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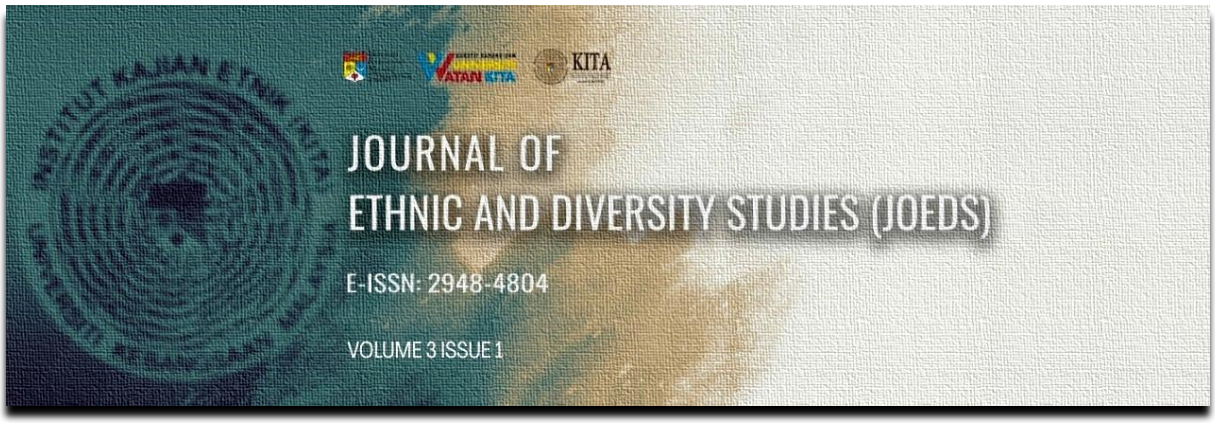

Perception and Translation of Humour in Post-Colonial Literature: The Case of Wole Soyinka's The Lion and the Jewel

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ABSTRACT

Nigerian literature produced immediately after independence revealed to a large extent the manifestations of humour in such works. The objective of this paper is to investigate the translation of humorous elements in Wole Soyinka's The Lion and the Jewel. Data for the study are culled from The Lion and the Jewel using the generative theory of verbal humour proposed by Attardo and Raskin (1991) as the theoretical framework. The method involves devoting keen attention to the most indicative examples in the text where the translator's decision-making process is geared towards facilitating the target reader's understanding of Soyinka's humour. The paper finds out that the analysis of Soyinka's humour in the text assists us to determine the cultural aesthetics and linguistic position of Nigerian dramatic literary system on the scale of comedy creation and domestication. The paper concludes that the translator's ability to perceive and translate humour in the text belongs to human trait which develops through time and culture (Hadiati (2008:9).

Keywords: Humour; Translation; Culture; Nigerian literature; Generative Theory.

ABSTRAK

Kesusasteraan Nigeria yang dihasilkan sejurus selepas kemerdekaan mendedahkan sebahagian besar manifestasi jenaka dalam karya tersebut. Objektif kertas ini adalah untuk menyiasat terjemahan unsur-unsur jenaka dalam The Lion and the Jewel karya Wole Soyinka. Data untuk kajian diambil daripada The Lion and the Jewel menggunakan teori generatif humor verbal yang dicadangkan oleh Attardo dan Raskin (1991) sebagai kerangka teori. Kaedah ini melibatkan menumpukan perhatian yang mendalam kepada contoh yang paling jelas dalam teks di mana proses membuat keputusan penterjemah menjurus ke arah memudahkan pemahaman pembaca sasaran tentang jenaka Soyinka. Makalah itu mendapati bahawa analisis humor Soyinka dalam teks membantu kita menentukan estetika budaya dan kedudukan linguistik sistem sastera dramatik Nigeria pada skala penciptaan dan domestikasi komedi. Makalah ini merumuskan bahawa

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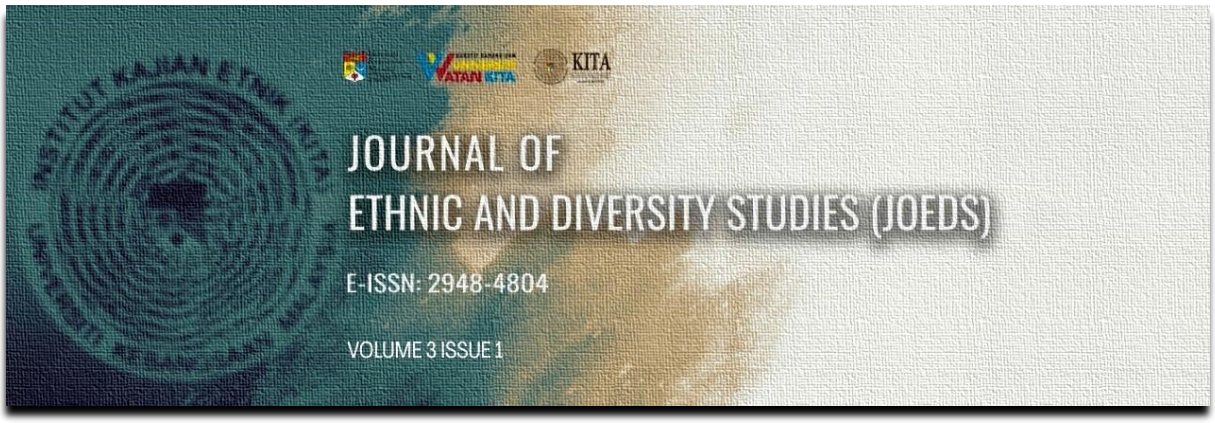


kebolehan penterjemah untuk melihat dan menterjemah humor dalam teks tergolong dalam sifat manusia yang berkembang melalui masa dan budaya (Hadiati (2008:9).

Kata kunci: Humor; Terjemahan; Budaya; kesusasteraan Nigeria; Teori Generatif.

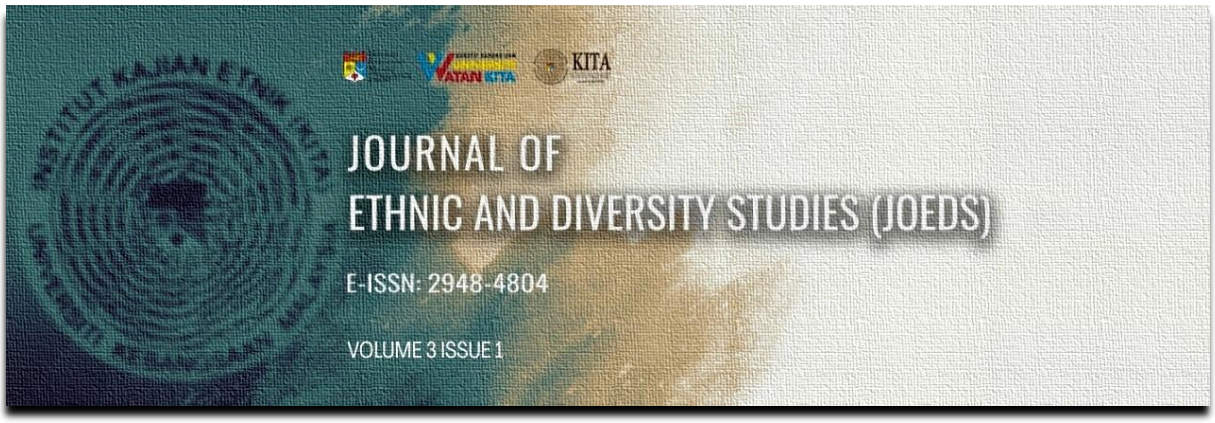
INTRODUCTION

Nigerian literatures produced immediately after independence revealed to a large extent, the manifestation of humour in such works. Translating humour emanating from a culturally-bounded text like *The Lion and the Jewel* presents a difficult task to the translator due to the fact that the translator takes into account the cultural aesthetics of the source text in order to ensure the acceptability of the target text to the target reader. In this contribution, the translation of humour is investigated in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* translated into French as *Le Lion et la Perle* by Philip Laburthe-Tolra. Soyinka embellishes the content of his creative fiction with humorous features to create laughter, generate emotional apprehension, show stress, pilot and properly smoothen conversation. Data for the study are culled from *The Lion and the Jewel* and its French translation using the General Theory of Verbal Humour as the theoretical framework. The text features a good number of humorous instances used to create comic effect to the target readers. Attention is devoted to the most indicative examples where the translator's decision-making process is geared towards facilitating the target reader's understanding of Soyinka's humour. The study investigates the translation procedures that contribute to a new model of humour translation in dramatic text. The study analyzes the factors that are pertinent to cultural affinity of the target reader so as to allow conclusions to be drawn on sufficient results.

The paper reveals that analysis of Soyinka's humour in our text assists in determining the cultural, aesthetic and linguistic position of Nigerian dramatic literary text on the scale of domestication and foreignization. It also reveals the role of translation as a medium for cross-cultural communication. Through the translation of *The Lion and the Jewel* into French, the French readers become more interested in reading the target text that allows them to explore other people's culture. Reflecting on the comparative text analysis of the text, this paper attempts to identify the most prevalent strategies used by the translator in the transfer of Soyinks's humour. The paper concludes that the translator's creative ability to perceive and translate humour in the text belongs to human trait which develops through time and culture (Hadiate 2008:9).

LITERATURE SURVEY ON HUMOUR TRANSLATION

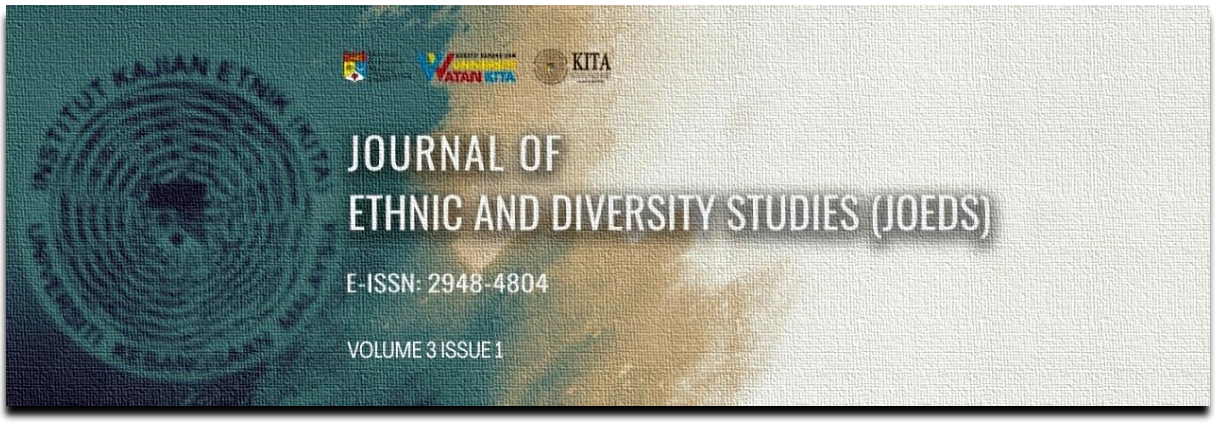
Numerous researchers have presented their contributions on the role of humour in literary narratives (Mahmood & Maryam (2021); Hadiate (2008); Katerina (2014); Adijei (2015); Chusni,



(2018). In an early article, Mahmood & Maryam (2021) analyzed the Persian humor expressions' appropriacy and their translated versions in English through a qualitative study. Arvo (2006) discussed the contemporary linguistic theories of humour focusing on subtopics as the Arthur Koestler's Dissociation theory of humour and its reception; Victor Raskin's Script-based theory of jokes in his semantic mechanisms of humour; the General theory of verbal humour by Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo and the attempt of testing GTVH by Nillibald ruch. Most of the humour theories ever proposed are, to a large extent, mixed with theories and many contemporary researchers believe that humour in its totality is too huge and multiform a phenomenon to be incorporated into a single integrated theory (ibid: 28). The work of Katerina (2014) examines the audio-visual translation of humour created by means of extralinguistic culture-bound references (ECRS) in the US-American TV Series,

The New Normal (Adler and Murphy, 2013). In the work, specific case study was discussed drawing on Relevance Theory and the concept of incongruity and superiority. The concept of context was given as an element specific to audio humour. With regard to translating audiovisual humour, a functional approach was promoted but that also seeks perlocutionary equivalence (ibid.:183). Drawing on these theoretical insights, three elements were considered as crucial for subtitling of extralinguistic culture-bound references in audiovisual humour: (i) the tripartite relationship, addresser-addressee-audience, (ii) extra-textual aspects; and (iii) intra-textual aspects (ibid. 183). He affirms that a model that could cater for the translation of culturally-derived humour would need to take into account the factors analysed in his research work, as well as more that may arise through relevant research. The work of Hadiate (2018) claims that the ability to perceive and produce humour belongs to human trait Hadiate (2018:9), which develops through time and culture. He submitted that humour is like a frog, once it is dissected, it dies (ibid.:9). Adijei (2015) x-rays the language of humour in anglophone African literature using Achebe's *A man of the people* as case study.

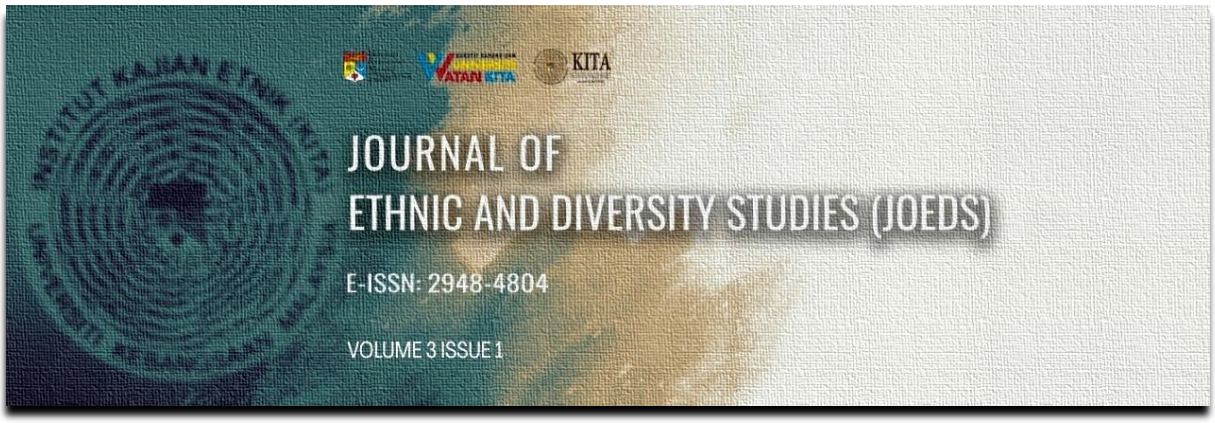
In his contribution, instances of humour show the strong attachment or detachment of a character towards somebody or something, satirize people in the community, deliver his major theme of corruption, and make the text interesting to read. Ying (2010) analyses the transfer of humour in translating advertising texts. He based his research on a prior study, processes that the transference of humour is quite flexible in the practice of advertisement translation. He claims that humourous expressions in original texts may be faithfully translated, or detected, or in some cases humour may be added in translated texts Ying (2010:47). From the survey, it is discovered that researchers have published numerous contributions that suggest what kinds of approaches should be used in the translation of humour from one text into another. One area of research remains underrepresented; there have been relatively few studies on the translation of humour in Nigerian dramatic text. Since much of the available scholarship has extolled the payoffs and challenges of humour research in other disciplines, this paper will explore humour translation in dramatic text and add another literary dimension to the theory and practice of translation.



THEORETICAL INSIGHT ON HUMOUR RESEARCH: LINGUISTIC THEORIES OF HUMOUR

The linguistic theories of humour can be classified into three main branches. In this section, I will discuss the three main classifications of humour. These are theories of incongruity, or inconsistency or contradiction or dissociation. This theory is based on some objective characteristics of a humourous text and it is assumed that every such act involves two different planes of content, line of thought. In newer works, the planes are called frames of references, isotopies, schemas, scripts (ibibd. 27). Second, the theory of superiority or disparagement or criticism, or hostility accentuates the negative attitude of the producer and, or user of humour towards its target and the often alleged aggressive character of laughter (ibib. 27). This humour is directed to person or group typically on political, ethnic or gender grounds (ibid.:27). Third, the theories of release also referred to as psychoanalytic theory is concerned with the recipient of humour and the psychological effect houmour allegedly brings about in the recipient (ibid.:27). Beyond the three classifications of humour is the script-based theory proposed by Raskin and Attardo (1991). This theory evaluates the semantic distance, or degree of similarity between particular joke texts and it involves six-level hierarchical representation model of verbal jokes: language, narrative, strategy, target objects, situation, logical mechanism and script opposition. This theory will later be applied in the analysis of the translation of Soyinka's *Lion and the jewel* translated into French as *Le lion et la perle.* Humour as perceived as incongruity when the humour is created where the information provided by the joke-teller is incongruous with information that the addressee expects to receive (Katarina 2014:167).

It has also been argued that producing and understanding humour is inextricably linked with a sense of self-gratification, while those involved in successful humour–deciphering often enjoy a feeling of superiority (Attardo 2009:323). Humour possesses a social dimension. Vandaele (2002:157) assigns a social dimension to the notion of superiority and points out that it can include "any anti-social effect, intention or cause that humour may have, either interpersonal and socially visible or "private", but with reference to social world. Therefore, feelings such as self-esteem, inferiority, aggression, hostility, disparagement and solidarity are viewed from the overarching perspective of superiority (Katarina 2014:167). It is however affirmed that both incongruity and superiority need to be complemented by elements pertinent to the communication context, which may include the interlocutor's assumed knowledge and relevant expectations (Vandaele 2002:159). The implication of this statement is that the target readers can perceive humour in dramatic and narrative texts once they have the dramatic context, coupled with the socio-cultural knowledge of such humour in the text.

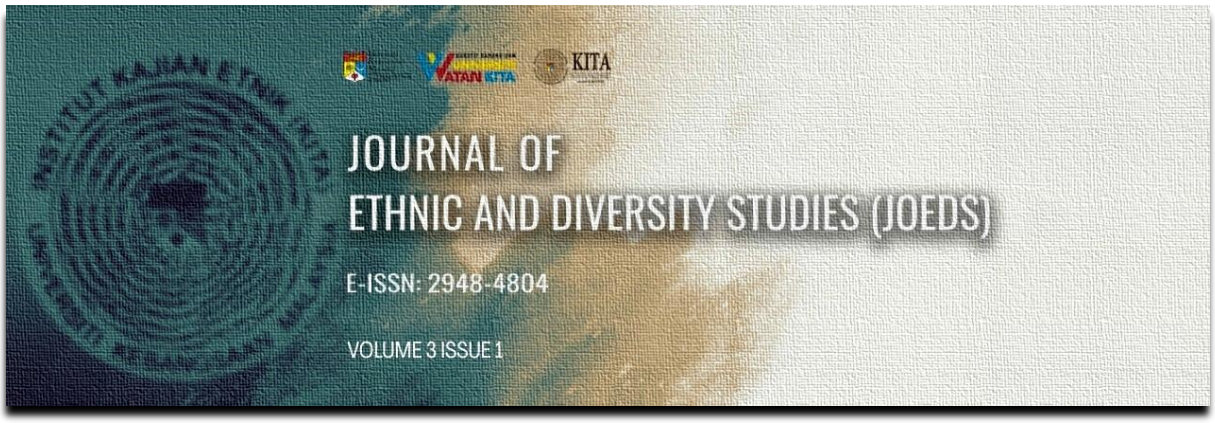


THE NOTION OF HUMOUR IN LITERARY TEXT

The concept of humour has been discussed by researchers in many disciplines: psychology, semiotics, linguistics (Freud 1960, Dorfles 1968; Raskin 1985; Attardo & Raskin 1991). Freud affirms that humour is used to ease psychological tension. Dorfles sees humour when it operates in a determined communicative circumstance a (…) change of relationship between the sign and its referents is given (1986:102). Humour is generally produced and expressed through the medium of word-play to cause laughter, physiological reaction, intellectual and emotional stimuli. Humour is perceived as the cognitive process which often, but not always, leads to the realization of the seizure-like activity called laughter Daniel (2015:195). It is necessary to state here that humour, laughter, jokes are familiar expressions in dramatic texts. Himour is the preoccupation of any dramatic piece that is meant to be staged for the enjoyment of the audience. All cultures are regarded as being familiar with humour (Polimeni and Reiss 2006, Franklyn 2006) and the ability to perceive and produce humour belongs to human trait (Chusni, 2018:1). Raskin (1985) states the ability to appreciate and enjoy humour is a universal human trait, whereas the individual's responses to humour are the result of their exercising of this ability in varying degrees. Humour is therefore, unique to culture and the different fields of human endeavours. It is, therefore, the reader's priority to perceive its schemata in order to properly understand such humour in dramatic texts and particularly, during their inter-lingual rendering. Defining humour in dramatic text relates to what makes the audience laugh in drama. Humour in dramatic narrative is simply what triggers emotion, intellectual stimuli, to the target reader. In other words, it refers to what is funny in the narrative with its causal effect.

ANALYSIS OF HUMOUR IN THE LION AND THE JEWEL RENDERED AS: LE LION ET LA PERLE

Traditionally, translation involves the reproduction of original message to the target audience. as it relates to dramatic text, it means the transfer of humorous elements of the original text into the target language and culture without any loss of meaning/jokes/laughter. Translating humour in a dramatic text, the translator must be familiar with the extra-linguistic and socio-cultural feature of the original text. This is what Zabalbeascoa (2005:190) refers to as "linguistic or encyclopedic knowledge, or their degree of familiarity or appreciation for certain subject-matters. This means that before a humorous feature of a text can be faithfully rendered, the translator needs to establish a link with the context in which the humour takes place and the audience's assumed knowledge. The translator should know the interpersonal dynamics among those involved in joke in order to decide on the most appropriate translation strategy (ibibd.:197).



THE TITLE TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT

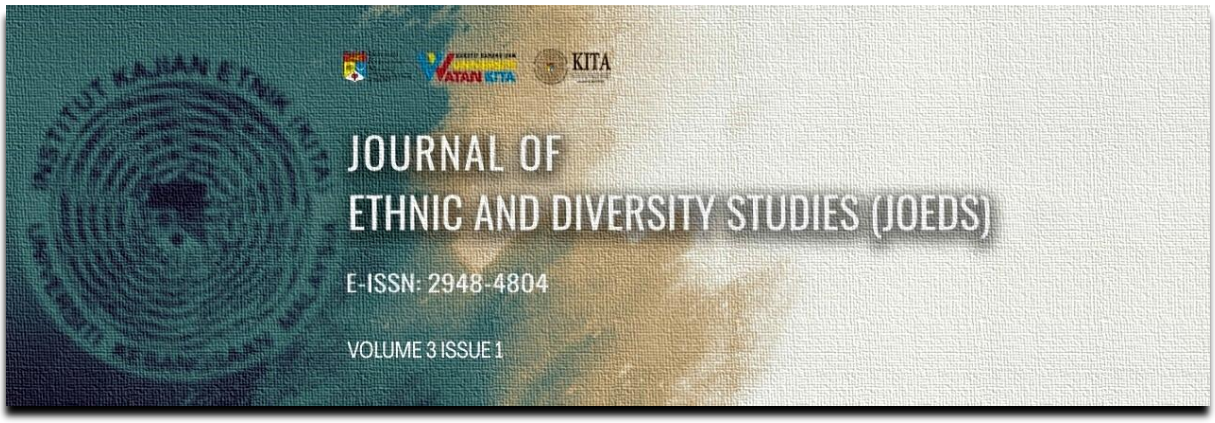
Soyinka's play is titled: *The Lion and the Jewel* rendered by Philippe Laburth-Tolra as *Le Lion et la Perle*. The translator uses what Newmark calls semantic strategy of translation in the transfer of the Soyinka's title. Semantic translation refers to the transfer of the word as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the target language allows the exact contextual meaning of the original. Newmark (1988:39). The translator could have rendered the title idiomatically as the King and the Queen, but he chooses to semantically render the title within the context of the original text and word-form in order to remain faithful the original text as closely as possible. The word "lion" is first used in the text by Lakunle when he remarks that: "*For that, what is a jewel is to pigs? P.3*. Lakunle values education above any other things. This quality ought to have made him a jewel among his village people. His claims of too much knowledge, bookish wisdom gives him the assumption that all other people in his village are pigs, illiterates. Sidi refers to Lakunle's assumption as madness to the village people of Ilujinle. Though Lakunle is the most well read in the village, hs claim of knowledge becomes so clear that Sidi could be referred to as the jewel of the village. The word "lion" normally refers to the king of all animals in the forest. In the text, the word "lion" refers to Baroka. Sadiku, the most senior wife of Baroka tells Sidi that "The Lion sent me. He wishes you well (p.19). « c'est le Lion qui m'envoie. Il te vient du bien. » (p.27).

In the play, the word "lion" is attributed to Baroka:

> Will you be Baroka's own jewel?
>
> Will you be his sweetest princess, soothing him on weary nights?
>
> What answer shall I give my Lord? (p.20)

> Et bien! Veux-tu devenir la perle de Baroka? Veux-tu etre sa plus douce princess, celle qui calmera la lassitude de ses nuits Quelle réponse donnerai-Je a mon seigneur? (p28-29).

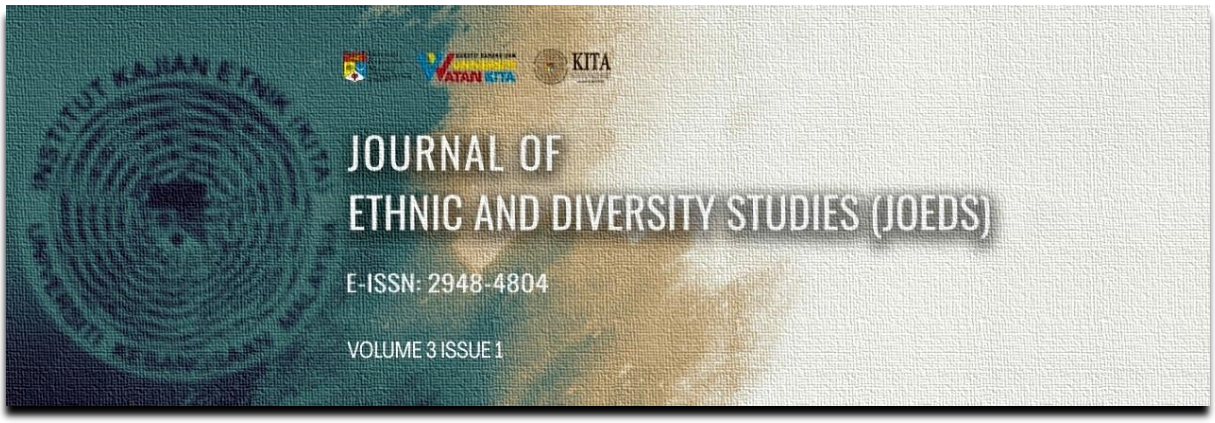
From the above text, Baroka wants Sidi to be his jewel, his wife. Sidi sees herself as the only jewel of Ilujinle when she claims that Baroka "seeks new fame as the one man who has possessed the jewel of Ilujinle p.21. Humour arises out of the shared knowledge and experience the reader possesses about Soyinka's text. In the translation of the text, the title presents an irony of situation; *The Lion* and *Jewel* are two incongruous animals. It is incongruous for a lion and



jewel to dwell together. It is comical and a costly joke for a jewel to desire the position of a lion. The overarching use of these words by Soyinks is what Polimeni and Reiss (2006) refers to as humorous communication that helps to navigate contentious social situations. Soyinka's act of comparing a lion with a jewel through the use metaphor is what makes his text humorous. The juxtaposition of lion and jewel in the title agrees with what Attardo (1994:223) refers to as logical mechanism. The logical mechanism accounts for the way in which the two senses (scripts) in the joke are brought together. Logical mechanism can range from straight-forward juxtapositions, false analogies, garden apt phenomena. The title of the text is funny, humorous and an attempt to flatter two major characters in the text. The two characters, Lakunle and Sidi, both symbolizing the North and the South; the high and the low; the affluent and the poor; the strong and the weak; the old and the new; the teacher and the student; modernism and tradition; progressive and retrogressive; palatable and unpalatable; educated and illiterate. The title affirms the theoretical position of Raskin and Attardo's script-based jokes. Here lies the two incongruous characters in the text. Sidi, an illiterate village girl of Ilujinle, is incongruous to the eminent honourable personality of Lakunle, who is a sound educated, civilized personality. It is, therefore, incongruous when Lakunle reacts to Sidi's stance of bride-price with the use of padding of jaw-breaking or so to say, high-sounding words, which Lakunle assumes are suitable for the description of the act of paying bride-price before marriage in Ilujinle Village:

> A savage custom, barbaric, out-dated, rejected denounced, accursed (p.7)
>
> Si je suis maintenant incompris par ta race de sauvages et toi, je plane au-dessus des persiflages et n'en demeure pas moins impassable (p.9).

This word "*Lion"* presents the opportunistic nature of Lakunle. The lion image of Lakunle makes the text highly humorous as one imagines Lakunle's cursing, abuse and yelling at Sidi. This makes the readers laugh. The congruity is that it is socially acceptable, customary for people to pay bride-price in Ilujinle before marriage. It is however incongruent to marry without paying the bride-price. It thus becomes insulting to Sidi to marry without bride-price, and Lakunle to pay bride-price before wedlock. Hence, the use of savage custom, barbaric, outdated. The French translation captures this humorous amusement of Lakunle's language to the French reader of the text. Although Lakunle sees himself as a man of "big brain" and it is incongruous to consider his disposition as "big brain" because Sidi felt really mad with Lakunle on his account of woman's nature of having "small brain". (p.4), "un cerveau plus petit" (p.9). He further pacifies Sidi, but indirectly substantiating his earlier claims on woman's brain description or rating through the book he has read. Employing the theory of incongruity, the title shows the various humours such as



sarcasm, marriage relationship, name calling, greetings, modernism and tradition, comparism in *The Lion and the Jewel*. These humorous elements bring about congruent and incongruent features in the dramatic narrative. These humours contribute to the creation of laughter, release of emotional and intellectual stimuli in the target reader.

Soyinka succeeds in his use of humour in driving home the preoccupation of the text: modernism and tradition symbolized by Fakunle and Sidi in the text. The target reader feels the import of these humours in the target text. Name calling becomes an avenue for Sidi to be humorous in the text. Sidi refers to Lakunle as a popular "madman of Ilujinle, who calls himself a teacher!" (p.3), "le fou d'Iloujinlé qui se dit instituteur" (p.9), in reaction to Lakunle's supposed abuses, especially through the exhibition of his bookish behaviour that comes in the form of his oration of big words which Sidi presumes have no meaning. Lakunle also resort to name-calling by referring to Sidi as:

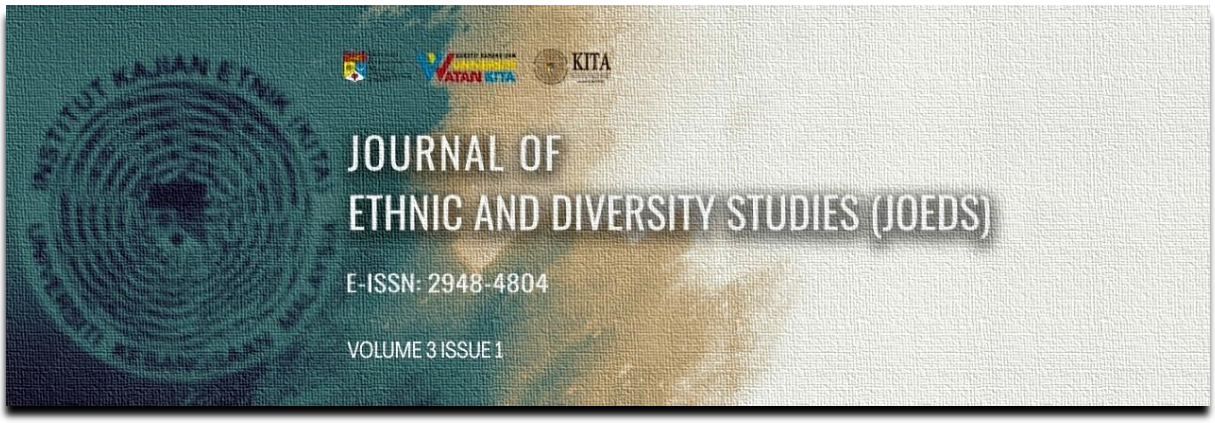
> My Ruth, my Rachael, Esther, Barthsheba,
> Thou summed of fabled perfections
> From Genesis to Revelations (p. 20).

> Ma Rute, ma Rachel, mon Esther, ma Bethsabée vous qui rassemblez toutes les perfections revelées depuis la Genèse jusqu'à l'Apocalypse, n'écoutez pas la voix de cette infidèle (…) (p.28)

Sidi's remark will likely elicit some desired laughter from the target reader of the French translation of Soyinka's narrative; Sidi replied Lakunle in a humourous manner:

> My name is Sidi and I am beautiful
> The stranger took my beauty
> And placed it in my hands (…) I need no funny names
> To tell me of my fame (p. 20)

> Je m'appelle Sidi, et je suis belle. L'étranger a capte ma beauté pour la placer entre mes mains (…) Je n'ai pas besoin de noms a coucher dehors pour m'annoncer ma célébrité (p.20)



It is incongruous for Lakunle's bookish behaviour to be interpreted as that of a popular madman of a village. This statement from Sidi is humorously demeaning of Lakunle's intellectual status. After this, a sudden humour emerged from Lakunle where he suddenly delves into poetry rendition to express how much he loves Sidi:

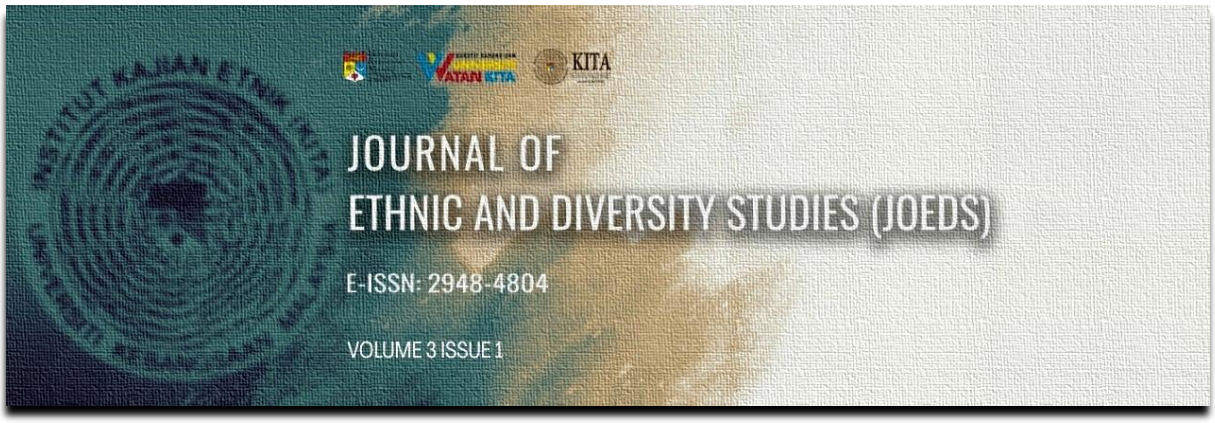
> Lakunle: Sidi, my love will open your mind
> Like the chaste leaf in the morning, when
> The sun first touches it. (p.6)
>
> Sidi, mon amour t'ouvira l'esprit comme
> la chaste corolla au matin, des que les
> rayons du soleil l'ont effleurée (p.11)

This abrupt transition from a normal way of confabulation to a panegyric display evicts laughter in the target reader of the text. A stronger form of joke, humour and laughter may be realized when Sidi outrightly dismissed Lakunle's marriage proposal on the ground of payment of bride price:le-même en crachoir recueillant les mépris du village! (p.12)

> Will you make me a laughing stock?
> Well, do as you please, but Sidi will not make herself
> A cheap bowl for the village spit (p.7)
>
> Voudrais-tu faire du moi un objet de risée?
> Bon, agis comme il te plait.

Mais, Sidi ne veut pas se transformer el, there is incongruity between Sidi's expected action and her actual action. Sidi reacted by hilariously insulting Lakunle's father as a drunk whom Lakunle takes after". There is a form of greeting that evokes so much humour in Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*. One of such is when Baroka, the Baale of Ilujinle mispronounces 'Good morning' as 'Guru morning' and the way he describes Lakunle's perpetual greetings makes it more amusing.:

> Baroka: Guru morning, guru morin, ngh-hn! (…)
> Guru morin. Wal guru morin wet my throat? (p.16)
>
> Bouyou, bouyou, hum! (…) Est-ce que "
> bouyou" me rafraichira le gosier? (p.22)

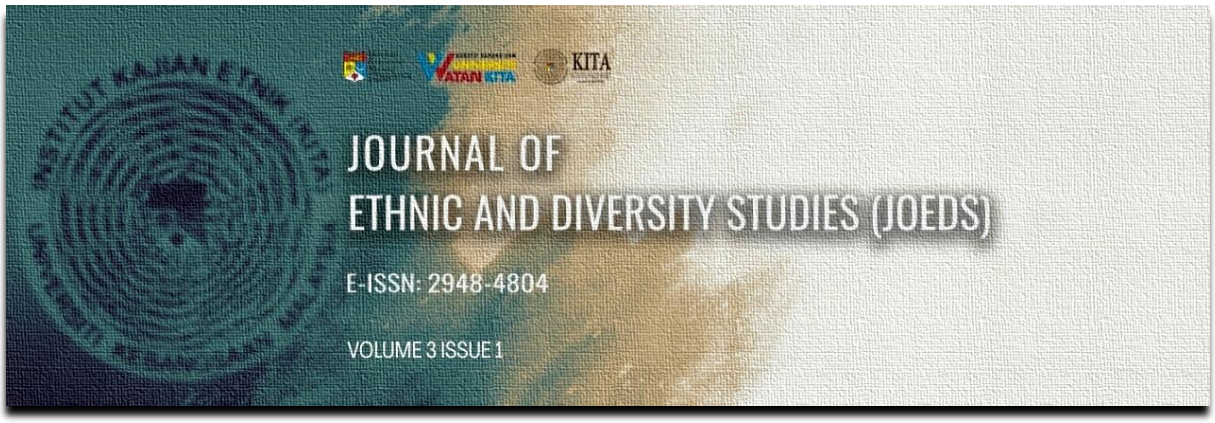


In the noon part of the play, the tension of Lakunle's love expression is heightened where Lakunle assumes that Sidi is to some extent dancing to the tune of his drum. He, therefore, begins to feel deeply emotionally affected and lost so much that he doesn't know the point at which he starts to read poetry in adulation of Sidi's beauty, which Sidi carefully dismisses with her thoughtful deconstruction of Lakunle's emotional intent. There is a dramatic humour where Baroka begins to reminiscent and reflect on the manner in which Sidi who happens to be his cruch has described him as 'old too old' (p.28). This reflection is implicative of how disillusioned Baroka is by the statement and in effect, he bitterly rebukes Sidi in absentia:

> Baroka: She says…. That I am old
> That I am much too old? Did a slight
> Unripened girl say this of me? p.28.
>
> Elle dit…que je suis vieux, que je suis beaucoup trop vieux?
> Est-ce qu'une petite fille a peine en fleur a dit cela de moi? p.36

As a result of the above description, Baroka ventures into the recounting of his triumphs which he believes have been objectified by virtue of his vigour and body fitness as against Sidi's demeaning description. Another scene that injects humour in the text is where Lakunle's presence is dishonoured by the womenfolk comprising Sidi and Sadiku because of the dissatisfaction that has begun to arise against Fakunle. He is given names such as 'scarecrow' (p.34) to make him feel inferior with Sidi thereby intimidating him of their space, that is, the women space.

> Sadiku: The scarecrow is here. Begone fop! This is the world of women. At this moment our star sits in the center of the sky. We are supreme. What is more, we are about to perform a ritual. If you remain, we will chop you up, we will make you the sacrifice (p.34).
>
> Ah! Voice l'épouvantail. Arrière, fréluquet! Nous sommes ici entre femmes. Notre étoile est en ce moment a son zenith. Nous sommes les reines! Et par-dessus le marche, nous allons te couper en petits morceaux pour t'offrir en sacrifice…p44



This situation evicts laughter from the reader especially when Lakunle, the bookman is teased out by the women folk. There is an element of surprise here, a joke element is established. Incongruity is strongly established because instead of honouring Lakunle, aspersion is cast on him. The women starred and laughed at him. Lakunle's civility is strongly belittled through this humour. The French translation captures the belittling. The catalyst that elicits humour in the altercation between Sadiku and Lakunle is the seriousness with which Lakunle teases Sadiku through the use of delayed humour. He describes Sadiku as a "yoke who does not have western education" (p.36):

> Lakunle: I won't demean myself to bandy words
> With a woman of the bush (p.36).
>
> Lakunle: Je m'avilirais si j'avais des mots avec une
> vieille de la brousse (p.46).

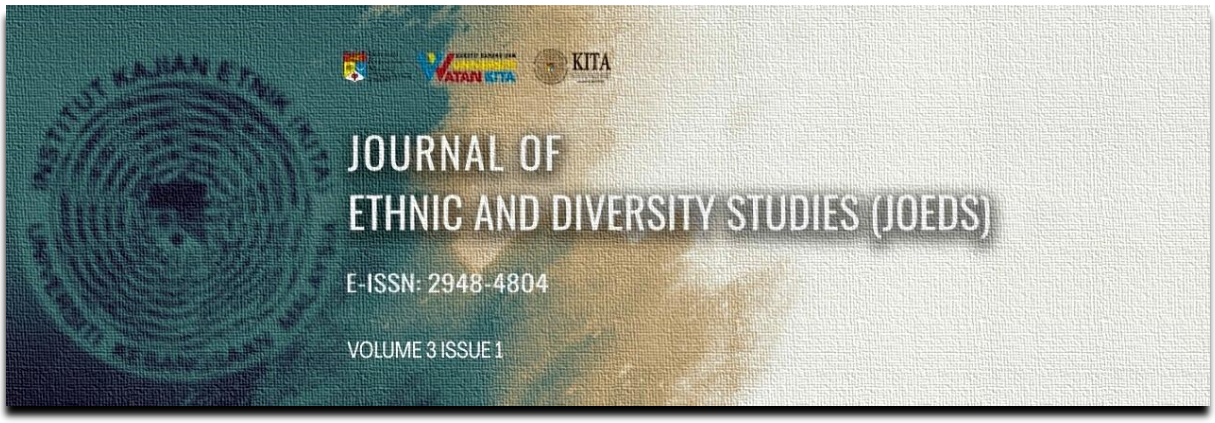
The effect of this humour is not realized almost immediately after the joke. This is what Ritchel (2010:41) claims that some "presentations of humour leave some of the necessary linguistic connection implicit, so that the audience must fill these in for themselves. In such situation, humour is achieved by the audience or reader after a careful thought of the utterance, or when all the details such as the context, the butt of the joke, the mood and atmosphere have been revealed (Daniel, 2015:199).

ETHNIC STUDIES IMPLICATION

The ethnic implication of this paper is that the analysis of Soyinka's humour in the text assists us to determine the cultural aesthetics and linguistic position of Nigerian dramatic literary system on the scale of comedy creation and domestication.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, our analysis of humour offers additional perspective on the subject matter and reflects some interesting findings that could be challenged in the future research on humour and translation in dramatic narratives. The study makes a methodological point by demonstrating how the linguistic theories on humour can be fruitful in conceptualization and highlighting humorous discourse within the framework of translation studies. Above all, further research on humour translation in other non-nigerian drama texts will always be desired and worth exploring.



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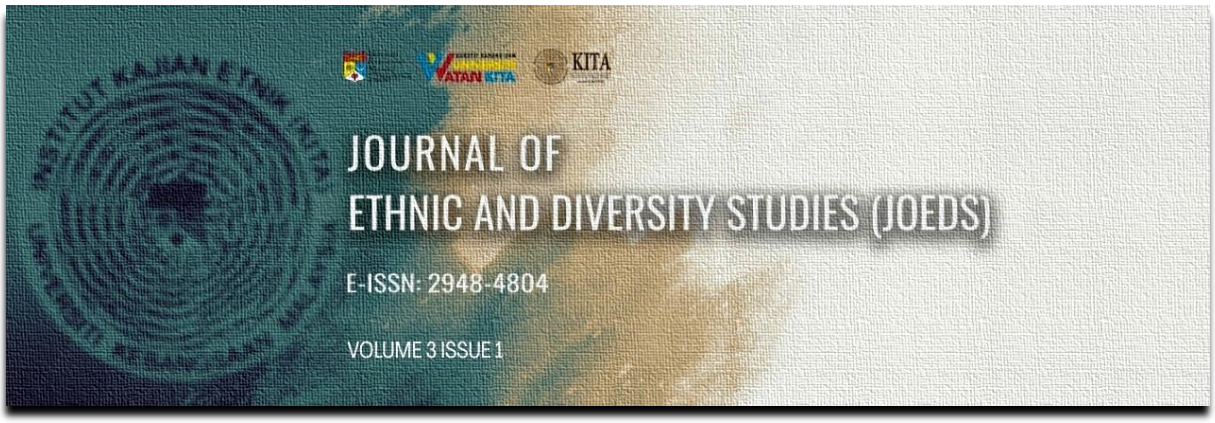

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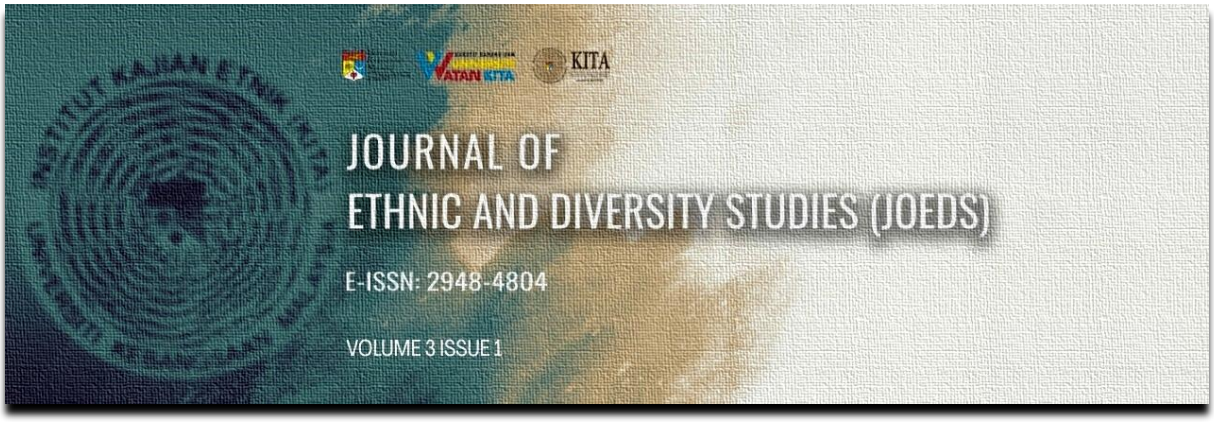

Exploration of the Origin and Development of the Guzheng

(Penerokaan Asal-usul dan Perkembangan Guzheng)

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ABSTRACT

As one of the traditional Chinese Musical Instruments, Guzheng has a long history and rich cultural connotation. First of all, this paper reviews the origin and development of Guzheng, and discusses the background of Guzheng. Secondly, it analyzes the origin of the name Zheng, and reveals the historical and cultural connotation and naming meaning behind it. With the development of society, because of some geographical, historical, cultural and other reasons, Guzheng has formed different schools, each with its own characteristics, showing the diversity and richness of Guzheng art and propose some specific methods to protect the Guzheng school. Through these methods, we can enhance people's awareness of protecting the traditional art of Guzheng and at the same time make innovations, speed up the construction of inheritors and use the Internet and other modern media for communication and learning. This paper aims to enhance people's cognition and understanding of Guzheng, a traditional musical instrument, arouse their love and attention to the art of Guzheng, and provide useful ideas and references for the inheritance and innovation of Guzheng culture.

Keywords: *Guzheng; Origin; Development; Heritage; Preservation methods*

ABSTRAK

Sebagai salah satu Alat Muzik tradisional Cina, Guzheng mempunyai sejarah yang panjang dan konotasi budaya yang kaya. Pertama sekali, kertas kerja ini mengkaji asal usul dan perkembangan Guzheng, dan membincangkan latar belakang Guzheng. Kedua, ia menganalisis asal usul nama Zheng, dan mendedahkan konotasi sejarah dan budaya serta makna penamaan di belakangnya. Dengan perkembangan masyarakat, kerana beberapa sebab

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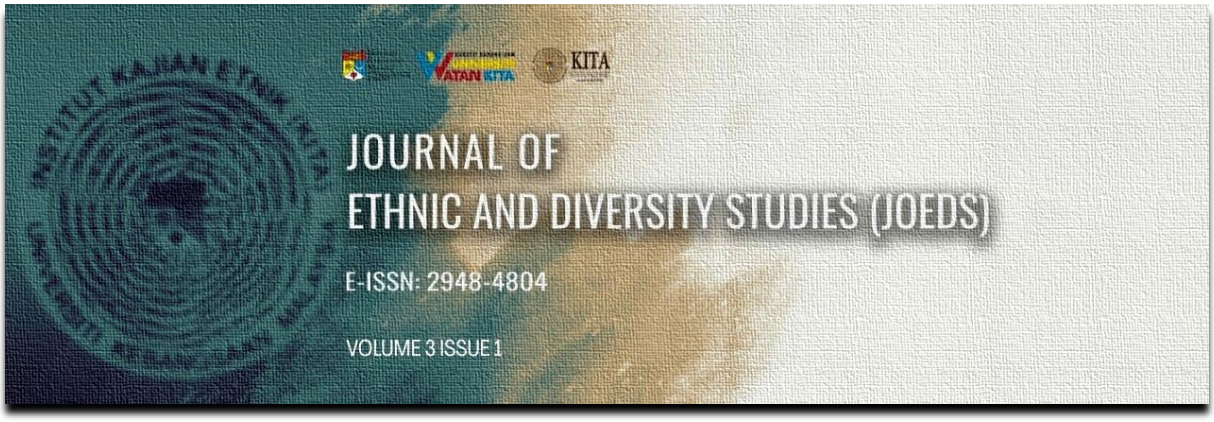


geografi, sejarah, budaya dan lain-lain, Guzheng telah membentuk sekolah yang berbeza, masing-masing mempunyai ciri tersendiri, menunjukkan kepelbagaian dan kekayaan seni Guzheng dan mencadangkan beberapa kaedah khusus untuk melindungi sekolah Guzheng. Melalui kaedah ini, kita boleh meningkatkan kesedaran orang ramai untuk melindungi seni tradisional Guzheng dan pada masa yang sama membuat inovasi, mempercepatkan pembinaan pewaris dan menggunakan Internet dan media moden lain untuk komunikasi dan pembelajaran. Kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kognisi dan pemahaman orang ramai tentang Guzheng, alat muzik tradisional, membangkitkan kecintaan dan perhatian mereka kepada seni Guzheng, dan menyediakan idea dan rujukan berguna untuk warisan dan inovasi budaya Guzheng.

Kata kunci: *Guzheng; Asal; Pembangunan; Warisan; Kaedah pemeliharaan*

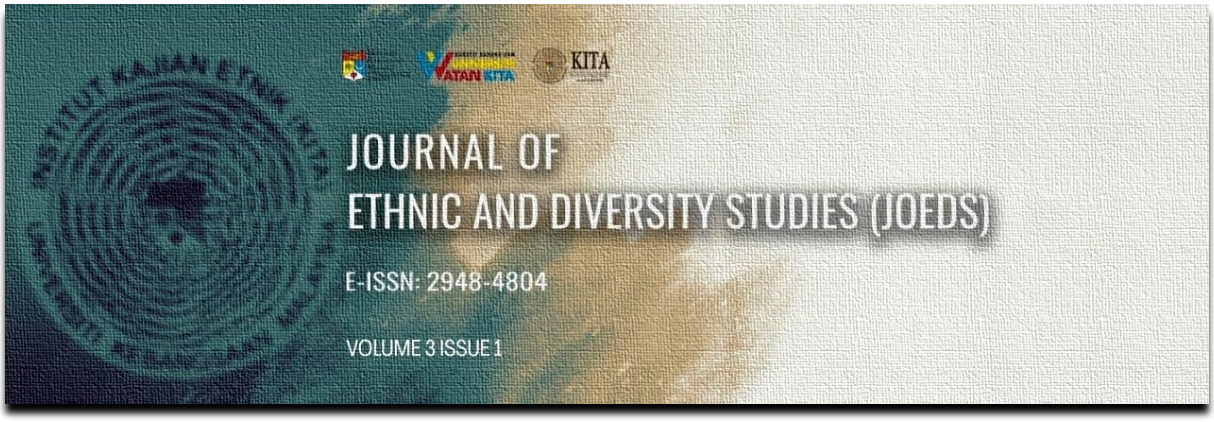
INTRODUCTION

The Guzheng, as one of the treasures of the Chinese nation, is not only a symbol of traditional Chinese music culture but also an important part of world music culture (Lv 2018). The Guzheng's beautiful timbre, rich expressiveness, and profound cultural heritage have made it deeply cherished. With a history spanning over two thousand years, this instrument's origins remain somewhat mysterious, but the author has compiled available literature to offer insights that highlight its significance in Chinese music history. The paper explores the main schools of Guzheng, each distinguished by regional cultural differences, showcasing the diversity and richness of Guzheng art. It analyzes the current status of these schools, examining the challenges and opportunities they face in modern society. Finally, the paper proposes specific methods for protecting and promoting Guzheng schools, including integrating traditional education, utilizing digital platforms, fostering collaborations, and organizing festivals. These strategies aim to ensure the continuous development and vitality of this precious cultural heritage.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUZHENG

THE ORIGIN OF THE GUZHENG

The Guzheng, one of the traditional Chinese folk instruments, is highly representative and nationalistic. China's long history and rich cultural heritage are essential when studying the historical background of the Guzheng. As time progressed, the Guzheng was influenced by



China's geographical factors, and people formed various schools based on local culture, customs, and beliefs. In the formation and development of these schools, common characteristics include folk nature, regional characteristics, conservatism, and continuity (Fu W. and Liu 2011). There are various theories regarding the origin of the Zheng, and the academic community has yet to reach a consensus. The instrument is referred to as "Zheng," with several explanations for its name. The earliest recorded mention of the Zheng can be found in historical literature, specifically in the ***Jian Zhu Ke Shu*** in the ***Records of the Grand Historian***. The text states: "Striking the rims of jars and pots while playing the Zheng and tapping the thighs to keep rhythm, singing joyful songs, this is the true music of the State of Qin."(Sima Qian and Han Zhaoqi 2023). In the ***Jian Zhu Ke Shu***， it is recorded that in 237 B.C., at the end of the Warring States period, Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered the expulsion of high-ranking officials from foreign lands. Li Si, serving as the Left Prime Minister, wrote a letter exhorted the emperor to withdraw the expulsion order. Thus, the academic community generally agrees that the appearance of the Zheng predates 237 B.C.

For a detailed study on the specific time of the Guzheng's origin, Teacher Zhao Manqin in the article ***A Brief Analysis of Guzheng History*** (Zhao Manqin 1981), based on the aforementioned literature the ***Jian Zhu Ke Shu*** and the issue of the attribution of "Qin" in "the true sound of Qin," identifies three possibilities:

1. If "Qin" refers to the "State of Qin," then the Guzheng's origin would date between 770 BCE and 237 BCE.
2. If "Qin" refers to the "Qin region," then the Guzheng's origin would date between 884 BCE and 237 BCE.
3. It is also possible that the Guzheng was already popular in this area before the Qin's rule, which would date its origin earlier than 884 BCE.

There is still no unified conclusion regarding the origin of the Guzheng, with various theories and opinions. Although it is difficult to determine definitively, the research process gradually unveils the Guzheng's mysteries and indirectly proves its ancient origin. Due to the numerous historical accounts regarding the Guzheng's origin, I have summarized the following six important theories:

1. The theory that the Guzheng evolved from the Se.
2. The theory that Meng Tian invented the Guzheng.
3. The theory that Jing Fang invented the Guzheng.
4. The theory that Hou Kui invented the Guzheng.
5. The theory that the Zhu was the precursor to the Guzheng.
6. The theory that the Guzheng and the Se share a common origin.

The Theory of the Guzheng Evolving from the Se.

The Se is also an ancient traditional Chinese plucked instrument, mentioned in ***The Book of Songs***. Some ancient records do suggest that the Guzheng evolved from the Se. Zhao Lin of the Tang Dynasty noted in his ***Yin Hua Lu*** that "The Zheng is an instrument from the State of

Qin and belongs to the Qin school. In ancient times, the Se had fifty strings. Emperor Huangdi once ordered Su Nv to play the se, and after listening, he became very sorrowful and split the Se in half. Since then, the Se had twenty-five strings. Later, the people of Qin played the Se, and two brothers fought over it, causing it to be split in half again. This resulted in the creation of the Zheng, and that's how the name "Zheng" originated." Ding Du of the Song Dynasty also recorded a similar theory in his ***Ji Yun*** that "A selfish father and son from the State of Qin fought over the Se and split it apart, resulting in the creation of the Zheng. The Zheng has twelve strings, derived from the division of the Se's twenty-five strings." In the ***Music and Taoism Collection*** by Japanese court musician Masana oka in the 17th century Genroku period，it is noted: "...According to legend, in the State of Qin, there was a man named Wan Wuyi who passed down a Se to his two daughters. Because both daughters fought over the Se, it was broken apart and became two separate instruments. Therefore, this instrument came to be called the Zheng."(Qiu 1982) The theory that the Zheng originated from a dispute over the Se, leading to its creation, lacks scientific basis and is merely a legend. Aside from the portrayal of the disputants as unkind, from a purely instrumental perspective, an instrument consists of numerous components, all essential. Breaking one into two would result in fragmentation or incomplete parts, making it impossible to form two separate instruments.

The theory that Meng Tian invented the Guzheng.

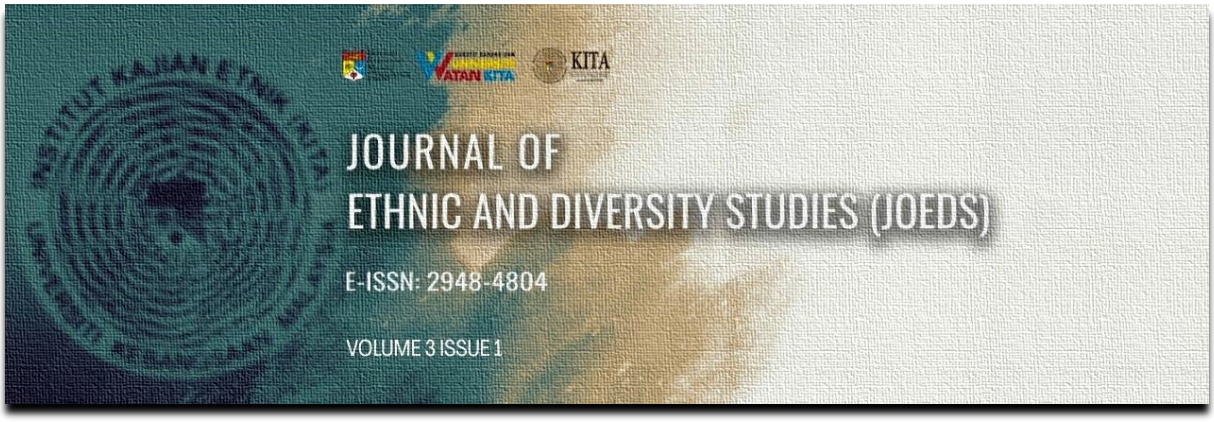
According to the ***Music Chronicle*** in ***The Book of Sui,*** it is stated: "The Zheng has thirteen strings, and the sound it produces is known as the unique sound of the State of Qin. It is said to be an instrument created by Meng Tian." However, Liu Qu recorded in the ***Music Chronicle*** in ***The Old Book of Tang*** that "The Zheng is an instrument from the State of Qin, and it is said to have been created by Meng Tian, but this is actually not true." In 237 BCE (the tenth year of Emperor Qin Shi Huang's reign), Prime Minister Li Si wrote the ***Jian Zhu Ke Shu*** to persuade Emperor Qin Shi Huang to rescind his expulsion order against foreign officials. In this memorial, he mentioned: Striking the rims of jars and pots while playing the Zheng and tapping the thighs to keep rhythm, singing joyful songs, this is the true music of the State of Qin." (Sima Qian and Han Zhaoqi 2023). This predates the rise of Meng Tian by sixteen years, making the claim that Meng Tian invented the Zheng unreliable.

The theory that Jing Fang invented the Guzheng.

Jing Fang was a great music theorist during the Western Han Dynasty, well-versed in musical scales. He invented the thirteen-string "Zhun" used to calibrate musical scales. Because both had thirteen strings, later generations mistakenly attributed Jing Fang's pitch calibration instrument as the Zheng (Li M. 2014).

The theory that Hou Kui invented the Guzheng.

"Kui" was a person from the era of Yao and Shun, and "Hou" is a respectful title for him. "Kui" held the position of overseeing music at that time, so he was said to have created the Zheng (Lv 2018).However, through the study of oracle bone inscriptions and related historical



materials, there is no evidence of stringed instruments even in the Xia Dynasty, let alone as early as the era of Yao and Shun when Kui lived.

The theory that the Zhu was the precursor to the Guzheng.
The theory that the Zhu is the origin of the Zheng first appeared in the Eastern Han Dynasty in Ying Xun's ***Feng Su Tong*** that "The Guzheng was originally an instrument with five strings, and its shape was similar to the Zhu." This theory suggests that the Zheng originated from an ancient instrument called the Zhu, which had five strings and was played by striking bamboo. The Eastern Han scholar Xu Shen's ***Shuo Wen Jie Zi*** holds a similar view and further explains that "The Guzheng is an instrument that produces sound by plucking its strings. Its character contains the 'bamboo' radical, indicating its material is related to bamboo, and the character 'Zheng' itself represents its sound." This means that the Zheng is made of bamboo, its shape and appearance are derived from the Zhu, and it produces a distinctive twanging sound. According to Zhou Yunjian, from a historical materials perspective, early zither and Guqin were more similar: both had wooden bodies, were made of bamboo, had a rod-like shape, a thin neck, and both had five strings. The theory that the Guqin originated from the zither has some reasonable aspects, but there are also aspects that have not been fully explained. Since the zither gradually fell out of use after the Warring States period, it is currently difficult to draw a definitive conclusion regarding their relationship (Zhou Yunjian 2012).

The theory that the Guzheng and the Se share a common origin.
In the essay ***On the Discussion of Ancient Zheng History*** by Mr. Cao Zheng (Cao 1981), Mr. Cao not only refutes the theory that Zheng originated from Se, but also provides a detailed analysis of various historical records to argue for the possibility that Zheng and Se share a common origin. He explains in detail why numerous excavated artifacts include Qin, Zhu, and Se, but not Zheng: Firstly, the exclusion of the popular folk instrument Zheng from funeral rites after its death was determined by the feudal ruling class's preference for elegance over commonality. Secondly, tools essential for the survival of folk artists were unlikely to be discarded or buried alive.

THE NAMING OF ZHENG

One theory about the origin of the name "Zheng" is that it was named for the "zhengzheng" sound the instrument produces, a theory that seems quite reasonable. For example, Liu Xi from the Eastern Han Dynasty recorded in his book ***Shi Ming*** that "When the Guzheng is played, the strings are pulled very tight, producing a zhengzheng sound." "Additionally, Xu Shen from the Eastern Han Dynasty wrote in ***Shuo Wen Jie Zi*** that Zheng is "from bamboo, the Zheng sound," indicating that the naming of Zheng is related to its sound. The instrument was named "Zheng" because it produces a "zhengzheng" sound. Qiu Dacheng, in ***The Origin of Chinese Zheng*** (2008), asserts that the naming of Zheng, like that of instruments such as the Qing and Xiao, is based on the sound it produces, affirming this hypothesis. Shu Shunping, in ***Discussing***

the Origin of Zheng from the Record of 'The Jian Zhu Ke Shu' (Shu 2011) , and Jin Jianmin, in ***The Origin of Guzheng*** (Qiu 1982) and ***The Mystery of Guzheng's Origins*** (Jin 1988), all suggest that the "zhengzheng" sound produced by "highly strung strings" clearly differentiates it from the more mellow sound of the Se, linking Zheng and Se together. The name "Zheng" likely originated from its sound, as it is common in traditional Chinese instruments to be named based on their origin, playing method, or sound. Therefore, naming Zheng based on its sound is logical and reasonable.

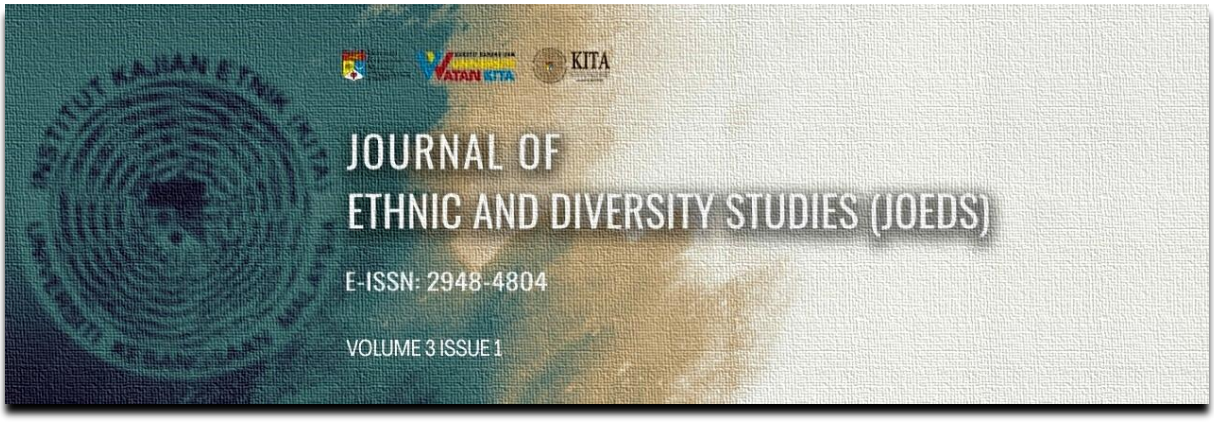
The Guzheng is also known as the "Han zheng," "Qin zheng," "Qin Sheng," and "Guzheng." The Zheng has been widely popular in the state of Qin for a long time. During festivals and banquets, people often played the Z heng and struck the Fou (a type of ceramic instrument), making it a local custom that has been passed down through generations. Consequently, it is also referred to as "Qin Zheng" or "Qin Sheng." Bai Juyi, in his poem ***Zheng***, wrote, "The sound of the Zhao state's Se is clear and melodious, similar to the Qin zheng, but the noisy sound of the Huqin is entirely different from them." In these verses, 'Qin zheng,' 'Qi se,' 'Zhao se,' and 'huqin' are not only used for poetic symmetry but, more importantly, indicate the regional popularity of the instruments. 'Qin,' 'Qi,' 'Zhao,' and 'Hu' are names of regions, not dynasties.

In ancient times, some names expressed people's fondness for the Zheng, calling it "Yao zheng," "Silver zheng," "Treasure zheng," "Cloud zheng," and more. Some names were based on the Zheng's decorations, such as "Xi zheng," "Tortoiseshell zheng," etc (Li M. 2014). The term "Guzheng" is used because of the instrument's long history. Modern people added the word "Gu" (ancient) to distinguish it, which is now the most common name for the Zheng.

SCHOOLS OF GUZHENG

China has always had vast territories and complex geographical conditions. In ancient times, due to the difficulties of transportation and communication, most ordinary people lived in relatively fixed regions. Accordingly, influenced by factors such as geography, climate, history, religion, and culture, different regional cultures emerged. Guzheng, as a part of traditional Chinese culture, naturally developed distinct regional musical styles based on local conditions (Fu L. 2015). This gradually formed the eight major genres of modern Guzheng music (Some scholars believe that it is the Nine Zheng school, but because some geographical and historical issues of the Korean zheng school are controversial, the author tends to divide the Guzheng school into the following eight zheng schools):

1. Henan Guzheng School, known for the 'Zhengwei Sound' of Zheng and Wei.
2. Chaozhou Guzheng School, influenced by the 'Hanjiang Silk and Bamboo' culture.
3. Shandong Guzheng School, characterized by the 'Qilu Da Ban' style.
4. Shaanxi Guzheng School, renowned for the 'True Qin Sound.'
5. Hakka Guzheng School, featuring the 'Hanhao Ancient Rhyme.'



6. Hangzhou Guzheng School and Zhejiang Guzheng School, known for the 'Wulin Heritage Rhyme.'
7. Fujian Guzheng School in the Minnan region.
8. Mongolia Guzheng School, known for the 'Yatuge' style on the grasslands.

As ancient people said, local conditions shape local people, and the same goes for Guzheng music. From its early formation to its later prosperity, local folk music has played a vital role in its development. These genres can generally be divided into two major branches, see the table 1 and table 2: the Southern School, known for its elegance, softness, melodiousness, and subtlety, and the Northern School, characterized by its boldness, clarity, vigor, and majestic style.

Table 1: Guzheng North-South School Classification Chart:

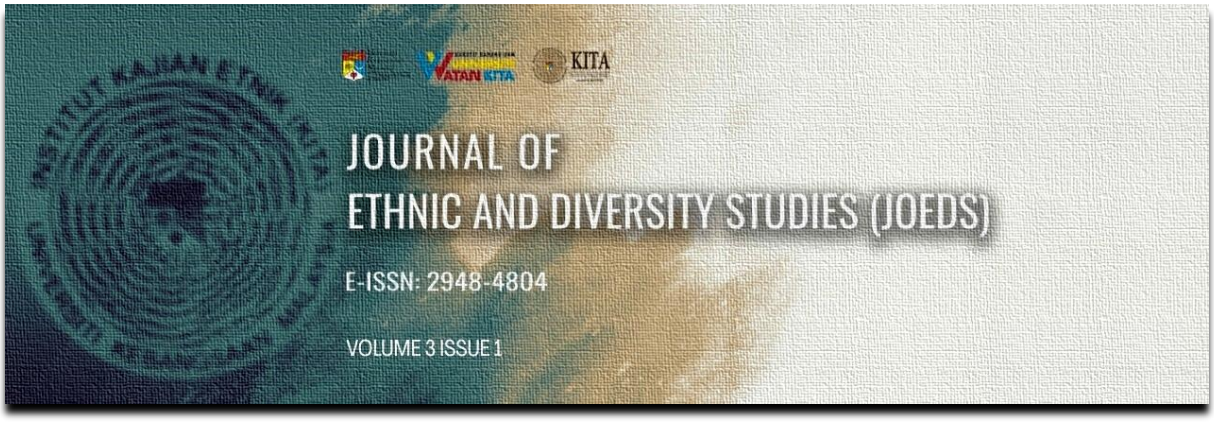
Southern School	Zhejiang Guzheng School, Chaozhou Guzheng School, Hakka Guzheng School, Minnan Guzheng School (Fujian)
Northern School	Shandong Guzheng School, Henan Guzheng School, Shaanxi Guzheng School, Mongolia Guzheng School

Table 2: List of Eight Main Schools of Guzheng：

School	Region	Founder	Style
Shandong Guzheng School	Shandong Province	Li Bangrong	Firm and deep
Zhejiang Guzheng School	Zhejiang Province	Wang Xunzhi	Bright, smooth and beautiful
Henan Guzheng School	Henan Province	Cao Dongfu	Beautiful and elegant
Hakka Guzheng School	Guangdong and Fujian Provinces	Chen Anhua	Fluent and soft
Shaanxi Guzheng School	Shaanxi Province	Zhou Yanjia	Generous and quick
Chaozhou Guzheng School	Guangdong Province	Yang Litong	Simple and elegant
Minnan Guzheng School	Fujian Province	Chen Maojin	Simple and elegant, beautiful and express feelings
Mongolia Guzheng School	Inner Mongolia	anonymity	Bold and bold

THE "ZHENGWEI MUSIC" OF THE HENAN GUZHENG SCHOOL

Henan Province is located in the central plains of China, historically known as Zhongzhou. Henan Zheng music is also known as "Zhongzhou ancient tunes," commonly referred to today as "Henan Zheng music." Henan has always been an agricultural powerhouse and deeply influenced by the cultural environment of the central plains. Henan Zheng music absorbed the essence of local folk opera arts such as Yu Opera, Bantou tunes, Quju opera, and Datiao tunes,

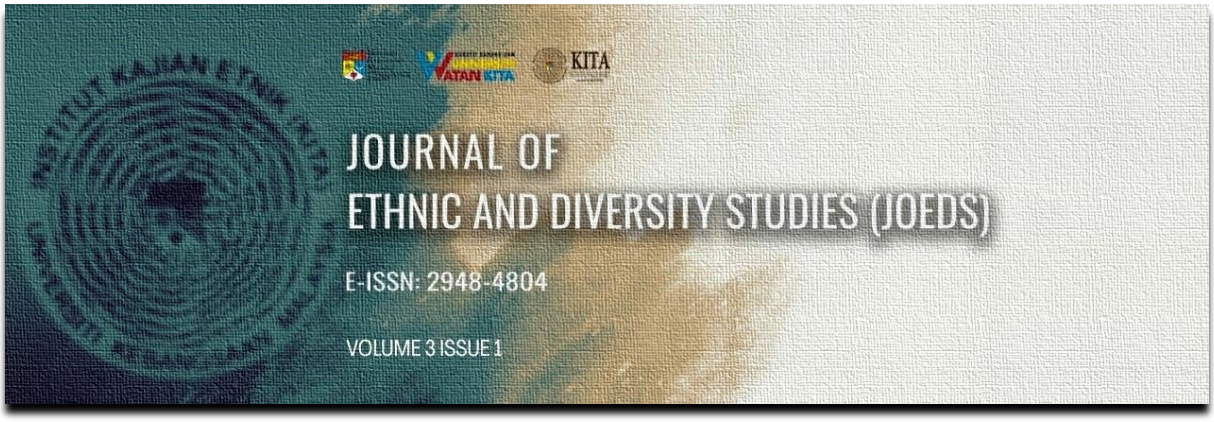


gradually forming its own artistic style. For a long time, "Zhengwei Music" flourished throughout Zhongzhou. Later, due to the capital relocation, Qin Zheng entered Henan. In the mid-Ming Dynasty, a folk music form called "Xian Suo" was introduced to areas like Henan in the central plains. This Xian Suo music ensemble, performed mainly by instruments such as Guzheng, Pipa, and Sanxian, served as accompaniment, enhancing the atmosphere and expressive power before or during the singing of Datiao tunes. Moving into the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, Henan Datiao tunes emerged, combining Xian Suo with Bianliang Xiaoyue (N. Li 2006). Initially, Guzheng's performance accompanied Datiao tunes and other vocal music in Henan, gradually absorbing much of their musical content and innovating its techniques during performance, enriching Guzheng's musical expression (Xiao 2023). Ren Qingzhi, Wei Zixian, Cao Dongfu, and Wang Shengwu are all prominent figures of the Henan guzheng school, each making significant contributions to its formation and development. In terms of repertoire, the Henan guzheng school is very rich and diverse, with representative pieces including "Hanjiang Melody," "Lantern Festival," and "Chen Xingyuan and the Fan." (Wang X. 2009)

THE CHAOZHOU GUZHENG SCHOOL OF "HANJIANG SIZHU"

In northern China, the Guzheng is represented by the Henan and Shandong schools, while in the south, it is mainly represented by the Chaozhou Zheng School. Traditional Chaozhou music can be divided into two main categories: "Wenpan" and "Wupan". Wenpan refers to Chaozhou string poetry music and delicate music, while Wupan refers to percussion music. Chaozhou Zheng music originated from Wenpan's string poetry music and delicate music and is an important part of Wenpan.Chaozhou Zheng mainly circulated in the Chaozhou area of Guangdong Province, originally as an accompaniment instrument for Chaozhou string poetry music and delicate music. It gradually appeared as a solo instrument form in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Traditional Chaozhou Zheng tunes are mainly used in "delicate music," which involves the ensemble of Sanxian, Pipa, and Zheng. Performers follow the same original scores but embellish their performances based on the characteristics of each piece and their own technical habits (Guo 2017).

Chaozhou Zheng Music inherits the tonal characteristics of Chaozhou music, distinguishing various modes through "Complement sound with rhyme" technique of the left hand, which involves pressing strings and rolling them to create tones. This is also an important distinguishing feature from other modes. The fingering techniques of the Chaozhou Zheng School are also distinctive, including techniques like "gou tuo ma tuo," "he fei zhi," "qi zhi," and "xiao gou da" (also known as "ji zhuo li"). Structurally, Chaozhou Zheng music mostly inherits the structure of Chaozhou string poetry music and delicate music, mainly divided into headboard, second board, third board, and cao pai types. Each board type can be played independently or connected during performances (Xu 2019). Representative pieces include "Han Ya Xi Shui," "Liu Qing Niang," "Fen Hong Lian," among others. Key figures in the Chaozhou Zheng School include Su Wenxian, Lin Maogen, Gao Zherui, and Yang Xiuming.



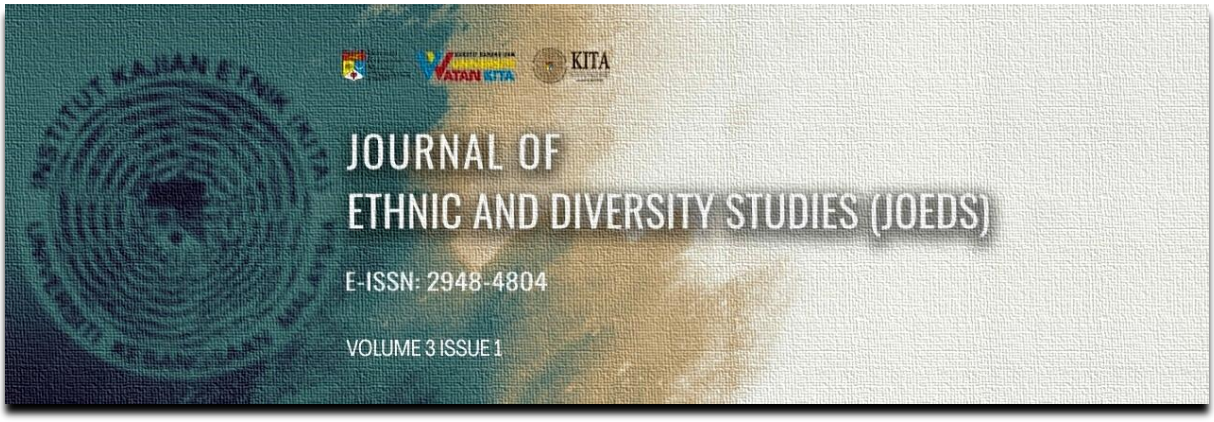
THE SHANDONG GUZHENG SCHOOL OF THE 'QILU BIG BOARD'

According to ***Intrigues of the Warring States - Qi Strategies***, it is recorded that "The place of Linzi is very rich and prosperous, where the people enjoy playing the Bamboo Flute, striking the Zhu, and plucking the Zheng." (Liu Xiang and Zhou Liuyan 2022). Therefore, the Shandong zither is also known as the Qizheng. Shandong zither music consists of two parts: traditional Qin music and zheng music evolved from Shandong qin songs. Shandong zither music is mainly popular in the southwestern part of Shandong, including Juancheng, Yuncheng, Heze, and Linqing in the Liaocheng area (Zhao Mingming 2018).

Traditional Shandong zither music adopts the "eight-section structure," with the "collision of eight sections" being the most common silk-string ensemble form. The "eight-section structure" consists of eight musical phrases, each with eight beats, except for the fifth phrase which has twelve beats, totaling sixty-eight beats. The "collision of eight sections" silk-string ensemble form is unique to the Shandong zither school. It involves the Guzheng, Yangqin, Huqin, and Pipa each playing an equal number of sections (phrases), with consistent small sections and musical spaces, but different melodies and titles, creating a naturally harmonious polyphonic music effect (Peirong, Yodwised, and Panyanan 2023). In traditional Shandong zither music, some pieces gradually became independent from Shandong Qin music ensemble, such as "Qin Yun," while others originated from Shandong Qin books' vocal music, such as "Yin Niu Si." The majority of tunes are in court style, compiled from eight large sections. Suite performances are a common music structure in folk music, demonstrating diverse and complex musical expressions. For example, the representative piece of the Shandong zither school, "Gao Shan Liu Shui," is a suite composed of four small pieces: "Shu Yun," "Qin Yun," "Ye Jing Luan Ling," and "Feng Bai Cui Zhu." In addition, there are adaptations from Shandong narrative music vocals, such as "Die Duan Qiao" and "Feng Xiang Ge." Representative figures include Wang Leyong, Zhang Niansheng, Gao Zicheng, Jin Yuting, and Zhao Yuzhai (Yu 2023).

"THE TRUE QIN SOUND" OF THE SHAANXI GUZHENG SCHOOL

The Shaanxi Guzheng School, historically known as the Qin Zheng School, has a long and rich heritage. Earlier in this article, in the section on the 'Origin of the Zheng', it was mentioned that "Striking the rims of jars and pots while playing the Zheng and tapping the thighs to keep rhythm, singing joyful songs, this is the true music of the State of Qin." (Han Dynasty, Sima Qian, 1986), excerpted from ***The Jianzhuke Shu*** (Sima Qian and Han Zhaoqi 2023).The text describes musical practices in the state of Qin during the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period, where the term 'plucking the Zheng' appeared, indicating that the Zheng was popular in the Qin region even before the Warring States Period. The Qin region during the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period corresponds to today's Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, hence the Shaanxi Zheng School is often referred to as the 'True Qin Sound'.

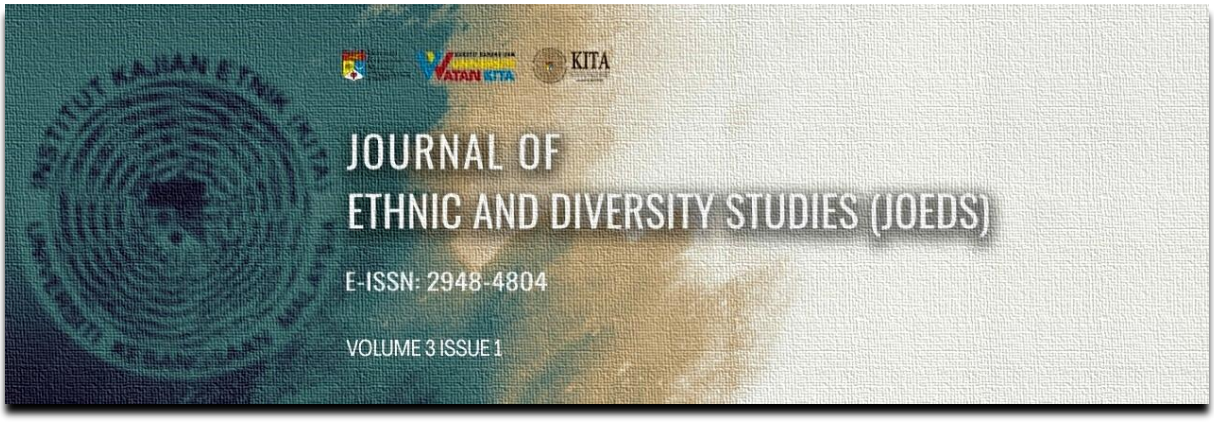


Shaanxi is located in the northwest region of China, due to underdeveloped transportation in earlier years, some areas of Shaanxi were relatively isolated from external influences in terms of economy, culture, and other aspects. As a result, traditional Zheng playing techniques were preserved for a long time. With the development of the times, musical perspectives gradually opened up in line with the era. The decrease in folk artists and the reduction in applications have made Shaanxi Zheng difficult to trace for a long time. In modern times, Zhou Yanjia took on the teaching responsibilities without hesitation. In the preface to ***Guzheng Fan Hu Qu Collection***, he clearly proposed the cultural concept of 'Qin Zheng Returns to Qin', which has historical significance. This aimed at revitalizing the national Zheng music industry originating from the Qin region, and also provided a direction for establishing the Guzheng major at Northwest Music College (Yang Z. H. 2024).

In the Shaanxi Zheng School, the most representative stylistic features are undoubtedly the "bitter tones" and "joyful tones". The tune of the joyful tones follows the Mixolydian mode, using the notes sol, la, do, re, mi, expressing emotions such as happiness, brightness, and liveliness. Bitter tones, also known as weeping tones, as the name suggests, convey sorrowful and indignant melodies using the notes sol, si, do, re, fa. The term "bitter tones" originates from the Tang Dynasty poet Cen Can's ***Qin Zheng Song sent my nephew Xiao Zheng back to Beijing*** that "Have you not heard? The sound of the Qin Zheng is the most bitter. Its strings are entwined with threads of five colors across thirteen string pillars." In the Shaanxi and Gansu regions, Qin tunes and Wanwan tunes in operas and other folk music also feature a characteristic tone known as "bitter tone tunes."(Li Y. 2019). Broadly speaking, bitter tones refer to a tone of bitterness and indignation; narrowly, they refer to the two characteristic tones in this tone: "micro # Fa and micro ♭Si." Representative works include "Embroidered Gold Plaque," "Tears of Jiang's Wife," "Qin Sang Melody," among others. Representative figures include Qu Yun, Zhou Yanjia, Zhou Wang, and others (Wang Yingrui 2016).

THE HAKKA GUZHENG SCHOOL OF "HAN GAO ANCIENT MELODIES"

The Hakka Zheng School, also known as Guangdong Han Music Zheng, primarily thrives in Hakka regions such as Guangdong, Jiangxi, and Fujian, and is one of the significant branches of Chinese Zheng music. Unlike most other branches named after geographical areas like Shandong or Chaozhou, the Hakka branch is named after a distinct ethnic group—the Hakka people. The Hakka Zheng has a long history, partly originating from Guangdong Han Music (Li Z. 2018). Legend has it that Guangdong Han Music emerged during the Eastern Jin to Song dynasties as Central Plains people migrated southward, blending the melodious and ancient "Central Plains melodies" and "Han Gao old scores" with local Guangdong music culture. Guangdong Han Music is also known as "Waijiang Xian," "Hakka Han Music," or "Confucian music." Some of the sources of Hakka Zheng music come from the "Silk String Music" in Guangdong Han Music, a small ensemble combining ancient Zheng, pipa, yehu, and dongxiao in a "Da Diao" style composition (Wang Yingrui 2022a). Through generations, Hakka Zheng musicians enriched, developed, and refined these pieces, gradually transforming them into solo



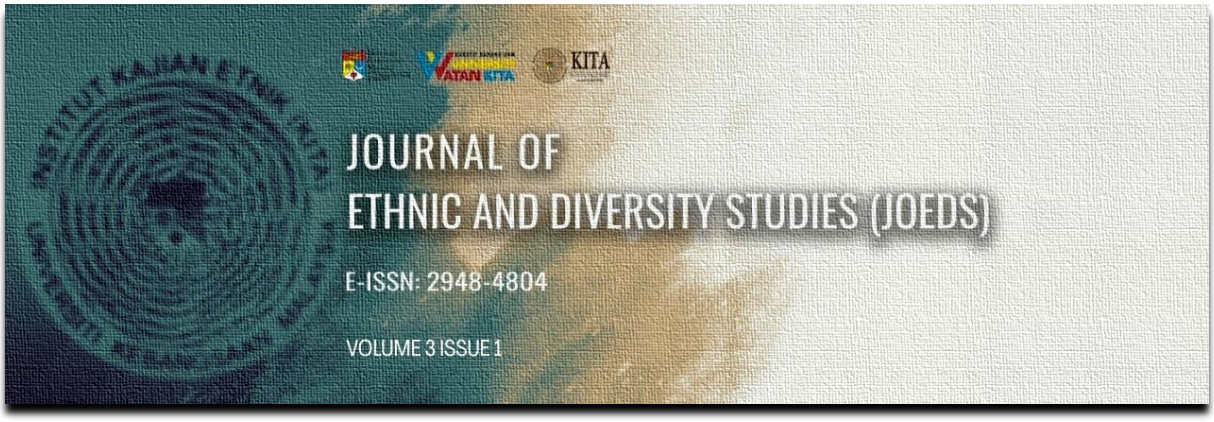
pieces distinctive to the Hakka Zheng school. Another part of the repertoire comes from local folk music and performance arts, known as "Chuan Qu." During performances, Hakka Zheng musicians often use the middle finger, employing vibrato techniques with significant pitch variations, resulting in lingering echoes of Zheng music. Stylistically, Hakka Zheng music is characterized by its elegance and lingering charm. Notable figures include He Yuzhai, Luo Jiuxiang, He Baoquan, and Chen Anhua. Representative compositions include "Emerging Lotus from the Water," "Night Rain at the Banana Window," "Lament of Ya Shan," and "General's Command." (Wang X. 2009)

THE HANGZHOU GUZHENG SCHOOL AND ZHEJIANG ZHENG SCHOOL OF 'WULIN YI YUN'

The Zhejiang Zheng School broadly refers to a regional genre popular in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions. Its "previous incarnation" is often referred to as "Hang Zheng," because "Wulin" was the ancient name for Hangzhou, also known as "Wulin Zheng." "Hang Zheng" emerged in the early 20th century, separating from "Hangzhou Tan Huang" and "Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo," and developing into an independent form of instrumental music (Yuan Jingfang 2004). The performance style of the Zhejiang Zheng School is diverse: it includes elegant, ancient, and simple literary styles, gentle and tranquil tones, as well as magnificent, splendid, and bold martial music styles. It features unique performance techniques, melodic characteristics, and musical structures. Performance techniques include "string lifting," "fast four points," "big thumb shaking," and others. During performances, the Zhejiang Zheng School integrates the playing techniques of other instruments such as the pipa and yangqin. "Swing fingers" in the Zhejiang Zheng School require performers to swing their wrists to make the thumb move quickly and accurately back and forth on the strings, creating melodic and smooth musical lines similar to those produced by bowed string instruments. In addition, "swing fingers" have been widely used in modern compositions of ancient Zheng music, becoming one of the more important and commonly used performance techniques in ancient Zheng music compositions (Wang Yingrui 2022c). Representative works include "High Moon," "Harmony and Auspiciousness," "Generals' Orders," "Celebrating Clouds," among others. Prominent figures include Yin Chun, Wang Xunzhi, Wang Changyuan, Sun Wenyen, and Xiang Sihua (Huang 2013).

MINNAN GUZHENG SCHOOL

Some even believe it has no difference from the Chaozhou zither school. The Minnan zither school is also referred to as "Minnan zither" or "Fujian zither," although there are distinctions between the two. Yang Fan detailed this in his doctoral thesis, noting that Chen Maojin first proposed the concepts of "Minnan zither" and "Fujian zither" in his paper "Exploration of Minnan Zither." Zhang Xuehai also used these terms interchangeably in his paper presented at the First Chinese Guzheng Academic Exchange Conference in Yangzhou. Since then, these

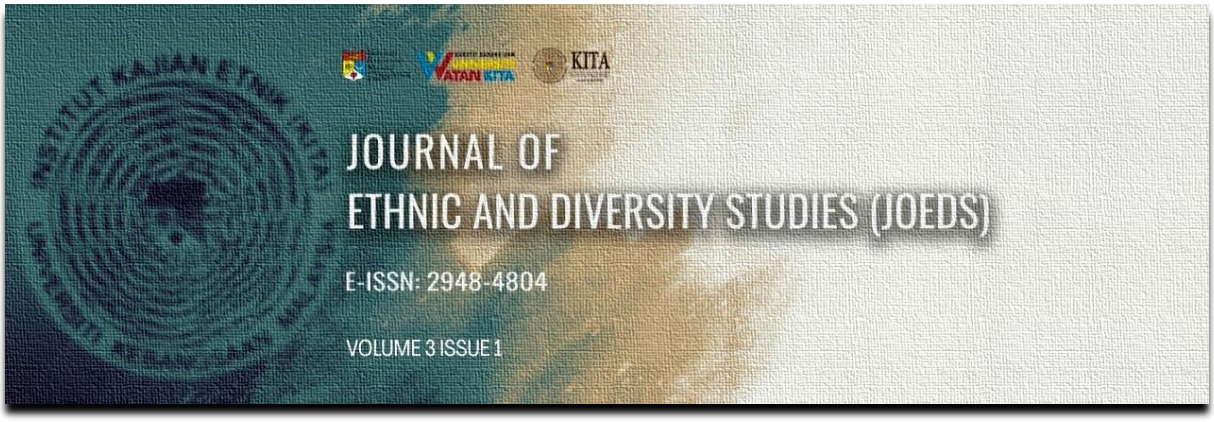


concepts have been widely adopted. Dr. Yang Fan suggests that discussions about "Minnan zither" and "Fujian zither" primarily define the phenomenon of zither appearance in Fujian's history, rather than discussing the artistic characteristics of the Minnan zither school. "Minnan" and "Fujian" are essentially two terms for the same concept, where "Minnan" is a shorthand for Fujian. Therefore, both Chen Maojin and Zhang Xuehai equated "Minnan zither" and "Fujian zither" in their writings. (Yang F. 2017) However, because the Minnan zither school mainly thrives in the Minnan region, using the concepts of "Minnan zither" or "Fujian zither" expands the scope to the entire Fujian province, which risks confusion with another zither school belonging to Fujian—the Hakka zither school. Hence, Dr. Yang Fan chose to use "Minnan zither school" rather than "Minnan zither" or "Fujian zither," a convention followed by the author as well. Representative works include "Spring Beauty Not Yet Clear," "Unintentional Railing," "Inaudible Whisper," "Liáng Fǔ's Song," "Cross-stitch Brocade," "Dragonfly Water Tapping," "Snow Stepping on Plum Blossoms," "Daiwa Fan," "Hundreds of Birds Returning to Nest - Moon Above Begonia," and more. Representative figures include Tang Guocheng, Zhang Yonggu, Chen Youzhang, and Li Wuzhou, among others (Wang Yingrui 2022b).

MONGOLIAN GUZHENG SCHOOL OF "YATOGE" IN THE GRASSLANDS OF INNER MONGOLIA

Yatuga is an instrument frequently used by the Mongolian people and has a long history of development, making it one of the most ancient instruments and a form of the ancient Chinese Guzheng. Therefore, the relationship between yatuga and Chinese instruments is very deep, and it is crucial to fully consider the connections between various instruments when studying them. "Yatuga" is translated from the Mongolian term "yatug," which refers to an instrument long used by the Mongolian ethnic group and now also known as the Mongolian zither.As early as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, this instrument had already gained widespread attention among the populace and became prominent during the Qin Dynasty. The earliest mention of the Mongolian zither in historical documents is found in ***The Yan Ju Wu Yue in The Meng Da Bei Lu*** written by Zhao Gong of the Southern Song Dynasty and annotated by Wang Guowei, where it was referred to as the "fourteen-stringed instrument." Subsequently, it was recorded in the poem collection ***Yushan Pu Manuscript: Two Songs of Si Song*** by the Yuan Dynasty poet Gu Ying. The Mongolian zither is also documented in historical texts such as the Ming Dynasty's ***Zheng Shizi Se Pu*** by the famous music theorist Zhu Zaiyu, the Qing Dynasty's ***Si Ku Quan Shu: Shi Bu: Huang Chao Li Qi Tu Shi: Yue Qi***, ***Qing Shi Gao***, and paintings and literature like ***Sai Yan Si Shi Tu***, ***Zi Guang Ge Si Yan Tu***, and ***Qing Chao Wen Xian Tong Kao*** (Wang Yu 2017).

The playing techniques of the yatoga generally involve using the right thumb for techniques such as "tuo" and "pi," as well as the index finger for "gou" and "tiao" to perform monophonic pieces. Artists from the grassland regions use the thumb to sweep the tonic or dominant chords up and down, whereas ordos artists use both the thumb and index finger in



the same pattern of "tuo" and "tiao" to increase intensity, change moods, and express individual characteristics. Representative pieces include "ASL" and the various "ASL" named after different banners of Xilingol League, "He Ying Hua," "A Qi Tu," "Ba Yin," "Gao Lin Tao Hai," and "Hundred Birds Gathering in Spring." Notable artists include Yin Dan, Zhang Guoyu, Li Yan, and Xue Tingting (Zhang Y. 2016).

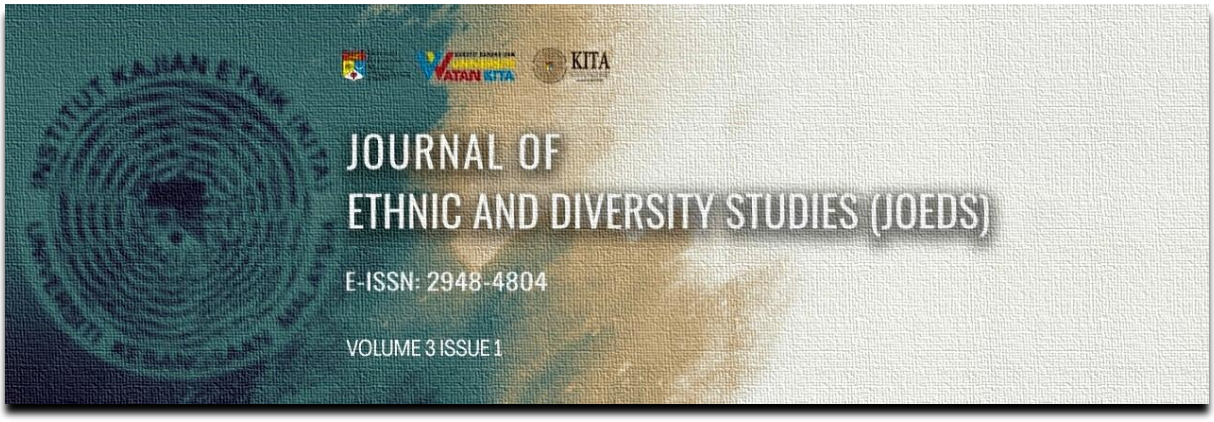
CURRENT STATUS OF THE INHERITANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF GUZHENG SCHOOLS

Culture is the soul of a nation and its people. The inheritance and protection of excellent traditional culture require the joint efforts of the state, society, and individuals. In recent years, countries around the world have been actively advocating for the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage. Influenced by various national policies, people have begun to value the study of Chinese traditional culture and traditional musical instruments. In China, the implementation of protective policies has increased social awareness and recognition of traditional musical instruments. National policies provide institutional guarantees for the inheritance and development of traditional culture. Culture is the crystallization of people's wisdom, and people are the creators and inheritors of culture. Focusing on the people is essential to promoting the high-quality development of the cultural industry. Therefore, the protection of inheritors and the cultivation of successors are also particularly important. Through the previous analysis of the musical styles and representative works of the eight major schools of the Guzheng, I have gained new insights into the study, inheritance, and development of Guzheng music.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF GUZHENG SCHOOLS' INHERITANCE

Transmission Media.

From ancient times to the present, the development of the Guzheng has gone through three key periods: oral transmission, written notation, and multimedia. In the earliest times, traditional Guzheng techniques were mainly passed down through oral transmission between master and apprentice. Guzheng masters would impart their skills and experiences to their apprentices, who would then master these techniques through long-term training and practical performance. Subsequently, written notation began to spread. Guzheng scores became an important medium for the inheritance of Guzheng art. Both traditional hand-copied scores and modern printed scores play a crucial role in Guzheng education. The standardization and normalization of scores have enabled the wide dissemination of Guzheng works, allowing students to learn classic pieces from different schools by reading scores (Guo 2017). In contemporary society, with the advancement of technology, multimedia has become an important tool for the inheritance of Guzheng art. Video tutorials, online courses, and Guzheng performance videos have greatly enriched learning resources. Internet platforms such as YouTube and Bilibili



provide a wealth of Guzheng performance and teaching videos, allowing students to watch and learn anytime and anywhere. The use of multimedia has made the dissemination of Guzheng art more convenient and efficient, especially during the pandemic, when online teaching has become the primary mode of learning.

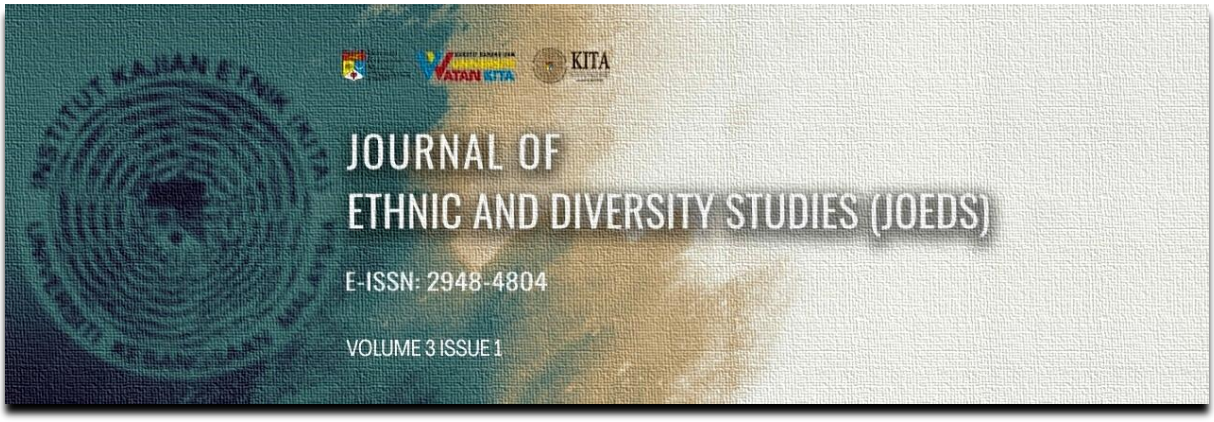
Market Inheritance.

Technological advancements have provided new avenues for the dissemination and inheritance of Guzheng art. Digital technology has made high-quality audio and video recordings possible, allowing Guzheng performances to be recorded and shared with greater fidelity. Various audio formats such as digital discs, MP3, FLAC, as well as high-definition video files, enable Guzheng works to be widely distributed around the world. Guzheng art is gradually becoming industrialized. Professional recording studios and production teams provide technical support for recording Guzheng performances. These specialized recording teams are standardizing and improving the quality of Guzheng music recordings, producing standardized and high-quality art discs. The recording of Guzheng art discs includes not only traditional classic pieces but also modern Guzheng compositions, enriching the expressive forms of Guzheng music (Xu 2019). As market demand grows, the recording and distribution of Guzheng music discs are becoming increasingly professional. The environment of recording studios, the professionalism of equipment, and the technical skills of recording engineers have all seen significant improvements. High-quality audio and video recordings faithfully capture the details and artistic expression of Guzheng performances, allowing listeners to appreciate the performers' exquisite skills through discs. The distribution channels for Guzheng performance discs and digital products are becoming more standardized and orderly, with enhanced market regulation and copyright protection. Music platforms like NetEase Cloud Music, QQ Music, Apple Music, and video websites ensure the rights of Guzheng artists through legitimate authorization and standardized distribution. A favorable market environment and regulated distribution channels have broadened the dissemination of Guzheng art and promoted its development and inheritance.

PROBLEMS FACED IN THE INHERITANCE OF GUZHENG SCHOOLS

Limited Participation of Traditional Guzheng Masters in University Teaching.

Most inheritors of traditional Guzheng schools are independent artists or work in local music groups, with few opportunities to participate in university teaching. This results in difficulties in systematically imparting traditional techniques and culture, leading to a lack of a standardized education system. Consequently, students are unable to comprehensively and deeply learn the essence of traditional Guzheng schools (Yu 2023). Additionally, university curricula tend to focus more on modern performance techniques and theories, resulting in a relatively weak foundation in the knowledge system of traditional Guzheng schools, and causing gaps in the inheritance of this art form.



Weakening of Traditional Guzheng School's Dissemination Due to Development of Western Music.

With the popularization and increasing influence of Western music in China, the dissemination of traditional Guzheng schools has been somewhat impacted (Zhao Mingming 2018). The maturity and rich resources of the Western music education system have led to more students and parents choosing to study Western instruments, resulting in a decrease in the source of students for traditional Guzheng schools. Additionally, changes in modern music aesthetics and performance techniques have made traditional Guzheng schools appear relatively conservative in performance and teaching, further weakening their dissemination and influence.

Heritage and Development of Guzheng Performance Techniques.

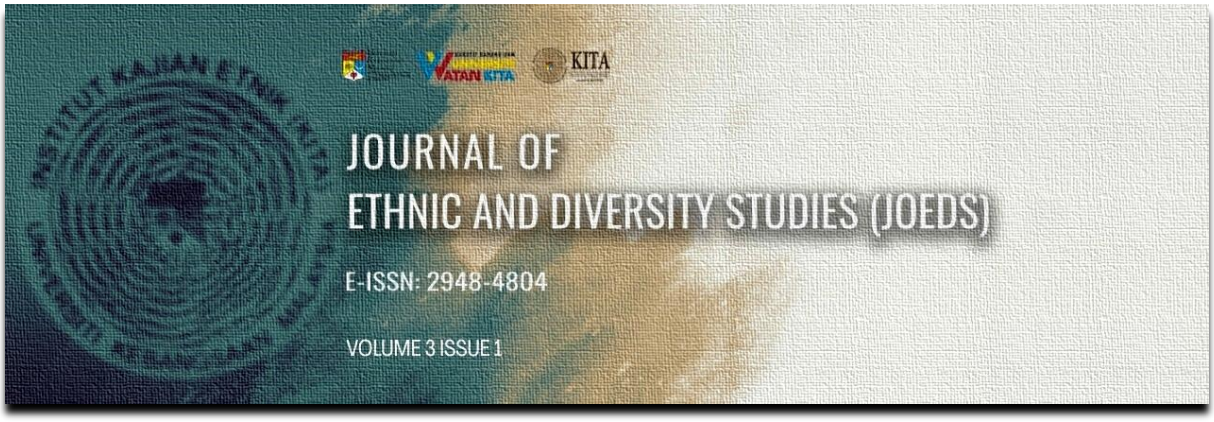
With the rapid development of information technology, the Guzheng faces the impact of diverse music styles, intensifying changes in techniques, and the development of dual-handed playing techniques is an inevitable trend. Guzheng techniques have evolved from simplicity to brilliance, reflecting the development from melody-centric to more harmonic approaches. Traditional techniques form the core of Guzheng art, expressing richness in flavor, artistic conception, philosophical thoughts, and emotions. Since the 21st century, with the enrichment of Guzheng repertoire, there has been a necessary emphasis on the return to traditional techniques. This requires exploring traditional techniques deeply from emotional content and stylistic characteristics, conveying the profound meanings of Chinese traditional music culture (Zhou Yi 2020). While emphasizing traditional techniques, modern compositions require richer expressive capabilities. Integrating traditional and modern techniques demands strong musical literacy and humanistic sentiments. It involves interpreting works sensibly, capturing stylistic nuances, enhancing personal performance levels, and promoting the development and innovation of Guzheng techniques.

Lack of Professional Talent Pool Construction.

The inheritance and development of Guzheng schools require a strong support of professional talent. However, there are currently some issues in the construction of a professional talent pool, such as a shortage of high-level teachers and performers, and an imperfect teacher training system. To address these issues, efforts should be made to enhance the training and professional development opportunities for Guzheng teachers and performers, thereby improving their professional skills and teaching capabilities (Wang Yingrui 2016).Furthermore, establishing a sound teacher evaluation and incentive mechanism is essential to attract more outstanding talents to engage in Guzheng education and performance careers. Simultaneously, encouraging excellent students to pursue further education and become future professionals is crucial for ensuring the inheritance and development of Guzheng art.

Lack of Financial Support.

The inheritance and development of Guzheng schools require adequate financial support, but currently, investment in this area remains insufficient. The lack of financial support affects the



development of Guzheng education, creation, and performances at all levels (Chen 2019). Therefore, governments, businesses, and various sectors of society should work together to increase financial investment in Guzheng art and the training of talents. It is crucial to establish a diversified financial support system to ensure that Guzheng schools can develop healthily in a conducive environment.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUZHENG SCHOOLS AND METHODS

Emphasizing the Training and Protection of Guzheng School Inheritors.

From ancient times to the present, China has upheld the philosophy of "harmony in diversity," where traditional culture embodies openness and inclusiveness, reflecting the essence of Chinese civilization (Gaywood 1996). With the popularity of Western music in China, traditional culture has faced challenges. However, the state has implemented policies to revitalize traditional culture, emphasizing the importance of protecting and inheriting it (Liu Xinwei 2019). Currently, inheritors of Guzheng schools face the issue of aging, with fewer young successors. Therefore, it is urgent to intensify efforts in training and protecting Guzheng inheritors. Through various channels, efforts should be made to attract and cultivate more young people to join the ranks of Guzheng art inheritance, ensuring the continuous development of Guzheng schools.

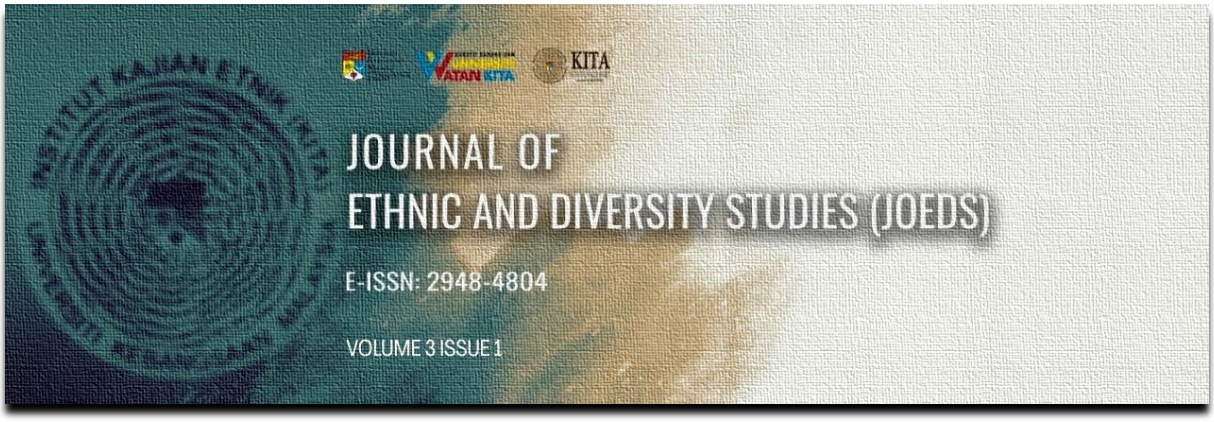
Utilizing the Internet to Promote Dissemination and Development.

The internet has provided unprecedented opportunities for promoting and disseminating Guzheng schools. Through online platforms, teaching videos can be published, online concerts and training courses can be held, providing more people with the opportunity to engage with and learn Guzheng art. Additionally, social media and music platforms can serve as important channels for promoting Guzheng schools. Leveraging the convenience and wide reach of online communication, these platforms can expand the influence and audience of Guzheng schools, thereby promoting their development.

Commercialization Trend in Guzheng Music.

With changes in market demand and the influence of commercialization, some Guzheng compositions have shown a trend towards commercialization. This trend focuses on superficial effects, neglecting the artistic essence and traditional techniques of Guzheng, which can lead to the vulgarization and shallowness of Guzheng art (J. Zhang 2018). Therefore, emphasis should be placed on the quality of Guzheng composition, encouraging creators to delve deep into traditional culture, integrate modern aesthetics, and create outstanding Guzheng pieces that not only possess artistic value but also preserve traditional characteristics with contemporary relevance. This approach helps to avoid the trend towards commercialization, ensuring that the development of Guzheng schools retains its essential ethnic identity.

Differences in Musical Aesthetics.



In contemporary times, Guzheng art also faces challenges regarding differences in musical aesthetics. Some performers and audiences pursue forms of music expression that are "homogenized," "academic," or "exaggerated," while overlooking the unique charm and traditional techniques of Guzheng schools (Yang Z. H. 2024). Therefore, it is essential to advocate for diverse musical aesthetic views, respect and embrace the artistic characteristics of different schools, encourage innovation while preserving traditions, and avoid blindly pursuing flashy techniques and homogenization. This approach ensures that Guzheng art thrives in a diverse aesthetic environment while maintaining its foundation in traditional inheritance.

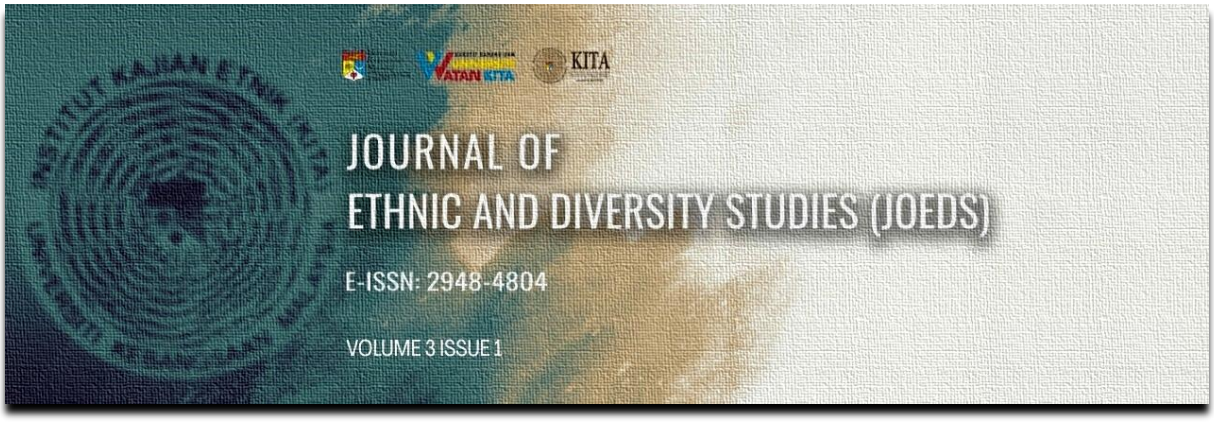
Professional Personnel Team Building.

The construction of a professional talent pool in the Guzheng schools first requires a sound education system. Establishing Guzheng majors in various levels of music colleges and art schools to systematically teach the history, techniques, and theoretical knowledge of Guzheng schools is essential. The emphasis should be on increasing the proportion of traditional Guzheng courses to ensure students comprehensively understand and master the technical characteristics and performance styles of each school (Xiao 2023). Additionally, offering graduate and doctoral degree programs will cultivate high-level Guzheng professionals, providing academic support for the inheritance and development of Guzheng schools. A high-quality teaching team is crucial for nurturing professional Guzheng talents. Combining the introduction of high-end talents with the cultivation of local talents is necessary to build a highly qualified Guzheng teaching team. Encouraging current teachers to participate in further education and training will enhance their teaching and research capabilities. Organizing regular teaching and research activities for teachers to share teaching experiences and methods will elevate overall teaching quality.

CONCLUSION

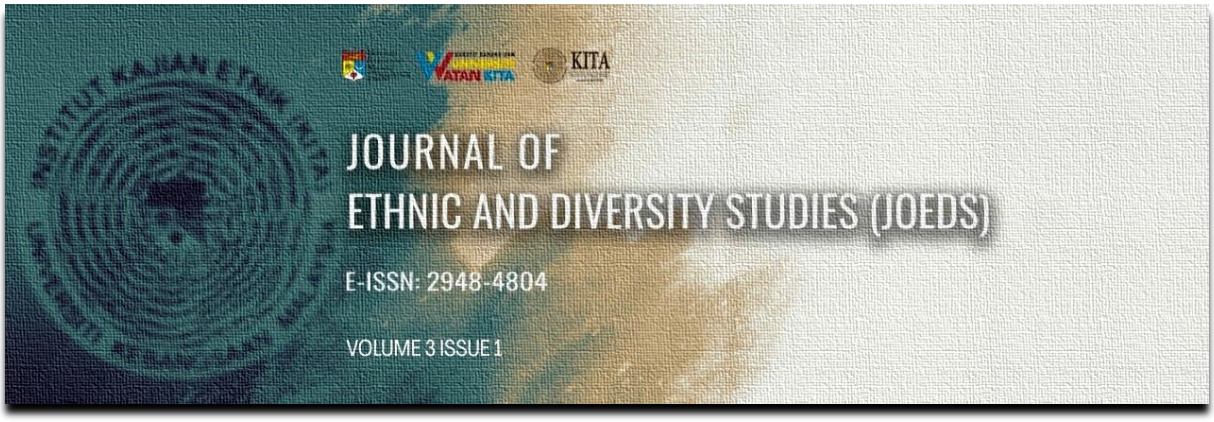
The Guzheng, as a treasure of Chinese traditional music culture, possesses a long history and profound cultural heritage. From its origins to its modern development, the Guzheng has continuously evolved and innovated, forming rich artistic forms and distinctive schools (Liu Xueqi 2019). Through discussions on its origins, nomenclature, schools, current status of inheritance and development, as well as explorations of protective measures, we gain a more comprehensive and profound understanding of this traditional instrument.

The origin and development of the Guzheng demonstrate its significant position in Chinese music history. The Guzheng is not only a carrier of musical art but also a symbol of Chinese culture. However, the origin of the Guzheng remains a mystery to this day, awaiting further investigation and research by scholars. Behind the naming of the Guzheng lies rich cultural connotations. By exploring the origin of the name "Guzheng," we can better understand its status and significance in Chinese traditional culture. The naming of the Guzheng not only reflects its unique sound and artistic characteristics but also embodies the traditions and cultural



customs of naming ancient Chinese musical instruments. Meanwhile, the various schools of Guzheng demonstrate the diversity and richness of its artistry. Different schools exhibit distinctive techniques, styles, and forms of expression, collectively constituting the blossoming of Guzheng art. Through analysis of these schools, we can appreciate the multifaceted charm of Guzheng art and understand the efforts and contributions of different schools in heritage and innovation. Reflections on the current status and development of Guzheng schools reveal the challenges and opportunities facing Guzheng in modern society. By analyzing the current state of heritage, we can identify effective approaches and methods to protect and propagate Guzheng schools.

Finally, the exploration of protective methods for Guzheng schools provides practical and feasible recommendations for the inheritance and development of Guzheng traditions. Accelerating the construction of succession teams, and actively utilizing modern communication mediums like the internet are crucial means to safeguard Guzheng cultural heritage. Only through collective efforts across society can Guzheng schools be better protected and preserved, revitalizing with new vitality.



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Authors' contributions
Li Yanjun, Shazlin Amir Hamzah and Nur Atiqah Tang Abdullah design the research. Li Yanjun looked up all the data information mentioned in the paper. Li Yanjun completed the analysis of the data and wrote a manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethics approval and consent to participate
Not applicable.

Competing interests
All authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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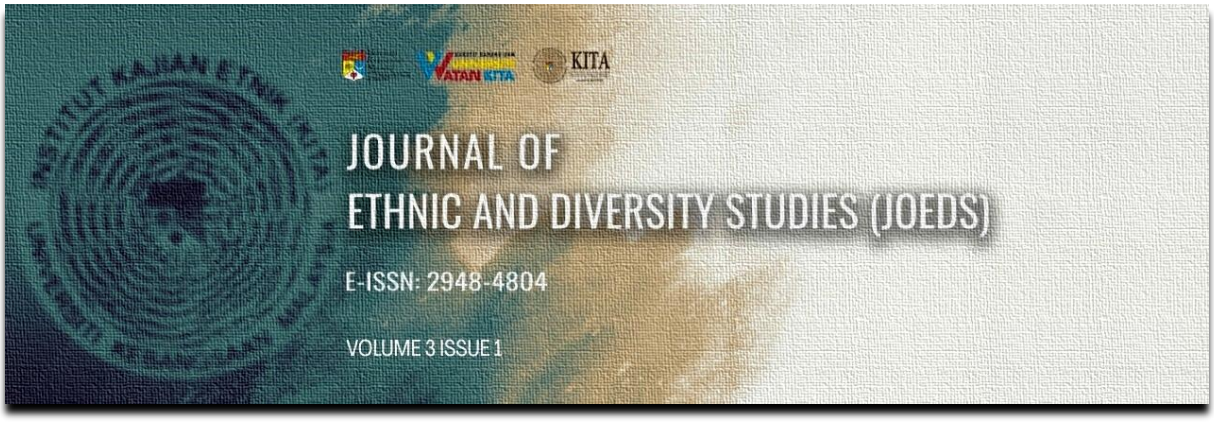

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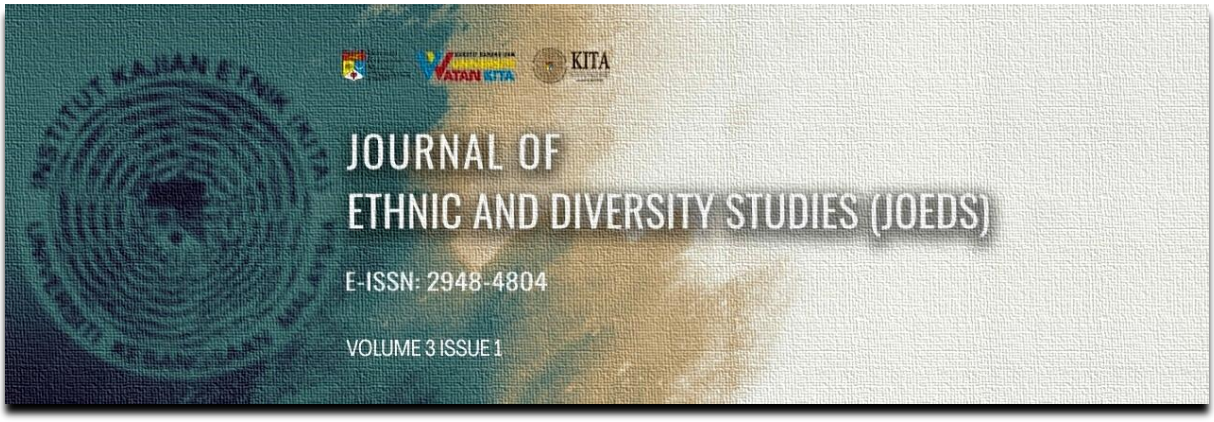

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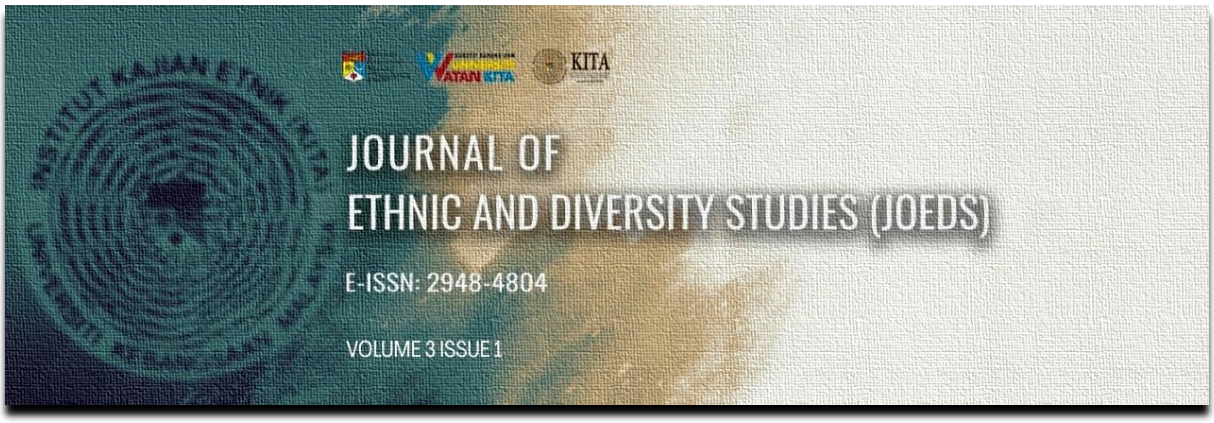

Cultivating Respect and Trust: The Inclusive Coexistence Between Peranakan Indians and Chinese in Malaysia – Exploring the Organization, Living Space, and Religion

(*Memupuk Rasa Hormat dan Kepercayaan: Kehidupan Bersama yang Inklusif antara Peranakan India dan Cina di Malaysia – Meneroka Organisasi, Ruang Hidup, dan Agama*)

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between Peranakan Indians and Chinese living in Malaysia, clarifying how they have built a unique community while fostering harmonious relationships with different ethnic groups. India is the world's largest emigrant country with many naturalising in Malaysia. This study focuses on Peranakan Indians who have been indigenised through intermarriage. They form a distinct community amid three major ethnic groups. Studies on Malaysian society based on nationally designated ethnic categories have often marginalised mixed-ethnicity individuals and exacerbated social divisions. This study examines the relationship between Peranakan Indians and Chinese by focusing on the committee, living space, and religion. The Peranakan Indian committee consisted of Chinese with kinship ties while fostering mutual understanding through daily interaction with Chinese outside their kinship, cooperating in religious festivals, and building a sense of unity. Through this process, they have nurtured respect, trust, and an inclusive, harmonious coexistence, flexibly embracing and incorporating each other's differences while mutually benefiting from their relationship. This study relativizes essentialist discussions on Malaysia's three major ethnic groups and presents a case demonstrating ethnogenesis and the dynamic plasticity of ethnicity. It contributes to theories of ethnicity and national integration while offering insights into improving interethnic relations worldwide.

Keywords: Interethnic coexistence; social integration of immigrants; ethnogenesis; syncretism, spirit possession

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneroka hubungan antara Peranakan India dan Cina yang tinggal di Malaysia, menjelaskan bagaimana mereka membina komuniti unik sambil memupuk hubungan harmoni dengan kumpulan etnik yang berbeza. India adalah negara emigran terbesar di dunia dengan ramai yang menjadi warganegara Malaysia. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada Peranakan India yang telah diterima oleh masyarakat tempatan melalui perkahwinan campur. Mereka membentuk komuniti yang tersendiri di tengah-tengah tiga kumpulan etnik utama. Analisis

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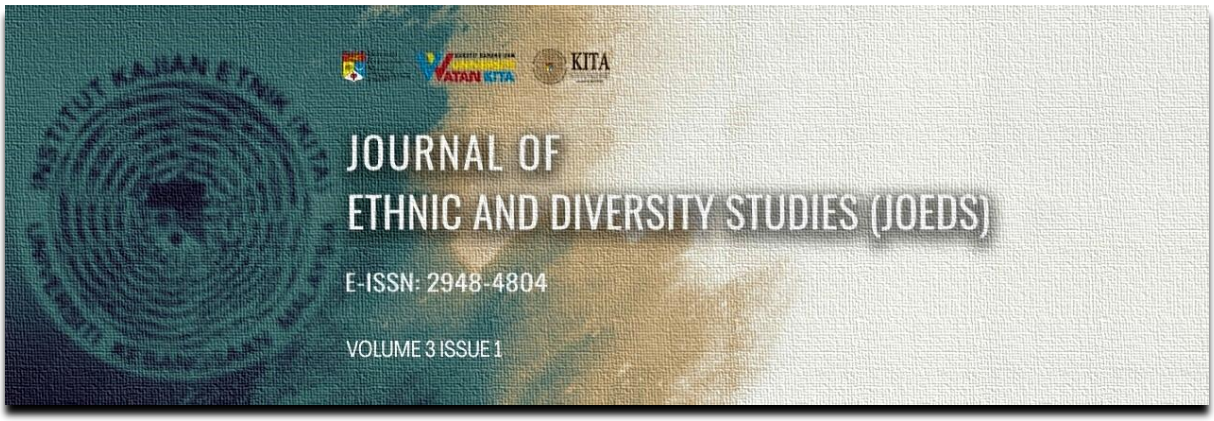


masyarakat Malaysia berdasarkan kategori etnik yang ditetapkan sering kali mengabaikan individu campuran etnik dan memperburuk perpecahan sosial. Kajian ini meneliti hubungan antara Peranakan India dan Cina dengan memberi tumpuan kepada jawatankuasa, ruang kediaman, dan agama. Peranakan India menerima individu keturunan Cina dalam jawatankuasa mereka dan memupuk pemahaman bersama melalui interaksi harian, kerjasama dalam perayaan agama, dan pembangunan rasa perpaduan. Melalui proses ini, mereka membina rasa hormat, kepercayaan, dan hidup bersama yang inklusif serta harmoni, dengan menerima dan menggabungkan perbezaan masing-masing. Kajian ini merelatifkan perbincangan esensialis mengenai tiga kumpulan etnik utama di Malaysia dan menunjukkan pembentukan etnik serta plastisitas etnik yang dinamik. Ia menyumbang kepada teori etnik dan integrasi nasional sambil memberikan pandangan untuk memperbaiki hubungan antara etnik di seluruh dunia.

Kata kunci:Kehidupan Bersama Pelbagai Etnik; Integrasi Sosial Migran; Etnogenesis; Sinkretisme; Rasukan

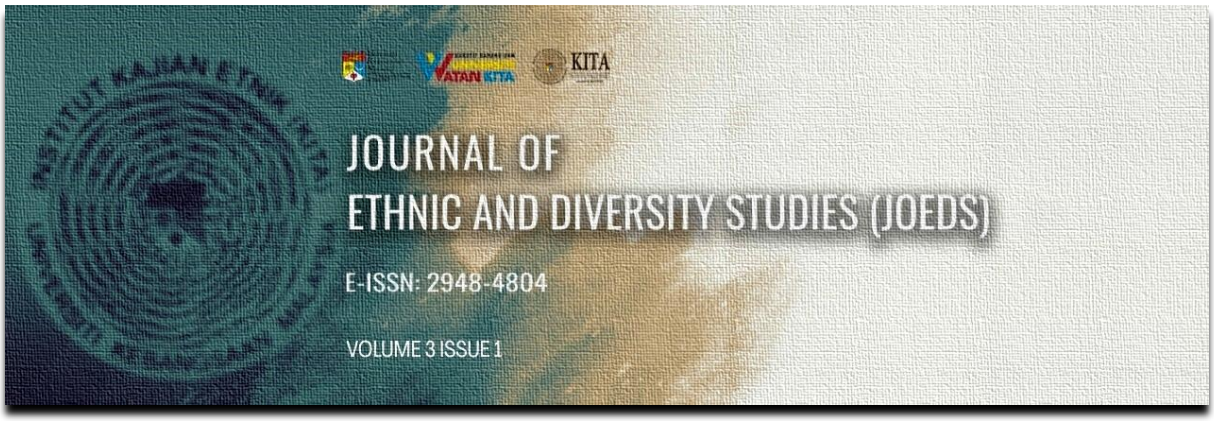
INTRODUCTION

The social integration of immigrants has become a pressing issue worldwide. The Malaysian government has sought national integration by classifying its citizens into *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil; indigenous peoples, primarily Malays), Chinese, and Indians. This classification was formed under the influence of colonial rulers. Soda (2020) has pointed out that colonial rulers introduced a new concept of Malay identity to Malaya, which was later reinterpreted, transformed, and adapted to the local context.

Shamsul (1996) proposed a distinction between 'authority-defined social reality,' shaped by those in power, and 'everyday-defined social reality,' experienced by individuals in their daily lives. Regarding the former, he highlighted the complexities arising from differing perspectives, even among those in power, as well as the challenge for Malaysian scholars to maintain an unbiased viewpoint because of their own ethnic affiliations. Furthermore, Shamsul (1996) noted that although Vision 2020 set the goal of building a unified Malaysian nation, ethnic conflict persists; moreover, the concept of a *Bangsa* Malaysia (Malaysian nation) should not be imposed by authorities but rather shaped through dialogue among the people.

Kartini and Shamsul (2020: 316) identified the role of the federal constitution, food, and religious tourism as key mechanisms for managing diversity, differences, and conflicting interests. Additionally, Lyu, Chan, and Olmedo highlighted an example where the Chinese community has fostered ethnic consciousness and national identity through lion dance activities (Lyu et al. 2024: 16).

What trajectories have those positioned between the three major ethnic groups, such as people of mixed marriage, followed? This paper examines Peranakan as a representative case. The term *Peranakan* comes from the Malay word *anak*, meaning 'child'. It has been used metaphorically to refer to locally born individuals of non-indigenous ancestry. Initially, the concept referred only to ancestral lineage (Pue & Shamsul 2012: 39-44). Over time, Peranakan



came to refer to a group of locally born people of mixed indigenous and non-indigenous descent who practiced a hybrid culture, assimilating aspects of Malay culture (Teo 2008: 357).

In 'everyday-defined social reality' (Shamsul 1996), a Peranakan identity enables connections with other ethnic groups (Pue 2016: 88). While inter-ethnic marriage may promote social cohesion, it can also pose significant challenges (Pue & Sulaiman 2013: 275). In Malaysia, categorising people along ethnic lines has led to a disregard for the interwoven interactions between ethnic groups in everyday life. This lack of awareness has resulted in the marginalisation of people involved in interethnic marriages, such as the Peranakan, reinforcing their social isolation (Pue 2015: 41).

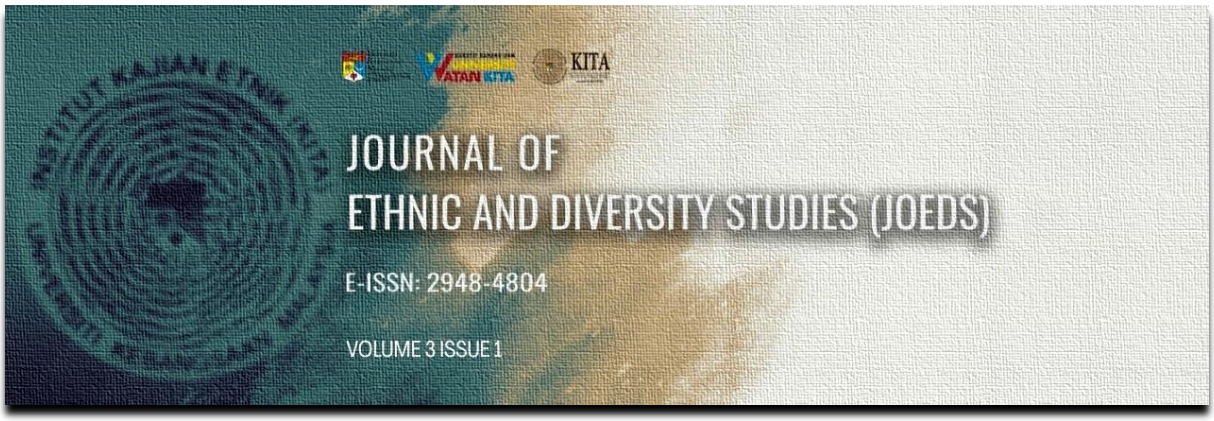
Research on Peranakan has predominantly focused on Peranakan Chinese, but other Peranakan also exist. The following section provides an overview of these groups. The Peranakan Chinese in Malacca have localised their language and culture, but they do not assimilate into the Malay category unless they convert to Islam (Tan 2021: 251,252). While culturally localised to integrate into local society, they have maintained intrinsic elements related to their group's identity, such as marriage and funerary rites, either in their original form or with slight modifications (Pue & Shamsul 2012: 44,45). They have largely preserved their community through endogamy (Clammer 1980). Following decolonisation, they lost British protection but attempted to revive their community by emphasising cultural aspects (Lee 2009: 169-171).

Meanwhile, the Peranakan Chinese in Kelantan have intermarried with Siamese and Thais, blending Taoism and Confucianism with Thai *Theravāda* Buddhism, Malay animistic beliefs, and other influences. They are distinguished by the local Chinese community; in 1987, established *Persatuan Peranakan Cina Kelantan* (Peranakan Chinese Kelantan Association) at the *Kulim* Buddhist Temple (Teo 2008: 229).

Eurasians, who trace their ancestry to Portuguese and Dutch settlers, were granted partial Bumiputera rights in 1984, and in 1990, the government designated their settlement area as a heritage site. These state-led efforts have contributed to the community's preservation (Pillai 2015: 99). *Jawi* Peranakan are descendants of localised Indian Muslims who, by promoting Malay nationalism, were absorbed into the Malay category (Roff 1994).

LITERATURE REVIEW

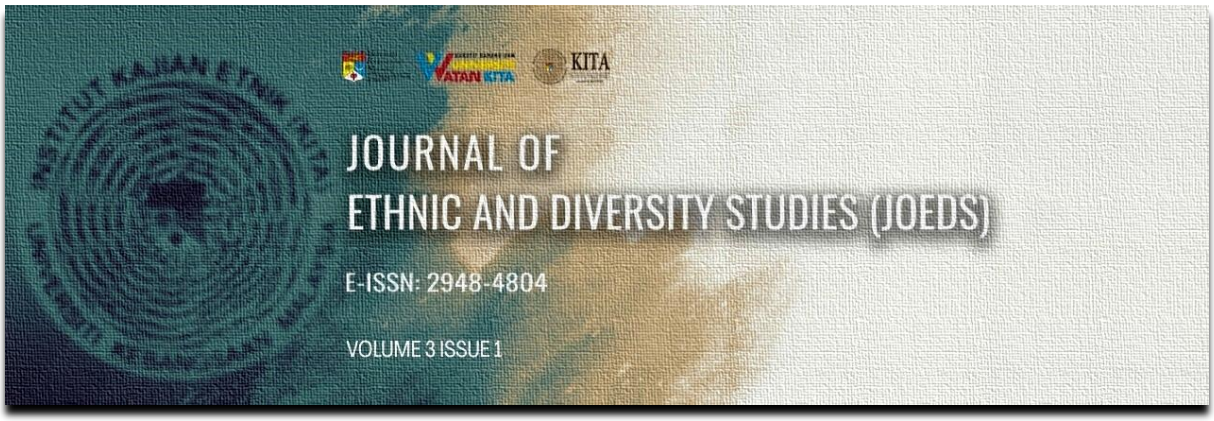
This paper focuses on Peranakan Indians, a group that has actively constructed their community while embracing diversity. They are considered descendants of Tamil Hindu merchants who arrived in Malacca in the 15th century and assimilated into the local culture. Their actual identity varies by region and individual and has also transformed depending on the social context, making it difficult to provide a clear definition. Furthermore, in discussing their position within the 'authorised category' (Shamsul 1996), this study seeks to avoid 'distinguishing the culture and history of people who fall outside ethnographic legitimacy and creating new boundaries within ethnic categories' (Ishikawa 1997: 159). As part of this effort, the study explores the inclusion and exclusion surrounding the category 'Peranakan Indian' and aims to capture their identity flexibly.



This paper begins by examining the definition of Peranakan Indians as stipulated in the rules of the Peranakan Indian Committee in Malacca and its evolution. In 1940, they were defined as 'the Malayan-born Tamil Community resident within the settlement of Malacca' (Temple Members' Society 1940: 4). This definition was later revised to include individuals who met the following three criteria (Melaka Chetti Community: 4):

(i) Male or female descendants of early settlers in Melaka of Tamil extraction from India either through father's or mother's lincage;
(ii) Practising a few of the Peranakan Indian customs and traditions such as creole language, attire and traditional rites;
(iii) A Hindu of Saiva faith.

Thus, it can be inferred that the original intent was to differentiate Peranakan Indians from transient residents born in India; however, as more individuals were born and settled in Malaya, a new set of criteria was introduced to differentiate them. Simultaneously, the definition retained a degree of ambiguity, allowing for the inclusion of more diverse individuals. For example, an additional provision specified that descendants include both biological and legally adopted children. This suggests that the Peranakan Indians, who have increasingly adopted children, also incorporated them into their community. Furthermore, although non-Hindus were officially excluded from the definition, the actual acceptance varied by individual and circumstance.
Previous studies have noted that Peranakan Indians have historically congregated in Malacca (Narinasamy 1983: 244) and that religious festivals held at multiple Hindu temples in the area play a crucial role in maintaining their community (Kandasamy and Rajantheran 2019: 1). However, due to financial difficulties, they have been forced not only to sell portions of their property (Narinasamy 1983: 263) but also transfer ownership of temples essential for religious festivals (Raghavan 1977: 450). As nuclear families became more common, and people sought better education and employment opportunities, migration from Malacca to Kuala Lumpur and other urban areas increased, further fragmenting the community (Wong, Neo & Wan 2023: 11). The rising number of inter-marriages with non-Peranakan Indians has made it more difficult to sustain the group (Raghavan 1977: 455). One Peranakan Indian expressed concerns that inter-ethnic marriage and migration could lead to their assimilation into dominant cultures (Wong et al. 2023: 7). Narinasamy (1983: 261) has pointed out that economically empowered Peranakan Indians who migrated to urban areas might neglect the maintenance of the Peranakan Indians' numerous Hindu temples left behind; moreover, unless the government grant Bumiputera rights and provide educational and employment support, the Peranakan Indian community would eventually disappear. However, due to their mixed heritage and the difficulty of defining them, there is little prospect of them obtaining such rights (Pillai 2015: 67). Nevertheless, the group that identifies or is identified as 'Peranakan Indian', is distinct from the three major ethnic groups, continues to exist. They maintain and manage communal land (referred to hereafter as Area A) and temples while striving to improve their sociocultural status. This raises the question: How has the Peranakan Indian community persisted?



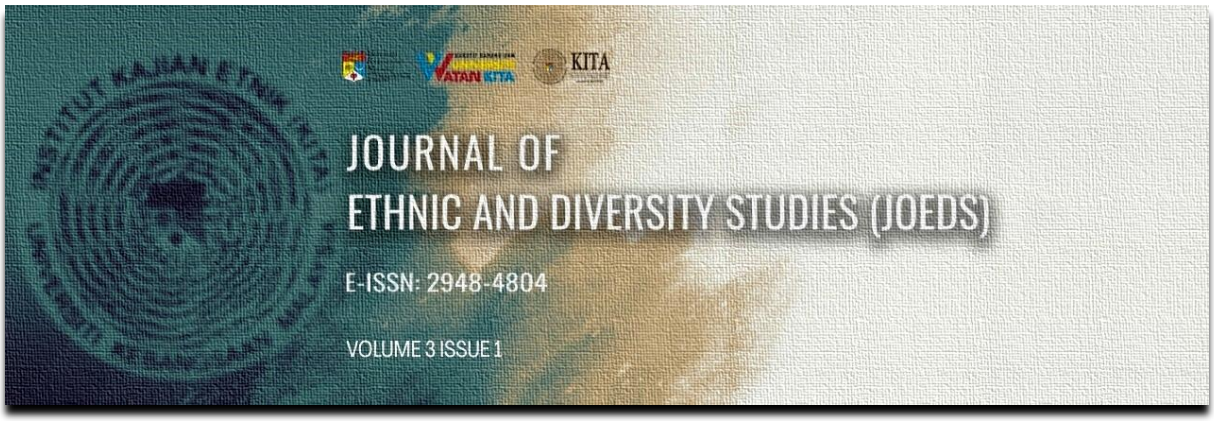
Kashiwa (2025) identified several factors that enabled Peranakan Indians to sustain their land and temples despite economic challenges and changes such as exogamy and urban migration. When the Peranakan Indian Committee began leasing its communal land to other ethnic groups, it not only gained rental income from them but also individuals from more diverse backgrounds who came to be elected as committee representatives. Furthermore, the religious festivals held at the temples attracted Peranakan Indians who had moved away from Malacca, leading them to support the community by serving as committee representatives or making donations (Kashiwa 2025).

Furthermore, Peranakan Indian temples have attracted and incorporated people of other ethnicities, including Chinese, who have contributed financially through cooperation. However, the reasons for this inclusivity have not yet been thoroughly examined. Beyond Peranakan Indian temples, there are other instances of interactions between Hindus and Chinese. In Malaysia and Singapore, the annual *Thaipusam* festival, a major Tamil Hindu festival, sees enthusiastic participation from many Chinese worshippers. Additionally, during the *Masimagam* festival at the *Arulmigu Sannasimalai Andavar* Temple in Cheng, Malacca, a temple owned and managed by *Chettiar* Hindus, the chariot procession stops not only at Indian Hindu houses but also the houses of Chinese devotees. In Jasin, Malacca, the *Sri Mathurai Veeran Raja Karumariamman Tuah Pek Kong* Temple, established in the 1970s, is a fusion of Hinduism and Chinese religious practices (Malacca Volunteer Social Research Association 2022: 287). Similarly, in Yishun, Singapore, the *Hock Huat Keng* Temple and *Sree Veeramuthu Muneeswarar* Temple merged in 1996 due to redevelopment and became a tourist attraction.

In contrast to these hybrid religious sites, Peranakan Indian temples are historically significant, dating back to the 18th century. They attract thousands of people from around the world during festivals and serve as places of daily worship for diverse communities, including Chinese devotees. Thus, Peranakan Indian temples provide an example of long-term multi-ethnic inclusion. This study seeks to clarify why this has been possible by examining the relationship between the Peranakan Indians and Chinese from a committee, living space, and religious perspective.

METHODOLOGY

This study's research methods include participant observations, interviews, and a literature review. The primary research periods covered multiple phases, including July to October 2022, January 2023, July to September 2023, May to August 2024, and December 2024 to January 2025. The main research locations were Malacca, Malaysia, where the Peranakan Indian community is concentrated in Area A (approximately 7 acres), and their primary migration destinations, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. The main research subjects were the chairman and committee members who jointly own and manage Area A, the residents of Area A, those who gather at Hindu temples owned by the committee, and individuals who have migrated outside Area A. Information sources are disclosed in a manner that ensures privacy protection. Unless otherwise noted, the data are based on interviews conducted between 2022 and 2025.



RESULTS

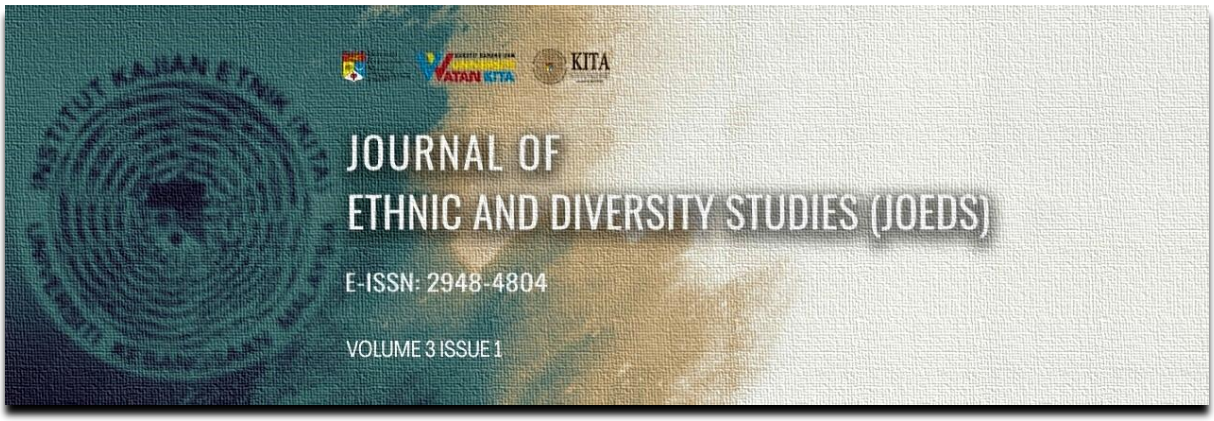
COMMITTEE AND LIVING SPACE

This section examines the relationship between Peranakan Indians and Chinese by focusing on the Peranakan Indian Committee and their shared land. The Peranakan Indian Committee jointly owned and managed ten Hindu temples, including one established in 1781 and Area A (Narinasamy 1983: 240,241). The committee leased the shared land to Peranakan Indians; however, as more Peranakan Indians migrated to urban areas, the amount of vacant land increased. In response, the committee began leasing land to non-Peranakan Indians in the 1950s, triggered by increased taxation on vacant land. The rent was set at 25 ringgit per household per month, regardless of ethnicity, which was relatively low compared to the rates for surrounding areas. By 1976, Area A had 98 households, consisting of 27 Peranakan Indian households, 52 Chinese households, 17 Indian households, and 2 Malay households (Narinasamy 1983: 253). The committee not only avoided taxation on vacant land but also generated rental income, which accounted for 56.2% of the committee's revenue from 2017 to 2021 (Melaka Chetti Community 2019: 44-46; 2022a: 44-65).

Residents lived together without dividing their residential areas by ethnicity, deepening their relationships through daily interactions of shared joys and sorrows. Inter-ethnic marriages also occurred, with exogamy surpassing endogamy. As marriages with Chinese individuals increased, more Peranakan Indians have lighter skin and Chinese features. When Chinese women married Peranakan Indians, many adopted Hindu names, converted to Hinduism, and actively engaged in learning Peranakan Indian culture to pass on to the next generation. However, if they wished, they retained the names given by their Chinese parents on their identification cards and continued to practice their previous religion alongside Hinduism.

Regarding language, many Peranakan Indians use a creole language based on Malay in daily conversations, incorporating Chinese words. Some are multilingual, switching between Malay, English, Hokkien, Mandarin, and other languages depending on the situation. While some have expressed concern about the shortage of residential areas for Peranakan Indians within Area A, the sharing of living spaces has fostered close relationships regardless of ethnicity. Additionally, Chinese residents tend to pay rent on time, which is appreciated. As a result, the committee has not expelled non-Peranakan Indian residents from Area A but instead prioritised Peranakan Indians when leasing newly available land.

Only Peranakan Indians can join the committee; however, it began to include women, members of various castes, descendants of inter-marriages with Chinese and residents outside Area A. The committee also differentiates associate members, including those who converted to religions other than Hinduism and the spouses of regular members, while still relying on their expertise and financial support. Additionally, individuals connected to Chinese through blood relations or adoption are now elected as committee representatives. One of the committee's objectives is to promote and maintain good relationships among people, regardless



of ethnicity or religion (Melaka Chetti Community: 5). For example, it promotes interaction between Indian Peranakan and Buddhist temples in the vicinity of Area A. As discussed in later sections, the worshippers of these temples not only participate in each other's religious festivals but also regularly visit and pray at both temples.

To summarise, Peranakan Indians and Chinese shared living spaces and deepened their interactions in daily life. As their relationships strengthened, intermarriage and adoption created familial ties. Rather than assimilating, both groups have shown respect and developed overlapping identities. This is reflected in the Peranakan Indian approach to respecting the cultural and religious backgrounds of those who marry into their community and their flexible use of multiple languages. Additionally, they built long-term relationships that benefit both. The committee of the Peranakan Indians began to include various people such as individuals of mixed Chinese descent, which shows that the community is becoming more inclusive.

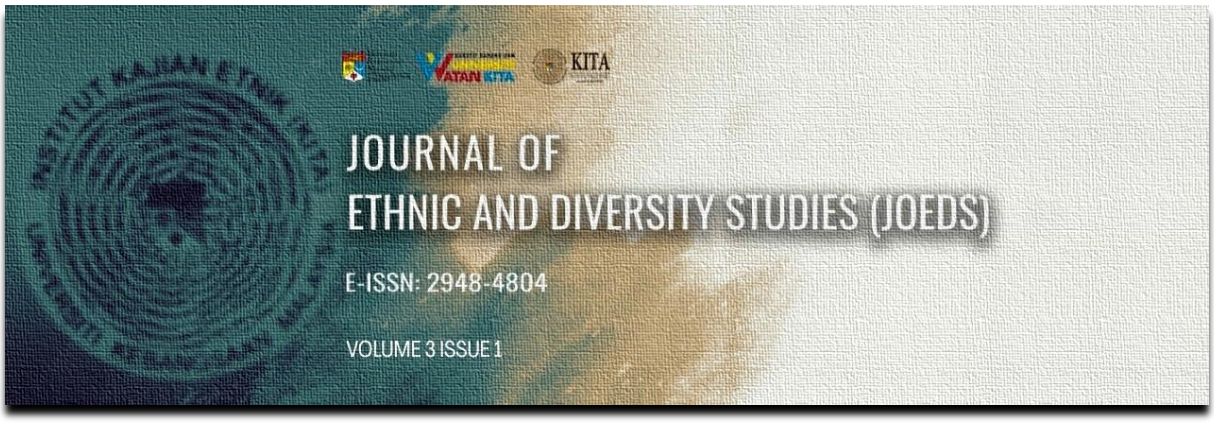
ANCESTRAL WORSHIP

While cremation is common among Hindus, many Peranakan Indians practice burial and have family graves. The Peranakan Indian committee owns a communal cemetery on the outskirts of Malacca. During the first week of January, Peranakan Indians visit this cemetery and conduct a ritual called *Naik Bukit*, which has been influenced by Chinese *Cheng Beng*. Relatives who have migrated to different areas gather to clean their ancestors' graves, decorate them with flowers, and offer the deceased's favourite foods, such as *nasi lemak*, sweets, and Indian dishes, placed on banana leaves.

Furthermore, Peranakan Indians hold a ritual called *Parchu* twice a year, during which food is offered to the deceased. The first *Parchu* takes place one week after *Naik bukit*, while the second occurs between June and July. During *Parchu*, approximately 16 different dishes are prepared in addition to *nasi lemak*. The preparation requires a significant amount of time, effort, and money. Peranakan Indians who migrated to other areas return home to assist.

In the household of S, who has no children, G, a Chinese, comes with his Chinese wife and child twice a year to help S prepare for the ancestral worship. Since S and his wife have cared for G as if he were their own child while his parents were busy with work, G has a strong bond with them. G states, 'I am a Buddhist, but I see Hindu Gods and *Buddha* as the same' as he explains the Hindu deities enshrined in S's house. S's wife praises G's wife, saying, 'She is such a hard worker and has a great personality' – making G's wife blush. In S's living room, deities, such as *Tua Pek Kong*, commonly worshipped by Chinese, are also enshrined.

On 13 January 2025, I observed the following ritual in the home of family F in Area A. Several banana leaves were placed on the floor, each carrying sixteen different dishes. After about an hour, one of the women who had prepared the food took two 20-cent coins and tossed them. If they landed head and tail, it was a sign that the deceased had accepted the offerings. However, each time she tossed the coins, they landed either head or tail. After nearly 10 minutes, they finally landed head and tail. Excitedly, the woman who had thrown the coins exclaimed, 'Look! The cigarette we offered has just burned out completely'. Others nodded in agreement,



saying, 'Ancesters were heavy smokers, after all!' A Chinese woman who had married into the Peranakan Indian community turned to me and said, 'This coin ritual and even the large red candles placed beside the offerings are Chinese influences'. Those who had been waiting hungrily gathered around the banana leaves and ate the offerings together, using their hands to mix the food. Among those sharing the meal and chatting happily were Chinese neighbours and friends.

During the second *Parchu*, a variety of traditional sweets are offered to the ancestors. These sweets are also distributed to friends and relatives. N, a Peranakan Indian resident of Area A, shared the sweets not only with all the Peranakan Indians living in the Area but also with his Chinese neighbours.

This section demonstrates how Peranakan Indian ancestral worship practices have evolved under the influence of Chinese and others. Ancestral worship serves as an opportunity for Peranakan Indians and their Chinese neighbours and friends to deepen their bonds – not only through the shared effort of preparation but also through communal dining. While participants recognize some customs as being influenced by Chinese, they also internalise and practice them as their own traditions. This process fosters mutual understanding of each other's deities and religious beliefs, leading to respect, shared worship, and, in some cases, the perception of religious figures as synonymous.

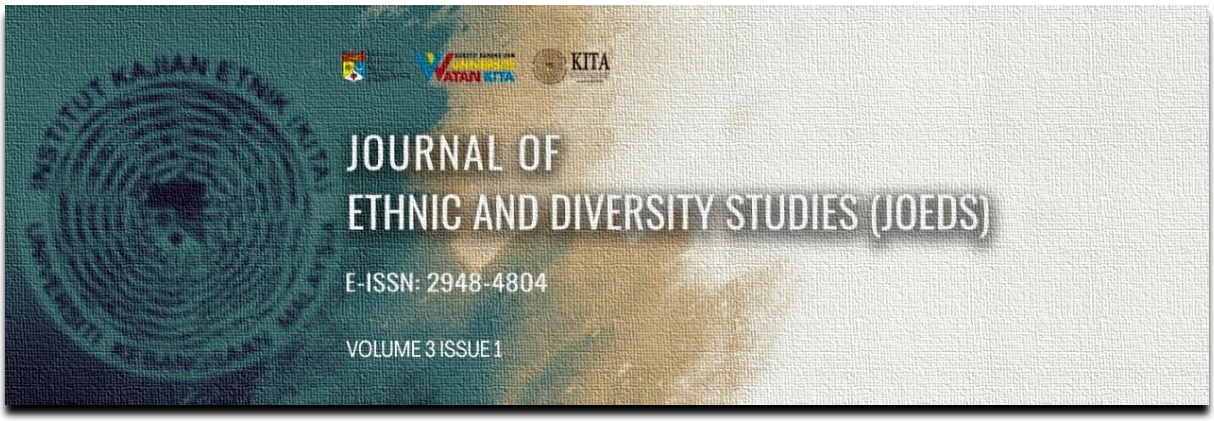
HINDU TEMPLES

In Area A and its surrounding areas, there are ten Hindu temples owned by Peranakan Indians. These temples not only hold daily rituals but also host numerous Hindu festivals. Representative festivals include *Pongal*, *Dato Chachar*, *Aadi pooja*, *Navaratri*, *Deepavali*, and *Shivaratri*. Many Chinese gather at these temples to seek divine blessings. According to a 70-year-old Peranakan Indian, Chinese have frequently visited the temples since childhood. Their participation in temple festivals has increased over time. For example, since 2022, Chinese devotees have also carried milk during *Aadi pooja*.

While Tamil is the predominant language in Malaysia's Hindu temples, Peranakan Indian temples primarily use Malay, the national language that reduces linguistic barriers for Chinese worshippers. Additionally, one of the Hindu temples owned and managed by Peranakan Indians, the *Sri Kailasanathar* Temple, incorporates Chinese motifs in its interior design, such as bamboo patterns.

To explore the interactions between Chinese and Peranakan Indians in more detail, this section focuses on *Meggamay*, also known as *Dato Chachar* in Malay, which is the largest festival for Peranakan Indians. *Meggamay* has been held annually for ten days since the establishment of the *Mariamman* Temple in 1822. The festival attracts both Peranakan Indians who have migrated to other regions and non-Peranakan Indians. The number of attendees reached several thousand in 2010 (Pillai 2015: 51).

The festival begins early in the morning with a large procession, with many Chinese devotees joining the procession from *Mariamman* Temple to *Vinayagar* Temple. To express



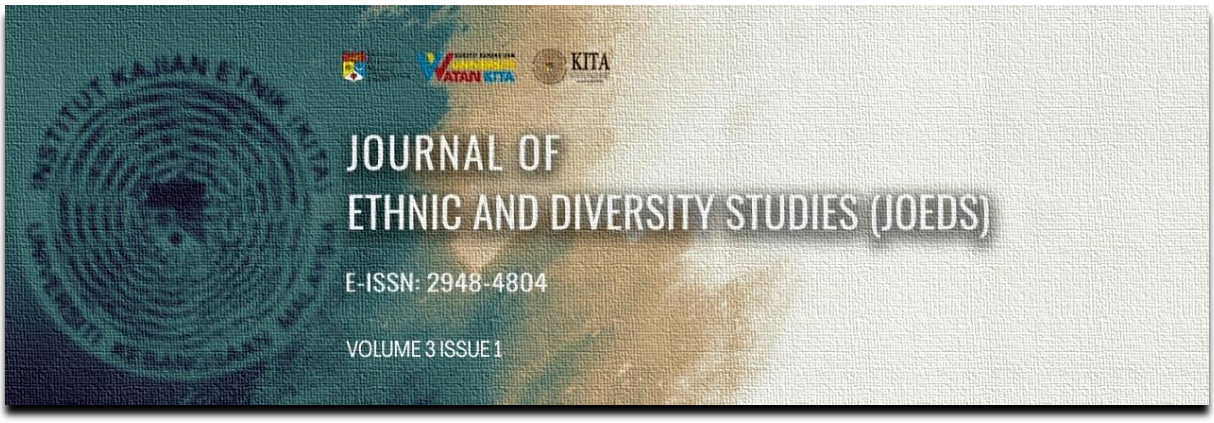
gratitude for their fulfilled vows, devotees engage in acts of extreme devotion, such as piercing their bodies with spears and hooks or carrying pots of milk (*Kavadi*). Anyone can participate in carrying milk upon prior registration. After the procession, a wooden chariot carrying the statue of Goddess *Mariamman* is pulled back to Area A. Along the way, the chariot stops in front of the *Cheng Hoon Teng* Temple, the oldest Chinese religious institution in Malacca, where Peranakan Indians pay respect. Chinese devotees watch with their hands clasped in prayer. The chariot also pauses in front of the houses of Chinese worshippers, where residents make offerings to the deity and distribute drinks to other devotees. Upon returning to *Mariamman* Temple, food is provided free of charge to all attendees regardless of ethnicity.

Throughout the festival, meals are served on multiple occasions and Chinese devotees play a significant role in food preparation. Chinese worshippers donate not only money but also large quantities of rice, cooking oil, and other ingredients to the temple. They also help with the food preparation, such as chopping vegetables, serving meals, distributing free food, and peeling fruit for the rituals. Some devoted individuals arrive early in the morning, even before the crowds, to assist with these tasks.

During the festival, enthusiastic Chinese devotees are often possessed by deities, even more frequently than the Peranakan Indians. The ones most frequently possessed tend to be the same individuals – often middle-aged Chinese women who have been devout worshippers at the temple since their youth. When possessed, they suddenly change their expressions, scream, run, or dance to the rhythm of the music. Their actions vary depending on the deity possessing them – some move like a snake, slithering across the floor. The possessed individuals and those around them interpret these behaviours as divine possession.

Those who are possessed sometimes act as mediums, conveying messages from the Gods. One evening, during the 2024 festival at *Mariamman* Temple, I had a conversation with K, a Chinese woman who frequently experiences possession while waiting in line with over 100 people to receive food. K told me, ‘I am a Buddhist, but Hinduism is the same. Since childhood, I have prayed at this temple whenever I am troubled, and I never miss a prayer on special occasions, like my birthday’. Although K has since moved away from the temple, she continues to visit regularly, saying, ‘Whenever I pray, my wishes come true’. K’s son, a student at one of Malaysia’s top universities, remarked while peeling fruit for the offerings, ‘If you pray here, you’ll get good grades’. Although he is now based in the capital, he still visits the temple. His siblings and Chinese fiancé nodded in agreement.

While the food was being served – first banana leaves, then rice, then curry, and finally *appalam* – K’s eyes began to wander. I turned around and saw that the idol carried by devotees was approaching. The sound of drums and flutes grew louder. K kept glancing at the idol and gradually began to flail her hands and feet. K desperately tried to compose herself, but suddenly, K slammed the table and let out a loud cry before running towards the idol. I followed K into the temple and found a crowd had gathered. I asked a Peranakan Indian woman nearby, ‘What’s happening?’ She replied, ‘Goddess *Mariamman* has possessed her and is delivering a divine message. I want to receive guidance too’. Peering through the crowd, I saw K sitting on the floor, surrounded by a long line of people, regardless of ethnicity, eager to hear the divine message. K



conveyed the message using only gestures, while her children interpreted and relayed it in Malay, English, or Chinese, depending on the listener. As the queue continued, K became drenched in sweat and eventually collapsed from exhaustion. The crowd gradually dispersed. Later, when I asked K about the experience, she said, 'I don't remember anything while I'm possessed'.

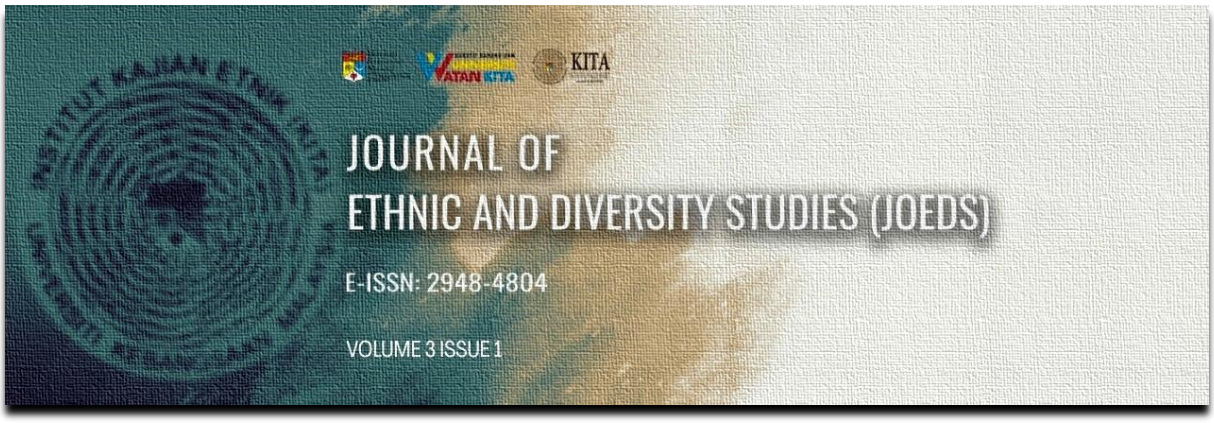
Some Chinese individuals who have experienced possession at this temple have gone on to become religious leaders. Previous studies indicated that a Chinese woman who first visited the *Mariamman* Temple festival at a friend's suggestion became a regular worshipper. During one festival, she felt that Lord *Ganesha* had entered her body, prompting her to walk like an elephant and chant Sanskrit mantras. Under the guidance of a Buddhist religious leader from a temple in Johor, and with the occasional presence of a Hindu priest during festival periods, she now leads both Buddhist and Hindu religious practices within a single building. Buddhist and Hindu worshippers from across the state seek guidance (Malacca Volunteer Social Research Association 2022: 442-444).

Chinese devotees have visited Peranakan Indian temples for at least 60 years. They participate in daily rituals as well as festivals, praying and preparing food.Food is distributed equally to all attendees, regardless of ethnicity, and shared communally. Some devoted Chinese worshippers act as spiritual mediums, and their divine messages are eagerly received by people from all backgrounds. Additionally, there are Chinese individuals who, after experiencing possession at these temples, have gone on to lead religious practices that integrate Buddhism and Hinduism in a single place of worship.

BUDDHIST TEMPLES

Not only do Chinese people visit Hindu temples, but Peranakan Indians also visit Chinese religious institutions. The closest relationship is with the nearby Buddhist temple *Sek Kian Enh*. For example, a woman in her 60s whose father was a Peranakan Indian and whose mother was a Chinese woman was adopted and raised as a Peranakan Indian and has been familiar withBuddhism since childhood. Her father took her to *Sek Kian Enh* every week, where she enjoyed singing and dancing in a language barrier-free environment. A woman in her 50s, an Indian who married into the Peranakan Indian community and resides in Area A, prays at a Hindu temple in Area A on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays but also practices a vegetarian diet on Saturdays so that she can visit *Sek Kian Enh*. A woman in her 20s, whose father is Chinese and whose mother is a Peranakan Indian, visits both *Sek Kian Enh* and Hindu temples.

On *Wesak* Day, a Buddhist festival, many Peranakan Indians visit the Buddhist temple to donate and pray. The Peranakan Indian's committee also takes the lead in carrying fruit and flowers from the *Mariamman* Temple as a gesture of respect. Sweets and rice are distributed during the parade held on the same night. Even for a Peranakan Indian who was too far from the distribution area to receive sweets, someone suddenly appeared to hand some to her. 'I asked for sweets in my heart, *Buddha* always grants wishes like this', she said. Others expressed the belief that 'all religions teach the same values, and regardless of race, all people are the same because



our blood is red'. Some Peranakan Indians view all gods as one and make gestures of prayer whenever they pass by a place of worship.

Donations collected from the many attendees at the *Mariamman* Temple festival accounted for approximately 20% of the committee's revenue between 2016 and 2019 (Melaka Chetti Community 2019: 44-46; 2022: 44-65). Donors included Chinese worshippers, as well as contributions from *Sek Kian Enh* and other Chinese religious institutions.

Peranakan Indians of all ages regularly engage with the local Buddhist temple in their daily lives. During festivals, even more Peranakan Indians visit, pray, and donate, while the committee makes formal gestures of respect. The fact that some practice a vegetarian diet to visit the temple and statements, such as '*Buddha* always grants wishes like this', indicate that Peranakan Indians also seek spiritual blessings from *Buddha*. Furthermore, they receive donations from Buddhist temples and Chinese worshippers, making Buddhist institutions an important part of their religious and communal interactions.

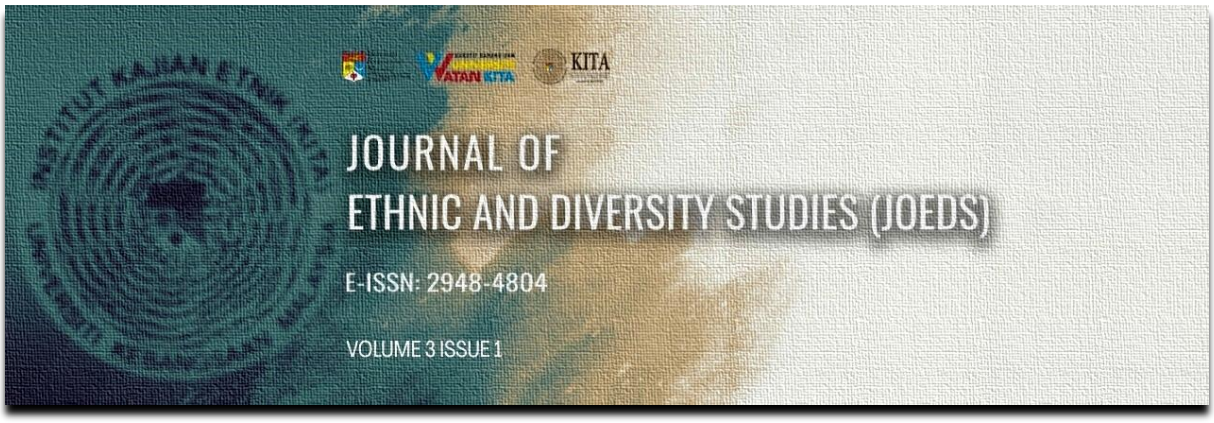
ETHNIC STUDIES IMPLICATION

This is one of the few empirical studies to focus on Peranakan Indians, a community that has successfully achieved inter-ethnic and inter-religious coexistence. Exploring how they constructed their unique community while fostering harmonious relationships with others provides insights into mitigating ethnic conflicts in Malaysia and how citizens can realise the concept of *Bangsa Malaysia*.

A distinctive feature of this study is its empirical and dynamic approach to understanding Peranakan Indians through interviews and participant observation. This allows for an analysis that captures their '*everyday-defined social reality' (Shamsul 1996)*, which often falls outside the scope of the '*authorized category' (Shamsul 1996)*, and provides a more comprehensive understanding, including the transformations they undergo. This study contributes by addressing the issue in Malaysian society, where categorising people along ethnic lines has overlooked fluid inter-ethnic relationships in everyday life, leading to the stigmatisation of inter-ethnic marriages.

Furthermore, as a Japanese researcher who does not belong to any of Malaysia's three major ethnic groups, I approached Malaysian society from a relative perspective, overcoming the conventional challenge of maintaining an impartial viewpoint. In doing so, this study relativises the essentialist discourse on Malaysia's three major ethnic groups and presents a case illustrating ethnogenesis as well as the ever-changing and plastic nature of ethnicity. Ultimately, this study contributes to theories of ethnicity and national integration while offering valuable insights into improving interethnic relations worldwide.

Specifically, this study demonstrates the following: Peranakan Indians have fostered mutual respect and trust with other ethnic groups through daily interactions facilitated by shared living spaces and language, as well as through collaboration in festivals that cultivate a sense of unity. Based on this foundation, they have built a tolerant and inclusive coexistence, and flexibly embraced differences while mutually benefiting from economic and other advantages. Given the prevalence of intermarriage among Peranakan Indians, even religious elements have been



influenced and transformed by other cultures. Yet, they have continued to develop as a distinct community without assimilating into any of Malaysia's three major ethnic groups.Shamsul (1996) noted that the concept of a *Bangsa Malaysia* should not be imposed by authorities but rather shaped through dialogue among the people. This case serves as an exemplary *bottom-up* model of integration.

CONCLUSION

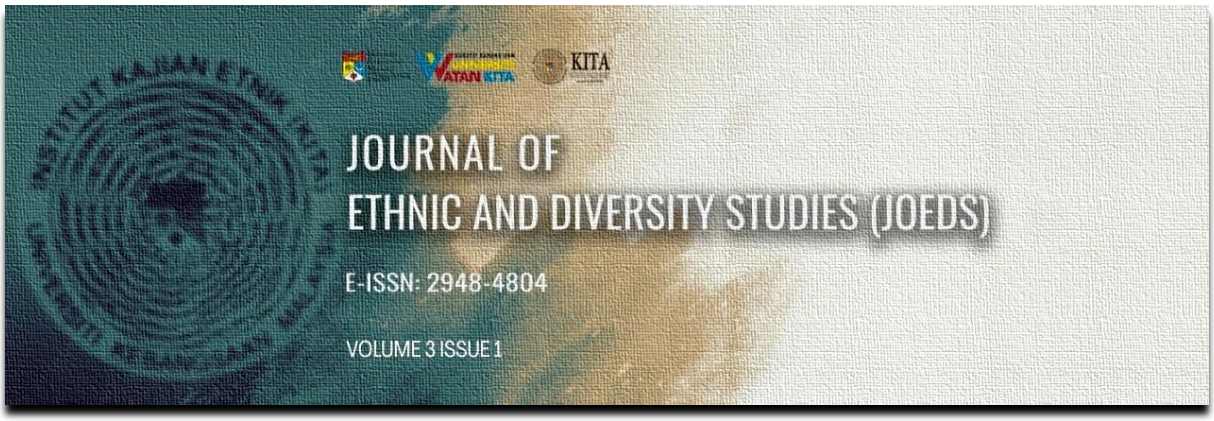
The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between Peranakan Indians and Chinese, as well as the background of their interactions, by focusing on land, the committee, ancestral rituals, and temples. Through this analysis, the study attempts to clarify how it is possible to construct a distinct community while fostering harmonious relationships with other ethnic groups.

The committee leased the communal land surrounding the Hindu temples to Chinese. As a result, Peranakan Indians and Chinese started to share a living space and their cultural and religious understanding deepened through daily interactions. As their relationships strengthened, intermarriage and adoption created ties between them. Rather than assimilating, both sides developed mutual respect, merged, and layered their identities. This inclusivity is reflected in the way Peranakan Indians honour the cultural and religious backgrounds of those who marry into their community as well as in their language practices.

The low linguistic barrier between Peranakan Indians and Chinese facilitates smooth communication. Specifically, Peranakan Indians primarily use Malay in their daily lives, while Chinese have also acquired Malay, the national language. Peranakan Indians have also incorporated Chinese words into their daily conversations. The shared language has functioned as a lubricant, reducing misunderstandings and prejudices while promoting smoother exchanges.

Many Peranakan Indians do not understand Tamil and predominantly use Malay, even in Hindu temples. One of the Hindu temples owned by Peranakan Indians incorporates Chinese architectural elements, which may have contributed to making the temple more familiar to Chinese than other Hindu temples in the area that primarily use Tamil. Practices commonly observed in Chinese religious traditions, such as spirit possession and incense offerings, are also practiced in Hindu temples. Familiar rituals may lower psychological barriers for worshippers.

Among Chinese who visit Hindu temples, some actively engage in cooking and other services alongside Peranakan Indians. Since the food provided in Hindu temples is vegetarian, it is accessible to Chinese, including those who follow a vegetarian diet, some of whom visit the temples for this reason. Ancestral rituals also serve as opportunities to deepen relationships, as not only kin but also Chinese neighbours and friends participate in the preparation and share meals with Peranakan Indians. Arata (2017: 127-143) pointed out that, in the Sundanese society of Indonesia, preparing and eating meals together fosters relationships, with greater participation leading to deeper connections. This study suggests that joint cooking and shared meals strengthen the relationship between Chinese and Peranakan Indians.



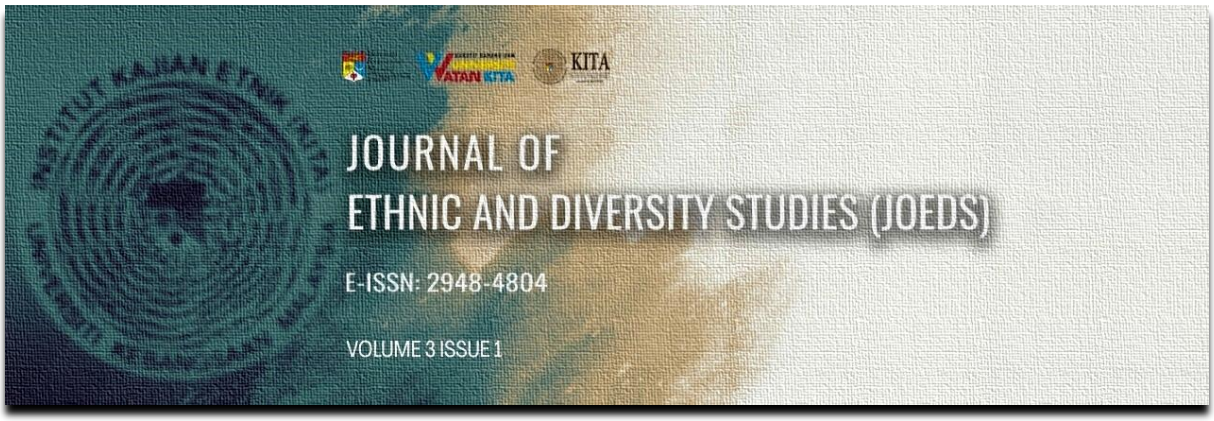
Both groups have built mutually beneficial relationships, engage proactively, and form long-term connections. For Peranakan Indians, Chinese provide financial support through rent and donations, while also serving as essential labour during major festivals. Chinese participate in rituals and festivals not only to seek spiritual efficacy but also to fulfil a sense of self-worth, enjoy various performances, and partake in meals. Additionally, Chinese residents in Area A benefit from affordable rent. Many Chinese have been visiting Peranakan Indian temples for at least 60 years, and some continue to do so even after relocating from the temple's vicinity.

Chinese generally identify as Buddhists, whereas Peranakan Indians consider themselves Hindus; however, both groups often state that Hinduism and Buddhism are essentially the same. Some individuals expressed beliefs such as, 'all religions teach the same principles, all humans have red blood, and race does not matter', while others recognise a singular divine presence and clasp their hands in prayer whenever they pass a place of worship. The oracles of Chinese spirit mediums are taken seriously by people regardless of their ethnicity or religion. In ancestral rituals, although certain customs have been influenced by Chinese traditions, participants embrace these practices as their own and follow them accordingly.

These findings indicate that the relationship between Chinese and Peranakan Indians is deeply embedded in everyday interactions and sustained through long-term engagement, rather than being limited to occasional participation in religious festivals. The process through which they have built this relationship does not rely on theoretical explanations, such as '*Buddha* is an incarnation of a Hindu deity' or 'Both are polytheistic religions'. Instead, their close proximity in a shared living space and the use of a common language allowed them to understand each other as fellow humans facing similar challenges. Over time, they incorporated each other's deities as objects of worship visited both temples, and enshrined statues in their homes. By praying together, engaging in religious offerings, and sharing meals, they deepened their bonds. While acknowledging and respecting religious differences, shared experiences—such as spirit possession—have played a role in blurring rigid boundaries and fostering a greater sense of unity. Through these multilayered interactions, they cultivated a foundation for mutual respect and trust, leading to the formation of an inclusive and harmonious coexistence.

The two groups have not assimilated; rather, they have respected their differences, sometimes merged traditions, and developed overlapping identities. They maintain long-term relationships based on mutual benefits, and embrace each other with flexibility and tolerance.

In the case of the Peranakan Chinese, core life cycle events, such as funerals have been maintained in their original form or with slight modifications, as they constitute an essential part of group identity (Pue and Shamsul 2012: 45). This study's findings suggest that in the case of Peranakan Indians, their religious system has evolved under the influence of Chinese, as exemplified by changes in ancestral worship practices. Despite these transformations, Peranakan Indians have continued to exist as a distinct community without assimilating into any of Malaysia's three major ethnic groups. Their distinctiveness is not characterized by homogeneity but rather by an identity shaped through the respect and inclusion of diversity. This construction is supported by the communal living space, committee, and temples that incorporate multiple influences.



However, this study has primarily focused on the relationship between Chinese and Peranakan Indians. Future research should also explore interactions with other ethnic groups to deepen the analysis further. In particular, attention should be given to the relationship with the Malay, as it presents complex developments influenced by factors such as the New Economic Policy and fundamentalism. This will be the focus of further investigation in subsequent studies.

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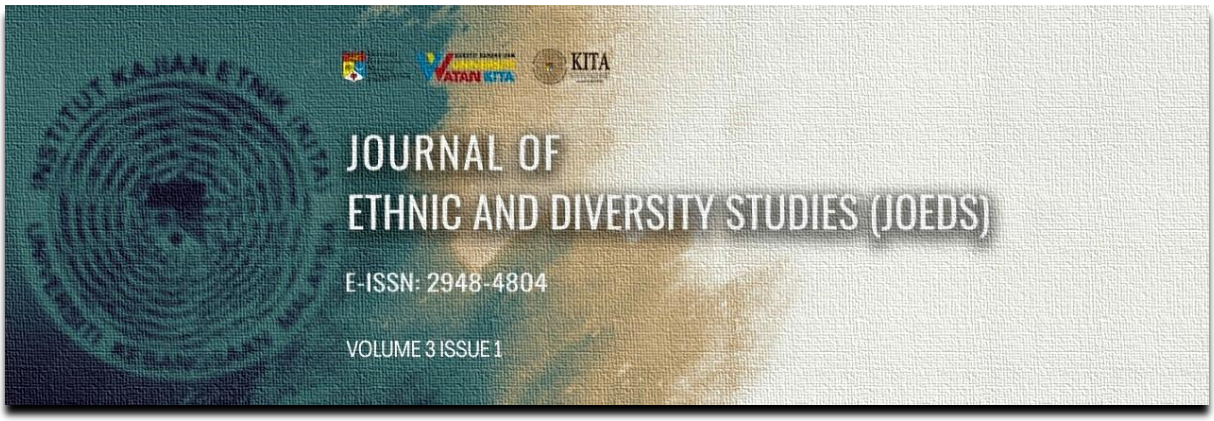

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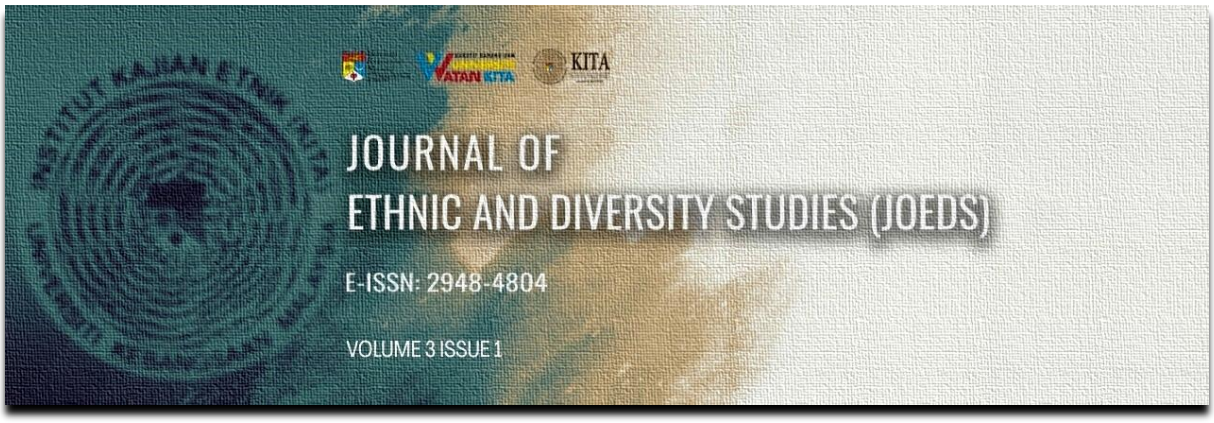

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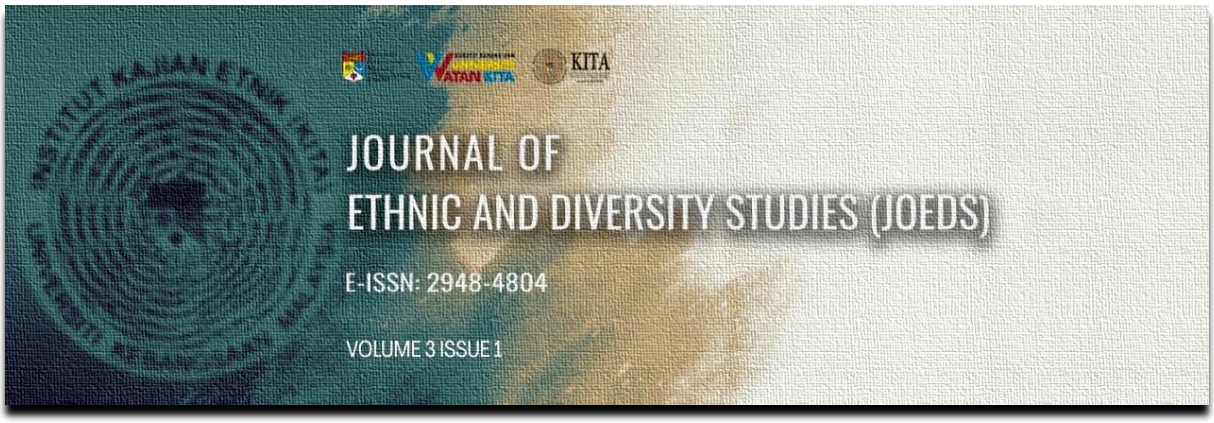

Frontal Sinus Morphology in the Malaysian Population: Patterns of Pneumatization and Gender Differences (Pilot Study)

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ABSTRACT

The study of various bones has been utilized across different populations for purposes such as gender, racial, and individual identification. This research focuses on examining the pneumatization and dimensions of the frontal sinus (FS) within the Malaysian population. The study analysed 60 multidetector computed tomography (MDCT) scans of bilateral frontal sinuses from Malaysian subjects aged over 25 years, all without any pathological conditions or prior surgeries involving the FS. Findings revealed that 26.66% of the sample exhibited variations in FS development. For individuals with pneumatization on both sides, the average frontal depth (FD) measured 10.54 ± 3.39 mm. In cases where the right frontal sinus was not pneumatized, the FD averaged 8.32 ± 2.23 mm, and the left width (LW) was 30.78 ± 6.50 mm. Among those with bilateral pneumatization, significant gender differences were observed in FD ($P = 0.042$), right width (RW) ($P = 0.033$), and LW ($P = 0.033$). However, no significant racial differences were found in FD ($P = 0.819$), RW ($P = 0.718$), or LW ($P = 0.270$). The study concludes that about one-quarter of Malaysians show variations in frontal sinus development, more frequently on the right side. Despite notable gender-related differences in FS measurements, racial variations were not significant. The authors recommend further research with a larger and ethnically balanced sample to validate these findings.

Keywords: Forensic science, Frontal sinuses, multidetector computed tomography (MDCT), human identification.

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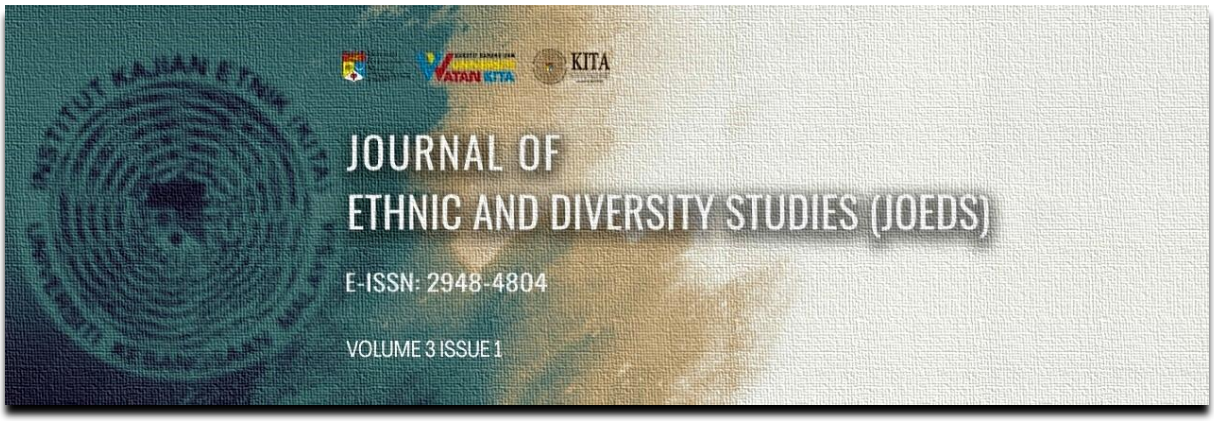


ABSTRAK

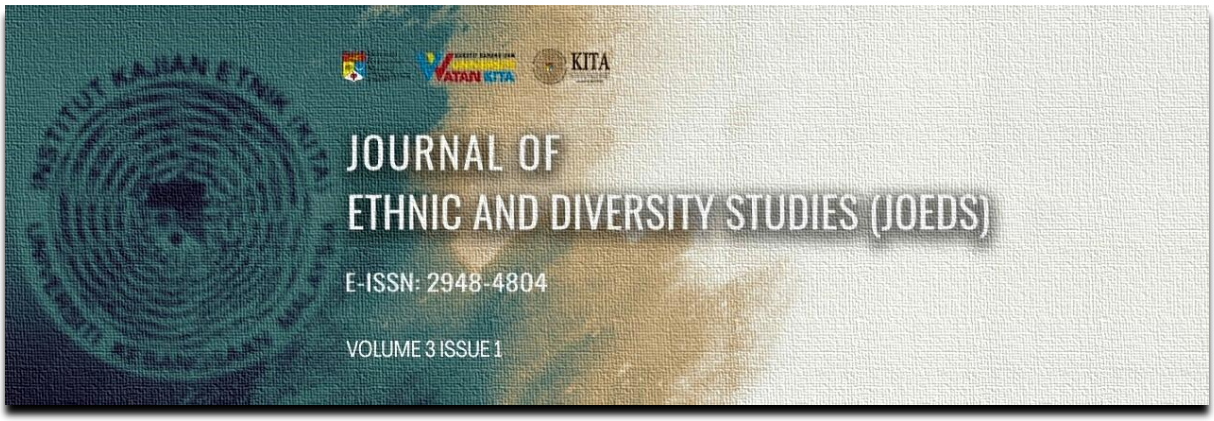
Kajian pelbagai tulang telah digunakan merentas populasi yang berbeza untuk tujuan seperti jantina, kaum dan pengenalan individu. Penyelidikan ini memberi tumpuan kepada mengkaji pneumatisasi dan dimensi sinus frontal (FS) dalam populasi Malaysia. Kajian ini menganalisis 60 imbasan tomografi berkomputer (MDCT) multidetector sinus frontal dua hala daripada subjek Malaysia berumur lebih 25 tahun, semuanya tanpa sebarang keadaan patologi atau pembedahan terdahulu yang melibatkan FS. Penemuan mendedahkan bahawa 26.66% daripada sampel mempamerkan variasi dalam pembangunan FS. Bagi individu dengan pneumatisasi pada kedua-dua belah, purata kedalaman hadapan (FD) diukur 10.54 ± 3.39 mm. Dalam kes di mana sinus hadapan kanan tidak dipneumatik, FD purata 8.32 ± 2.23 mm, dan lebar kiri (LW) ialah 30.78 ± 6.50 mm. Antara mereka yang mengalami pneumatisasi dua hala, perbezaan jantina yang ketara diperhatikan dalam FD (P = 0.042), lebar kanan (RW) (P = 0.033), dan LW (P = 0.033). Walau bagaimanapun, tiada perbezaan kaum yang ketara ditemui dalam FD (P = 0.819), RW (P = 0.718), atau LW (P = 0.270). Kajian itu menyimpulkan bahawa kira-kira satu perempat rakyat Malaysia menunjukkan variasi dalam perkembangan sinus frontal, lebih kerap di sebelah kanan. Walaupun terdapat perbezaan yang ketara berkaitan jantina dalam pengukuran FS, variasi kaum tidak ketara. Penulis mengesyorkan penyelidikan lanjut dengan sampel yang lebih besar dan seimbang dari segi etnik untuk mengesahkan penemuan ini.

Kata kunci: Sains forensik, Sinus hadapan, tomografi berkomputer pelbagai pengesan (MDCT), pengenalan manusia.

INTRODUCTION

The frontal sinuses are a pair of an air-filled cavities located within the frontal bone, superior to the orbits and posterior to the glabella(1). The two frontal sinuses are separated by a septum which is rarely found in midline (2). This sinus is not apparent at birth, develops by the second year of life and is visible radiographically by the age of five years. It is widely accepted that the frontal sinus is developed by 20 years of age and remains stable until further enlargement of the chambers occurs as a result of bone resorption during advanced age (3). The frontal sinuses develop individually and are rarely symmetrical (4).

Pneumatization refers to the extension of this sinus into adjacent structures, resulting in a range of morphological patterns. Frontal sinus pneumatization occurs in approximately 90% of the population, but the degree of pneumatization varies widely among individuals as well as within the same individual (5). These morphological variations has surgical, radiological as well as forensic significance (6). Variations in pneumatization of frontal sinuses may affect the outcomes of endoscopic sinus surgery, maxillofacial and skull base surgery(7). Knowledge of



frontal sinus pneumatization aids in the interpretation of radiological imaging, particularly computed tomography (CT) scans, which are commonly used in clinical practice (8). On the other hand, the unique morphology of the frontal sinuses and the possibility of preserving its intact structure have helped in forensic identification of human skeletal remains (9). Recognition of frontal sinus pneumatization patterns contributes to the understanding of evolutionary biology and comparative anatomy. Comparative studies help in gender and racial identification (10-12). Consequently, it's morphology among different populations has been widely studied and reported worldwide (2). Yet, the distribution and variability of frontal sinus morphology among Malaysian adult population has been rarely studied (13). Therefore, aim of the present research is to study the frontal sinus pneumatization and measurements among the Malaysian population.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study sample consisted of 43 Malay, 10 Indians, 7 Chinese patients with 26 males and 34 females. The inclusion criteria for the study considered were age of 25 years and above, have no pathological condition related to the frontal sinus or prior surgery.

A total of 60 multidetector computed tomography (MDCT) scans of bilateral frontal sinus images were retrieved retrospectively from database of radiology department, Hospital Shah Alam from 2017-2020. The institutional review board approval was exempted as the study included only retrospective anonymous patients' data with no intervention on the patients. Further, these scans were of patients not having any disease or surgery related to the paranasal sinuses. subsequently the patients' consent was waived.

The scan measurements were performed by an experienced radiologist and repeated twice for quality assurance. For obtaining the scans, a Multidetector Computed Tomography (MDCT) scanner (SOMATOM Definition AS, 64 slice, Siemens), employing volumeteric acquisition and multiplanar reconstruction with high resolution bone window alogrithm in axial plane was utilized. The images were viewed and measurements obtained on Prime DICOM viewer software using its inbuilt electronic caliper. The measurements included the width and depth of the frontal sinus, measured in the axial section and the height, measured in the coronal section. The frontal depth (FD) or anteroposterior diameter was defined as the longest distance from the most anterior point of the anterior wall to the most posterior point of the posterior wall of the largest pneumatized compartment of the frontal sinus in the axial view. The frontal width was defined as the longest transverse distance from the most medial point of the medial wall to the most lateral point of the lateral wall in the axial view. It was measured on both sides to have the Left (LW) and Right (RW) transverse diameter (Width) of the frontal sinus. In the largest pneumatized compartment, the anteroposterior (FD) and transverse (FW) dimensions were oriented perpendicularly (14) (Figure 1).

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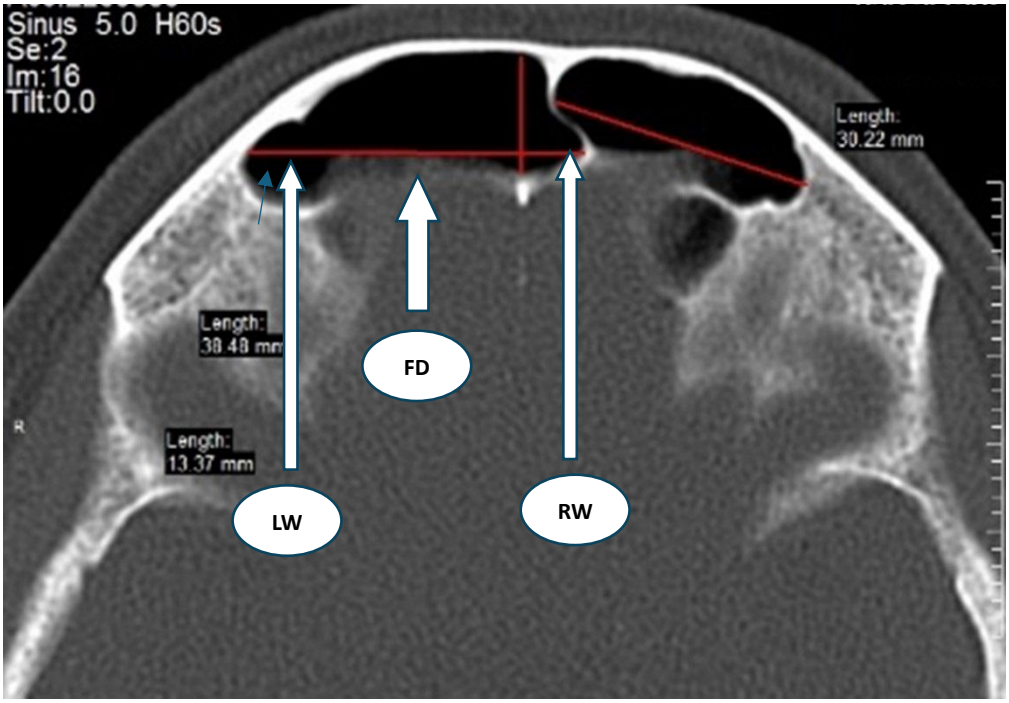


FIGURE 1. Measurements of the frontal sinus depth (FD), right width (RW) and left width (LW)

The collected data were statistically analysed by SPSS (version 26) to identify the prevalence of frontal sinus pneumatization according to side, race and gender, the average measurements of width and depth of frontal sinus in relation to gender and race of the sample.

RESULTS

The demographic profile of the study population is depicted in Table 1. It included 60 Malaysian individuals (7 Chinese, 10 Indian, 43 Malay) which roughly correlates with the racial distribution among the Malaysian population (15).

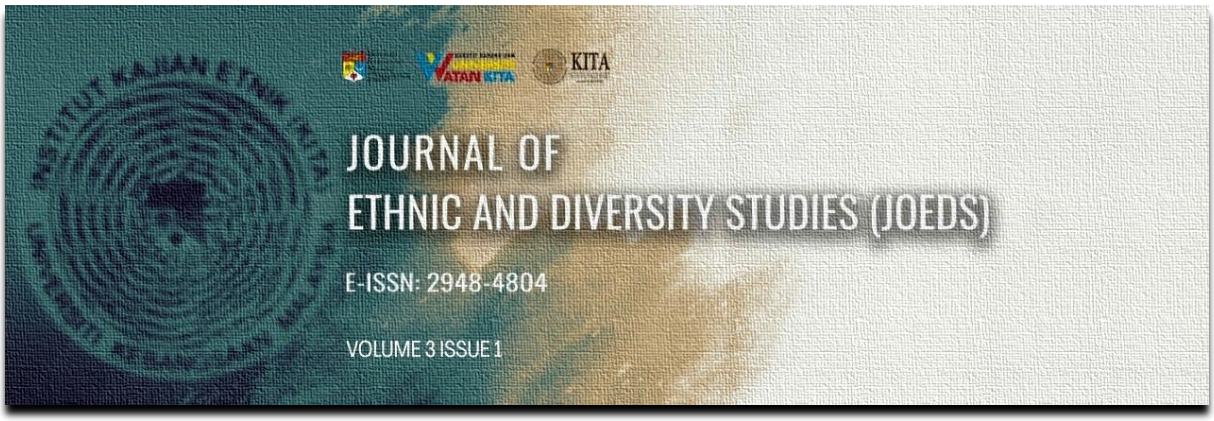


TABLE 1. Demographic data of the study participants.

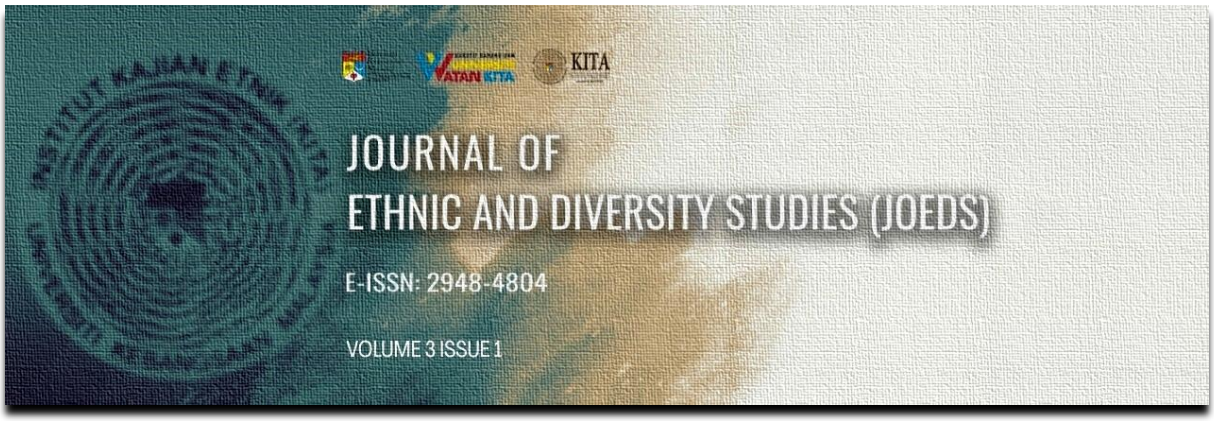
		RACE			Total
		CHINESE	INDIAN	MALAY	
GENDER	FEMALE	0	3	23	26
	MALE	7	7	20	34
Total		7	10	43	60

Among the sample studied, 73.3% had bilateral frontal sinus pneumatization. While 26.66% revealed variations in frontal sinus pneumatization, 9 (15%) have no frontal sinus on both sides, 6 (10%) have no right-side frontal sinus, and 1 (1.66%) has no left side frontal sinus. The variation (absence of both frontal sinus) was common among Malay (20%) when compared to Chinese (3.33%) and Indians (3.33%). With respect to gender, bilateral absence of frontal sinus was seen more often in females among Malays and more commonly among males among Indians. However, right sided non -pneumatization of frontal sinus was seen more commonly among males in all racial groups. (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Frontal sinus pneumatization pattern among the studied sample distributed according to race and gender.

		Those having both sides pneumatization of the frontal sinuses		Those having Non pneumatization of the frontal sinuses						
				Both sides non pneumatization		Right side non pneumatization		Left side non pneumatization		Total
Total No. (%)		44 (73.33%)		9 (15%)		6 (10%)		1 (1.66%)		16 (26.66%)
Gender		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Race	Malay	14 (23.3%)	17 (28.33%)	2 (3.33)	5 (8.3%)	3 (4.98%)	1 (1.66%)	1 (1.66%)	0	12 (20%)
	Chinese	5 (8.3%)	0	1 (1.66%)	0	1 (1.66%)	0	0	0	2 (3.33%)
	Indian	5 (8.3%)	3 (4.98%)	1 (1.66%)	0	1 (1.66%)	0	0	0	2 (3.33%)

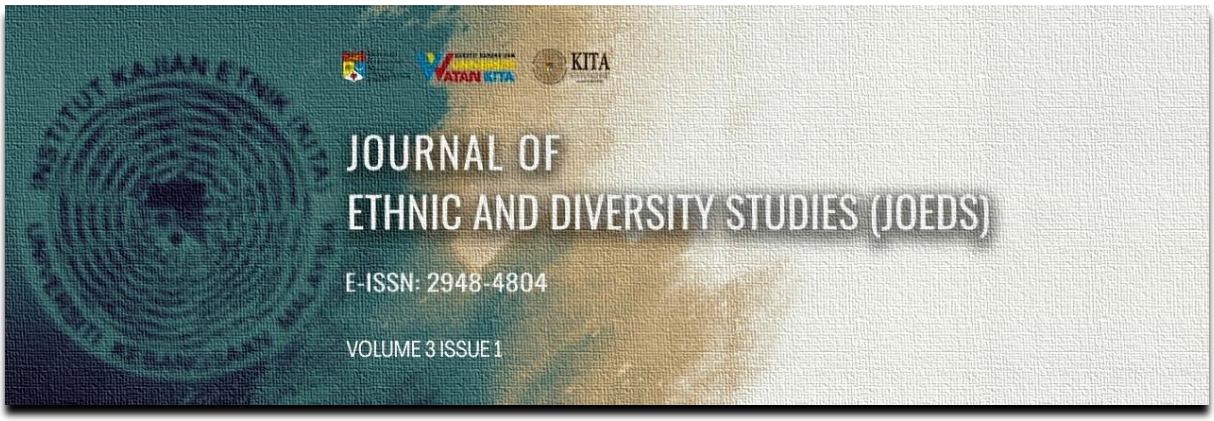
Among those who had bilateral pneumatization of the frontal sinus, the anteroposterior diameter of the frontal sinus (FD) among females was 6.93 ± 1.44 mm among Indian and 9.84



± 3.91 mm among Malay. While among males, FD was 9.89 ± 3.73 mm among Chinese, 13.62 ± 2.43 mm among Indians and 11.28 ± 2.18 mm among Malay. The right transverse diameter (width) (RW) among females was 20.86 ± 6.05mm among Indian and 26.32 ± 9.15 mm among Malay. While among males, RW was 30.93 ± 10.13 mm among Chinese, 34.37 ± 9.04 mm among Indians and 29.63 ± 5.84 mm among Malay. The left transverse diameter (LW) among females was 23.50 ± 5.60 mm among Indian and 27.28 ± 9.78 mm among Malay. While among males, LW was 26.54 ± 10.18 mm among Chinese, 41.11 ± 7.75 mm among Indians and 32.21 ± 5.90 mm among Malay (Table 3). Hence, when both the frontal sinuses are pneumatized, RW (28.44 ± 8.44mm) was found to be smaller than the LW (30.08 ± 9.27). But, this difference was not statistically significant (Table 3).Further, on comparing the mean measurements using ANOVA, there was a significant gender variation in the measurements of FD (p= 0.042), RW (p= 0.033) and LW (p= 0.033). Meanwhile there was no significant racial variations in the measurements of FD (p= 0.819), RW (p= 0.718) and LW (p= 0.270).

TABLE 3. Comparison of racial and gender variations in the frontal sinus measurements among those having both side pneumatization of the frontal sinuses.

		Anteroposterior diameter (Depth) of the frontal sinus (FD)			Right transverse diameter (Width) of the frontal sinus (RW)		Left transverse diameter (Width) of the frontal sinus (LW)	
GENDER	RACE	N	Mean (mm)	Std. Dev	Mean (mm)	Std. Dev	Mean (mm)	Std. Dev
FEMALE	CHINESE	0						
	INDIAN	3	6.93	1.44	20.86	6.05	23.50	5.60
	MALAY	17	9.84	3.91	26.32	9.15	27.28	9.78
	Total	20	9.41	3.77	25.50	8.85	26.71	9.26
MALE	CHINESE	5	9.89	3.73	30.93	10.13	26.54	10.18
	INDIAN	5	13.62	2.43	34.37	9.04	41.11	7.75
	MALAY	14	11.28	2.18	29.63	5.84	32.21	5.90
	Total	24	11.48	2.77	30.89	7.41	32.89	8.48
Total	CHINESE	5	9.89	3.73	30.93	10.13	26.54	10.18
	INDIAN	8	11.11	3.99	29.30	10.29	34.51	11.24
	MALAY	31	10.49	3.27	27.81	7.88	29.51	8.51
	Total	44	10.54	3.39	28.44	8.44	30.08	9.27
Anova test	Racial variations	.819			.718		.270	
	Gender variations	.042			.033		.026	



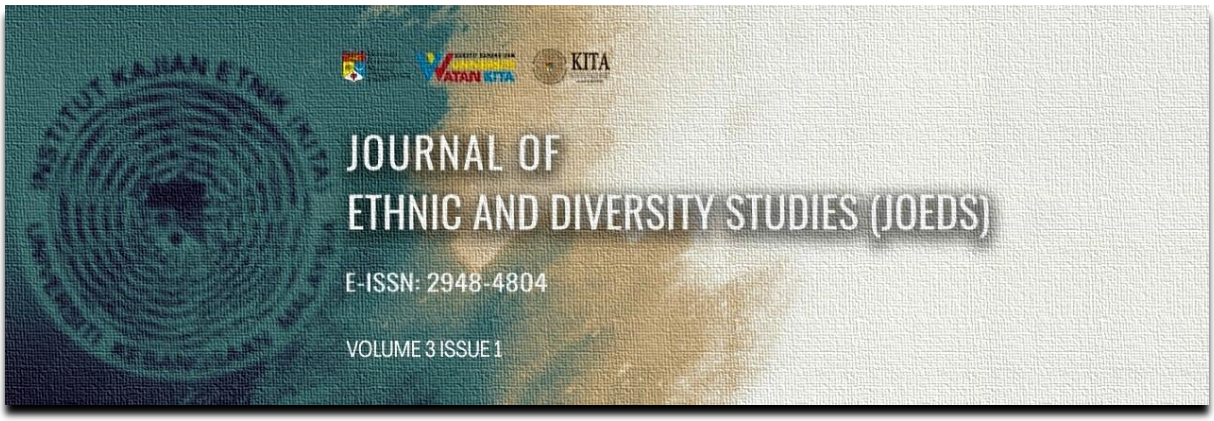
Among those with non-pneumatization of the right frontal sinus, the FD is 8.32 ± 2.23 mm (5.52 mm among females and 8.89 ± 1.96 among males) and the LW is 30.78 ± 6.50 mm (38.4 m among females and 29.26 ± 5.96 mm among males) (Table 4).LW among those with both sides pneumatization is 30.08 ± 9.27 mm (Table 3) and 30.78 ± 6.5 among those with Right side non pneumatization (Table 4). FD among those with both sides pneumatization 10.54 ± 3.39 mm (Table 3) and 8.32 ± 2.23 mm among those with Right side non pneumatization (Table 4).

TABLE 4. Left frontal sinus measurements in those having Right side non pneumatization.

		Anteroposterior diameter (Depth) of the frontal sinus (FD)			Left transverse diameter (Width) of the frontal sinus (LW)	
GENDER	RACE	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev
FEMALE	CHINESE					
	INDIAN					
	MALAY	1	5.52		38.4	
	Total	1	5.52		38.4	
MALE	CHINESE	1	8.14		30.26	
	INDIAN	1	7.32		24.65	
	MALAY	3	9.66	2.30	30.47	7.59
	Total	5	8.89	1.96	29.26	5.96
Total	CHINESE	1	8.14		30.26	
	INDIAN	1	7.32		24.65	
	MALAY	4	8.62	2.79	32.45	7.362
	Total	6	8.32	2.23	30.78	6.50

DISCUSSION

The unique morphology of frontal sinuses was first reported by Zuckerkandl in 1895(13). Since then, researchers have concluded that the appearance of the radiographic image of the frontal sinus is unique for each individual(2). As the left and right frontal sinuses develop independently, a significant asymmetry between these sinuses can arise in the same individual (16). On this evidence, it is proposed that frontal sinus pattern matching be used for personal identification when other methods have failed (14) making it crucial for forensic investigations. Ct Scans have been identified as a reliable method for the measurement of different dimensions of the frontal sinus (17). This study unveils the frontal sinus pneumatization patterns and measurements among Malaysian population. The findings reveal that 15% of the studied sample had bilateral absence of frontal sinus, 10% had no right-side frontal sinus, and 1.66% had absence of left side frontal sinus. Similar studies conducted in other populations show varied results. The Turkish population were detected to have bilateral and unilateral absence



of frontal sinus in 3.8% and 4.8% respectively (12). Another study among 147 male and 142 female Indians, 4 individuals showed unilateral/bilateral absence of frontal sinuses (18). Thereby, the unilateral/bilateral absence of frontal sinus varies across populations. Climate, environmental factors and individual health are believed to be responsible for these variations (13).

The variation (absence of both frontal sinus) is common among Malay (20%) more than Chinese (3.33%) and Indians (3.33%) The variations among Chinese and Indians are commoner among males than females. But this conclusion regarding the gender cannot be generalized and need to be studied on a sample with equal number of male and females from each ethnic group. It is concluded that asymmetry for the frontal sinus of both sides is a rule because of the unequal sinus development (3,19). In this research, among those who are having both side pneumatization of the frontal sinus, RW (28.44 ± 8.44mm) is non-significantly smaller than the LW (30.08 ± 9.27). In contrast to other researches, a study among Indians detected that the mean measurement of right-side frontal sinus is greater than the left side in both males and females (18) which is in contrast to other studies (20,21).

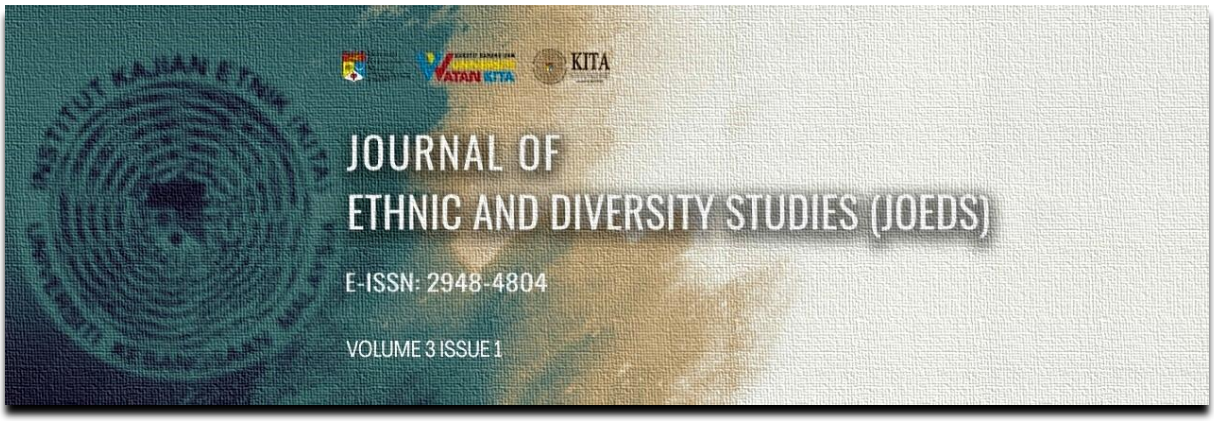
Morphologic evaluation of frontal sinus is a useful technique to determine gender (22, 23), which is confirmed by the results of the current study among Malaysians. Based on the Arabian-Caucasian and Han-Chinese sub-population findings, the frontal sinus is an effective tool for determining gender and appears to have potential in ethnicity identification (23) in comparison to the current study findings where there is a significant gender variation in the measurements of FD, RW and LW. Nevertheless, there is no significant racial variations in these measurements.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The authors would like to acknowledge the presence of some limitations. There were no females among the Chinese ethnic group in the sample. This could be attributed to the scans being taken from a single hospital in Malaysia. Further, it was a retrospective study on Ct Scans of individuals with no prior sinus pathology/ surgery. Hence, a similar study on a larger sample of Malaysian population with equal number of participants based on gender and race is suggested.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal that the morphology of the frontal sinus varies among individuals across gender and race. As population specific variations have been observed, this study helps to build the database on frontal sinus morphology among the Malaysian adult population. This data maybe helpful for forensic identifications as well as for surgical planning in the field of otorhinolaryngology and neurosurgery.



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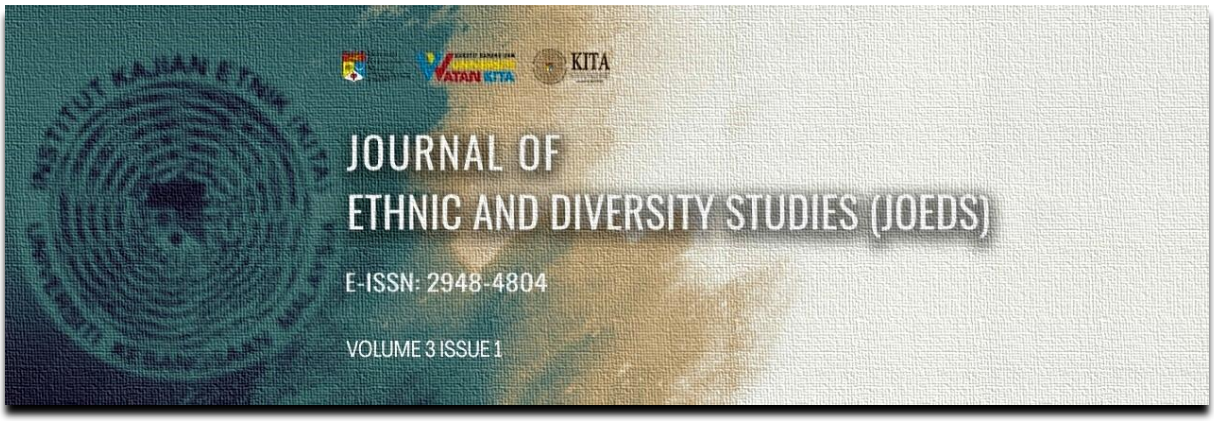

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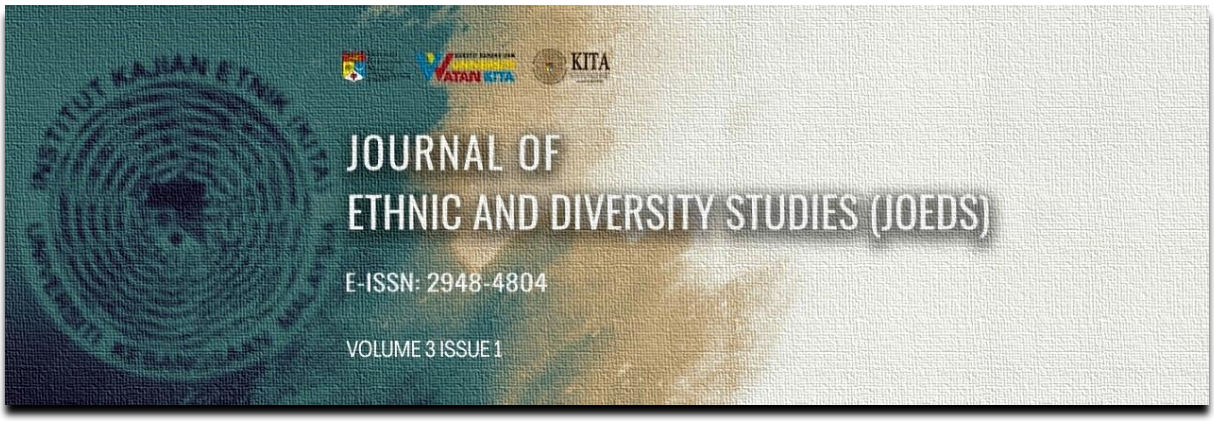

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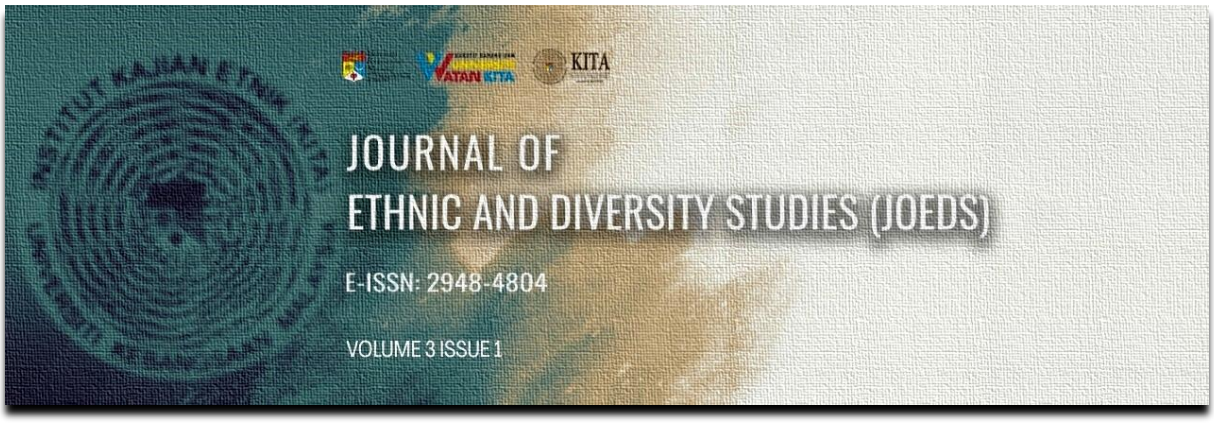

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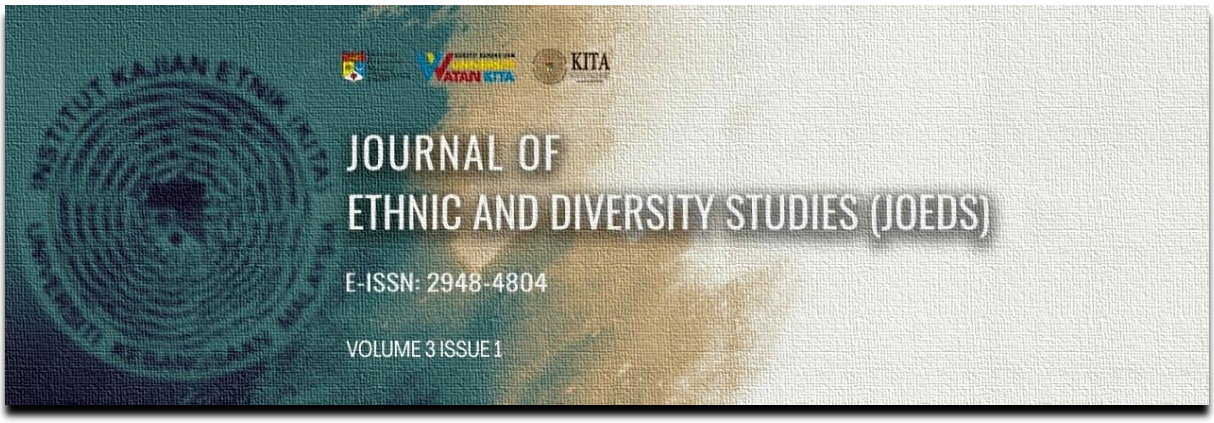

Historical Legacy: Diversity and Views on Immigration in Peninsular Malaysia

(*Warisan Sejarah: Kepelbagaian Etnik dan Persepsi Mengenai Imigresen di Semenanjung Malaysia*)

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ABSTRACT

More persons enter Malaysia than leave. This makes Malaysia an ideal study site of the contact hypothesis, which theorizes that intergroup contact promotes positive and tolerant attitudes between groups. We test this hypothesis by investigating whether diversity influences views on immigration. A major concern is the endogeneity of diversity, which introduces bias. To address this, we capitalize on historical events from the mid-19th to early-20th centuries that led to an influx of Chinese and Indian labourers, increasing ethnic diversity in selected states only as the location of labourers is highly centralized based on state planning. Using historical records and wave 7 of the World Values Survey (WVS), we regress contemporaneous views on immigration against diversity in 1911. WVS respondents in states with historically higher diversity are more accepting of immigrants.

Keywords: contact theory; diversity; history; migration

ABSTRAK

Lebih ramai masuk Malaysia daripada keluar. Ini menjadikan Malaysia sesuai untuk kajian contact theory, yang menyatakan bahawa pertemuan dan hubungan antara kumpulan berbeza menggalakkan persepsi positif dan sikap tolak ansur terhadap kumpulan lain. Kami uji kaji hipotesis ini, menyiasat sama ada kepelbagaian etnik mempengaruhi pandangan tentang warga asing. Kepelbagaian etnik ialah pemboleh ubah endogen, yang memperkenalkan isu bias di mana dapatan kajian dipenuhi prasangka. Untuk menangani ini, kami rujuk kemasukan buruh Cina dan India dari pertengahan abad ke-19 hingga awal abad ke-20 sebagai peristiwa eksogen. Memandangkan pengambilan pekerja mengikut perancangan negeri, kemasukan buruh meningkatkan kepelbagaian etnik di beberapa negeri sahaja. Menggunakan data arkib dan gelombang 7 World Values Survey (WVS), kami melaksanakan regresi pandangan tentang imigresen pada kepelbagaian etnik tahun 1911. Responden WVS di negeri yang mempunyai lebih banyak kepelbagaian etnik pada tahun 1911 lebih cenderung untuk terima baik kemasukan warga asing.

Kata kunci: contact theory; kepelbagaian etnik; sejarah; penghijrahan

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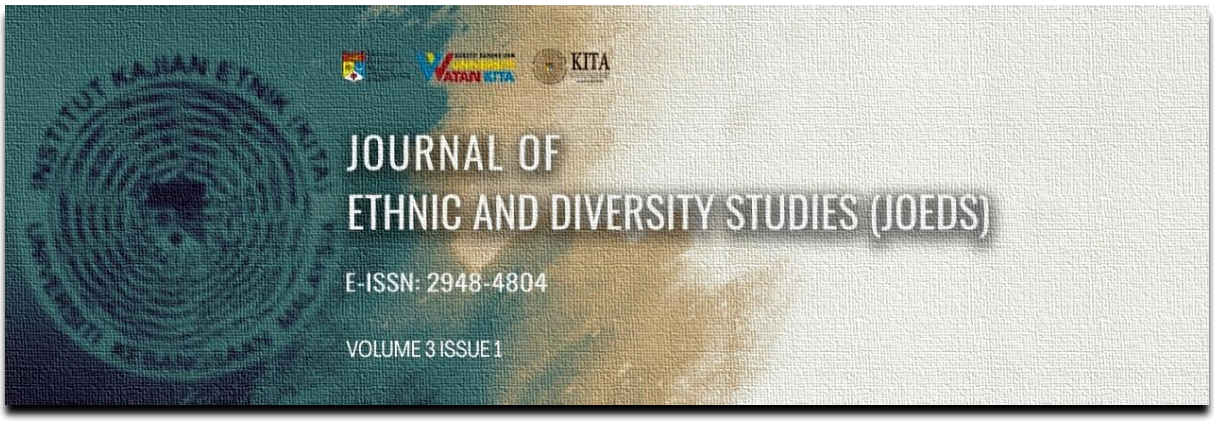


INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a net receiver of migrants. Thus, to foster social harmony, it is imperative to understand the factors that contribute to tolerance, if not acceptance, of migrants. This brief research note examines one potential factor: the ethnic composition of society. The contact hypothesis posits that intergroup contact may increase tolerance toward individuals from different backgrounds. Such contact has the potential to alleviate tensions under favorable conditions, namely, equal status between groups, shared objectives, engagement in a cooperative environment, and interactions under supervision (Pettigrew, 1998).

Empirically, it is not easy to distinguish a causal effect of diversity because of endogenous sorting. Simply regressing our outcome of interest against diversity is flawed because some populations choose to live in communities that hold similar views. Instead, we need an exogenous change that explains differences in diversity. This is possible in randomized control trials, as in Boisjoly et al. (2006). The investigators randomly assigned roommates to estimate the impact of mixing with members of other ethnic groups. Others use policies that caused exogenous changes to diversity, such as the resettlement Transmigration program in Indonesia, which led to the relocations of two million ethnically diverse Indonesians (Bazzi et al., 2019). For our study, we refer to the colonial history of Peninsular Malaysia.

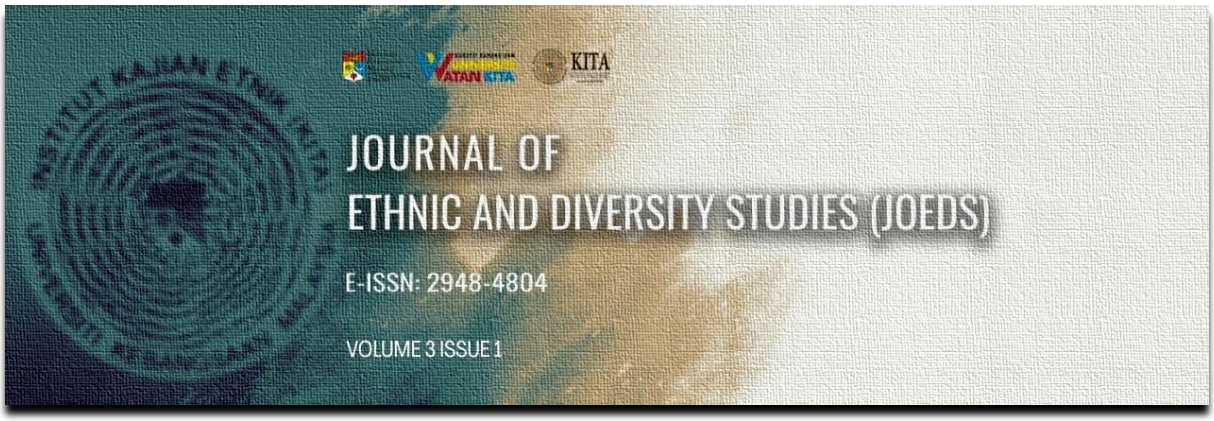
The population of Peninsular Malaysia before 1850 consisted largely of natives of the archipelago (Dodge, 1980). Upon the discovery of tin, the development of rubber plantations, and the establishment of British colonialism in the mid to late-19th century, labour demand spiked, resulting in a massive influx of migrants from China, India, Java, and Sumatra (Sagoo, 2006). The entrants of labourers were globally monumental as the immigration rate (immigrants per 1,000 population) of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore was the highest in the world from 1881 to 1939, ten times higher than the United States (Huff & Caggiano, 2007; Reid, 2010). Consequently, the ethnic composition of the population changed, as exemplified in P Pinang. In the 1830s, 68 percent of the population were Malays and other Bumiputera[1]. By 1911, this share dropped to 41 percent (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Share of Malays and Aborigines in Malacca, Pahang, and Penang, 1830s and 1911

State	1830s (%)	1911 (%)	Percentage point change
Melaka	67	63	-4
Pahang	70	73	3
P Pinang	68	41	-27

Note: Author's calculations of data from Dodge (1980)

[1] The term Dodge (1980) uses is Malays and Aborigines/Malaysians.



This migration wave contributed to differences in diversity by state. Unlike P Pinang, Melaka and Pahang experienced less drastic changes (Table 1). The varying degrees of change likely reflect the accompanying labour demands, with Indian and Chinese employment in the rubber and tin industries concentrated in the western part of the peninsular (Chitose, 2001; Kaur, 2012).

Remarkably, this has been a mainstay in the diversity of states in Peninsular Malaysia ever since. To show this, we first introduce the fractionalisation index (F). F in a state corresponds to:

$$(1) \qquad F = 1 - \sum_{j=1}^{J} p_j^2,$$

where ethnic group is indexed by j = 1, … , J and p_j is the ethnic group j's population share in the state. F measures the probability that two individuals, randomly selected from a state, belong to different ethnic groups. With many small groups, F increases. Table 2 shows the value of F by state in 1911 and 2020. Over more than 100 years, the likelihood that two people taken randomly in the same state are of different ethnic groups have remained stable.

TABLE 2. Fractionalisation index by state, 1911 and 2020

	1911	2020	Change
Perlis	0.18	0.21	0.03
Johor	0.51	0.53	0.02
Kedah	0.33	0.34	0.01
Terengganu	0.06	0.05	-0.01
Kelantan	0.12	0.07	-0.05
P Pinang	0.64	0.59	-0.05
N Sembilan	0.59	0.53	-0.06
Selangor	0.62	0.56	-0.07
Melaka	0.51	0.43	-0.08
Perak	0.62	0.54	-0.08
Pahang	0.42	0.32	-0.10

Note: Author's calculations of data from EHM (n.d.)

The fact that some states received more migrants may have lasting effects on their current openness to welcoming immigration for various reasons. The normalisation of immigration can be passed down through generations within families or through local norms (Homola et al., 2020). Some individuals in the population might have been descendants of immigrants, making them less likely to condemn immigration (McLaren et al., 2021). The associated economic and social benefits of immigration may also be more apparent. Populations in less diverse states may not be familiar with different groups or the advantages of immigration.

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We test the hypothesis that more diversity in the state led to more positive views on immigration today. Our results should be viewed as reduced-form estimates at most without identifying the direct mechanism, which can be multiple as explained in the previous paragraph. The intuition of our findings can be summarized as below:

State diversity in 1911 → Unidentified mechanism → Views on immigration in 2018

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Our data is from the 2018 World Values Survey (WVS), which we restrict to respondents in Peninsular Malaysia (Haerpfer et al., 2020). WVS is a nationally representative survey that collects views of respondents on a myriad of topics, including immigration. Our outcomes will be the share of respondents who agree to the following statements:

1. The government should place strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here to work or prohibit foreigners from coming here to work.
2. The impact of immigrants on the development of Malaysia is rather bad or quite bad.
3. Immigrants fill useful jobs in the workforce.
4. Immigrants increase unemployment.
5. Immigrants increase the crime rate.
6. Immigrants increase the risks of terrorism.
7. Immigrants lead to social conflict.
8. Immigrants strengthen cultural diversity.

We use the 1911 population estimates by ethnicity and state collated by Dodge (1980) and calculate diversity as defined in equation (1)[2]. Figure 1 displays differences in F by state.

[2] We use data from Dodge (1980) instead of EHM (n.d.) as Dodge (1980) separates data for Malays and other Bumiputera.

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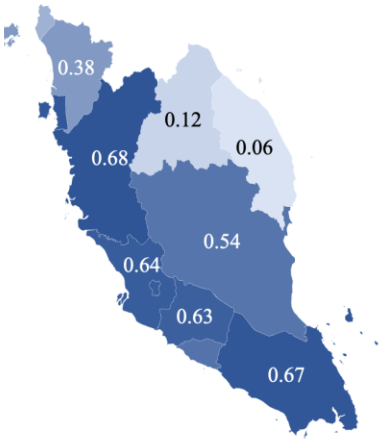


FIGURE 1. Diversity (fractionalisation index) by state, 1911
Note: Author's calculations of data from Dodge (1980)

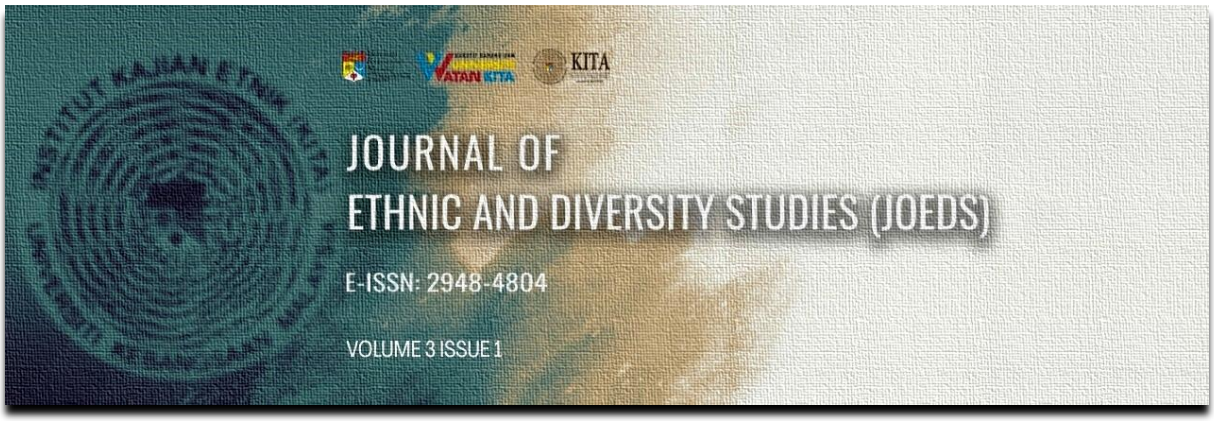
We regress outcomes on F using the following ordinary-least squares regression:

$$(2) \qquad y_{is} = \alpha + \beta_1 \times F_s + X_s^H \alpha_1 + X_{is}^C \alpha_2 + \varepsilon_{is},$$

y_{is} equals 1 if respondent i in state s agrees to statement on immigration. F_s measures diversity for state s in 1911.

X_s^H is a vector of historic state characteristics that correlate with diversity in 1911. Labourers were not free to move but were allocated in a centralized manner as a function of labour needs. We rely on the quasi-random nature of this centralized process for identification. Since labour movements are dictated by state planning, we control for the three state groupings conferred by the British: the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Melaka, and P Pinang), the Federated Malay States (FMS) (Perak, Pahang, Selangor, and N Sembilan), and the Unfederated Malay States (UMS) (Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, and Johor). The three groups, while under the protectorate of the British, were under different administration systems (Mujani & Sulaiman, 2016). In Figure 1, states under direct control of the British, namely the Straits Settlements and the FMS, have higher diversity. We also control the distance to colonial ports Melaka, P Pinang, and Singapore, as these are entryways for migrants (Brunero, 2021). Google Maps was used to derive the shortest travel distance between states[3]. The presence of migrants is much higher in port cities and declines as we move away from these cities. Johor illustrates the significance of including this variable, as its close proximity to Singapore probably increased diversity despite being a UMS state.

[3] Data was recorded on 30 March 2024.



X_{is}^{C} is a vector of contemporary state and individual controls that may influence the acceptance of immigrants, including the share of noncitizens in the state[4], population density, urban dummy, age, sex, ethnicity, religion, immigrant status, education, occupation, and income group.

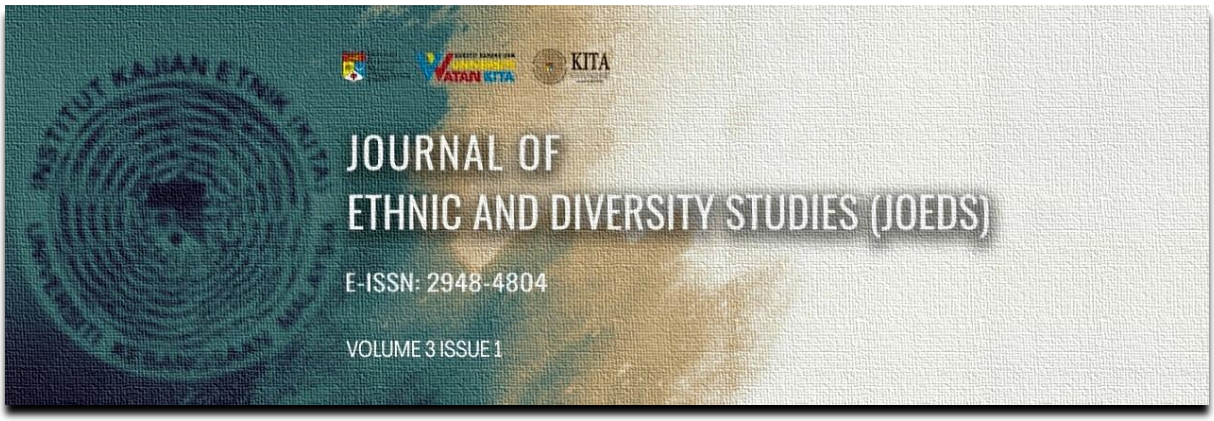
RESULTS

Respondents in historically diverse areas are less likely to agree with restricting the entry of migrant workers (Table 3). The effect size is substantial: a 0.1 unit increase in F decreases the probability that a respondent agrees with placing strict limits by 5.5 percentage points, about 7 percent of the mean. A 0.1 unit increase is akin to moving from Pahang (F = 0.54) to Selangor (F = 0.64). They are also less likely to have negative views on immigrants, such as that immigrants negatively impact the development of Malaysia, and more likely to have positive views, such as that immigrants fill useful jobs.

TABLE 3. Impact of Diversity in 1911 on Immigration Views in 2018

	Fractionalisation index		Mean	Observations
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Place strict limits or prohibit foreigners from coming here to work	-0.51***	-0.55***	0.81	1,036
	(0.05)	(0.17)		
Would not like to have immigrants/foreign workers as neighbours	-0.20	-0.19	0.52	1,036
	(0.13)	(0.18)		
The impact of immigrants on development is bad	-0.41***	-0.37	0.48	1,036
	(0.10)	(0.27)		
Immigrants fill useful jobs	0.27***	0.32*	0.38	1,036
	(0.07)	(0.16)		
When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of this country over immigrants	-0.08	-0.39**	0.89	1,036
	(0.10)	(0.15)		
Immigrants increase unemployment	-0.45***	-0.51*	0.54	1,036
	(0.13)	(0.26)		
Immigrants increase crime	-0.25***	-0.53***	0.61	1,036
	(0.08)	(0.14)		
Immigrants increase terrorism	-0.63***	-0.67***	0.55	1,036
	(0.09)	(0.19)		

[4] Data is from DOS (2020) with the author's calculations.



Immigrants lead to conflict	-0.30* (0.15)	-0.43* (0.24)	0.60	1,036
Immigrants strengthen diversity	0.27* (0.14)	0.42* (0.21)	0.31	1,036
Historical state-level controls	Yes	Yes		
Contemporary individual-level controls	No	Yes		

Note: Standard errors clustered at the state level.
*** Significant at the 1 percent level. ** Significant at the 5 percent level. * Significant at the 10 percent level.

CONCLUSION

This short note is motivated by research whose overarching theme is that historical legacies persistently affect contemporary outcomes (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Baranov et al., 2020; Homola et al., 2020; Lowes & Montero, 2021; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016; Nunn & Wantchekon, 2011). It provides suggestive evidence that diversity is a potential factor in promoting positive perceptions of outgroups in Peninsular Malaysia by utilizing a historical phenomenon—the entry of migrant labourers starting in the 19th century.

Our preliminary estimates should not be taken as a direct explanation for the acceptance of migrants, as mechanisms can be plentiful and were not specifically identified. Researchers can further clarify pathways that influence this relationship through econometric frameworks, such as the two-stage least squares method. More data on historical economic, ecological, and social environments that influence diversity can further improve the research design.

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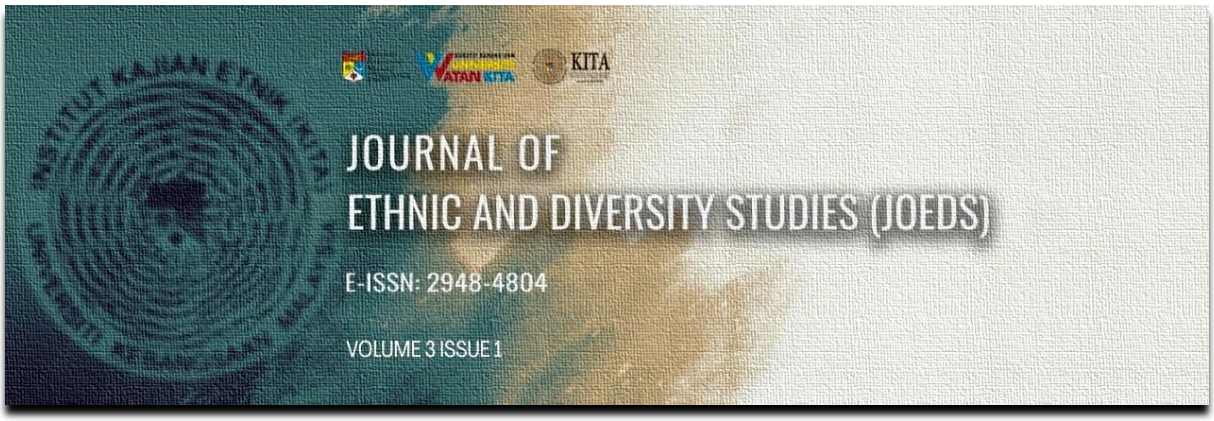

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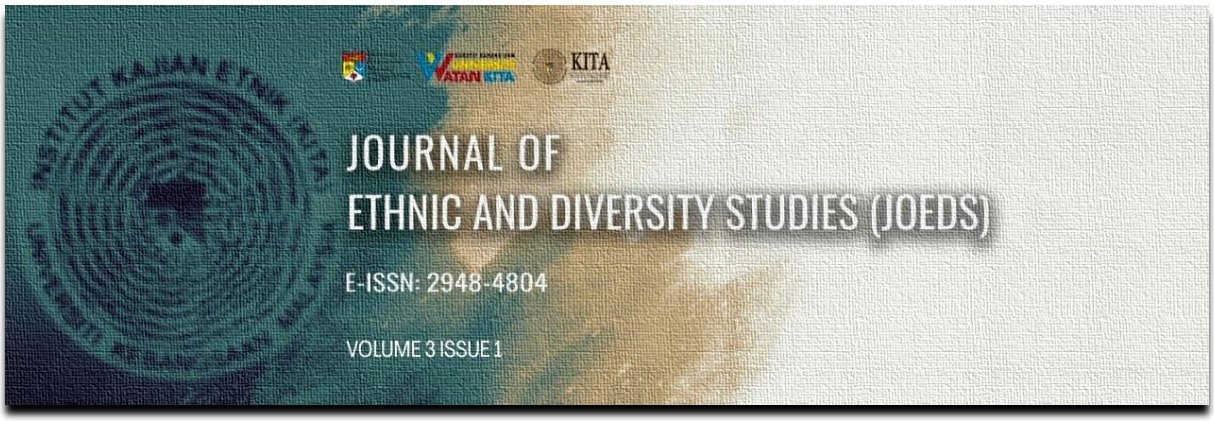

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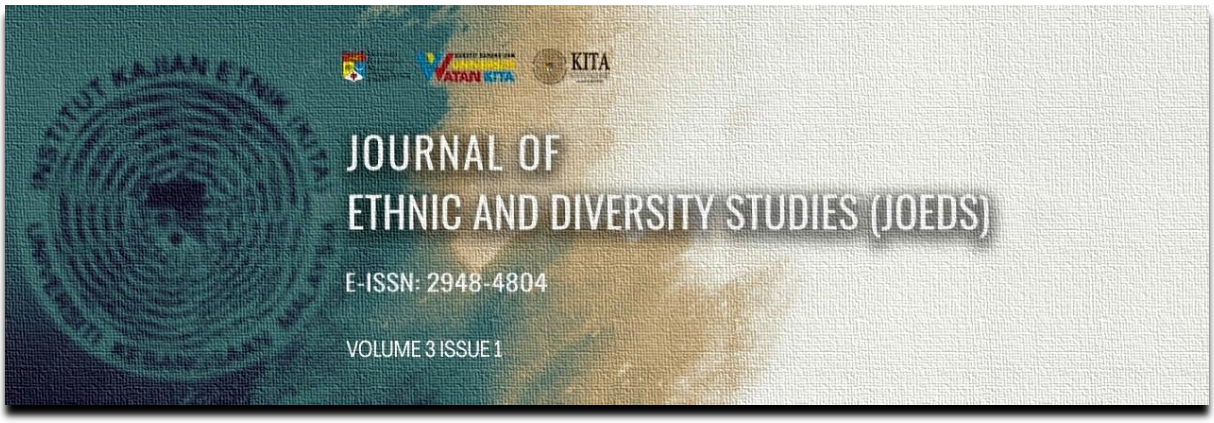

Idea Sebuah Bandar : Menyingkap Teori Gestalt dan Teori Normatif dalam Perancangan Bandar

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ABSTRACT

The concept of the city as a machine is a metaphor that portrays the city as a systematic and well-organized entity, in which each component functions collectively to ensure the continuity of life and the well-being of human society. The primary objective of this study is to analyze how this metaphor can serve as a means to achieve the idea of creating a utopian city within the context of contemporary society. This study adopts the gestalt theory approach by Max Wertheimer (1997) to understand how visual and structural elements within the city can shape a collective psychological perception of urban space, alongside Kevin Lynch's normative theory (1981), particularly the machine model approach, which emphasizes clear order and structure in urban planning. The findings indicate that this approach effectively illustrates the city as an ideal system when its key elements interact harmoniously, ultimately shaping a human-centered environment. The discussion also reveals that the machine metaphor not only refers to the city's physical aspects but also reflects the social and visual dynamics that contribute to its function and identity. The study's findings broaden the understanding of this field through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates aspects of urban sociology and urbanisme, thereby offering a new analytical framework for understanding and designing a utopian city.

Keywords: gestalt theory; machine model; urban sociology; urban planning; urbanisme

ABSTRAK

Konsep bandar sebagai mesin merupakan satu metafora yang menggambarkan bandar sebagai sebuah entiti sistematik dan terancang, di mana setiap komponen di dalam bandar tersebut berfungsi secara kolektif untuk menjamin kelangsungan hidup dan kesejahteraan masyarakat manusia. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk menganalisis bagaimana metafora ini mampu merealisasikan gagasan bagi mewujudkan sebuah bandar utopia dalam

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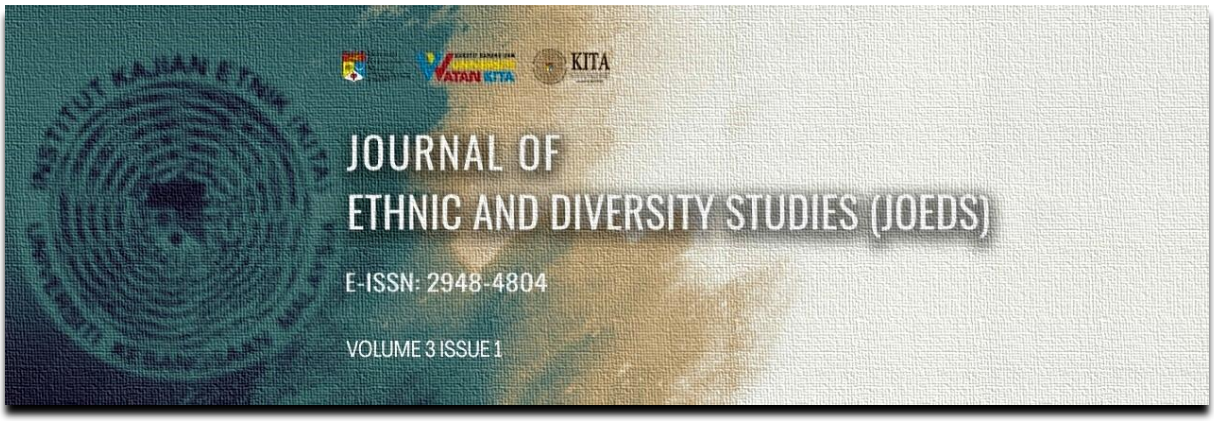
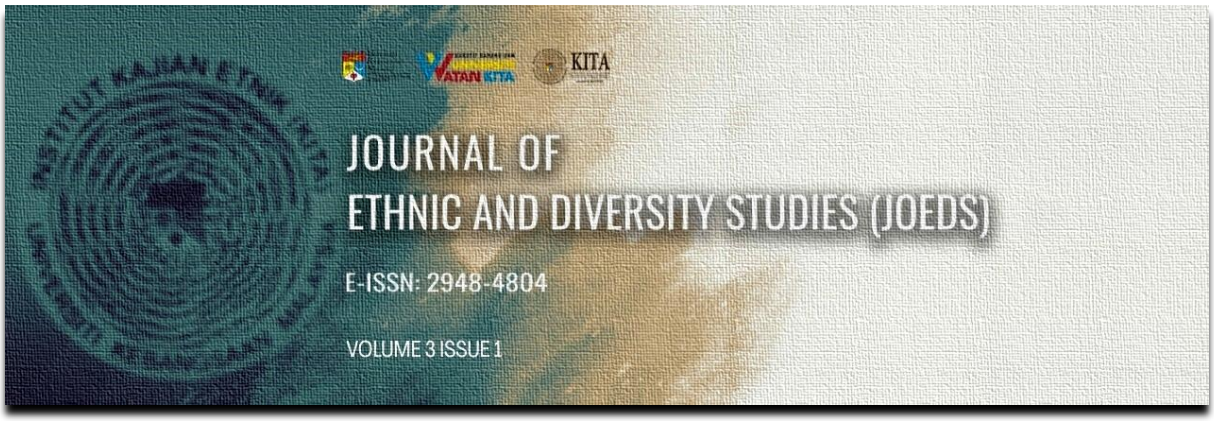


konteks masyarakat kontemporari. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan teori gestalt oleh Max Wertheimer (1997) bagi memahami bagaimana elemen-elemen visual dan struktur dalam bandar membentuk persepsi psikologi kolektif terhadap ruang bandar, serta teori normatif Kevin Lynch (1981), khususnya pendekatan model mesin yang menekankan sistem yang mementingkan keteraturan yang jelas dalam perancangan bandar. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pendekatan ini dapat mengilustrasikan bandar sebagai satu sistem yang ideal apabila elemen-elemen utamanya berinteraksi antara satu sama lain, akhirnya membentuk persekitaran yang bersifat manusiawi. Perbincangan juga mendapati bahawa metafora mesin bukan sahaja merujuk kepada aspek fizikal bandar, tetapi turut mencerminkan dinamik sosial dan visual yang menyumbang kepada fungsi dan identiti bandar. Hasil dapatan kajian dapat memperluas pemahaman dalam bidang ini melalui pendekatan multidisiplin yang menggabungkan aspek sosiologi urbanisasi dan urbanisme, sekali gus menawarkan kerangka analisis baharu dalam memahami dan merancang sebuah bandar bersifat utopia.

Kata kunci: teori gestalt; model mesin; sosiologi urban; perancangan bandar; urbanism

DEFINISI DAN ETIMOLOGI BANDAR

Keunikan bentuk bandar, struktur bandar yang berbelah bahagi antara ruang, kekaburan kedudukan kawasan dari segi spatial dan fungsi antara kawasan bandar dan luar bandar, serta pola pertumbuhan kompleks telah menjadikan usaha untuk menentukan sempadan bandar dan merumuskan definisi tunggal bagi bandar yang dapat diterima secara universal menjadi sebuah cabaran besar. Faktor-faktor ini mencerminkan dinamik konsep bandar, yang sering kali berbeza mengikut konteks wilayah atau negara tertentu. Namun begitu, secara umum, istilah bandar merujuk kepada kawasan dengan sempadan pentadbiran yang jelas, di mana sebahagian besar penduduknya terlibat dalam aktiviti ekonomi bukan berasaskan pertanian (Caves, 2004). Menurut Goodall (1987), bandar kebiasaannya ditakrifkan sebagai kawasan yang dihuni secara tetap oleh populasi besar, dengan kepadatan penduduk yang tinggi serta kemudahan infrastruktur yang ketara. Definisi ini menekankan elemen-elemen utama yang membezakan bandar daripada kawasan luar bandar. Tambahan pula, *Oxford English Dictionary* (2014) menyatakan bahawa etimologi perkataan bandar atau *city* dan perkataan berkaitan seperti tamadun (*civilization*) berasal daripada akar bahasa Latin iaitu "*civitas*", yang bermaksud 'kewarganegaraan' atau 'ahli komuniti'. Istilah ini kemudiannya berkembang kepada "*urbs*", iaitu 'bandar' dalam pengertian fizikal yang lebih spesifik. Dalam konteks Rom, "*civitas*" turut dikaitkan dengan istilah Yunani iaitu "*polis*", yang menjadi akar kepada pelbagai perkataan dalam bahasa Inggeris seperti "*metropolis*" (Zhong et al., 2012). Walau bagaimanapun, dapat diklasifikasikan bahawa tidak terdapat satu karakterisasi bersifat universal yang berupaya untuk memberikan definisi atau ungkapan tepat yang dapat menjelaskan mengenai fenomena bandar. Interpretasi tentang apa yang dimaksudkan dengan bandar adalah bergantung pada istilah dan makna yang digunakan untuk memahami realiti sosial, ekonomi, dan spatial bandar



dalam konteks tertentu (Füller, 2014). Kompleksiti ini menjadikan kajian mengenai bandar sebagai satu cabang penting serta perbezaan ini tidak hanya mencerminkan sifat diversiti dalam pendekatan konseptual, akan tetapi juga secara realiti fizikal dan sosial bandar yang berubah seiring dengan perkembangan dunia dan evolusi urbanisasi.

SIFAT MULTIFUNGSIONAL BANDAR

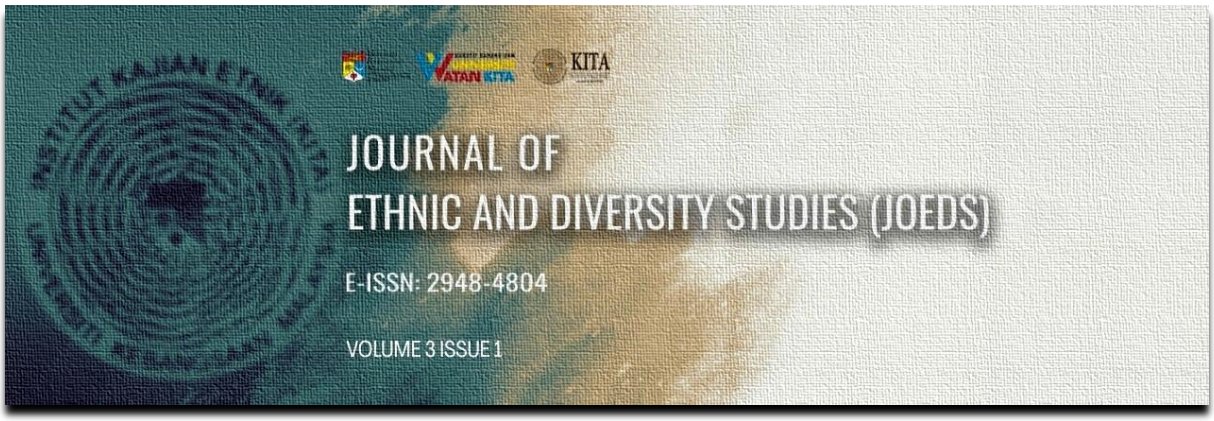
Menurut Živković (2019), fungsi bandar dapat difahami melalui hubungannya dengan masyarakat, termasuk interaksinya dengan kawasan pedalaman atau penempatan lain, yang melibatkan pelbagai aktiviti dan keperluan bandar dan berkait rapat dengan bentuk ruangannya. Bandar modenmerupakan elemen yang paling kompleks dalam landskap budaya manusia, dengan sifatnya yang sangat tersusun dan teratur. Bandar bukan sekadar sebuah ruangan berbentuk fizikal, tetapi juga dapat dilihat sebagai satu entiti yang mencerminkan kerumitan sosial, ekonomi, budaya, dan politik di dalam dunia moden. Evolusi bandar mencerminkan kompleksiti melalui pelbagai varieti fungsi dan dimensi yang melambangkan kepelbagaian masyarakat dalam sesebuah bandar. Fenomena ini jelas terlihat di negara-negara yang mengalami urbanisasi dan perindustrian pesat, di mana bandar sering menjadi pusat inovasi dan pembangunan ekonomi. Di negara membangun pula, bandar memainkan peranan penting sebagai pusat transformasi sosio-ekonomi. Proses bersifat multifungsional yang berlaku di bandar mencerminkan dinamik kehidupan manusia yang kompleks dalam ruang yang terhad. Penulisan ini akan memberi fokus kepada tiga aspek utama terhadap fungsi bandar, iaitu dari segi sosial, politik, dan ekonomi, sebagai bukti yang dapat mendukung analisis.

Bandar bukan sahaja dapat dilihat sebagai medium dalam melaksanakan aktiviti perdagangan, tetapi juga membuka peluang pekerjaan dan mendorong pertukaran budaya, menjadikannya elemen asas dalam pembangunan masyarakat. Perdagangan merujuk kepada aktiviti membeli dan menjual barangan dan perkhidmatan, yang sering difasilitasi oleh bandar melalui infrastruktur dan kemudahan yang disediakan. Grainger (2007) menjelaskan bahawa konsep perdagangan seringkali diberikan perhatian yang signifikan dan menjadi elemen utama dalam pelbagai inisiatif masyarakat adat. Kajian oleh Cavailhès et al. (2004) menunjukkan bahawa bandar memainkan peranan penting dalam struktur perdagangan dengan mengurangkan kos komunikasi dan pengangkutan. Dalam konteks ekonomi pula, bandar bertindak sebagai pusat perdagangan dan industri yang memacu inovasi serta pertumbuhan melalui pengagregatan ekonomi, iaitu pengumpulan aktiviti ekonomi di satu kawasan yang meningkatkan kecekapan dan produktiviti (Duranton dan Puga, 2013). Bandar juga menjadi pusat utama bagi pergerakan tenaga kerja, modal, dan inovasi teknologi yang memberi kesan secara langsung kepada pembangunan ekonomi sesebuah wilayah dan negara secara keseluruhan. Sebagai contoh, kajian oleh Fedorenko dan Kolos (2023) menunjukkan bahawa bandar memainkan peranan penting dalam memacu pertumbuhan ekonomi melalui penyediaan infrastruktur moden, peluang pekerjaan, dan kemajuan teknologi yang memperkukuhkan daya

saing negara di peringkat global. Bandar juga bukan sahaja menjadi pusat kepada kehidupan moden, akan tetapi ia juga menjadi pemacu utama dalam pembangunan sosio-ekonomi dan pembentukan landskap budaya manusia pada abad ke-21. Bandar menyediakan persekitaran yang bersifat fleksibel dalam dunia ekonomi, bagi pelaksanaan perniagaan, menarik pelaburan, dan mencipta peluang pekerjaan, sekali gus menyokong pembangunan ekonomi sesebuah negara (Crisp et al., 2023).

Selain daripada itu, bandar juga menyediakan ruang interaksi antara pelbagai lapisan masyarakat, yang secara langsung menggalakkan kohesi sosial dan pertukaran budaya. Kohesi sosial merujuk kepada ikatan yang menyatukan masyarakat, mempromosikan kesatuan dan kerjasama antara ahlinya (Schiefer dan Noll, 2017). Sebagai contoh, kajian oleh Novy et al. (2012) menegaskan, perpaduan sosial di kawasan bandar dapat dipertingkatkan melalui dasar inklusif yang menangani ketidaksamaan sosial dan menggalakkan penglibatan komuniti. Pertukaran budaya pula melibatkan perkongsian dan integrasi amalan budaya, idea, dan nilai antara komuniti yang berbeza, seperti yang diketengahkan oleh Oko-Jaja (2024) melalui program pertukaran budaya yang memainkan peranan penting dalam merapatkan jurang budaya dan mempromosikan pemahaman global. Bandar memainkan peranan utama sebagai nod penting dalam rangkaian global yang mendorong transformasi ekonomi dan sosial, iaitu perubahan ketara dalam struktur ekonomi dan sosial masyarakat yang sering didorong oleh urbanisasi, kemajuan teknologi, dan pembaharuan dasar. Bandar berfungsi sebagai sebuah katalis dalam pembangunan sosial dan budaya melalui interaksi pelbagai komuniti, yang melibatkan peningkatan struktur sosial dan amalan budaya dalam komuniti. Dengan kehadiran penduduk daripada pelbagai latar belakang yang berbeza, bandar menjadi ruang di mana nilai, idea, dan tradisi bertemu, menghasilkan inovasi sosial dan kerjasama yang melintasi sempadan budaya. Zhao (2024) menekankan bahawa kawasan bandar memudahkan pembangunan sosial dan budaya dengan menyediakan ruang bagi komuniti yang pelbagai berinteraksi dan bekerjasama, memupuk inovasi sosial dan pertukaran budaya. Peranan ini menjadikan bandar sebagai platform bagi mewujudkan sifat kemajuan bersama masyarakat manusia.

Bandar secara amnya berfungsi sebagai pusat pentadbiran yang menempatkan institusi kerajaan dan menyediakan perkhidmatan awam penting kepada rakyat. Pentadbiran merujuk kepada pengurusan dan pelaksanaan dasar serta perkhidmatan oleh institusi kerajaan. Sebagai contoh, kajian oleh Caragliu et al. (2011) menunjukkan bahawa bandar berfungsi sebagai pusat pentadbiran yang penting dengan menyediakan perkhidmatan awam dan memainkan peranan utama dalam pembangunan ekonomi dan sosial. Sebagai elemen utama dalam sistem pembahagian wilayah pentadbiran, bandar bukan sahaja menjadi pusat interaksi sosial dan pemacuan ekonomi, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai teras kepada pengurusan dan perancangan pembangunan di peringkat nasional dan global. Bandar juga berfungsi sebagai pusat pentadbiran dan pemerintahan dengan menyediakan perkhidmatan asas serta infrastruktur yang menyokong kesejahteraan penduduk. Lefebvre (1970) menekankan bahawa bandar menyediakan perkhidmatan asas seperti pendidikan, kesihatan, dan keselamatan yang penting untuk kesejahteraan masyarakat. Kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa sifat



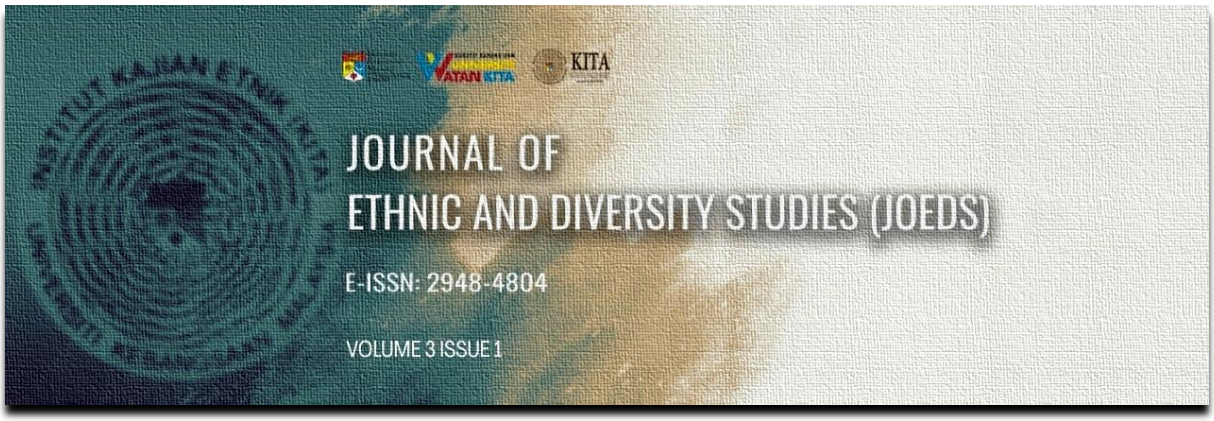
multifungsional bandar menjadikannya elemen utama dalam pembangunan lestari serta berperanan meningkatkan kualiti hidup penduduknya. Jacobs (1961) dalam bukunya *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, menegaskan bahawa bandar yang berfungsi dengan baik dapat meningkatkan kualiti hidup penduduk melalui perancangan yang baik dan penyediaan perkhidmatan yang mencukupi.

BANDAR SEBAGAI SEBUAH MESIN : TEORI BERKAITAN

I) TEORI GESTALT

Sifat multifungsional yang dilihat dan dihasilkan di dalam bandar merupakan dasar kepada penjelasan mengenai metafora yang dikendalikan. Elemen-elemen yang telah dinyatakan secara umumnya dapat dikaitkan dengan teori gestalt (1997). Menurut Sternberg dan Sternberg (2012), Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, dan Wolfgang Köhler, mengasaskan psikologi gestalt pada awal abad ke-20. Namun, Max Wertheimer meletakkan asas kepada teori ini dengan menyatakan bahawa "terdapat keseluruhan yang tingkah lakunya tidak ditentukan oleh unsur-unsur individunya, tetapi di mana proses-proses bahagiannya sendiri ditentukan oleh sifat semula jadi keseluruhan tersebut" (Wertheimer, 1997). Ahli psikologi gestalt percaya bahawa memecahkan sesuatu fenomena kepada bahagian-bahagian kecil tidak akan membawa kepada pemahaman yang lengkap. Sebaliknya, mereka melihat fenomena tersebut sebagai satu situasi secara keseluruhan (Sternberg dan Stenrberg, 2012). Teori ini telah memberikan dua sumbangan utama. Pertama, ia berusaha untuk merumuskan peraturan persepsi visual melalui analisis corak dan pengkelompokan objek. Kedua, ia membangunkan prinsip penyelesaian masalah melalui kreativiti (Günay, 2018). Istilah "*gestalt*", yang bermaksud bentuk, rupa, corak, atau konfigurasi dalam bahasa Jerman, yang mencerminkan intipati idea-idea ini (Günay, 2018). Kurt Koffka, seorang ahli psikologi dan profesor dari Jerman, berpendapat bahawa selain daripada elemen deria penglihatan melalui objek yang dilihat, terdapat elemen tambahan iaitu elemen yang muncul daripada organisasi komponen deria tetapi mempunyai sifat tersendiri (Koffka, 1935). Idea ini juga dikenali sebagai "*gestalt-qualität*" atau diterjemahkan sebagai 'kualiti bentuk.' Sebagai contoh, apabila seseorang mendengar melodi melalui musik, beliau tidak hanya mendengar nota secara individual, akan tetapi beliau juga dikatakan dapat merasai kualiti musik tersebut menyeluruh yang mengikatnya menjadi satu irama yang rancak.

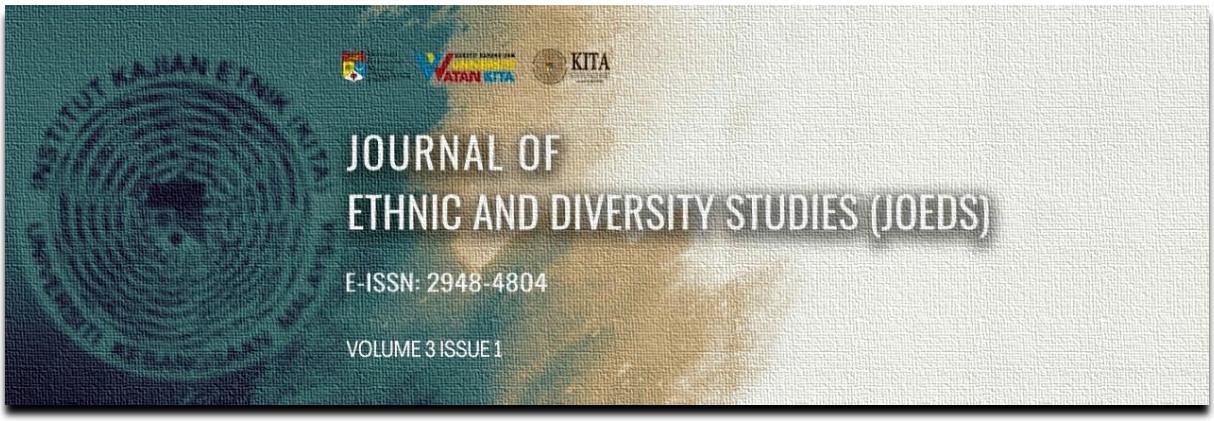
Teori gestalt di dalam ruang lingkup berkenaan perancangan urban dapat dijelaskan melalui penekanan terhadap persepsi struktur sesebuah bandar secara keseluruhan, yang membawa implikasi penting dalam proses urbanisasi. Dalam perancangan bandar, prinsip gestalt digunakan untuk mencipta persekitaran yang harmoni di samping itu meningkatkan pengalaman penduduk bandar secara menyeluruh. Keutamaan ini dicerminkan melalui prinsip berbentuk kognitif, di mana elemen yang tepat memberikan satu perasaan atau emosi berbentuk psikologikal, yang memberi 'penjelasan' dan 'keselamatan' kepada seseorang individu. Sebagai



contoh, elemen seperti jarak digunakan untuk merancang kawasan kejiranan di mana perkhidmatan dan kemudahan yang penting berada dalam jangkauan yang dekat. Begitu juga dengan elemen kesinambungan, di mana ia dapat membantu dalam merancang laluan dan jalan yang membimbing pergerakan penduduk dengan lancar dalam sesebuah bandar. Menurut Günay (2018), penerapan prinsip gestalt dalam lensa urbanisasi dan urbanisme membantu perancang bandar masa hadapan mengembangkan kemahiran visual yang diperlukan untuk mencipta ruang bandar yang teratur dan menarik secara estetik. Pendekatan ini bukan sahaja meningkatkan fungsi kawasan bandar tetapi juga berupaya untuk menyumbang kepada kesejahteraan psikologi penduduk dengan mencipta persekitaran yang mudah dinavigasi dan kohesif secara visual (Sakketa, 2023). Teori ini secara amnya menyediakan prosedur berbentuk standard untuk meningkatkan kemahiran visual pereka bandar dengan memberi tumpuan kepada persekitaran binaan sambil mencapai bentuk bandar yang baik dan memenuhi keperluan pengguna (Elshater, 2015).

II) TEORI NORMATIF

Kerangka yang digunakan sebagai inspirasi bagi membangunkan sesebuah bandar utopia juga dipengaruhi oleh tiga model utama yang berbeza melalui magnum opus yang disediakan Kevin Lynch (1981) iaitu teori normatif. Teori ini merupakan satu pendekatan yang mengenal pasti ciri-ciri yang harus dimiliki oleh sesebuah penempatan manusia. Berdasarkan bukunya *A Theory of Good City Form* (1981), Lynch telah mengenal pasti lima dimensi prestasi yang saling berkaitan iaitu vitaliti, rasa, kesesuaian, akses, dan kawalan serta dua "meta-kriteria," iaitu kecekapan dan keadilan. Dimensi-dimensi ini dikaitkan bersama tiga teori normatif sedia ada. Pertama, model kosmik (*cosmic model*) melihat bandar sebagai sebuah mikrokosmos yang mempunyai hierarki teologikal dan bersifat utopian, di mana perubahan berlaku secara ritmik dan akhirnya dikekalkan. Bandar wujud atas alasan keagamaan dan politik. Malah, bentuk fizikal bandar itu sendiri mencerminkan pandangan berbentuk kosmologi (MIT, 2009). Seterusnya, model organik (*organic model*) sering dikaitkan dengan konsep homeostasis. Model ini digambarkan melalui *Garden Cities* oleh Howard (2003) dan muncul sebagai tindak balas kepada proses urbanisasi pesat yang berlaku pada abad ke-19. Model ini juga membayangkan sebuah bandar yang mempunyai sempadan yang jelas, baik dari segi fizikal mahupun demografik. Apabila sempadan ini dicapai, bandar baharu akan dibangunkan, berbanding membenarkan bandar sedia ada terus berkembang (MIT, 2009). Sebaliknya, model mesin (*machine model*) menggambarkan bandar sebagai satu sistem berbentuk fungsional yang terdiri daripada komponen yang saling bergantung dan bersifat dinamik seperti sebuah mesin yang berfungsi, membolehkan pertumbuhan dan evolusi bandar secara sistematik serta boleh diramal (MIT, 2009). Dalam model ini, kestabilan terletak pada ‘komponen’ secara individual dan bukan secara keseluruhan, sekali gus mencerminkan pendekatan yang praktikal dan adaptif terhadap perkembangan bandar.

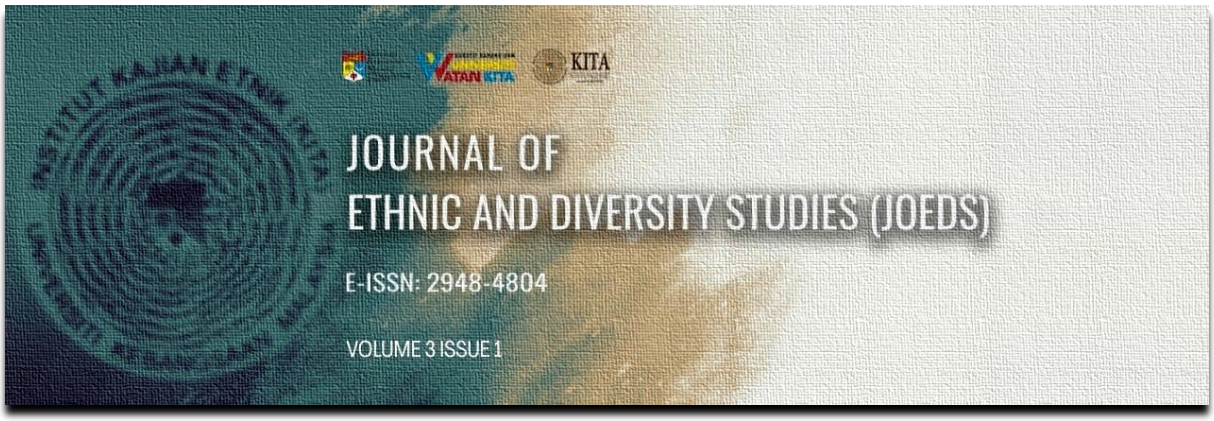


Dalam konteks analisis bandar yang ideal dan pengaplikasian pendekatan ini, model mesin diberikan tumpuan utama kerana ia menawarkan pendekatan yang lebih berstruktur dan berfokus terhadap kecekapan serta fungsionaliti bandar. Dalam urbanisasi yang berasaskan model mesin, reka bentuk bandar diutamakan untuk mencapai keberkesanan yang optimum, di mana setiap elemen di dalam bandar dianggap sebagai komponen-komponen yang saling bergantung dan menyokong antara satu sama lain. Fenomena ini mencipta satu sistem yang teratur, di mana setiap bahagian bandar berfungsi secara efisien untuk memenuhi tujuan yang lebih besar, iaitu untuk menyokong kelangsungan hidup dan kesejahteraan penduduk bandar (Lynch, 1981). Selain itu, model mesin bukan sahaja memberikan tumpuan kepada kestabilan dan keberkesanan dalam jangka masa yang terhad atau pendek, tetapi juga menekankan kemampuan bandar untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan perubahan dinamik yang berlaku dalam masyarakat dan persekitarannya secara semasa atau pada masa akan datang (Lynch, 1981). Dalam erti kata lain, bandar yang dibangunkan melalui model mesin seharusnya tidak statik; sebaliknya, ia perlu dirancang dan dibangunkan secara fleksibel supaya ia boleh berkembang dan menyesuaikan diri dengan cabaran urbanisasi yang dialami seiring peredaran masa. Kajian oleh Lau et al. (2021) menekankan bahawa elemen reka bentuk bandar seperti laluan, nod, tepi, mercu tanda, dan daerah yang dinyatakan oleh Lynch adalah penting dalam membentuk imej mental bandar dan meningkatkan pengalaman penduduk. Dengan itu, model ini bukan sahaja memenuhi keperluan asas penduduk, tetapi juga membantu bandar menjadi lebih adaptif dan progresif dalam memenuhi keperluan generasi yang akan datang.

PERBEZAAN PENDEKATAN

Prinsip gestalt oleh Wertheimer (1997) mengamalkan pendekatan berbentuk holistik dalam memahami urbanisasi dengan menekankan aspek kognitif dan visual. Bandar dilihat sebagai sistem yang saling berhubung, di mana elemen-elemen seperti sosial, budaya, ekonomi, dan fizikal digabungkan untuk membentuk sebuah kesatuan yang berintegrasi antara satu sama lain di samping itu bersifat fleksibel dan harmoni. Setiap elemen menyumbang kepada identiti bandar, dengan penekanan kepada interaksi dan hubungan antara elemen-elemen tersebut dan bukannya dianalisis secara terasing atau individu. Pendekatan ini memberi keutamaan kepada pengalaman penduduk serta pertumbuhan organik bandar sambil menghormati budaya tempatan, sejarah, dan persekitaran. Berbanding model mesin yang diketengahkan oleh Lynch (1981), teori gestalt memfokuskan terhadap kesatuan antara elemen bandar secara rohani. Pendekatan teori ini juga berbeza daripada model mesin yang lebih mekanistik. Model mesin sering memisahkan fungsi bandar seperti zon perumahan, perniagaan, dan perindustrian, menyebabkan pembangunan bandar menjadi terasing dan kurang berhubung. Sebaliknya, gestalt melihat bandar sebagai suatu entiti organik, di mana hubungan antara masyarakat, persekitaran fizikal, dan budaya adalah dinamik dan berkembang secara semula jadi.

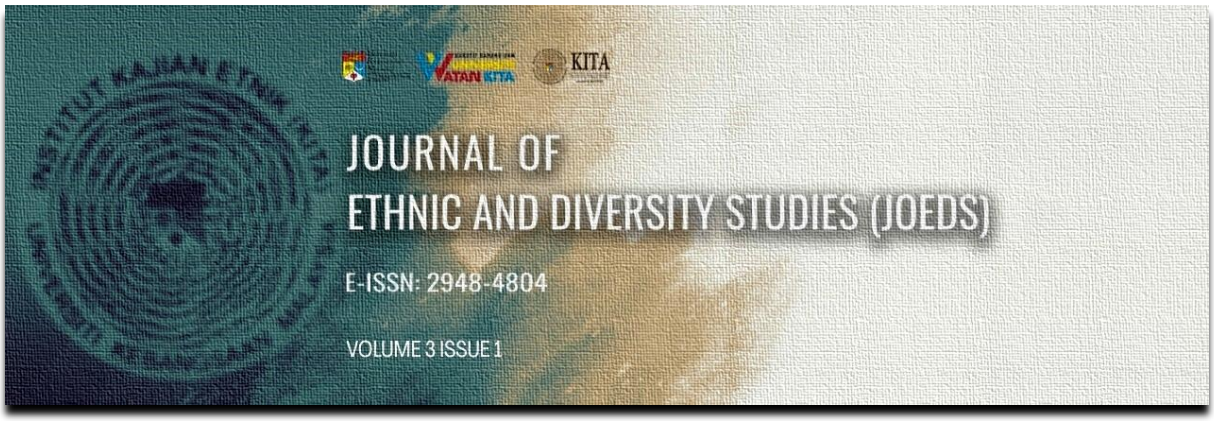
Bandar, dalam konteks gestalt, difahami sebagai sebuah ekosistem yang saling melengkapi, di mana setiap elemen yang wujud berperanan penting dalam membentuk



'kesatuan' yang harmoni. Sebagai contoh, hubungan antara elemen sosial seperti interaksi masyarakat, struktur ekonomi seperti pasaran, dan budaya tempatan seperti seni dan tradisi adalah faktor yang menyumbang kepada latar belakang serta fungsi bandar secara keseluruhan. Pendekatan ini berusaha melihat bagaimana elemen-elemen tersebut bekerjasama dalam menghasilkan pengalaman yang bermakna kepada masyarakat manusia. Salah satu prinsip utama dalam pendekatan ini juga adalah mewujudkan perasaan dan sifat integrasi, kerjasama dan keharmonian secara psikologikal dalam kalangan penduduk bandar. Ini bermaksud, bandar yang baik adalah bandar yang dapat dirasai sebagai sebuah 'kesatuan' oleh penduduknya. Masyarakat dalam bandar wujud melalui hubungan yang saling bergantung antara satu sama lain, sama ada dari aspek budaya, fizikal, mahupun sistem sosial. Kesalinghubungan ini, secara kognitif, menjadikan bandar berfungsi seperti mesin yang digerakkan oleh hubungan antara masyarakat manusia. Bandar yang ideal dan sempurna dimanifestasikan melalui elemen kesatuan tersebut. Dalam konteks ini, masyarakat di dalam bandar saling berkait bukan hanya dari segi fizikal tetapi juga dari aspek sosial dan budaya, menjadikan bandar bergerak dan berfungsi sebagai satu entiti harmoni. Secara keseluruhan, pendekatan gestalt menekankan bahawa urbanisasi harus dilihat sebagai suatu proses yang melibatkan integrasi elemen-elemen yang kompleks. Hubungan yang wujud antara elemen ini membolehkan bandar menjadi sebuah ruang yang bermakna, bukan hanya dari segi fungsi tetapi juga sebagai refleksi kehidupan dan identiti masyarakat yang menghuninya.

Sebaliknya, model mesin dalam urbanisasi mengamalkan pendekatan yang lebih fungsionalis dan mekanistik, di mana bandar dilihat sebagai satu sistem yang tersusun daripada komponen-komponen berasingan seperti perumahan, pengangkutan, dan industri. Setiap komponen ini direka untuk berfungsi secara efisien dan bebas bagi memenuhi tujuan tertentu, dengan fokus utama kepada kecekapan, organisasi, dan produktiviti. Pendekatan ini sering kali dipengaruhi oleh idealisme modenisme dan pertumbuhan industri, yang menekankan perancangan yang sistematik, zonifikasi yang ketat, serta pemisahan fungsi bandar seperti zon kediaman, komersial, dan perindustrian. Melalui pendekatan ini, bandar dilihat sebagai sebuah mesin yang terdiri daripada komponen berasingan seperti perumahan, pengangkutan, dan industri, yang berfungsi secara efisien dan bebas untuk memenuhi tujuan tertentu. Pendekatan fungsionalis dan mekanistik Lynch (1981) melihat bandar sebagai sebuah mekanisme yang terdiri daripada pelbagai komponen berasingan, yang direka dan berfungsi melalui sambungan serta hubungan antara komponen tersebut, seperti kaedah sebuah mesin beroperasi.

Menurut Lynch (1981), bandar dalam model ini dianggap sebagai sistem yang saling membantu dan saling berkaitan, tetapi hubungan tersebut dilihat dari sudut teknikal dan utilitarian semata-mata, tanpa mengambil kira aspek emosi, budaya, atau sosial penduduknya seperti pendekatan gestalt. Model mesin juga membayangkan bandar sebagai "mesin untuk kehidupan," di mana infrastruktur, pengangkutan, dan seni bina direka untuk mencapai tahap kecekapan maksimum, sering kali mengorbankan pertumbuhan organik atau integrasi komuniti. Walaupun model ini menawarkan kelebihan dari segi skalabiliti, keteraturan, dan kemudahan pelaksanaan, ia berisiko menghasilkan persekitaran bandar yang kurang manusiawi

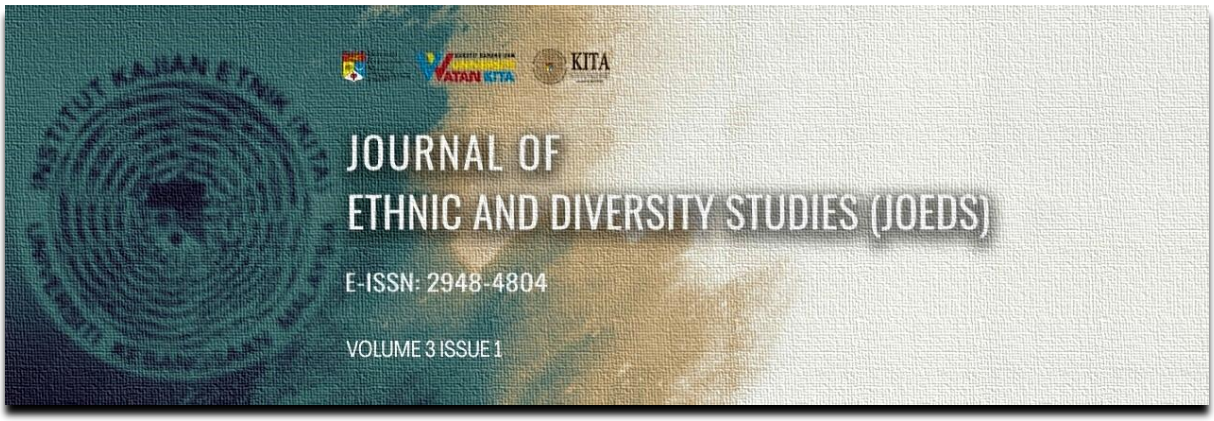


dan kurang melibatkan dimensi budaya atau rohani. Akibatnya, bandar yang dibangunkan mengikut model ini disifatkan sebagai tiada personaliti, kaku, dan terasing daripada identiti penduduknya. Pengasingan antara fungsi bandar sering menghalang pembentukan hubungan sosial dan komuniti, menjadikan bandar kurang harmoni dari segi pengalaman hidup penduduknya.

Teori gestalt dan model mesin berdasarkan teori normatif mencerminkan dua pendekatan yang berbeza terhadap urbanisasi, di mana kedua-dua teori tersebut mempunyai pemahaman falsafah dan prinsip asas yang unik dalam memahami reka bentuk, pembangunan, dan fungsi bandar secara keseluruhan dan bagaimana ia dapat berfungsi sebagai sebuah mesin dalam menghasilkan satu idea bandar yang sempurna. Terdapat perbezaan jelas antara kedua-dua model ini. Pendekatan gestalt melihat pembentukan bandar dari sudut pandang yang lebih optimistik dan psikologikal, manakala model mesin cenderung mengambil perspektif yang lebih realistik dan praktikal. Teori gestalt melihat bandar sebagai satu organisma hidup yang berkembang secara organik, manakala model mesin menganggapnya sebagai sistem komponen bersifat mekanisitik yang direka untuk kecekapan. Pendekatan gestalt yang fleksibel dan menghormati aliran semula jadi serta sosial, berbeza dengan pendekatan yang bersifat tegas dan berpisah atau terasing di dalam model mesin. Dari sudut pengalaman manusia, teori gestalt mengutamakan kesinambungan masyarakat dan keharmonian, manakala model mesin lebih menitikberatkan produktiviti dan susunan. Secara keseluruhannya, teori gestalt mencerminkan urbanisasi sebagai manifestasi identiti manusia dan budaya, manakala model mesin melihatnya sebagai mekanisme untuk mengoptimumkan fungsi dan kecekapan. Kedua-duanya menawarkan perspektif yang berharga dan relevan, bergantung pada keperluan dan konteks pembangunan bandar serta idea mereka terhadap urbanisasi dan urbanisme.

IDEA BANDAR YANG SEMPURNA

Adalah wajar untuk menyimpulkan bahawa idea sebuah bandar yang sempurna merupakan gabungan di antara prinsip psikologikal teori gestalt dan pemahaman tentang evolusi bandar yang digariskan melalui model mesin oleh Lynch (1981). Pendekatan ini saling melengkapi antara satu sama lain kerana kedua-duanya membawa perspektif unik yang diperlukan dalam perancangan bandar yang mampan dan inklusif. Model mesin mengutamakan pendekatan yang berfokus kepada kecekapan secara teknikal, organisasi, dan fungsi setiap komponen bandar. Ia melihat bandar sebagai sistem yang terdiri daripada bahagian-bahagian yang berasingan tetapi saling melengkapi. Perancangan dalam model ini menekankan struktur yang teratur, reka bentuk yang rasional, dan infrastruktur yang optimum untuk memastikan bandar dapat berfungsi dengan lancar. Walaupun model mesin tidak mengabaikan sepenuhnya peranan masyarakat, ia cenderung melihat manusia sebagai sebahagian daripada sistem atau elemen berbentuk mekanikal yang perlu disesuaikan untuk menyokong kecekapan bandar secara keseluruhan. Akibatnya, perhatian terhadap pengalaman manusia, seperti kesejahteraan psikologi, hubungan sosial, dan nilai budaya, seringkali diabaikan atau dianggap tidak penting

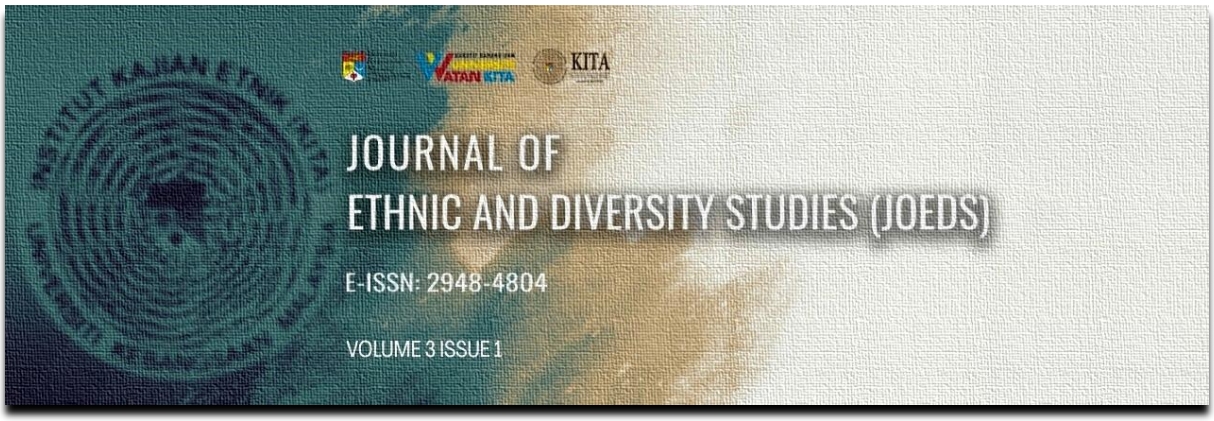


atau kurang diberikan perhatian. Sebaliknya, pendekatan gestalt memberi tumpuan kepada masyarakat sebagai elemen teras dalam pembentukan dan fungsi bandar. Pendekatan ini menekankan bahawa bandar adalah lebih daripada sekadar gabungan elemen fizikal; ia merupakan ruang di mana interaksi sosial, budaya, dan emosi manusia berkembang. Dalam konteks ini, gestalt melihat bandar sebagai satu bentuk kesatuan yang bersifat semula jadi dan organik, di mana hubungan antara manusia dan persekitaran bandar mencipta pengalaman yang bermakna. Elemen-elemen seperti seni bina, ruang awam, dan landskap bandar tidak hanya dinilai dari segi fungsi, tetapi juga bagaimana ia mempengaruhi kesejahteraan dan hubungan masyarakat yang menghuninya.

Dalam erti kata lain, model mesin menonjolkan kecekapan dan struktur bandar yang dapat diukur secara objektif, manakala pendekatan gestalt lebih mengambil kira dimensi subjektif bandar. Keseimbangan antara kedua-dua pendekatan ini dapat menghasilkan bandar yang bukan sahaja berfungsi dengan baik dari segi teknikal tetapi juga memenuhi keperluan sosial, emosi, dan budaya penduduknya. Gabungan kedua-dua pendekatan ini dapat diibaratkan seperti yin dan yang, di mana kekuatan satu melengkapkan kelemahan yang lain. Pendekatan gestalt memberi perhatian kepada bagaimana masyarakat bandar dapat bergerak secara harmoni sebagai sebuah entiti yang bersatu, dengan memberi fokus kepada pengalaman manusia, hubungan sosial, dan elemen budaya. Pada masa yang sama, prinsip ini secara tidak langsung menyumbang kepada pemahaman model mesin, di mana evolusi dan perancangan bandar dapat dirangka secara lebih teratur dan berfungsi seperti sebuah mekanisme yang cekap.Kombinasi kedua-dua teori ini diperlukan untuk menghasilkan bandar yang lebih sempurna. Dengan menggabungkan pemahaman teori gestalt terhadap masyarakat dan hubungan manusia dengan kecekapan sistematik model mesin, bandar yang ideal dapat diwujudkan. Bandar ini bukan sahaja efisien dari sudut fungsi teknikal tetapi juga mencipta persekitaran yang selesa, bermakna, dan mesra untuk penduduknya. Hasilnya, bandar tersebut menjadi refleksi keseimbangan antara pengalaman manusia yang mendalam dan keperluan secara fungsional yang diperlukan untuk memastikan kelangsungan hidup bandar dalam jangka panjang.

KESIMPULAN

Kesimpulannya, pembentukan sebuah bandar yang utopia memerlukan gabungan kedua-dua pendekatan, iaitu prinsip psikologikal teori gestalt yang memberi tumpuan kepada hubungan sosial dan pengalaman manusia, serta model mesin yang menekankan kecekapan teknikal, organisasi, dan fungsi sistem bandar. Dengan mengintegrasikan kedua-dua perspektif ini, bandar tidak hanya dapat berfungsi secara efisien, tetapi juga mencipta persekitaran yang harmoni, menyokong kesejahteraan penduduknya dan memenuhi keperluan sosial serta budaya. Keseimbangan antara struktur sistematik dan interaksi manusia ini dapat menghasilkan bandar yang lebih berdaya tahan dan lebih bermakna bagi penghuninya. Metafora "bandar sebagai sebuah mesin" menekankan kecekapan, struktur sistematik, dan fungsi komponen



bandar yang saling berkaitan untuk menyokong kehidupan masyarakat. Konsep ini sejajar dengan cita-cita moden dan perindustrian, menggambarkan bandar sebagai mekanisme yang direka untuk produktiviti dan kemajuan teknologi. Namun, perspektif ini mencetuskan perdebatan tentang batasannya, terutamanya kecenderungannya untuk mengabaikan nilai budaya dan intipati kemanusiaan dalam kehidupan bandar. Konsep bandar sebagai sebuah mesin menekankan kepentingan untuk menilai semula perancangan bandar. Bandar perlu dilihat bukan sahaja sebagai sistem fungsional tetapi juga sebagai ekosistem sosial dan budaya yang dinamik. Perspektif ini penting untuk mewujudkan ruang bandar yang inklusif, mampan, dan mampu menyokong kesejahteraan komuniti, sambil menghormati identiti sejarah dan budaya masyarakat manusia.

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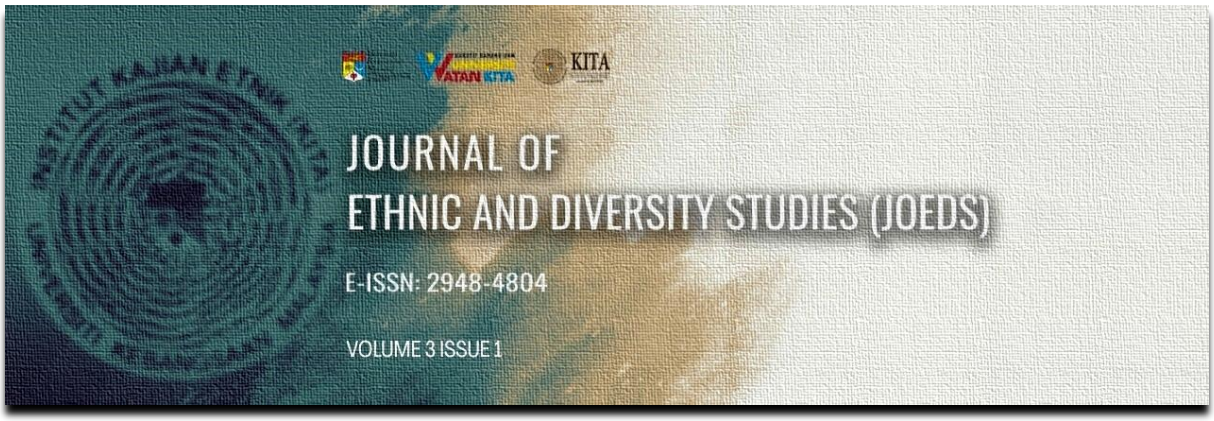

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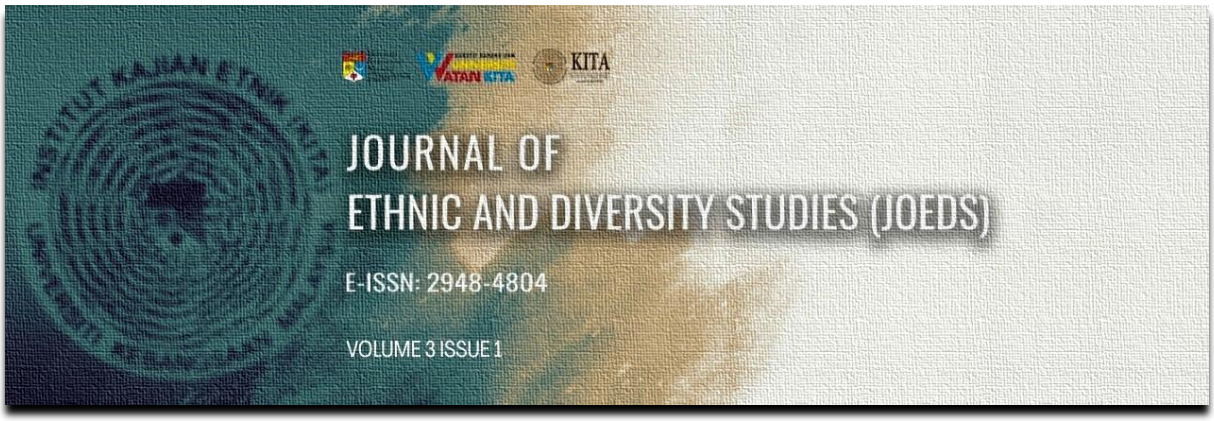

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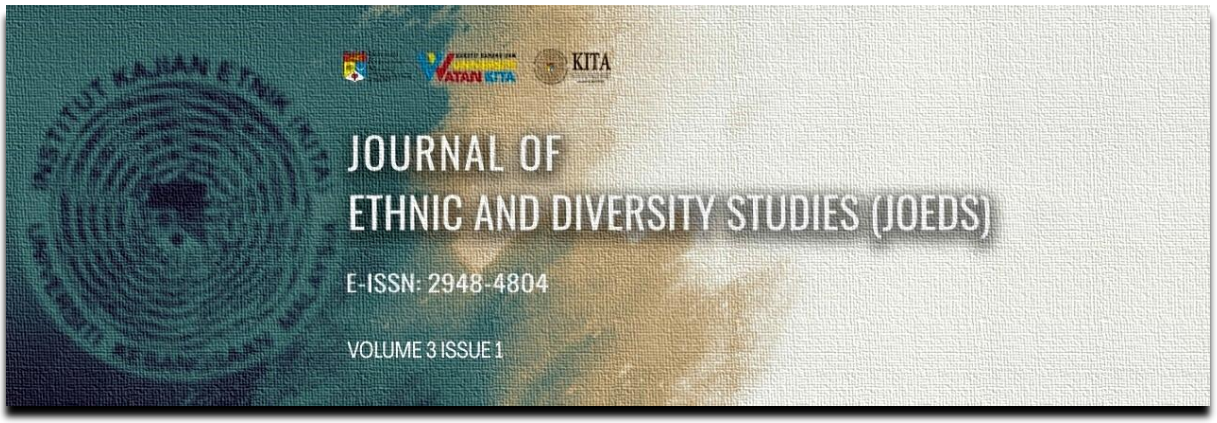

Do Temporary Skilled Migrants In The Healthcare Sector, Specifically The Nursing Profession, Have Agency Over Their Migration Experience?

(Adakah Migran Mahir Sementara Dalam Sektor Penjagaan Kesihatan, Khususnya Profesion Kejururawatan, Mempunyai Agensi Terhadap Pengalaman Migrasi Mereka?)

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses gaps in existing literature concerning temporary skilled migrants (TSMs) in the Australian healthcare sector and nursing profession, particularly those holding the Temporary Work (Skilled) visas (subclass 457) [457] or Temporary Skills Shortage visas (subclass 482) [TSS]. The study considers TSMs' level of agency in shaping their migration experiences. While prior research has explored the economic and political aspects of skilled migration, a comprehensive study of TSMs' varied experiences and agency is still needed. The focus on healthcare stems from it being one of Australia's top three most sought-after skilled industries (Kelly, 2019). The aim of this study was to investigate the agency experienced by these migrants in influencing their life trajectories and contributing to Australian migration policy. The qualitative study highlighted the key role of TSM perspectives in shaping Australia's migration policy. It included a focus group with six stakeholders from various professions related to TSMs, and interviews with eight TSMs on or formerly on the 457 or TSS visa. The findings highlight the lack of agency in TSMs' migration journeys and the absence of their lived experiences in policy processes. The study offers recommendations to enhance TSM participation in policymaking, improving migration outcomes and their agency.

***Keywords*:** *Agency, Globalisation, Government, Healthcare sector, Labour market*

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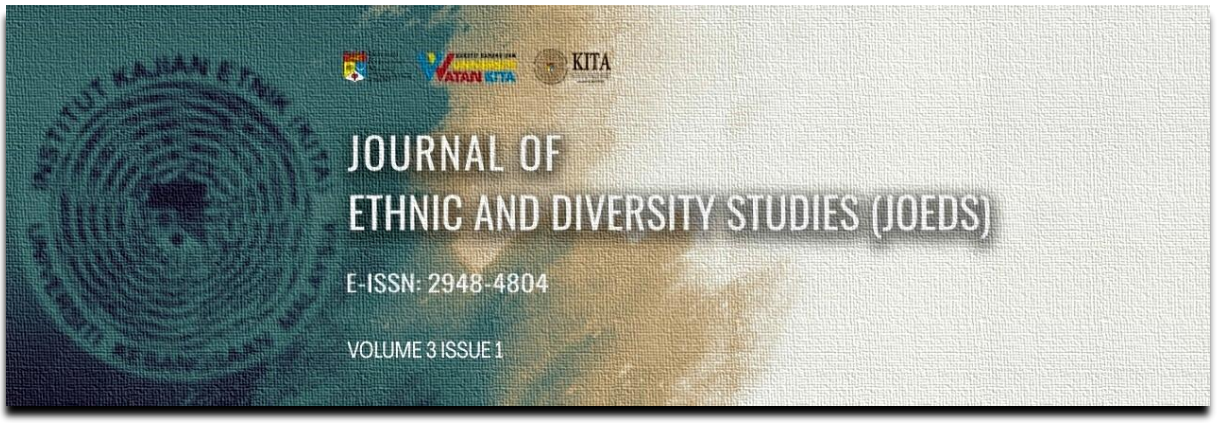


ABSTRAK

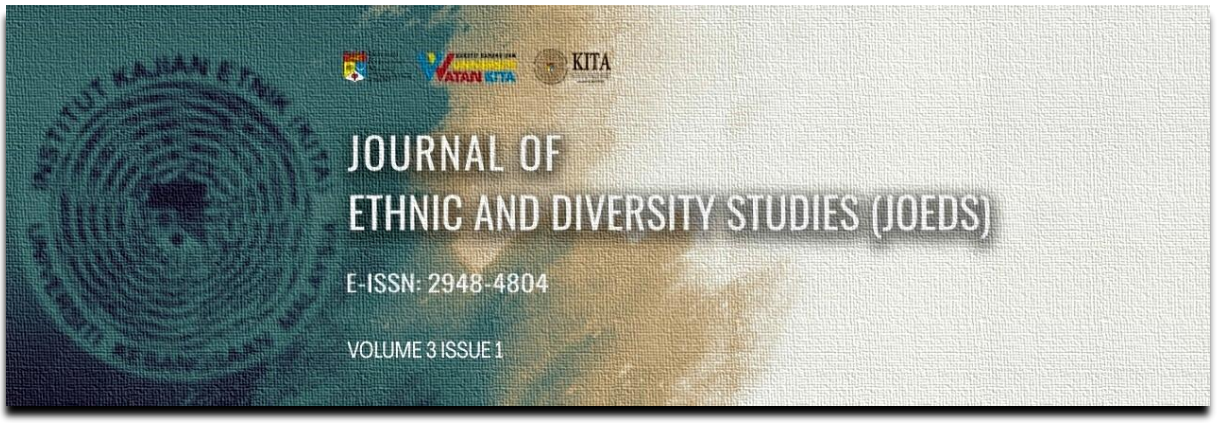
Kajian ini menangani jurang dalam kesusasteraan sedia ada mengenai pendatang mahir sementara (TSM) dalam sektor penjagaan kesihatan Australia dan profesion kejururawatan, terutamanya mereka yang memegang visa Kerja Sementara (Mahir) (subkelas 457) [457] atau visa Kekurangan Kemahiran Sementara (subkelas 482) [TSS]. Kajian ini mempertimbangkan tahap agensi TSM dalam membentuk pengalaman penghijrahan mereka. Walaupun penyelidikan terdahulu telah meneroka aspek ekonomi dan politik penghijrahan mahir, kajian komprehensif tentang pelbagai pengalaman dan agensi TSM masih diperlukan. Tumpuan pada penjagaan kesihatan berpunca daripada ia menjadi salah satu daripada tiga industri mahir yang paling dicari di Australia (Kelly, 2019). Matlamat kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat agensi yang dialami oleh pendatang ini dalam mempengaruhi trajektori hidup mereka dan menyumbang kepada dasar migrasi Australia. Kajian kualitatif itu menyerlahkan peranan utama perspektif TSM dalam membentuk dasar penghijrahan Australia. Ia termasuk kumpulan fokus dengan enam pihak berkepentingan daripada pelbagai profesion yang berkaitan dengan TSM, dan temu bual dengan lapan TSM pada atau sebelum ini menggunakan visa 457 atau TSS. Penemuan itu menyerlahkan kekurangan agensi dalam perjalanan penghijrahan TSM dan ketiadaan pengalaman hidup mereka dalam proses dasar. Kajian ini menawarkan cadangan untuk meningkatkan penyertaan TSM dalam penggubalan dasar, meningkatkan hasil penghijrahan dan agensi mereka.

Kata kunci: Agensi, Globalisasi, Kerajaan, Sektor penjagaan kesihatan, Pasaran buruh

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have delved into the advantages and drawbacks of temporary skilled migration in host nations (Pietsche, 2022). However, a significant gap exists concerning the agency of TSMs during their migration process. This gap is particularly evident among TSMs in Australia on the previous 457 or the TSS Visas, especially those in the nursing profession. The lived experiences of these individuals hold valuable insights that can inform and potentially reshape policymaking for Australia's temporary migration program. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the first-hand lived experiences of TSMs within Australia's healthcare sector, focusing on those in the nursing profession.

Australia's migration context, shaped by economic needs and historical debates, outlines the significant and dynamic nature of skilled migration within the policy landscape (Doherty & Evershed, 2018). Historically, the transition from permanent family migration to temporary skilled migration has reflected the government's strategic aims and preferences to boost the economy (Betts, 1993b). Factors such as job security, cultural assimilation, acculturation, and the changing



political climate have dictated Australia's migration history for decades (Collins, 1986; Legrain, 2007b).

The study considers the evolving nature of migration policies, particularly the shift from the 457 Visa to the TSS Visa over time. Despite these policy changes, there remains a lack of consideration for TSM involvement and feedback in the development of migration policies. This study seeks to amplify the voices of TSMs, providing crucial insights to inform policy debates and decisions.

The study specifically aims to understand TSMs' lived experiences in the nursing profession, the contextual factors impacting them, and their agency within Australian life and policy processes. The research includes current and former visa holders, employers of TSMs, advocates, and key informants. The healthcare sector's significance is highlighted, especially given its forecasted growth and increasing demand, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

By incorporating the lived experiences of TSMs, the study contributes to existing knowledge gaps and informed policymaking. It outlines the benefits of considering these experiences, including enhanced policy relevance, improved policy effectiveness, tailored support options, better social integration, and more effective talent attraction.

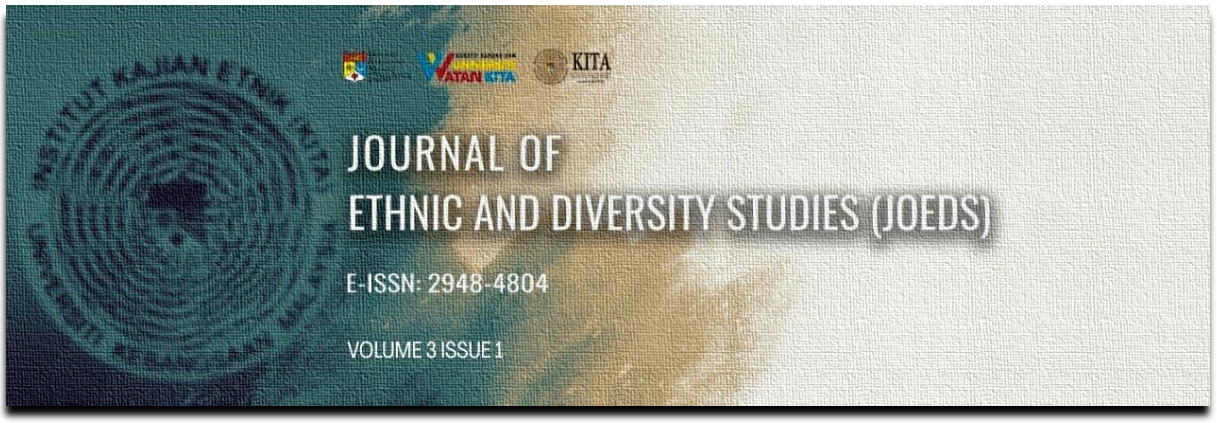
The structure of the study encompasses historical and theoretical context, detailed methodologies, research findings, and in-depth discussions. The study concludes by emphasising the importance of incorporating TSMs' voices in shaping migration policies and fostering a culture of tolerance and inclusivity in Australia.

The research highlights the crucial role of TSMs in the Australian workforce, particularly in sectors like healthcare that are critical to national well-being. By bringing to light the personal narratives and professional challenges faced by TSM nurses, the study advocates for a more inclusive and participatory approach to policy formulation. This approach not only recognises the contributions of TSMs but also seeks to create a more supportive and integrative environment for them.

In summary, this study aims to bridge the gap in understanding the agency of TSMs in Australia, focusing on their lived experiences in the nursing profession. Through a comprehensive analysis of migration policies and the personal experiences of TSMs, the study provides valuable insights that can help shape more effective and inclusive migration policies in Australia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration is a complex phenomenon involving multiple stages, challenges, and perspectives. Existing research explores pre-migration preparation, settlement struggles, workplace cultural competency, policy frameworks, and migration theories in abundance. However, there is a significant gap in understanding the agency (or lack thereof) of TSMs in Australia’s healthcare sector.



Literature outlines that in more recent times, during the pre-migration phase, digital platforms play a crucial role in information access, reflecting the impact of globalisation (Appadurai, 1996). Despite abundant online resources, migrants often encounter inadequate guidance, complicating their transition in the host country (Stark & Bloom, 1985). Upon arrival, they face social isolation, employment restrictions, and professional accreditation challenges (Gunasekara, Grant & Rajendran, 2019). However, research seldom examines how TSMs in the healthcare sector exercise agency to overcome these barriers.

Cultural competency frameworks are essential for workplace inclusion particularly for TSMs from non-English speaking countries (FECCA, 2019), yet discrimination and underutilisation of migrant skills persist. While literature highlights systemic barriers, few studies explore how TSMs actively navigate workplace challenges and career progression. Similarly, migration policies shape employment conditions and access to opportunities (Bolger, 2019), but little is known about how healthcare sector TSMs negotiate these constraints.

Migration theories abundantly explain mobility drivers, including economic and environmental factors (Van Hear et al., 2008), yet they often overlook the agency of TSMs in shaping their professional trajectories. Likewise, while social capital is crucial for settlement (Wali & Renzaho, 2018), research rarely considers how health sector TSMs leverage networks for career advancement. Poststructuralist perspectives challenge rigid migration narratives (Harcourt, 2007; Darkins, 2017) but rarely address professional autonomy in this sector specifically.

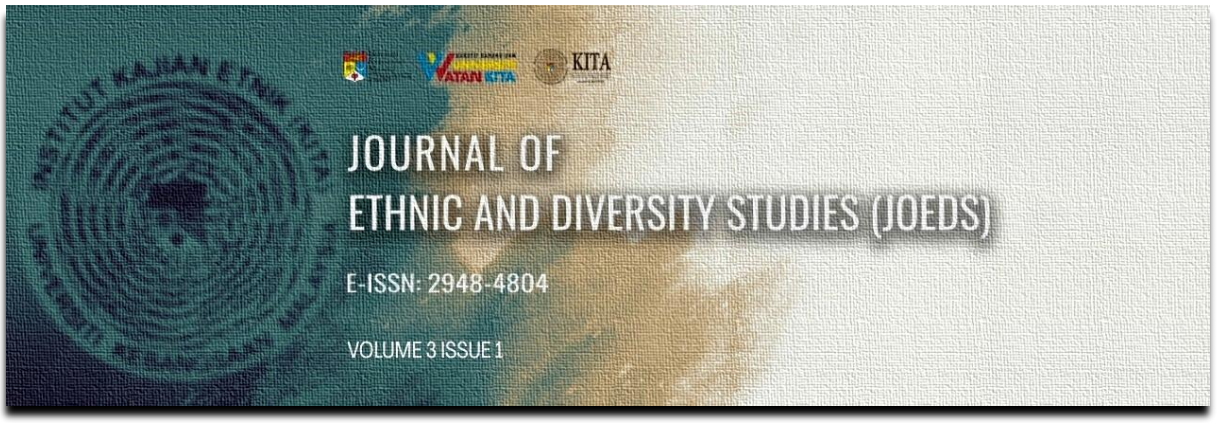
This existing literature highlights a critical gap: the lack of research on TSMs' agency in Australia's healthcare sector. Future studies should examine how these migrants navigate systemic barriers, assert professional autonomy, and influence their settlement experiences.

METHODOLOGY

By establishing epistemological frameworks and employing qualitative research methods, this segment paves the way for a comprehensive exploration of TSMs' lived experiences.

Epistemology, defined as the study of knowledge, forms the theoretical foundation of the research study (Dooley, 1990). Constructivism and phenomenology emerge as the guiding epistemological approaches. Constructivism posits that reality is constructed through human interaction and experience (McKinley, 2015), while phenomenology seeks to uncover and analyse the meanings embedded within individual lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). These epistemological orientations shape the research design, enabling a nuanced exploration of TSMs' subjective realities.

By focusing on the lived experiences of culturally diverse TSMs, phenomenology facilitates a culturally sensitive understanding of how social factors influence their perceptions (Creswell, 2007). Through reflexivity and openness to multiplicity, phenomenology enables researchers to authentically capture the richness of TSMs' narratives, thus contributing to a more



inclusive representation of human experiences (Van Manen & Adams, 2009).

The study adopts a qualitative research approach, consisting of narrative and interpretive aspects to uncover the complexities of social phenomena (Creswell, 2007). Employing techniques such as interviews, focus groups, and policy process analysis, the study captures the complex nature of TSMs' experiences in the healthcare sector. The study ensures a comprehensive exploration of relevant themes and issues by conducting a thorough literature review (Bowen, 2009) and employing purposive sampling techniques (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

Through interviews with various stakeholders, including TSMs, advocates, policymakers, and healthcare workers, the study explores the lived experiences of TSMs, contextual factors influencing their experiences, their ability to participate in Australian life, how they are perceived, and their potential contribution to shaping migration policy. The research employs content analysis (Walter, 2013), thematic analysis (Walter, 2013), and coding techniques (Bright & Connor, 2017) to analyse interview data rigorously, aiming to uncover underlying themes and patterns. By adhering to grounded theory methodology, the study ensures consistency in data analysis and interpretation. Through its findings, the study shed light on the challenges faced by TSMs and their potential role in shaping migration policy, providing valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders to improve the skilled migration program in Australia.

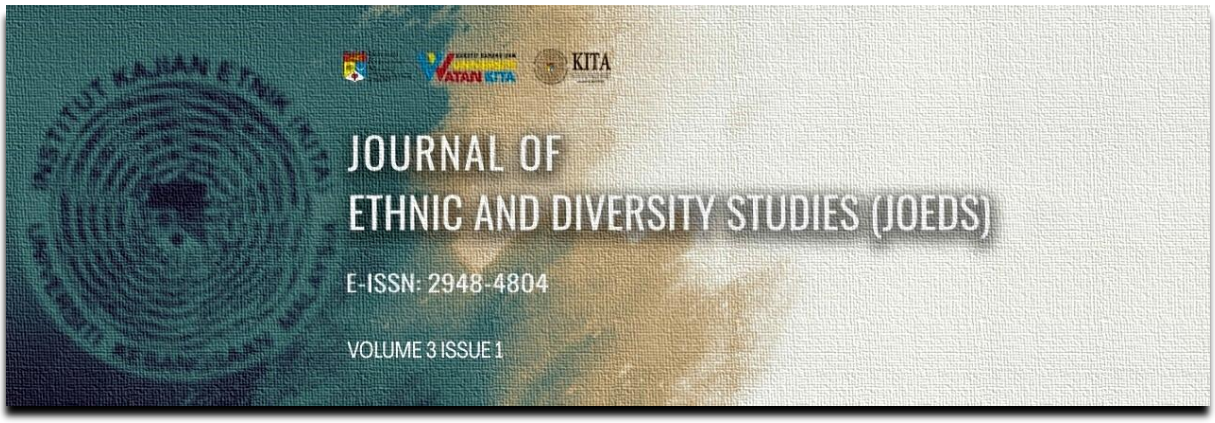
Ethical considerations are paramount throughout the research process, with measures in place to protect participants' confidentiality and ensure informed consent (Bryman & Bell, 2007). By adhering to rigorous methodological standards and ethical guidelines, the study aims to produce valid and reliable insights into the lived experiences of TSMs in the healthcare sector.

By combining epistemological perspectives, qualitative research methods, and ethical considerations, the study highlights the dynamics of skilled migration and its impact on policy outcomes.

RESULTS

The results are outlined in two main parts:

Part 1 involves interviews with eight TSM participants, while Part 2 explores insights from focus group discussions with six key stakeholders. The research aimed to comprehend emerging issues, considering existing literature, and lived experiences in skilled migration within Australia's healthcare sector. Findings shed light on various aspects of TSMs' migration journeys, offering multiple perspectives that could inform policy reform, especially in nursing. The study empirically examined TSMs' level of control over their migration experiences and suggested that policymakers could benefit from integrating TSMs' lived experiences into policy-making processes. The findings pave the way for new discussions, inspire further research, and drive actions for enhancing temporary skilled migration programs in the healthcare sector.



TSM participant key themes and dimensions

Key themes	Key dimensions
Lived experience	➢ Reasons for migration ➢ Experience of the migration process ➢ Settlement and the quality of life ➢ Qualifications/ job identification
Context of migration in Australia	➢ Workplace culture and fit/ work-life balance – Induction and orientation – Training ➢ Discrimination/ racism ➢ Industrial rights & domestic workforce
Participation (societal and institutional)	➢ Lifestyle and extracurricular activities: fundraising and spiritual commitments ➢ Agency and involvement in decision-making – Individual agency – Collective agency
Institutional and government frameworks	➢ TSM visa challenges and policy issues ➢ Opportunities for reform

FIGURE 1. TSM Participant Key themes and dimensions

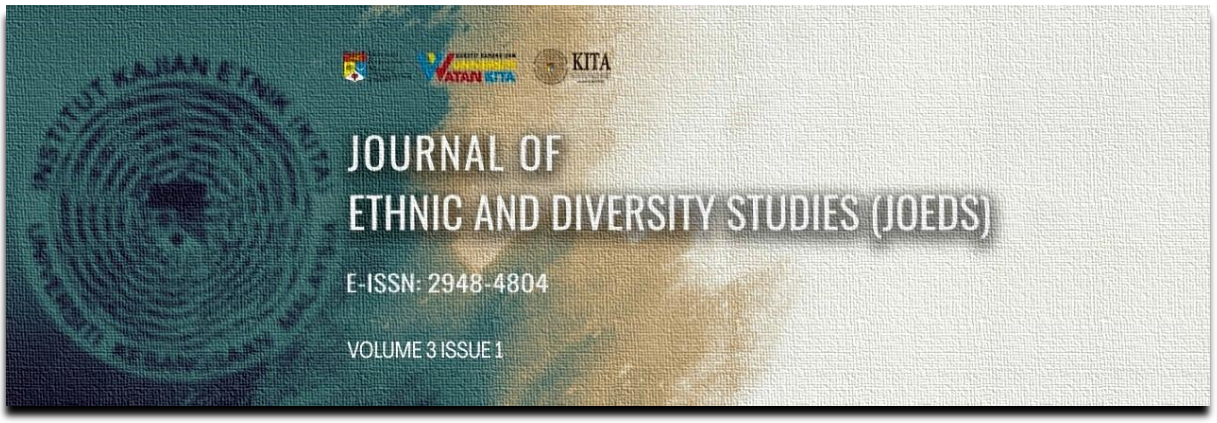
Stakeholder participant key themes and dimensions

Key themes	Key dimensions
Participant TSM Program experience	Relationship with TSMs Program satisfaction Attitudes
Participation (societal and institutional)	Contributions Qualifications Agency and involvement in decision-making
Context of Migration in Australia	1. Domestic workforce- lack of local experience and the ageing workforce 2. Discrimination/ racism
Institutional and Government Frameworks	3. Skilled migration visa and policy issues 4. Reform

FIGURE 2. Stakeholder Participant key themes and dimensions

The research considers motivations for migration, settlement experiences, workplace challenges, and qualifications, unraveling essential aspects of TSMs' journeys. Part 2 focused on stakeholder perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of TSMs' experiences. Stakeholders, selected for their expertise and roles in the migration sector, offered valuable insights and diverse perspectives, enriching the depth of the study. Highlighted issues include challenges with nursing registration, qualification recognition, and recent changes impacting employment, necessitating reforms such as streamlining processes, revisiting permanent migration pathways, extending visa time frames, and involving migrants in the policy-making process.

The study confirms the need for TSMs to have substantive agency over their migration experiences and involves policy reforms, community integration, employer engagement, legal



advocacy, education, research, partnerships, and regular evaluation of the Australian skilled migration program. Recommendations emphasise aligning policies with migrants' experiences in the nursing profession, facilitating pathways to permanent residency, enhancing settlement support, and establishing exclusive hubs to assist TSMs throughout their migration journey, including pre and post migration.

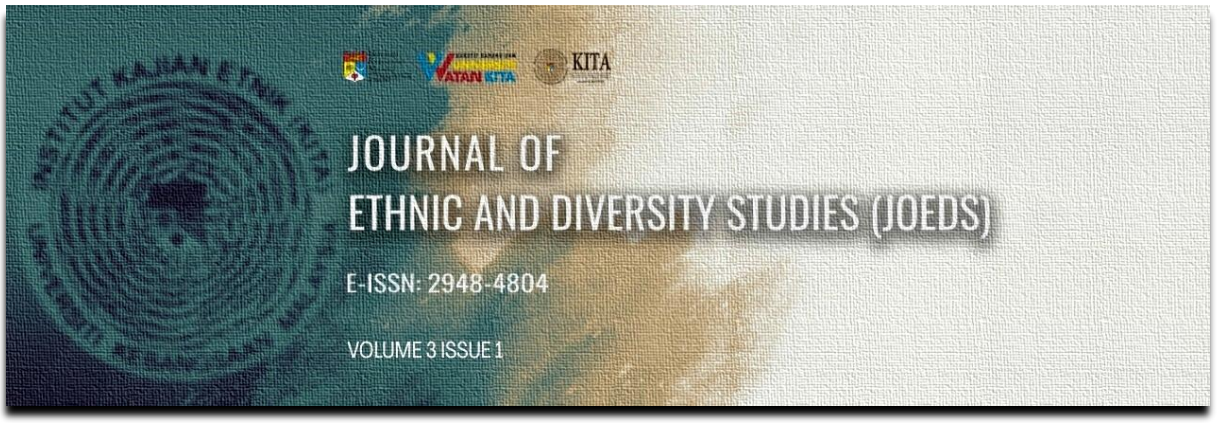
The central objective of the study is to deeply understand the extent of agency held by TSMs in the nursing profession throughout their migration journey. At its core, the study strives to enhance the well-being and agency of TSMs, recognising their substantial contributions to both society and the economy. By placing a strong emphasis on empowerment and active engagement, the study envisions a future where TSMs lead more productive and fulfilling lives while maintaining control over their migration paths.

Throughout the research, compelling insights have surfaced regarding the driving forces behind migration decisions, such as lifestyle improvements and promising job opportunities. Conversely, significant challenges like lengthy bureaucratic processes, financial burdens, and inadequate support structures have emerged as critical issues, particularly during the pre-migration stage. Contextual factors, including employment conditions and restrictions, experiences of discrimination, visa renewal costs and the scarcity of pathways to permanent residency, have profoundly shaped the experiences and stability of TSMs in Australia.

The study highlights the agency of TSMs in actively participating in Australian society, voicing concerns that affect them, and exerting influence over various other aspects of their lives. It has shed light on the obstacles related to social integration, workplace dynamics, and the frustration stemming from perceived neglect by authorities or decision-makers, which often hinder TSMs' ability to exercise their full agency. The research strongly advocates policy reforms and inclusive decision-making approaches that empower TSMs and encourage their active participation in societal, economic, and political realms.

In acknowledging its scope, the study acknowledges certain exceptions and limitations, such as its reliance on a relatively small sample size and its exclusive focus on the nursing profession. These factors may constrain the generalisability of the findings to broader populations of TSMs. Theoretical implications of the research emphasise the imperative to recognise and address power differentials and structural constraints that shape TSMs' migration experiences. On a practical level, the study calls for advocacy aimed at policy reforms and the implementation of tailored support services designed to empower TSMs and enhance their overall well-being.

The results of the study reflect a pressing need for more inclusive and supportive environments for TSMs in Australia. The results emphasise that while TSMs play a significant role in Australia’s economy by filling critical skill shortages in sectors such as healthcare, engineering, IT, and construction, their contributions are often hindered by their temporary status. This temporary status creates uncertainty and instability, making it difficult for TSMs to fully integrate into Australian society. The study found that TSMs often have limited access to essential



services, such as healthcare, housing assistance, and social welfare, leading to social exclusion and marginalisation. Additionally, TSMs face challenges in securing additional employment opportunities due to visa restrictions, citing difficulty in keeping up with visa renewal payments.

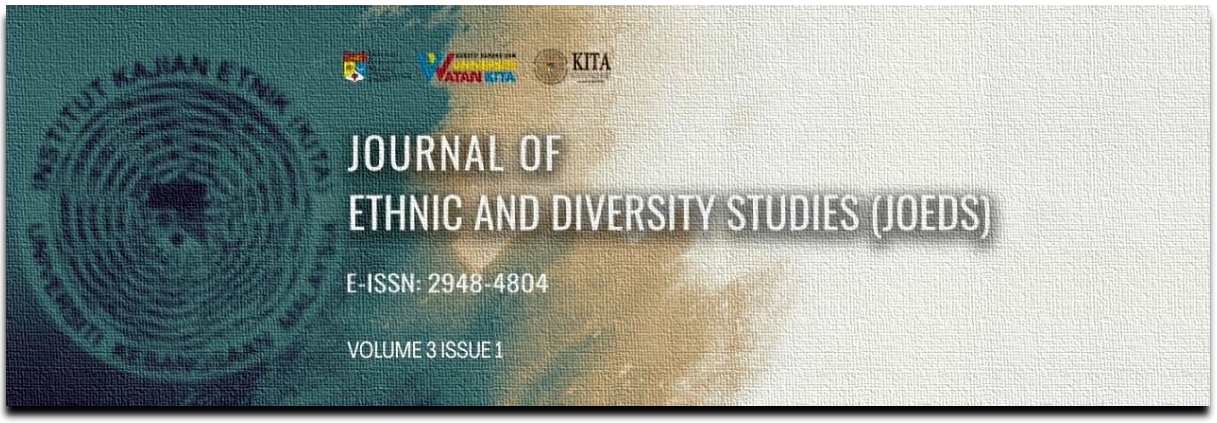
The study also highlighted the significant barrier of limited pathways to permanent residency. TSMs are often caught in a cycle of temporary work without a clear route to stay in Australia permanently. The findings showed that the current visa system, with its complex and restrictive requirements, is a major obstacle for TSMs seeking to establish long-term futures in Australia, including the inability to focus on their personal dreams and goals. This lack of stability prevents TSMs from forming deeper, more meaningful connections with Australian society and impedes their ability to invest in their long-term career and personal development.

Another key result of the study was the identification of a major gap in TSMs' involvement in decision-making processes that affect their lives. TSMs are often excluded from the policy making processes that shape their migration experiences, leading to a disconnect between their needs and the policies that govern their lives. The study found that, as a result, TSMs often feel marginalised and disenfranchised, as their voices are not heard in the development of policies that directly impact them. The results of the study reflected that, due to the diverse nature of TSMs and the varying challenges they face across different sectors and regions, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to temporary skilled migration. The findings point to the need of policies to reflect the lived experiences of TSMs to be truly effective.

Despite these challenges, the study also emphasised that TSMs demonstrate considerable agency in navigating various aspects of their lives by actively seeking to improve their skills, build social networks, and contribute to their communities. However, without adequate support, they are often unable to fully leverage this agency to reach their potential when it comes to their migration journey. The study revealed that providing enhanced support structures for TSMs—such as access to healthcare, social services, career development and stability—would allow them to maximise their contributions to Australian society and economy.

The results of the study also highlighted the importance of including TSMs in the policy-making process. By involving TSMs in the development of policies and initiatives that affect them, the study found that policies would be better tailored to address their unique needs and challenges. This involvement would also foster a greater sense of ownership and empowerment among TSMs, encouraging their deeper engagement in Australian society. The study concluded that TSMs' voices need to be heard in the policy process, as their lived experiences offer crucial insights that are currently missing from the policy-making cycle.

The study revealed the necessity for greater social and cultural integration initiatives for TSMs. The research found that social isolation is a significant challenge for many TSMs, with cultural differences and language barriers often exacerbating their feelings of exclusion. The study emphasised the need for programs that encourage cross-cultural exchange and social networking to promote mutual understanding between TSMs and the broader Australian community. These



initiatives would not only help TSMs feel more connected but also foster stronger community ties and social cohesion.

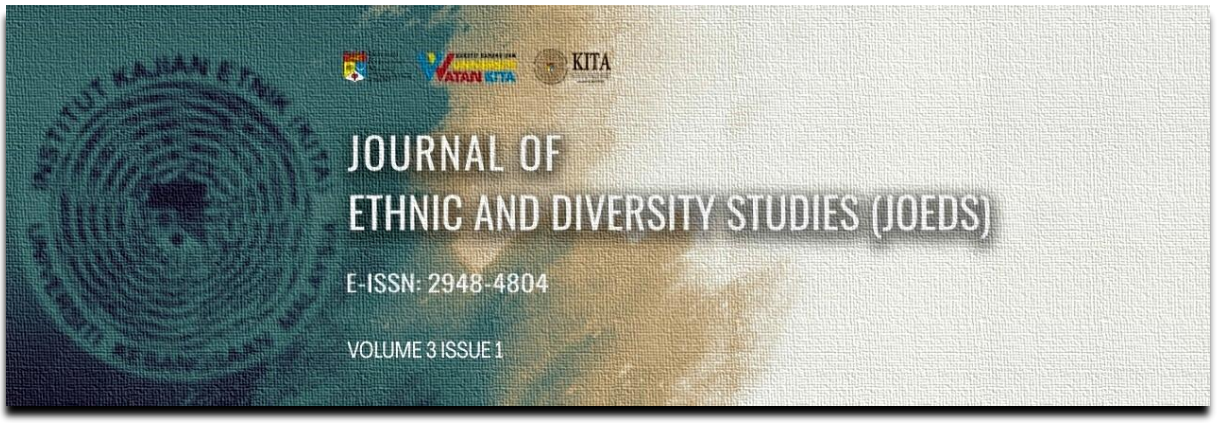
It is also important to note that some of the TSMs interviewed, despite having been in Australia for several years, still had to renew their visas and were not offered permanent residency. This is particularly noteworthy given that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government was actively seeking skilled migrants to fill critical nursing shortages. Many TSMs including those interviewed in this study, who were already working in healthcare and performing well, were still not considered for permanent residency. Meanwhile, during the same time, additional skilled migrants were being brought in to fill the same roles. This highlights the inconsistency in the treatment and opportunities available to TSMs who have already made significant contributions to key sectors like healthcare.

The results of this study reflect a critical need for policy adjustments that can address the barriers TSMs face in Australia. The findings highlight the importance of creating clearer pathways to permanent residency, expanding support services, and ensuring TSMs are actively involved in decision-making processes. The research highlights the necessity for tailored, inclusive policies that consider the diverse needs of TSMs and their potential to contribute to Australian society. By implementing these recommendations, Australia can ensure that TSMs are not just seen as temporary workers but as valuable, long-term contributors to the country's social and economic fabric.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the agency of TSMs in the nursing profession throughout their migration journey, with a focus on enhancing their well-being and empowerment. The research identifies key motivations for migration, such as better opportunities and lifestyle improvements, while also revealing significant challenges like bureaucratic delays, financial burdens, and discrimination. Despite these obstacles, TSMs demonstrate agency by actively engaging with Australian society, voicing concerns, and trying to influence their circumstances. However, limited pathways to permanent residency and other structural barriers hinder their ability to fully exercise their agency.

The study advocates policy reforms to remove barriers to permanent residency, improve support structures, and involve TSMs in decision-making processes that affect their lives. While acknowledging the study's limitations, including a small sample size and a focus on the nursing profession, it emphasises the need for more inclusive and supportive environments for TSMs. The research highlights the importance of recognising TSMs' contributions to Australian society and calls for changes that allow them to fully participate and thrive within the broader social, economic, and political frameworks.



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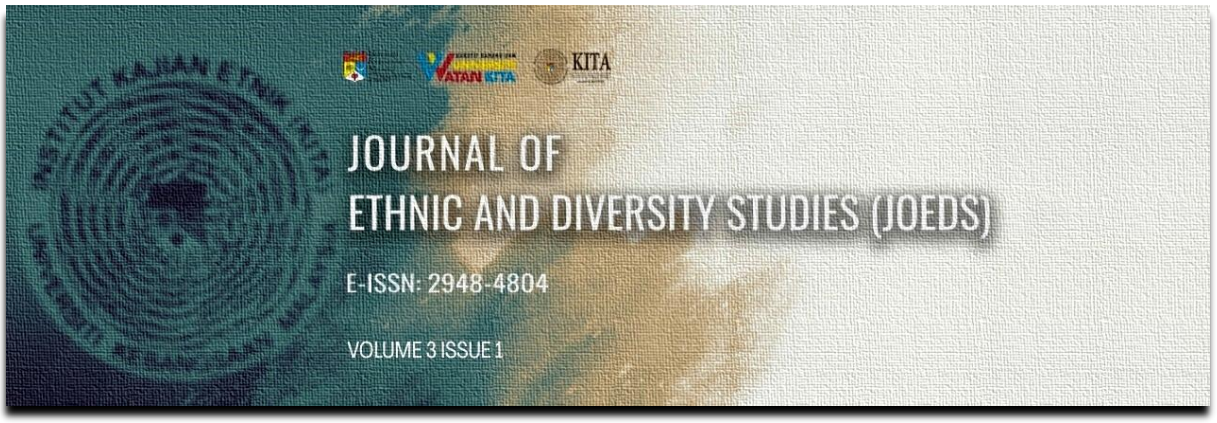

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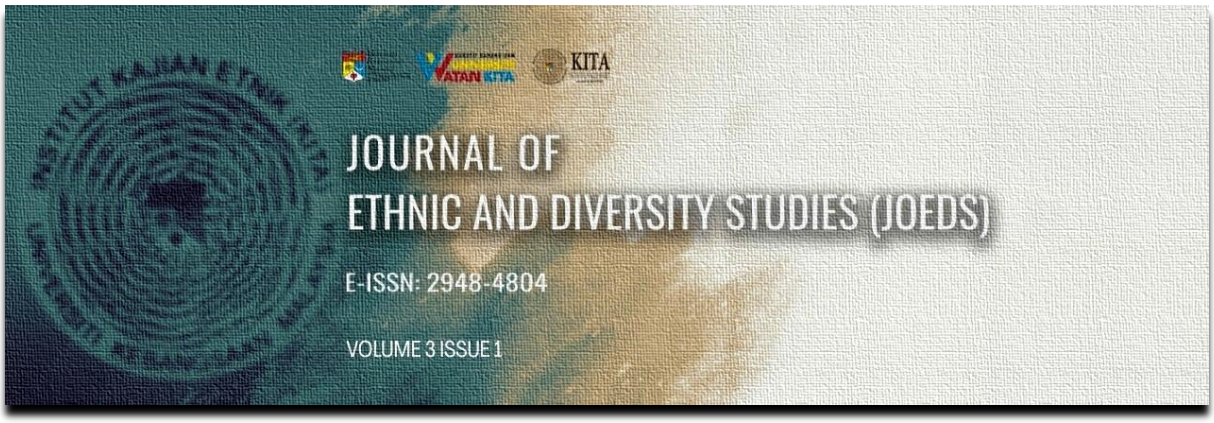

Multimedia Review: The Vulture and the Little Girl by Kevin Carter (1993)

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ABSTRACT

Some cultures of the world refuse to be photographed. They believe that a photograph takes more than just an image, it takes one's soul instead. The Vulture and Little Girl, a 1993 Pulitzer Prize winning photograph, depicts the story of Kevin Carter. Kevin Carter's photograph not only garnered him the Pulitzer Prize but also subjected him to widespread criticism for capturing the image without intervening to assist the child. This review explores Carter's photograph through sociological theories, including social stratification, conflict theory, modern sociological perspectives and the global failure to address such atrocities. It also uses the photograph as an epistemological tool to explore the visual composition and quality as artistic benchmarks, drawing comparisons with other iconic images to establish critical criteria in multimedia ethics, style, and social impact.

ABSTRAK

Sesetengah budaya dunia enggan diambil gambar. Mereka percaya bahawa gambar mengambil lebih daripada sekadar imej, sebaliknya ia memerlukan jiwa seseorang. The Vulture and Little Girl, gambar pemenang Hadiah Pulitzer 1993, menggambarkan kisah Kevin Carter. Gambar Kevin Carter, bukan sahaja meraihnya Hadiah Pulitzer tetapi juga menundukkannya kepada kritikan meluas kerana merakam imej itu tanpa campur tangan untuk membantu kanak-kanak itu. Kajian ini meneroka gambar Carter melalui teori sosiologi, termasuk stratifikasi sosial, teori konflik, perspektif sosiologi moden dan kegagalan global untuk menangani kekejaman tersebut. Ia juga menggunakan gambar sebagai alat epistemologi untuk meneroka komposisi visual dan kualiti sebagai penanda aras artistik, membuat perbandingan dengan imej ikonik lain untuk mewujudkan kriteria kritikal dalam etika multimedia, gaya dan impak sosial.

INTRODUCTION

Some cultures of the world refuse to be photographed. They believe that a photograph takes more than just an image, it takes one's soul instead. *The Vulture and Little Girl* a 1993 Pulitzer Prize winning photograph, depicts the story of Kevin Carter. Kevin Carter's photograph, *The*

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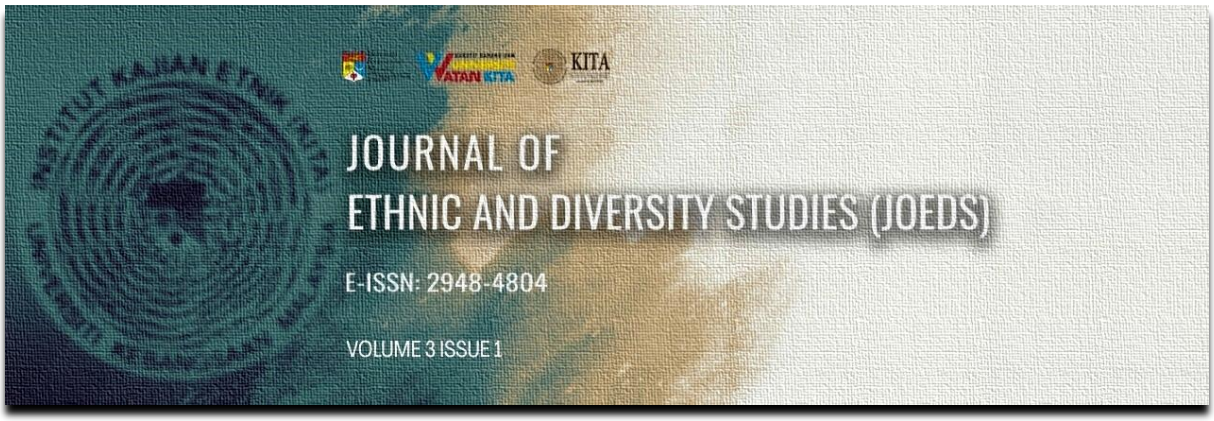
Vulture and the Little Girl, not only garnered him the Pulitzer Prize but also subjected him to widespread criticism for capturing the image without intervening to assist the child. This scrutiny, coupled with the haunting scenes he witnessed, weighed heavily on him, leading to his suicide just months after receiving the award (McCabe, 2014; MacLeod, 2001; Marinovich & Silva, 2000). This multimedia review reveals the real-life documentary, autobiography with an ontological stance of an individual's life journey in the quest of highlighting to the world of global humanitarianism, injustice, inequality, systemic neglect, real-life lived experience of structural violence, human suffering, and the ethics of photojournalism. This is more than just a still image. It is a haunting snapshot that has stirred emotional and ethical discussion within the realms of sociology. Captured in famine-stricken Sudan, the image became an enduring visual metaphor of social injustice, particularly ethnicity, class stratification and capitalism within the context of apartheid and post-colonial South Africa. The photograph portrays a starving child collapsed on the ground, watched closely by a single lurking vulture.

This review explores Carter's photograph through sociological theories, including social stratification, conflict theory, modern sociological perspectives and the global failure to address such atrocities. It also uses the photograph as an epistemological tool to explore the visual composition and quality as artistic benchmarks, drawing comparisons with other iconic images to establish critical criteria in multimedia ethics, style, and social impact. While The Vulture and the Little Girl directly portrays famine in Sudan, its broader implications evoke the legacies of colonial exploitation, such as slavery and systemic inequality, particularly evident in postcolonial African societies like South Africa (Worden, 2012; Rodney, 1972). Exploitation, inequality and conflict are the three ingredients of colonialism from Europe which tore apart the social and economic fabric of South Africa. South Africa shared the European practise of forcing native Africans into slavery. Slavery is a problem that greatly influenced Africa as a continent and many of its problems can be linked to it. Slavery was common practise at that time and Dutch settlers needed workers. Fundamentally, they used slaves to manage their properties and enterprises. Some of these slaves originated from South Africa and nearby countries. The fact that the slaves were not white or European was the only thing they had in common. Without a pass, slaves were not permitted to leave their workplace. Poor nutrition, overcrowding, corporal punishment and the ban on marriage all applied to them. If they did have children, they were kept as slaves permanently and became the property of the slave owners.

As soon as slavery was outlawed, settled farmers fled the nation since it was no longer profitable to use slave labour (Sontag, 2003: Silva, 1994). Although The Vulture and the Little Girl captures a moment from the Sudanese famine, the sociological weight of the image can be connected to the broader African experience of colonial exploitation and racialized violence. In South Africa, British imperial interests in diamonds and gold led to the displacement of indigenous populations and entrenched racial hierarchies (Pakenham, 1991; Fredrickson, 1981). These dynamics later manifested in violent state suppression during apartheid, including

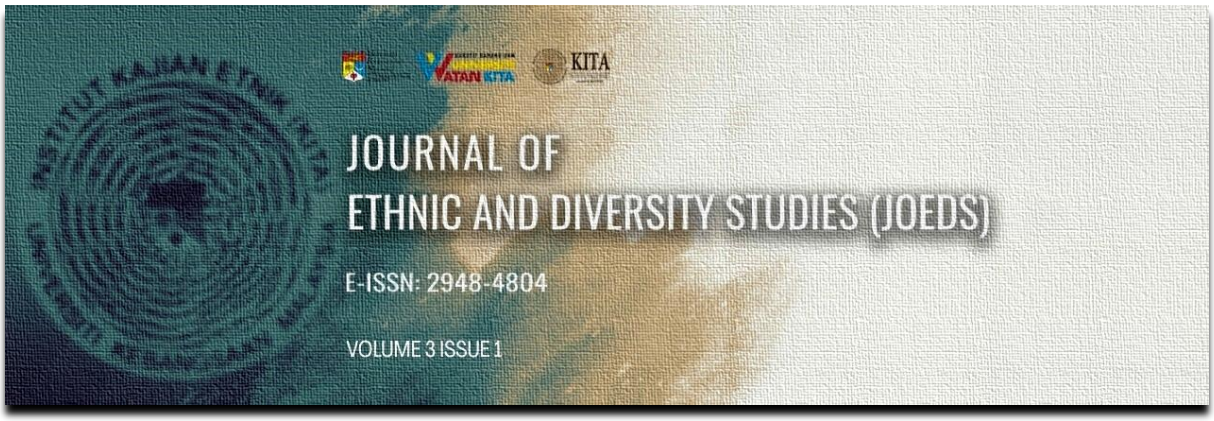


the deployment of death squads (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998). British forces invaded and overthrew the ruling sons of soil indigenous population in order to acquire the resources. Thereafter, it would become an independent state for a few decades but one that nevertheless carried the legacy of earlier colonial authority, the notion that people of colour were inferior to their white European counterparts. These factors, led to protracted Civil Wars. Hardworking Africans from lower social classes opposed the state and fought for the same legal protections and rights as their colonial citizens. The South African government sent out death squads to literally patrol the streets and assassinate people throughout the 1980s (Mamdani, 1996). The sociological paradigm which explains apartheid policy of segregation and discrimination on grounds of race and ethnicity will be best explained by *The Conflict Theory* of Karl Marx.

KEVIN CARTER: A LIFE FRAMED BY CONSCIENCE AND CONFLICT

Kevin Carter's lived experience under apartheid deeply shaped his moral compass. Born into a white middle-class family in Johannesburg, he was disturbed by the racial violence he saw from a young age (O'Laughlin, 1994). He often questioned his parents, wondering how a Catholic, liberal family could accept such systemic cruelty as fair or just. Initially aspiring to become a chemist after high school, Carter eventually abandoned his academic pursuits and was conscripted into the South African Defence Force. His time in the South African Defence Force further intensified his ethical turmoil especially after defending a *Black* waiter from ridicule, for which he was violently attacked and labelled a *kaffir boetie* a derogatory term meaning *Nigger* lover. (Marinovich & Silva, 2000; Nachtwey et al., 1994). Traumatised and disillusioned, Carter went absent without leave (AWOL) and attempted to become a radio DJ. It's a military term used when a soldier leaves their post or duty without official permission. He was eventually captured and forced to complete his military conscription. In 1983, Carter witnessed the aftermath of the Church Street bombing in Pretoria. This event became a turning point in his life.

Disillusioned by the heavily biased media portrayal, which painted only the narrative of police victimhood while ignoring the deeper context of oppression, Carter resolved to pursue photojournalism. He sought to tell the stories that mainstream media often omitted, those of the oppressed, the brutalised, and the forgotten. While national coverage focused on images of *Black South Africans* clashing with authorities, Carter turned his lens toward the source of their anguish: the cruelty of apartheid, the systematic abuse, and the existential violence that compelled such resistance. One of the most horrific practices he documented was *necklacing*, a brutal form of execution inflicted on collaborators and informants. Victims would have a tire forced over their torso, immobilizing their arms, before being doused with petrol and set alight. Carter was the first to photograph this atrocity. Although he felt morally conflicted, he believed that capturing such events was vital to awakening the world to South Africa's deepening human



crisis. He later admitted that the emotional toll of witnessing and documenting such violence began to erode him.

Still, he hoped his images might urge international leaders to pressure oppressive regimes into ending segregation, especially in the context of the emerging Fourth Industrial Revolution.

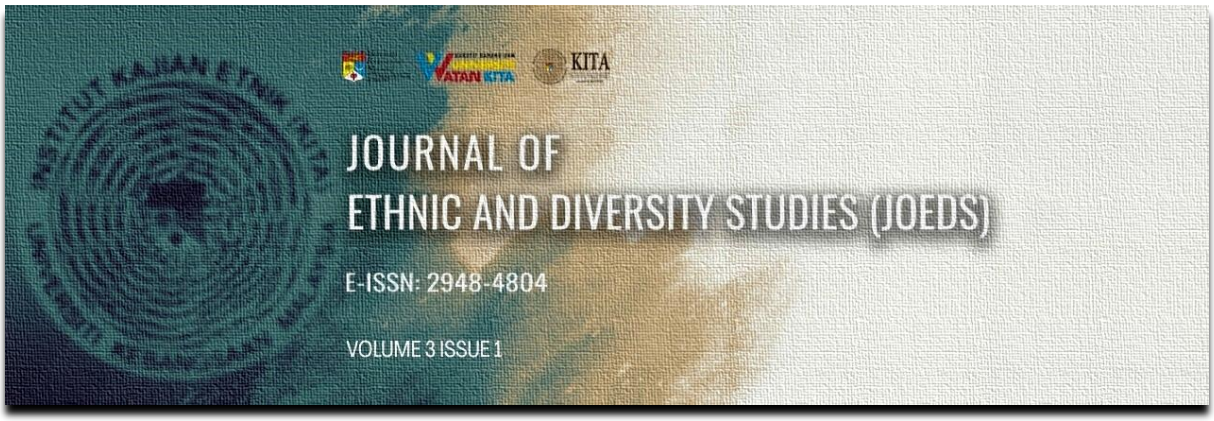
> *"I was appalled at what they were doing. I was appalled at what I was doing. But then people started talking about those pictures... then I felt maybe my actions hadn't been all that bad."* (attributed to Kevin Carter, Kumar, 2022)

This quote reveals the duality of Carter's inner world: part documentarian, part empath, constantly questioning whether his work illuminated atrocities or inadvertently sensationalized them. He feared that media attention might actually fuel the violence by making it performative.

> *"After having seen so many necklacing's on the news, it occurred to me that either many others were being performed off camera or that the presence of the camera completed the last requirement and acted as a catalyst in this terrible reaction... The strong message that was being sent was only meaningful if it were carried by the media. The question that haunts me is: would those people have been necklaced if there was no media coverage?"* (attributed to Kevin Carter, Wikipedia, n.d.)

This chilling reflection highlights the ethical quagmire photojournalists face where the act of witnessing can become a force in shaping the event itself. Over time, Carter would photograph many African war zones, documenting the aftermath of political instability and violence across the continent. However, one country in particular would weigh heavily on his conscience: Sudan. In March 1993, the United Nations invited a group of photojournalists to raise global awareness about the famine ravaging the country. Carter was among them. Initially photographing at a feeding station, he wandered off after hearing the faint whimper of a child. There, he encountered the scene that would define his legacy: a severely malnourished child, curled over in exhaustion, while a vulture loomed ominously in the background. Carter waited, hoping the vulture would spread its wings for a more dramatic shot. When it didn't, he took several photographs and then shooed the bird away. The resulting image was harrowing. A frozen moment of desolation, starvation, and silent predation. After taking the photo, Carter reportedly walked to a nearby tree, lit a cigarette, and wept. He later said the only thing he could think of was hugging his daughter. Despite its power, the image raised immediate ethical questions: *Did the child survive? Why didn't you help her?* These inquiries haunted Carter.

> *"It may be difficult for people to understand, but as a photojournalist, my first instinct was to make the photograph. As soon as that job was done and the child moved on, I*



> *felt completely devastated. I think I tried to pray; I tried to talk to God to assure Him that if He got me out of this place I would change my life."* (Kevin Carter, NPR.org, 2006).

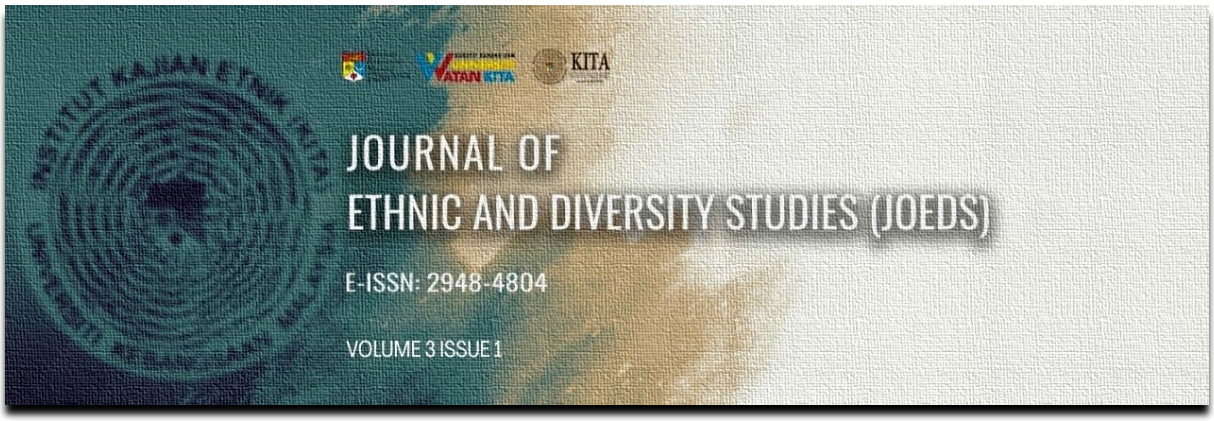
Importantly, few members of the public understood that photojournalists, especially in crisis zones, are often prohibited from interacting with their subjects to prevent the spread of disease or interference with humanitarian operations. Carter was instructed not to touch or assist famine victims. Furthermore, the photo's framing was misleading. The vulture, estimated to be about 20 meters away, was not stalking the child. In fact, there were other vultures just outside the frame, feeding on nearby waste. The child, identified by a feeding station wristband had already been registered for aid, and her parents were likely nearby. Years later, the child's family confirmed the child was a boy named Kong Nyong. He survived the famine but tragically died in 2007 from malaria. Despite winning the Pulitzer Prize for the photograph in April 1994, the emotional toll on Carter was overwhelming. On July 27, 1994 just two months later, Kevin Carter died by suicide. In his final note, he wrote:

> *"I'm really, really sorry. The pain of life overrides the joy to the point that joy does not exist… I am haunted by the vivid memories of killings & corpses & anger & pain… of starving or wounded children, of trigger-happy madmen, often police, of killer executioners… I have gone to join Ken, if I am that lucky."* (attributed to Kevin Carter, Harvard University Asia Center, 1999)

Carter's story is a tragic testament to the burden borne by those who seek to expose injustice through the lens of a camera. His life and work continue to provoke deep ethical questions: Can bearing witness justify inaction? Does documenting suffering absolve us, or implicate us further? And most crucially, at what cost do we preserve truth?

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION AND AESTHETIC ANALYSIS

Kevin Carter's *The Vulture and the Little Girl* is not only a haunting document of famine and human despair but also a highly calculated and powerful composition rooted in visual storytelling. Through a nuanced orchestration of photographic principles such as the rule of thirds, tonal contrast, spatial arrangement, and symbolic framing, the image communicates emotional and moral urgency beyond its surface. The rule of thirds is employed with precision, placing the emaciated child in the lower left intersection of the frame and the vulture in the upper right. This diagonal tension creates a dynamic interplay between vulnerability and predation, guiding the viewer's gaze across the visual plane and constructing a silent narrative of helplessness and threat (Arnheim 1974). According to Briot (2010), strong composition necessitates of balance, leading lines, contrast and emotional gravity, are also present in Carter's work. The vast negative space surrounding the subjects amplifies the child's isolation.

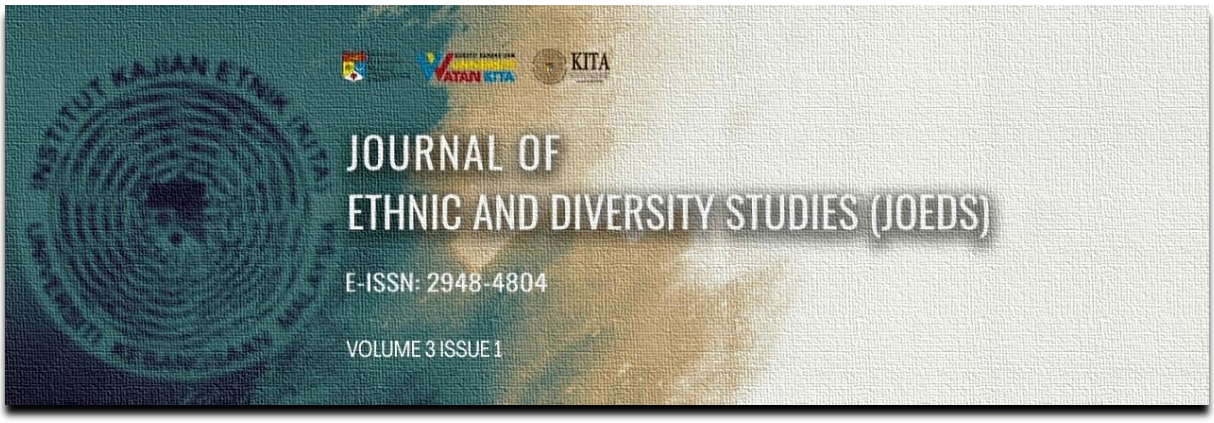


As Koffka (1935) emphasized in Gestalt theory, humans interpret the whole before its parts. The barrenness of the environment creates a psychological void, one that symbolically mirrors the absence of aid, compassion or intervention. The stark spatial emptiness evokes a profound sense of global detachment, compelling viewers to confront their humanitarian responsibility, a visual technique often used in conflict photography to provoke emotional and moral introspection (Sontag, 2003; Zelizer, 2010).

Meanwhile, tonally the image is characterised by a stark contrast between light and shadow. The skeletal figure of the child and the textured plumage of the vulture are accentuated by natural lighting that dramatizes every contour and crack in the earth. These elements are not just visually arresting, they operate semiotically as well (Barthes 1977) symbolizing the extremity of suffering and the spectre of death that hovers within the composition. Whilst, from a psychological perspective, the posture of the child collapsed and seemingly lifeless invokes the phenomenon of learned helplessness (Seligman 1975), reflecting how chronic adversity can paralyze action and agency. The implied motion of the vulture, cautiously approaching yet suspended in the background, introduces narrative ambiguity. Invoke a question, is it simply a bird, or a metaphor for exploitative systems and social abandonment? Framing choices also play a critical role. Carter intentionally excludes any surrounding human presence, despite later admissions that aid workers were nearby. This omission creates a more intense and focused composition that enhances the viewer's emotional response but also raises ethical questions about constructed narratives in photojournalism (Zelizer, 2010; Marinovich & Silva, 2000). As Sontag (2003) suggests, aestheticizing suffering can provoke both empathy and apathy. It confronts viewers while simultaneously implicating them in voyeuristic consumption. Ultimately, the strength of Carter's photograph lies not only in its content but in the deliberate visual architecture that supports its meaning. It is a masterclass in affective composition where technical choices serve to enhance emotional resonance, sociological symbolism and moral provocation.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND GLOBAL INEQUALITY

The photograph depicts the child as the marginalised Sudanese communities and the vulture symbolises the predatory nature of global capitalism. Carter's photograph highlights social stratification at its most extreme where famine, conflict, and historical exploitation intersect. Giddens and Sutton (2013) describe stratification as the hierarchical layering of society based on class, race, or other status markers. The image encapsulates a social world where individuals are structurally denied basic human needs. It echoes the legacy of colonialism and slavery in Africa, as discussed in the accompanying narrative: slaves were stripped of dignity, autonomy, and opportunity, much like the modern-day child in the photo, reduced to a symbol of a failing global system. Robertson (1992) contextualizes this within globalisation theory, asserting that systemic inequalities are perpetuated through unequal economic relations. The photograph serves as a powerful visual representation of the extreme poverty faced by individuals in sub-



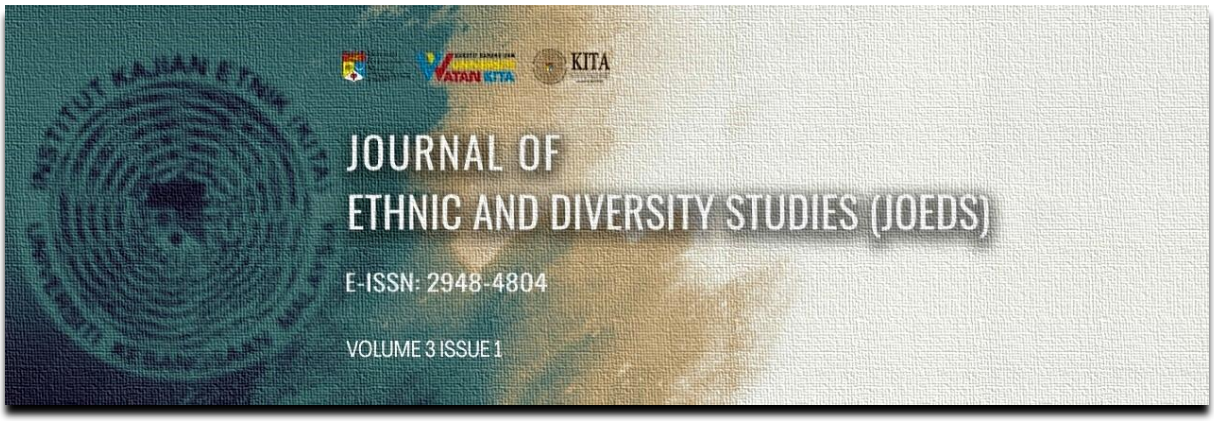
Saharan Africa, particularly in war-torn Sudan, as shown in the backdrop of the child's suffering. The child's vulnerability and the haunting presence of the vulture suggest a broader, systemic failure in addressing poverty and inequality on a global scale, drawing attention to the impacts of international neglect.

CONFLICT THEORY AND CAPITALIST CRITIQUE

Karl Marx conceptualized society as a system of social relationships fundamentally rooted in economics, with capitalism and modes of production serving as the primary determinants of major social forces. He argued that the history of human society is predominantly shaped by economic conflict, resulting in the formation of two antagonistic social classes: the bourgeoisie (the white capitalist elites or owners) and the proletariat (the indigenous labouring class). According to Marx, conflict emerges when the proletariat becomes aware of the exploitative tactics employed by the bourgeoisie to maximize profits through cheap labour. This realisation, Marx posited, would eventually catalyse a proletarian revolution aimed at dismantling the capitalist system and replacing it with a more equitable socialist structure. This revolutionary upheaval took the form of violent resistance such as *necklacing*, a gruesome but symbolic act of protest against those seen as collaborators of the oppressive regime. Marx's ontological perspective views the world as inherently unstable, driven by the inevitable transition of control over resources from capitalist to socialist systems. Epistemologically, Marx's conflict theory grounded in scientific realism offers a lens through which to uncover the hidden realities and causal mechanisms underpinning social exploitation and inequality.

The capitalist practices implemented by the European ruling class in South Africa marginalised and oppressed the indigenous population, intensifying social stratification. According to Marx, capitalism is destined to collapse and be superseded by socialism. Yet, despite the theoretical inevitability of its demise, capitalism remains a dominant global system. Nevertheless, Marx's predictions have materialised in various contexts such as South Africa, Sudan, Libya, Iraq, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Philippines, and more recently, Malaysia where social consciousness and resistance movements have challenged capitalist structures. Marx maintained that class consciousness would ultimately lead to societal transformation. Once individuals become aware of their exploitation, they are compelled to rise up and dismantle the systems that oppress them. In this regard, Carter's photograph, serves as a poignant visual critique of capitalist apathy. Marx's conflict theory (Ritzer & Goodman, 2000) is indispensable for interpreting the power dynamics represented in this image. The image functions as both a testament to human suffering and a powerful catalyst for revolution and social change, aligning with Marx's belief that awareness of injustice is the first step toward liberation.

The vulture is capitalism and the child is proletariat. The photograph metaphorically stages the exploitative relationship between oppressor and oppressed. As Chan and Aboo (2018) explain, stratification systems are maintained not merely through legal frameworks but



cultural narratives. Images like Carter's disrupt these narratives by making suffering visible. Furthermore, the image supports Marx's prediction: exploitation breeds resistance. Carter's photograph act as a documentation of activism through art. Similar to Mandela's resistance or Sudanese uprisings, became part of a broader push against hegemonic power structures.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN PHOTOJOURNALISM

The ethical debate surrounding Carter's actions is well documented. While the child survived, critics accused Carter of exploitation. His suicide two months after winning the Pulitzer highlights the psychological toll of bearing witness without intervention. Fulcher and Scott (2011) stress that media must balance documentation with empathy. Yet photojournalists often face institutional constraints: interacting with subjects can contaminate scenes or violate health protocols. In Carter's own words:

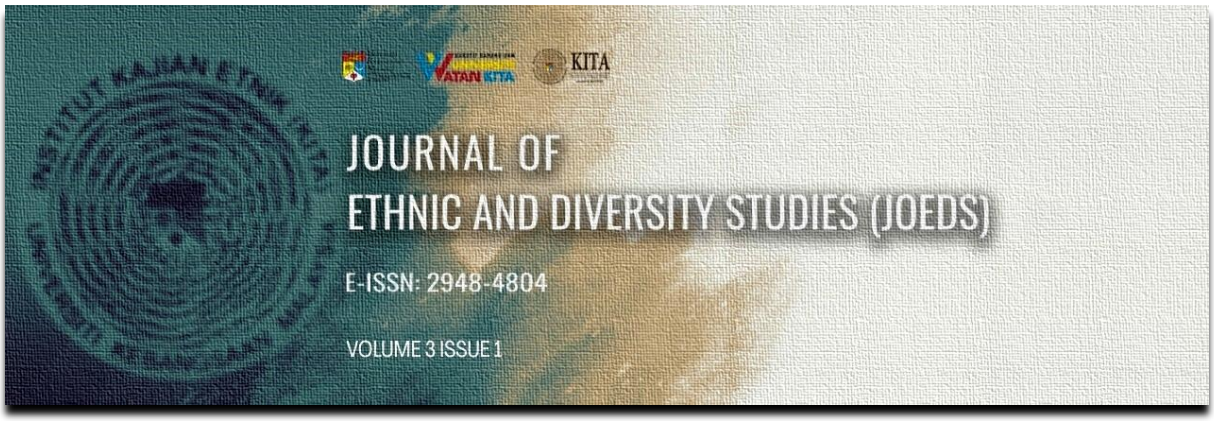
> *"I am haunted by the vivid memories of killings & corpses...of starving or wounded children"* (attributed to Kevin Carter, Harvard University Asia Center, 1999)

The phrase reveals an epistemological crisis: is documenting suffering sufficient, or is it complicit? These reflections challenge photojournalists and consumers alike to interrogate their roles in a media-saturated world. As documented, Carter was prohibited from touching famine victims for fear of disease transmission. Furthermore, photojournalistic ethics dictate non-intervention in order to preserve the objectivity of reportage. However, this rule is fraught with moral complexity. This reveals a paradox in visual media ethics: when does observation become complicity? As Carter himself questioned, was the vulture merely in the photo or was it, in fact, the photographer himself?

COMPARATIVE ICONOGRAPHY AND BENCHMARKING

In terms of iconic status, *The Vulture and the Little Girl* is often compared to other historic photographs such as Nick Ut's *Napalm Girl* (1972), Eddie Adams's *Saigon Execution* (1968), and Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* (1936). Each shares key benchmarks: emotional intensity, historical resonance, symbolic imagery, and wide dissemination. The criteria used for comparison include:

- Narrative Depth – The story behind the image (Briot, 2010).
- Symbolism – Representation of broader societal conditions.
- Emotive Power – The ability to provoke public discourse.
- Ethical Complexity – Moral questions raised by the image's creation or dissemination.
- Legacy – Enduring impact on society, policy, and culture.



Carter's photograph stands among the most influential, serving as a benchmark in photojournalism education and media ethics debates. As the saying goes, *a picture is worth a thousand words*, highlights the power of visual communication. A single still photograph conveyed complex ideas and emotions effectively as compared to a detailed verbal description. Similar to a famous quote by Mahatma Gandhi, *even a single lamp dispels the deepest darkness*. Carter's vision through his lens, envisioned the humankinds future undertakings.

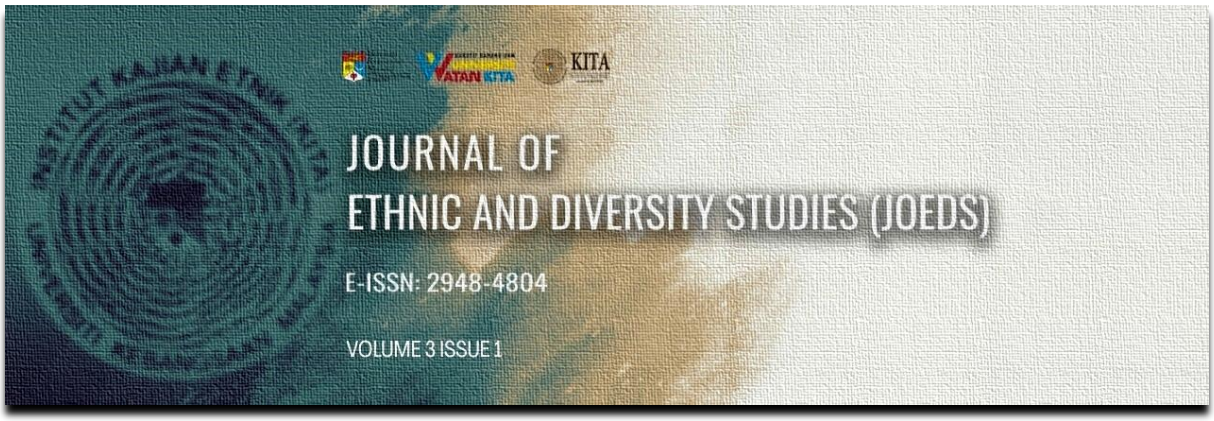
NEWER SOCIOLOGICAL INSIGHTS AND MEDIA STUDIES

Contemporary research in visual sociology and digital media ethics has added layers of interpretation. Chan, Edo, and Hussain (2016) argue that visual culture, especially in multilingual and multicultural societies, serves as a field of honour for identity and representation. With the rise of social media, photos like Carter's are now rapidly disseminated and recontextualized, often stripped of background, creating new ethical dilemmas.

Shamsul (2017) further highlights the *top-down* vs. *bottom-up* approaches to social integration. While Carter's image originated from a top-down UN intervention, its grassroots impact was substantial, prompting global awareness and reshaping public sentiment about African crises. As the Fourth Industrial Revolution continues, integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and social media, such multimedia documentation must navigate the fine line between advocacy and commodification of suffering.

CONCLUSION

Through witnessing, analysing, and reflecting on Kevin Carter's life journey, I have come to deeply understand the devastating effects of systemic social segregation. The apartheid injustice in South Africa, like other forms of institutionalised inequality enforced by the dominant social class upon the oppressed, inevitably sows the seeds of revolution. Marx's *Conflict Theory* is profoundly validated in this context. Social segregation and class stratification lead to the emergence of class consciousness, which, in turn, culminates in violent resistance and the eventual uprising of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. This dynamic was epitomized in South Africa through the eventual liberation of Nelson Mandela, a lower-class activist and anti-apartheid leader who was imprisoned for 27 years. His release in 1990 marked the beginning of the end for the apartheid regime and ushered in a new era of peace and reconciliation in a racially and ethnically divided nation. Mandela's leadership not only transformed South Africa but also ignited global movements in the pursuit of justice and human rights. On April 20, 1964, Mandela delivered his iconic three-hour speech, *I Am Prepared to Die*, during his trial for sabotage as the leader of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress. His words continue to resonate across generations, capturing the spirit of resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to justice:



> *"It always seems impossible until it's done. Many people in this country have paid the price before me, and many will pay the price after me. Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again. Money won't create success, the freedom to make it will. Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."* (quote attributed to Nelson Mandela, McKenna, A., n.d.)

This academic reflection seeks to explore the enduring relevance of injustice and inequality in society, particularly as it relates to class oppression, race, and the power of visual documentation. *The Vulture and the Little Girl* is not just a still photo, it is a mirror to humanity's failures and a call for a global moral action. Hence, Kevin Carter's photograph continues to educate through pain, truth, and empathy. His life is his message.

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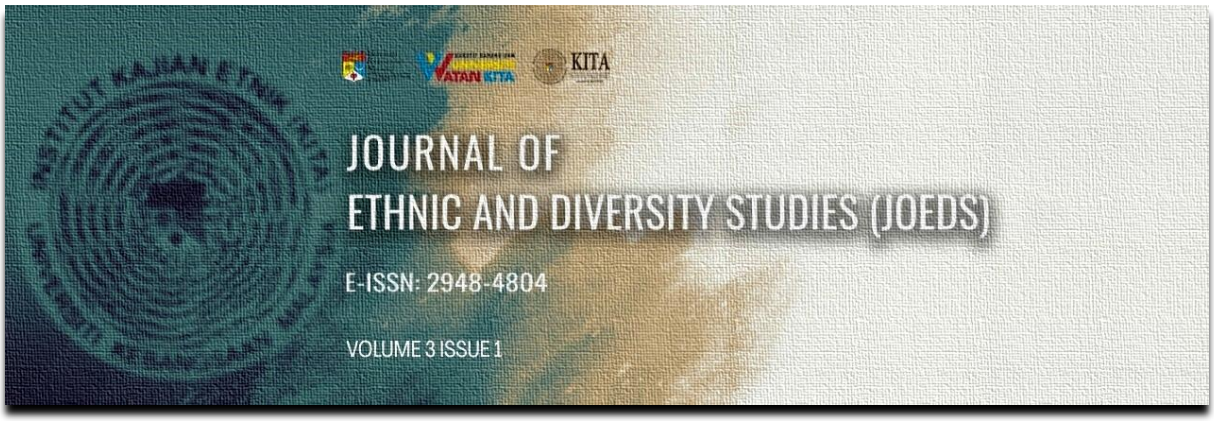

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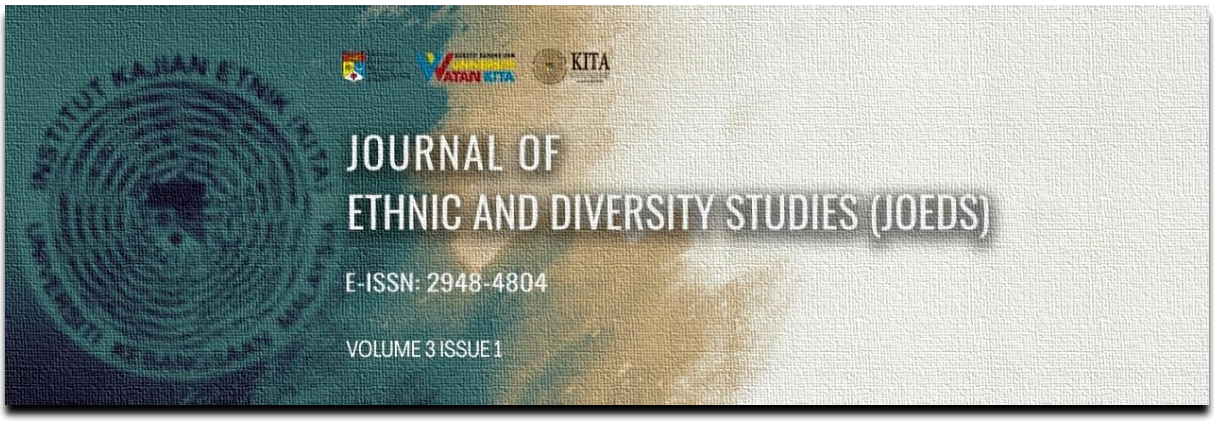

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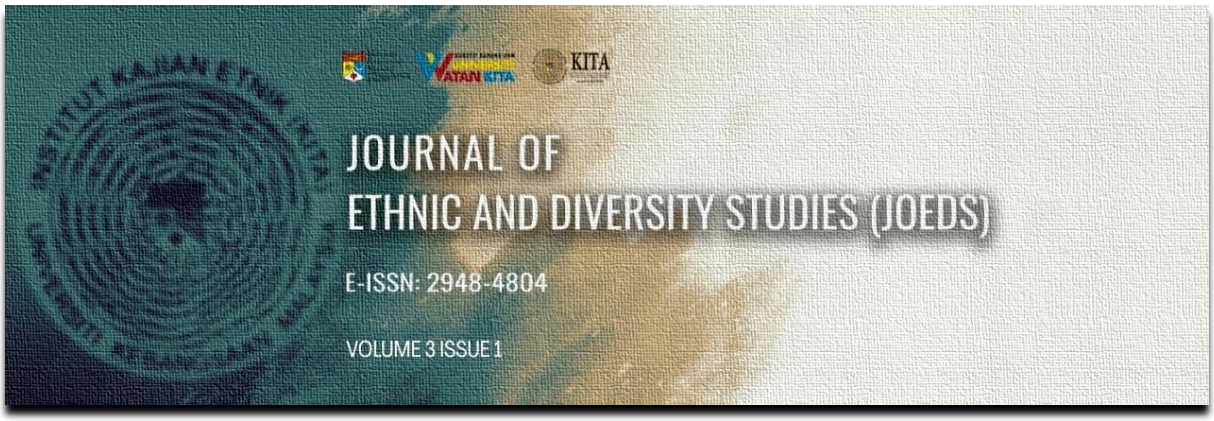

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