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ABSTRACTS

**THE EVOLVING TRADE AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
BETWEEN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM**

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Economic relations between Cambodia and Vietnam are characterised by strong trade ties, investment collaboration, and shared economic interests, though not without contention. The two countries occupy distinct positions within regional integration processes, deriving differing benefits from their interactions. The study aims to analyse the evolution of Cambodia-Vietnam economic relations, focusing on bilateral trade dynamics, investment patterns, and ongoing

integration processes that affect both economies. The research employs various statistical analyses, utilising data from reputable sources such as the World Bank and ASEANstats. It examines trade and investment activities from the 2000s to the present, assessing both qualitative and quantitative indicators. The findings indicate a significant increase in bilateral trade, with Vietnam emerging as Cambodia's third-largest trading partner. However, the study reveals persistent asymmetries in trade data reported by each country, often highlighting frequent statistical discrepancies. It also discusses the predominance of raw material exports from Cambodia and the implications of substantial Vietnamese investments across sectors of the Cambodian economy. The article concludes that while the economic cooperation has brought benefits such as job creation and infrastructure development in Cambodia, it also presents threats, notably the risk of Cambodia becoming raw material appendage to Vietnam. Enhancing the efficiency of these economic relations, developing infrastructure, and fostering deeper bilateral cooperation are posited as crucial for the sustainable growth of both nations.

Keywords: Cambodia, economic ties, integration, investments, trade, Vietnam

UNDERSTANDING YOUTH CONSUMERS OF HALAL COSMETICS: A CROSS-COUNTRY STUDY OF MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

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The halal cosmetics industry is a growing part of Southeast Asia's economy, driven by consumer demand for products that meet both religious values and modern lifestyle needs. This study compares the purchasing behaviour of youth consumers in Malaysia and Indonesia, two key Muslim-majority countries that play an important role in the

halal cosmetics sector. The aim is to explore the social, cultural, and psychological factors that influence young people's choices of halal cosmetic products and to contribute to a better understanding of consumer behaviour in the region. The study used a quantitative descriptive method, with data collected from 400 university students, 200 from each country, through a structured questionnaire. The survey measured purchasing behaviour, attitude, personality, perceived environmental concern, price, psychology of shoppers, and religiosity. The results show clear differences between the two countries. In Malaysia, purchasing behaviour is mainly shaped by personality and attitude, showing the importance of personal identity and lifestyle. In Indonesia, religiosity and environmental concern have the strongest influence, reflecting collective values and ethical awareness. These differences highlight the cultural and institutional contexts that shape consumption patterns in Southeast Asia. This study helps to improve the understanding of youth consumer behaviour in the region and provides useful insights for those developing halal cosmetic products that meet the values and needs of young Southeast Asian consumers.

Keywords: *halal cosmetics, purchase behaviour, youth, Malaysia, Indonesia*

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD AMONG THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

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Indigenous communities maintain a profound relationship with the natural world, rooted in a deep understanding of ecological systems and guided by generations of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). This knowledge is central to cultural identity and continuity and offers practical frameworks for sustainable living and biodiversity conservation. As modern development and environmental degradation intensify, recognising the role of TEK in shaping resilient, sustainable communities has become increasingly important. This study explores how TEK informs and sustains the livelihoods of two indigenous groups: the Baduy tribe of Indonesia and the Batek tribe of Malaysia. The purpose of the study is to examine the ways in which these communities apply TEK in daily practices and how they respond to the pressures of modernisation while striving to maintain cultural integrity. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations with five key informants from both communities. The findings reveal that both groups rely heavily on TEK in areas such as agriculture, health, education, and governance. However, they differ in their levels of adaptation — while the Baduy remain largely resistant to external influences, the Batek exhibit selective engagement with modern systems such as schooling and healthcare. The study concludes that TEK is essential to indigenous resilience and should be actively integrated into national sustainability and development strategies, with respect for local customs and governance structures.

Keywords: *Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), indigenous communities, livelihood, sustainability, Baduy, Batek*

REVITALISING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES THROUGH RESEARCH AND CREATIVE WORKS

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Indigenous peoples (IPs) in Southern Philippines face significant challenges in preserving their Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) from misappropriation and exploitation. This study explores the revitalisation and protection of IKSPs through a qualitative-descriptive approach grounded in oral history, ethnographic fieldwork, and narrative inquiry to centre indigenous voices, cultural backgrounds, and storytelling traditions. Ethnographic fieldwork conducted between the 3rd quarter of 2021 and the 1st quarter of 2023 adopted a reflective inquiry style, while open interviews were employed from the 1st quarter to the 3rd quarter of 2024, capturing oral histories, narratives, and memories of the Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs). Narrative inquiry was conducted on the narratives and stories of selected IP groups from the 4th quarter of 2023 to the 2nd quarter of 2024. Findings reveal that IKSPs permeate the daily lives of ICCs, encompassing environmental conservation, governance, spirituality, artistic expression, and community well-being. Art emerged as a vital conduit for preserving and transmitting this knowledge system through oral traditions, storytelling, and performance. This is exemplified in the adaptation of the *Legend of Durian* and Macariu Tiu's *Balyan* into a three-act theatrical play, as well as the composition of *Singgit*, illustrating how academic research can powerfully integrate with creative expression and community engagement. Three core themes surfaced: Theme 1 emphasises that IKSPs are dynamic, evolving knowledge systems grounded in place-based learning and cultural normativity. Theme 2, on supplementary materials, utilises Indigenous ecological knowledge for disaster risk reduction, interpreting animal behaviours and wind patterns that uphold traditional practices in conflict resolution and cultural transmission to assert self-determination. Finally, Theme 3 from the *Pakighinabi* session at the TINGUG International Conference further demonstrates efforts to position IKSPs within global dialogues on Indigenous safe space, preservation and governance. The study advocates for recognising IKSPs as central to cultural heritage and environmental stewardship, ensuring that IPs continue to actively shape policies that reflect their unique traditions and collective aspirations, directly impacting the well-being of their communities and future generations.

Keywords: *cultural revitalisation, grounded normativity, ethnographic research, indigenous storytelling, indigenous safe space*

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACT EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY AND HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM IN LUZON, PHILIPPINES

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Impact evaluation studies are often generic and susceptible to large sampling errors. Therefore, assessing impacts using small area configurations to analyse poverty alleviation and economic development is crucial, particularly in the poorest region of Luzon, Philippines. This study utilised randomised control trials, predictive analytics, and regression discontinuity. Most households in the treatment locality live above the poverty line (19.85%), whereas a significant portion of households in the comparison locality live below the poverty threshold (41.93%). Gap metrics (0.36–0.44), severity statistics (0.17–0.26), and Watts indices (0.53–0.79) were analysed. Logistic (17) and multivariate (2) regression models were employed to examine the impact of eligibility (-6.8715), socio-economic characteristics (Sig = 9VAR), and economic development variables (3.8208, 0.000, $R^2 = 0.4967$). Results indicate that the programme has successfully reduced poverty (0.26%) and fostered economic development (diff=P022.08%, $P_1=0.08$, $P_2=0.09$, $w=0.26$) by decreasing child malnutrition (0.08%) and mortality rates (0.62%), lowering dropout rates from schooling ($e=0.35\%$, 0.23% , $h=0.61\%$, 0.49% , $s=0.84\%$, 0.87%), improving housing (0.17%), settlement (0.77%), water (0.47%), and sanitation facilities (0.58%), increasing employment ($U=-0.70$), creating new sources of income (6+), promoting participation in community development initiatives (15+), and enhancing peace and order outcomes (0.12%). Additionally, regression discontinuity design was applied to estimate the overall impact (LATE=0.9386) at various levels of disaggregation. Finally, policy proposals were provided to complement the poverty alleviation and economic development programme.

Keywords: *impact evaluation, community-based monitoring system, poverty alleviation, economic development, regression discontinuity design*

INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION: SHOULD MALAYSIA'S PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM ENROLL REFUGEE LEARNERS?

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Refugee children of school-going age in Malaysia continue to face significant barriers to accessing inclusive and equitable quality education. A central debate in addressing this issue is whether Malaysia should integrate refugee learners and local students into its public education system. This paper contributes to the discourse by offering evidence-based insights to guide stakeholders, particularly policymakers, in making informed decisions on refugee education. It presents a systematic literature review on the current educational landscape for refugee children in Malaysia, supplemented by qualitative analysis of public perspectives drawn from key informant interviews. Findings reveal limited progress in integrating refugees into public schools, with most educational access occurring through resource-constrained, humanitarian-led alternative learning centres. Given the protracted nature of displacement and continuous forced migration in the region, the integration of refugee learners into the national education system must be anticipated as an inevitable and necessary policy direction. The paper argues that Malaysia must move beyond this fragmented approach by fostering strategic, multi-sectoral partnerships and adopting inclusive education models already implemented in other refugee-hosting nations. Ultimately, expanding access to education for refugee learners is a moral imperative and a strategic investment in Malaysia's social cohesion, economic development, and long-term national resilience.

Keywords: *refugee education, public schools, alternative learning centres, Malaysia, inclusive education*

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES IN ENHANCING HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS FOR CHILDREN OF INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN SABAH, MALAYSIA

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From Indonesian migrant workers (IMWs) to the children of IMWs, both have encountered challenges, particularly with regard to the rights of the IMWs' dependents. This research discusses more towards fulfilling the needs of the children of IMWs to access education, especially in Sabah, Malaysia. The paper pursues to reveal the multi-centric actors behind the establishment of community learning centres (CLCs), and secondly to explore and discover the process by which these children access higher education during their stay in Malaysia. Data were collected from six informants through interviews to support this inductive research. This study highlights the importance of non-state actors, such as NGOs and IMWs, also known as *Perantau*, in initiating such educational institutions, especially since the limitation of education access for the children of IMWs following amendments to education policy. The *Perantau*'s roles are particularly valuable in understanding social problems and maintaining connectivity with their motherland and community. An NGO also played a significant role in providing educational opportunities, but a lack of government recognition hindered its efforts. Ultimately, government contributions were crucial in establishing better educational institutions.

Keywords: *children of Indonesian migrant workers, community learning centre, education policy, higher education access, Indonesian migrant workers*

FOLK BELIEFS IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF SOUTHERN KHMER PEOPLE OF VIETNAM

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Khmer people are one of 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam, and they live mainly in the southern region of Vietnam, with Tra Vinh having the largest concentration. The Khmer people in Tra Vinh province have a diverse folk belief system and unique characteristics. Khmer folk beliefs play an important role in their spiritual life; they partially meet the needs of cultural and religious activities, thereby contributing to psychological relief and balancing their spiritual life. This study aims to generalise and clarify the folk belief system of the Southern Khmer people in Tra Vinh province, survey, analyse, and evaluate the role and value of the folk belief system in the spiritual life of the Khmer people. A qualitative study and a semi-structured survey were conducted. The sample selected for the survey was 75 people, semi-structured interviews using a convenient method, and the sample size was 15, including 07 men and 08 women (ages 25 to 70). Combined with previous research and assessments, it shows that in Khmer people's folk beliefs, values must be promoted, and limitations must be overcome.

Keywords: *folk beliefs, spiritual life, Southern Khmer people, Tra Vinh province, Vietnam*

NING AS THE FEMALE WRITERS IN THE RE-AWAKENING OF PESANTREN LITERATURE: CRITICAL ANALYSIS FROM BOURDIEU'S CAPITAL THEORY

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Novels written by female writers in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) from 2019 to 2020 were republished by *Ning*, who was the daughter of a *Kiai* and *pesantren* caregiver. The writers of the original novels include Khilma Anis, Najhaty Sharma, Nisaul Kamilah, Mar'atul Makhmudah, and Liza Samchah. The attempt made by *Ning* shows

the effort to revive *pesantren* literature, specifically those written by female writers. The phenomenon is interesting because the works are read in different *pesantren* despite the limited space for female writers. Therefore, this study aims to show how literacy in *pesantren* is developed through the interaction of social capital, social media, and independent publishers, which enable writers to express ideas and expand their audience. The perspective of literary sociology and the capital theory of Bourdieu was used to connect social capital with the production of works by female writers in *pesantren*. The theories were also used to understand how the works reflected the social structure of *pesantren*. The results showed that *Ning* articulated the experiences, ideas, and Islamic identities through novels based on the interaction of capital possessed. The resulting works provided a new perspective on the experiences of female writers. It was observed that the works functioned as a personal expression and a negotiation of social structures experienced. The results contribute to the development of *pesantren* literature, currently dominated by male authors. Moreover, this study shows the social transformation in the tradition of more inclusive *pesantren* literacy as well as an increase in the awareness of issues related to female writers.

Keywords: *social capital, social media, independent publishers, literacy, pesantren female writers*