合作的法律基础，包括合同执行、知识产权保护、税收和海关等方面。这些规定要求企业在跨文化交流时不仅要考虑文化因素，还需遵守相关的法律规定，确保商业活动的合法性和正当性。例如，某些国家对数据保护和隐私有着严格的法律要求，企业在这些国家操作时必须适应这些法规，这要求企业在沟通和数据交换时采取特定的措施。其次，不同国家的商业礼仪和法律环境也对跨文化交流产生影响。企业在进入新的市场时，需要深入了解当地的商业习俗和法律环境，以免因无意中违反当地习俗或法规而导致的误解和冲突。了解和适应这些差异，是建立有效沟通和成功国际合作的前提。再者，政策和法规的变化可能对企业的跨文化交流策略造成影响。随着国际政治经济环境的变动，政策和法规也会相应调整，这要求企业必须保持灵活性，及时适应这些变化，以维护企业的国际业务

和合作关系。这种适应性不仅体现在遵守新的法规上，也体现在调整沟通策略上，以保持与国际伙伴的良好关系。最后，跨文化交流的成功不仅依赖于文化的理解和适应，也依赖于对国际政策和法规环境的敏感性和适应能力。通过在遵守国际法律框架的同时，有效管理和解决文化差异，马来西亚华人企业能够在全球市场中稳步发展，建立起强健的国际合作网络^[6]。

三、社会资本与跨文化交流的互动关系

（一）社会资本如何促进跨文化交流

社会资本在促进跨文化交流方面起着至关重要的作用，特别是在全球化日益加深的今天，它成为了桥接不同文化之间差异和促进理解的重要工具。通过建立和维护广泛的人际关系网络，企业可以有效地利用社会资本来促进跨文化交流，进而加强国际合作和市场拓展。社会资本通过其人际网络的特性，为企业提供了进入新市场和文化环境的渠道。这些网络不仅包括同行业内的联系，也涵盖了政府机构、非政府组织以及其他文化群体。通过这样的网络，企业可以获得宝贵的第一手信息和深入的文化洞察，这些信息和洞察有助于企业更好地理解目标市场的文化特征和商业习惯，从而制定出更为有效的沟通和市场策略。同时，社会资本中的信任元素为跨文化交流提供了稳固的基础。在不同文化背景的人们进行交流时，预先建立的信任可以显著降低误解和冲突的风险，增加沟通的透明度和效率。信任促进了开放和诚实的对话，使双方能够更容易地分享知识和观点，这对于解决跨文化交流中的障碍至关重要。此外，社会资本中的团体归属感和社会认同感加强了跨文化合作的凝聚力。当企业能够在多元文化的背景下建立起共同的目标和认同感时，不

同文化背景的团队更容易找到共同点，促进团队内部的和谐与协作。这种团队内的协作精神能够向外扩展至国际合作伙伴，建立起更加稳定和长期的合作关系。

（二）跨文化交流如何增强社会资本

跨文化交流在增强社会资本中发挥着关键作用，尤其是在全球化的商业环境下。通过有效的跨文化交流，企业不仅能够扩大其人际网络，还能够增强信任和合作，进而深化社会资本的价值和广度。有效的跨文化交流首先扩大了企业的人际关系网络。在多元文化的交流中，企业接触到来自不同文化背景的合作伙伴和客户，这些新的联系点为企业带来新的资源、信息和机会。通过这种方式，企业能够建立起覆盖更广泛地区和行业的网络，为企业的发展提供新的动力^[7]。其次，跨文化交流通过建立和增强信任促进了合作的深化。在理解并尊重不同文化价值观和习俗的基础上，企业能够更有效地与国际伙伴沟通，减少误解和冲突，建立起基于相互理解和尊重的信任关系。这种信任是合作关系稳定和长期发展的基础，对于维护和加强社会资本至关重要。进一步而言，跨文化交流有助于构建共同的价值观和目标，这对于团队的凝聚力和组织的整体表现极为重要。通过共享经验和最佳实践，企业能够在多样化的文化环境中找到共同点，建立起共同的目标和追求。这种文化上的共识加强了团队成员之间的联系，提升了团队效能，从而增强了社会资本。最后，跨文化交流还能够增进社会认同和团体归属感。在全球范围内建立有效的沟通和合作，使得企业不仅在本土社会中，也在国际社会获得了认同。这种认同感不仅增强了企业的品牌形象，也加深了内外部利益相关者对企业的忠诚和支持。

（三）两者的相互作用对企业策略的影响

社会资本与跨文化交流之间的相互作用对企业策略产生了显著的影响，为企业在全球化市场中的发展提供了新的视角和方向。这种相互作用促使企业重新审视其业务战略，更加重视文化敏感性和人际网络的构建，在全球范围内寻求和维护竞争优势。随着跨文化交流的加深，企业开始意识到，成功的国际业务不仅仅依赖于产品和服务的质量，更依赖于能够理解和适应不同文化背景的能力。因此，企业策略中越来越多地包含了跨文化培训和多元化管理的元素。这些策略的实施有助于提升员工的跨文化交流能力，建立起更加广泛和深入的国际合作网络。同时，社会资本的积累为企业提供了宝贵的资源和信息，使企业能够更好地识别和把握国际市场的机会。在这个过程中，企业不断地通过跨文化交流来强化和扩展其社会资本，包括建立跨国的合作伙伴关系、加入国际商业组织和参与国际项目。这不仅增强了企业的市场竞争力，也提升了企业的创新能力和市场适应性。进一步地，社会资本与跨文化交流的相互增强促使企业更加注重企业社会责任和可持续发展。在全球化背景下，企业的社会影响和环境影响越来越受到关注。通过积极参与跨文化交流和社会资本的构建，企业能够更有效地与各利益相关者沟通，响应社会和环境问题，从而提升企业的社会形象和品牌价值^[8]。

四、案例研究

马来西亚华人企业历来在经济发展中占据核心地位，面对全球化挑战，这些企业展现出了非凡的适应能力和竞争力。案例中所述的家族企业便是一个生动的例证，其在电子产品制造和出口领域的成就，凸显了社会资本和跨文化交流在促进企业发展方面的重要作

用。该企业的成功秘诀之一在于其建立了庞大的人际关系网络。通过积极参与商业协会和社团活动，不仅促进了市场信息的获取，还加深了与供应商及客户之间的合作关系。这种基于相互信任和尊重的文化内化于企业的每一个层面，从而营造出一个促进合作的环境。除了人际网络的构建，企业还重视员工的社会认同和归属感。通过组织各种文化和社交活动，加强了团队精神，这不仅提高了员工的满意度和忠诚度，也间接地提升了企业的市场竞争力和适应性。在跨文化交流方面，企业展现了同样的独到见解和策略。大量资源被投入到跨文化沟通的培训，包括聘请多语言人才，以及提供文化敏感性培训，以确保团队能够有效应对语言和文化差异。此外，企业采取了灵活的策略来适应不同文化背景下的市场需求，有效地解决了文化冲突，保障了业务的顺畅进行。企业对国际贸易政策和法规的变化保持敏感，确保其跨文化交流策略符合相关要求，这不仅避免了潜在的法律风险，也增强了企业的国际形象和竞争力。社会资本和跨文化交流之间的互动关系为企业的成功提供了坚实的基础。良好的人际关系网络促进了信息的流通和资源的共享，而信任和合作的文化氛围则为跨文化交流铺平了道路。反过来，有效的跨文化交流也进一步增强了企业的社会资本，通过与不同文化背景的合作伙伴建立稳定的关系，扩大了企业的影响力。综上所述，通过深入分析这家马来西亚华人企业的发展历程，可以清晰地看到社会资本和跨文化交流在促进企业成长中的重要性。随着全球化的持续深入，这些因素将成为企业进一步扩展国内外市场、增强竞争力的关键。

五、结论

在全球化日益加深的今天，马来西亚华人企业通过有效地运用社会资本和实施跨文化交流策略，不仅巩固了其在本土市场的领导地位，还成功扩展了国际业务。社会资本的深化和跨文化交流的有效性，为这些企业提供了宝贵的资源和信息，加强了内部的凝聚力和外部的合作网络。通过案例分析，可以看到企业如何在维护自身文化特性的同时，学习和适应不同文化背景下的商业实践，解决文化冲突，促进了企业的可持续发展。这不仅体现了马来西亚华人企业在全球化背景下的竞争力和韧性，也为其他跨国企业提供了宝贵的经验教训。

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