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The Motivation behind Egyptian Youth Subscription to Video on Demand Services and Excessive Use: A case study on WATCH iT!

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ABSTRACT

With the rising competition in the subscription video on demand (SVoD) services market, the services' providers are trying to elevate the services they offer. In this context, this study aims to explore the individuals' psychological factors, motives, perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness that influence the video streaming platforms usage behavior and lead to excessive usage by their users. This research has adapted key measures from the "technology acceptance model" (TAM) and from the "uses and gratifications theory" (UGT) to better understand the effects of the users' psychological factors, instrumental and ritualized motivations on their excessive usage of the platform WATCH iT! An online questionnaire was distributed, and data was gathered from 350 respondents with age range between 16-39. Low self-esteem and lack of self-control were negatively related to the excessive use behavior identified in this study. This study suggests that entertainment uses and gratification is a strong predictor of excessive use of the platform WATCH iT! Evidently, information seeking did not predict the excessive use of the platform. Moreover, the individuals' perceived usefulness and ease of use were significant antecedents of the excessive use the platform. This study contributes to the academic literature by generating new knowledge about the individuals' background characteristics and motivations that explain the excessive use behavior of the platform WATCH iT! The findings imply that there is scope for the providers of online streaming services to improve their customer- centric marketing by refining their content creation to attract viewers and garner their loyalty. This study integrates the TAM and UGT frameworks to better understand the effects of the users' psychological factors, instrumental and ritualized motivation on their excessive watching of movies and series through the platform WATCH iT!

Keywords: *Excessive use of the internet, Subscription video on demand (SVoD), Technology acceptance model (TAM), Uses and gratifications theory (UGT).*

1.   INTRODUCTION

With the rising competition in the subscription video on demand (SVoD) services market that includes platforms such as WATCH iT! Shahid, Netflix, Disney+, etc.; these service providers are adopting new and innovative techniques to deliver their services to audiences, aiming to secure a higher market share and a wider range of users **(Pennington 2020, 15).** On that basis, these services' providers are moving beyond the price, as the mere pillar for competition and into developing a service that elevates the type and form of services they offer. Since the majority of recent studies have been investigating the offline commerce side, which resulted in very limited research within the online commerce side, considering its potential value.

With the great advancements in technology and internet provision, SVoD services, have made a remarkable entrance with a competitiveness which

resulted in a dramatic shift in the media industry (**Noh 2020, 132**). In Egypt, the use of SVoD services has experienced a massive growth in recent years. Yet, research on young Egyptians' use of SVoD services' platforms remains lacking, where there is a greater number of users and potential users of these entertainment services that can be explored and studied; and, the audiences' behavior in the changing environment of accessing entertainment in Egypt can be examined.

The results and findings of this study will be able to provide great value and useful data for the SVoD services' providers to have a better understanding of the young Egyptian audiences' behavior streaming online in order to excel in the SVoD market in Egypt. The main research question in this study refers to the motives and psychological factors that drive the excessive use of video streaming services platforms specifically WATCH iT!; or in other words:

How do the individual factors such as: psychological factors, motives, perceived usefulness and ease of use influence the video streaming platforms usage behavior and lead to excessive usage by their users?

This study explores the market of SVoD services in Egypt and create an understanding of what users perceive as valuable. This research acts as a reference for businesses in the industry in Egypt to help them make efficient changes to further meet potential and current users' expectations as it provides an understanding of the user's usage behavior. In this context, this research aims to explore the individuals' uses and gratifications from online streaming technologies when they decide to subscribe to a SVoD services' platform. This research enriches the literature of excessive Internet use as it explores individuals' excessive usage of video streaming services. Compared with the other two popular Internet services, online video games and social networking services (SNS), the factors that contribute to the excessive use of online video streaming services are different.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of the internet and its increasing value around the world has directed leading media companies to rethink their approach regarding their delivery channels. Media companies all around the world, whose core business is delivering content through cable or satellite, see the benefits of implementing this service to users and others see the opportunity to build successful business models exclusively based on providing VoD services like WATCH iT!, Netflix, etc. (**Allen *et al.* 2014**).

WATCH iT!, an Egyptian platform, was introduced in early 2019 targeting mainly Egyptian audiences. WATCH iT! is differentiated by its Egyptian content emphasis and dramas that were aired previously on Egyptian private TV stations. WATCH iT! also occasionally produces documentaries about former Egyptian presidents since it acquired the right of their speeches. While its service is to offer Egyptian produced entertainment content that would be appealing to all ages, WATCH iT! has rushed its entry into the market without sufficient plans of content offerings combined with technical difficulties.

As an element of Business Model (BM), key resources encompass tangible and intangible resources, such as: knowledge workers, technology, equipment, distributing channels, facilities and employees. The lack of resources in the aforementioned areas seems to cause the delay of the growth of the platform WATCH iT!, and have negatively affected its users' experience before and accordingly the perception of WATCH iT! as a whole. Some of the inadequate resources of WATCH iT!, are: the lack of basic technological knowledge, no cloud-based system and the lack of what other competitors are offering in general; in addition to no proper hosting at the time of the launch. It is also worth noting that finding the right partners within the VoD ecosystem is important to develop a sustainable streaming business in the long run. The VoD services' platform WATCH iT! is investigating the possibility of partnering with multiple telecommunication companies to partially subsidize the subscription fees in return for keeping customers. In general, VoD platforms can build a beneficial ecosystem through partnerships to facilitate their market expansion and increase their audience reach.

Through conducting personal interviews with 17 different digital media executives, **Allam and Chan-Olmsted (2021)** investigate how the market environment affects the development of different video streaming platforms in Egypt. The study highlighted several factors that might lead to success or failure of VoD services in Egypt. Delivering entertainment value was suggested as the main value proposition, but to succeed in this marketplace, differentiation is a must. While Netflix and Shahid VIP were able to position themselves through content that presents a global or regional entertainer, WATCH iT! unfortunately failed due to its rush to enter the market with ill-planned content library, technical delivery and talent resources (**Allam and Chan-Olmsted 2021**). It is known that the mainstream broadcast stations in Egypt mostly stream videos through their official YouTube channels. However, public broadcast media still have a very poor presence on the digital platforms (**Nagy 2019**).

"When it comes to SVoD, Egypt is not as mature as the U.S. Yet, Egyptian subscribers constitute a large percentage of subscribers in the Arab region given its large population, large youth percentage and huge developments in the telecommunication infrastructure" (**Nagy 2019**). **Dwyer *et al.* (2018)** highlighted the importance of local content provisions, they compare digital media industries in South Korea and Australia and conclude that the technological environment in Australia significantly affected its viewers' experience and failed to provide the audiences with fast, cheap and reliable broadband infrastructure to access the SVoD, leading to many audience complaints (**Dwyer *et al.* 2018**).

Dinana and Allam (2021) also examine the relationship between the perceived characteristics of VoD platforms and consumer characteristics measuring the intention to use. The characteristics of VoD platforms include perceived substitutability, relative advantage, perceived ease of use and compatibility. Their study found that among the perceived characteristics, the perceived ease of use is the only variable that is positively correlated to the use of VoD platforms (**Dinana and Allam 2021**), which means that youths tend to prefer to engage with a system that is free from any physical or mental efforts and where the activities they are engaged in, such as searching, storing and downloading videos, are not complicated (**Dinana and Allam 2021**). This is compatible with the nature of Egyptian audiences, who are considered relatively new to the technological environment. It is also relevant to the cultural preference of consuming audiovisual content (**Allam and Chan-Olmsted 2021**) and the low rate of literacy which makes the ease of use of a new platform an important factor. **Cha (2013)** found that besides the perceived ease of use, relative advantage and compatibility are positively correlated to the use of VoD platforms.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 *Theoretical Framework*

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)
The technology acceptance model (TAM) is considered an adaptation of Ajzen's theory of planned behavior (TPB) (**Ajzen 1985**). The model focuses on predicting and explaining human behavior in different situations. The technology acceptance model (TAM) suggests two main predictors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. As for perceived usefulness, it can be understood as the ability to enhance consumers' online experience, while, "perceived ease of use" refers to how easy it is for consumers to use the technology in question (**Davis 1986**). According to the technology acceptance model, consumers' ideas about technological innovation, such as perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, can influence their attitudes towards and use of the technology. These attitudes can then have an impact on their intent to accept and use the technology (**Davis *et al.* 1989**).

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)
Uses and gratification theory explores the "needs and satisfactions" that motivate people to actively select and use certain media. It assumes that users of media are goal-directed, which means that a specific media is selected to satisfy their needs (**Ruggiero 2000**). UGT refers to "media as sources of influence amid other sources and sees media audiences as variably active communicators" (**Rubin 2009**). This theory states that the origins of the motivations that engage audiences in a particular media are social and psychological factors. This theory has been widely used in the realm of mass communication. And in recent years, the uses and gratifications framework has been adopted to study traditional media as well as new media. **Katz *et al.* (1974)**, in the early 1940s, coined the uses and gratification theory to deal with explaining why people use certain types of media, what needs do they have to use them, and what gratifications do they get from using them. The theory was first introduced to understand why people chose to consume the various forms of media that were present at the time in the 1940s. Nowadays, the theory relies on two assumptions regarding media consumption. The first assumption is that the audiences are considered active members of the media through the selection of their preferred content that they consume. The second assumption is that the media users are more aware of the reasons why they choose the media that they choose to consume.

3.2 *Methodology*

3.2.1 Research Sampling
The researcher chose a purposive sample which is a type of the non-probability sample based on choosing a population with specific characteristics (**Tayie 2009, 43**). The purposive sample is seen as the most suitable sample for this research, as it studies the way young Egyptians, within a specific age group, use SVoD services' platforms and their subscriptions to the Arabic content video on demand services' platform WATCH iT!. This research is conducted on 350 participants, males and females from different social classes and educational backgrounds, aging from 16 to 39 years old.

3.2.2 Research Questions

RQ 1: What is the impact of self-esteem and self-control on users' usage behavior of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!?

RQ 2: To what extent do information seeking needs affect users' usage behavior of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!?

RQ 3: To what extent do pastime seeking needs and entertainment seeking needs affect users' usage behavior of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!?

RQ 4: How does the users' perceived ease of use and users' perceived usefulness affect their usage behavior of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!?

3.2.3 Research Design

The participants taking part in this research are young and dynamic individuals, who belong to the generations defined as millennials/echo boomers and Generation Z. The targeted participants are in the age group of 16 to 39 years old belonging to big cities such as Cairo and Alexandria. The reason for choosing this target group is the fact that these individuals are frequent users of OTT services' platforms. Most of these participants are more likely to choose OTT content over traditional television content and are frequently watching video content that is customized for OTT platforms only. This research specifically focuses on regular users of one of the major video streaming platforms in Egypt – WATCH iT! The researcher used a quantitative method which was done through an online survey, as the survey represents one of the most significant methods for gathering data in the field of media research because of its flexibility, **(Tayie 2009, 49)**. The survey's sample was 350 respondents after refining all the sample errors and excluding those who didn't match the sample criteria.

3.2.4 Data Collection Method

An online questionnaire was distributed to conduct the survey. The questionnaire was written in both Arabic and English format to suit each respondent. It consisted of questions with multiple choices and a Likert scale. The questionnaire was designed via Google Forms and its link was distributed through social media platforms such as the researcher's Facebook timeline, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The researcher depended on a statistician to conduct the analysis part using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which is the most used software in social science studies. This helped the researcher have accurate data after excluding the sampling errors and ensuring the reliability and validity of the questions. It also facilitated the process of comprehending and analyzing the collected data.

3.2.5 Research Variables

The independent variables in this research are self-esteem and self-control, information seeking needs, pastime and entertainment needs, the individuals' perceived usefulness and ease of use of the platform WATCH iT!. While excessive use of the platform WATCH iT! will act as dependent variable.

Excessive use of online video streaming services' platforms

A state where individuals lose control of their internet use and maintain excessive usage despite of experiencing negative outcomes, such as having conflicts with family members or facing problems concerning their professional and educational careers.

Information seeking

The user's tendency to gather information using any platform or media source. For audiences, video streaming websites act as a great way of collecting information related to either work or leisure.

Pastime

The human activity aimed at making use of leisure time with no apparent aim or objective.

Entertainment

Refers to watching SVoD services' platforms that hold the attention and interest of the user *or gives them pleasure and delight.*

Psychological factors

Mainly referring to the lack of self-esteem and lack of self-control. Lack of self-esteem refers to individuals having negative evaluations about themselves and are suspicious of praise. While lack of control refers to an individual's belief about the extent to which he/she is in control of his/her life vis-`a-vis the extent to which he/she believes external forces are in control of his/her life.

Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness

Refers to the perceptions of the beliefs users hold about the system and the users' motivations to engage with a certain technology.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographics

The sample demographics information collected by imposing four questions regarding age, gender, education level and marital status. The study sample

after refining the answers consisted of 74 responses collected from the age interval (16-23) which means they represent (21%) of the sample, 173 responses from the age interval (24-31) which means they represent (50%) of the sample, and 103 responses collected from the age interval (32-39) which means they represent (29%) of the overall sample. The respondents were asked about their gender, this resulted in 147 valid responses collected from males representing (42%) of the sample and 203 valid responses collected from females representing (58%) of the sample. For the educational level, 176 (50%) of the sample are graduates, followed by 137 (39%) of the sample are postgraduates, and 37 (11%) of the sample are high school and university students. Lastly, the study's sample consists of 222 (63%) single respondents and the remaining 128 (37%) of them are married. As shown in the following Table1.

Table 1. Demographic variables

Demographics	Indicator	Frequency	%
Age	16-23	74	21
	24-31	173	50
	32-39	103	29
	Total	350	100
Gender	Male	147	42
	Female	203	58
	Total	350	100
Educational level	Students (high school and university students)	37	11
	Graduates	176	50
	Post graduates	137	39
	Total	350	100
Marital status	Single	222	63
	Married	128	37
	Total	350	100

4.2   Research Questions Analysis

4.2.1 The impact of self-esteem on excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

As shown in Table 2, the results report that there is a significant effect between the individuals' self - esteem and the excessive use of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!, where sig=0.000 (less than 0.05). The correlation coefficient value (-0.047) refers to a weak negative relation between the two variables, as the lower the self-esteem, the more the excessive use platform WATCH iT!. The results summarized in Table 2 refers that 31.4 % of the respondents with low and very low self- esteem are not using the platform excessively (disagree or strongly disagree). Also 14 % of the respondents with high and very high self- esteem are not using the platform excessively (disagree or strongly disagree). On the other hand, 8.1% of respondents with low and very low self- esteem are excessive users (agree or strongly agree), while 5 % of the respondents with high and very high self- esteem are excessive users (agree or strongly agree).

Table 2. The impact of self-esteem on excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

Excessive use	Self-esteem index												Chi square
	Very low self-esteem index		Low self-esteem index		Neutral		High self-esteem index		Very high self-esteem index		Total		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strongly disagree	5	1.4	8	2.3	5	1.4	5	1.4	0	0	23	6.6	Chi square = 76.625 Sig = 0.000 r = -0.047
Disagree	11	3.1	86	24.6	45	12.9	44	12.6	0	0	186	53.1	
Neutral	16	4.6	39	11.1	21	6	14	4	0	0	90	25.7	
Agree	3	0.9	16	4.6	6	1.7	9	2.6	3	0.9	37	10.6	
Strongly agree	6	1.7	3	0.9	0	0	2	0.6	3	0.9	14	4	
Total	41	11.7	152	43.4	77	22	74	21.1	6	1.7	350	100	

4.2.2 The impact of self-control on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

As shown in Table 3, the study revealed that there is significant effect between the individuals' self -control and the excessive use of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! where sig=0.000 (less than 0.05). The correlation coefficient value (-0.095) refers to a weak negative relation between the two variables, as the lack of self-control increases the platform WATCH it! Usage. The results summarized in Table 3 refers that 32.3 % of the respondents with high lack and lack of self-control are not using the platform excessively (disagree or strongly disagree). Also 11.5 % of the respondents with very high and high self-control are not using the platform excessively (disagree or strongly disagree). On the other hand, 8.3 % of respondents with high lack and lack of self-control are excessive users (agree or strongly agree), while 4.1% of the respondents with very high and high self-control are excessive users (agree or strongly agree).

Table 3. The impact of self-control on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

Excessive use	Self-control index												Chi square
	High lack self- control index		Lack self- control index		Neutral		High self- control index		Very high self- control index		Total		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strongly disagree	3	0.9	7	2	10	2.9	2	0.6	1	0.3	23	6.6	Chi square = 94.201 Sig = 0.000 r = -0.095
Disagree	5	1.4	98	28	46	13.1	34	9.7	3	0.9	186	53.1	
Neutral	21	6	34	9.7	17	4.9	14	4	4	1.1	90	25.7	
Agree	2	0.6	18	5.1	8	2.3	7	2	2	0.6	37	10.6	
Strongly agree	9	2.6	0	0	0	0	2	0.6	3	0.9	14	4	
Total	40	11.4	157	44.9	81	23.1	59	16.9	13	3.7	350	100	

4.2.3 The impact of information seeking on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

By studying the relation between the participants' motivations for the instrumental use (information seeking) and the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!, the results shows that, with 95% of confidence and 5% significance, there is a highly significant relation between the two variables (sig=0.000, less than 0.05). The correlation coefficient value (-0.011) refers to a very weak negative relation between the

two variables, as the more the information seeking needs, the excessive use rates will slowly decrease. The results summarized in Table 4 refers that 12.5% of the respondents with very low and low information seeking index have low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree), and 34.6 % of the respondents with very high and high information seeking index have

also low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree). On the other hand, 0.6% of respondents with very low and low information seeking index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree), while 8.8% of the respondents with very high and high information seeking index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree).

Table 4. The impact of information seeking on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

Excessive use	Information seeking index												Chi square
	Very low information seeking index		Low information seeking index		Neutral		High information seeking index		Very high information seeking index		Total		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strongly disagree	5	1.4	2	0.6	7	2	6	1.7	3	0.9	23	6.6	Chi square = 107.004 Sig = 0.000 r = -0.011
Disagree	19	5.4	18	5.1	37	10.6	103	29.4	9	2.6	186	53.1	
Neutral	11	3.1	7	2	48	13.7	23	6.6	1	0.3	90	25.7	
Agree	2	0.6	0	0	17	4.9	18	5.1	0	0	37	10.6	
Strongly agree	0	0	0	0	1	0.3	6	1.7	7	2	14	4	
Total	37	10.6	27	7.7	110	31.4	156	44.6	20	5.7	350	100	

4.2.4 The impact of pastime on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

The participants' motivations for the ritualized use (Pastime) of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! is a significant antecedent of their excessive use of the mentioned platform, where sig=0.000 (less than 0.05). The correlation coefficient value (0.044) refers to a weak direct relation between the two variables, as the more there is pastime needs, the excessive use rate increases slowly. The results summarized in

Table 5 refers that 22.5 % of the respondents with very low and low pastime index have a low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree), and 14 % of the respondents with very high and high pastime index have also a low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree). On the other hand, 3.5% of respondents with very low and low pastime index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree), while 3.7 % of the respondents with very high and high pastime index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree).

Table 5. The impact of pastime on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

Excessive use	Pastime index												Chi square
	Very low pastime index		Low pastime index		Neutral		High pastime index		Very high pastime index		Total		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strongly disagree	4	1.1	6	1.7	9	2.6	4	1.1	0	0	23	6.6	Chi square =50.115 Sig = 0.000 r = 0.044
Disagree	6	1.7	63	18	72	20.6	44	12.6	1	0.3	186	53.1	
Neutral	3	0.9	37	10.6	32	9.1	18	5.1	0	0	90	25.7	
Agree	3	0.9	5	1.4	23	6.6	5	1.4	1	0.3	37	10.6	
Strongly agree	1	0.3	3	0.9	3	0.9	5	1.4	2	0.6	14	4	
Total	17	4.9	114	32.6	139	39.7	76	21.7	4	1.1	350	100	

4.2.5 The impact of entertainment on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

The participants' motivations for the ritualized use (Entertainment) of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! is a significant antecedent of their excessive use of the mentioned platform, where sig=0.002 (less than 0.05). The correlation coefficient value (0.099) refers to a direct relation between the two variables, as the higher the entertainment index, the more the excessive use rate. The results summarized in Table 6 refers that 3.5 % of the respondents with

very low and low entertainment index have low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree), and 51.7 % of the respondents with very high and high entertainment index have also low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree). On the other hand, 0.6 % of the respondents with very low and low entertainment index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree) and 13.4 % of respondents with very high and high entertainment index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree).

Table 6. The impact of entertainment on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

Excessive use	Entertainment seeking index												Chi square
	Very low entertainment seeking index		Low entertainment seeking index		Neutral		High entertainment seeking index		Very high entertainment seeking index		Total		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strongly disagree	1	0.3	2	0.6	2	0.6	13	3.7	5	1.4	23	6.6	Chi square = 36.903 Sig = 0.002 r = 0.099
Disagree	7	2	6	0.6	10	2.9	147	42	16	4.6	186	53.1	
Neutral	1	0.3	11	3.1	8	2.3	50	14.3	20	5.7	90	25.7	
Agree	0	0	2	0.6	2	0.6	27	7.7	6	1.7	37	10.6	
Strongly agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2.3	6	1.7	14	4	
Total	9	2.6	21	6	22	6.3	245	70	53	15.1	350	100	

4.2.6 The impact of the perceived ease of use on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

There is a positive and direct relationship between the respondents' perceived ease of use (PEOU) of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! and their excessive use of the mentioned platform, where sig=0.000 (less than 0.05). The correlation coefficient value (0.007) refers to a direct relation between the two variables, as the more the perceived ease of use, the excessive use rate increases slowly. The results summarized in

Table 7 refers that 4.3 % of the respondents with very low and low perceived ease of use index have a low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree), 50.9% of the respondents with very high and high perceived ease of use index have also low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree). On the other hand, 0.6 % of respondents with very low and low perceived ease of use are excessive users (agree or strongly agree) and 10 % of the respondents with very high and high perceived ease of use index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree).

Table 7. The impact of the perceived ease of use on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

Excessive use	Perceived ease of use index												Chi square
	Very low perceived ease of use index		Low perceived ease of use index		Neutral		High perceived ease of use index		Very high perceived ease of use index		Total		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strongly disagree	2	0.6	3	0.9	2	0.6	9	2.6	7	2	23	6.6	Chi square = 98.086 Sig = 0.000 r = 0.007
Disagree	5	1.4	5	1.4	14	4	142	40.6	20	5.7	186	53.1	
Neutral	2	0.6	16	4.6	3	0.9	55	15.7	14	4	90	25.7	
Agree	0	0	2	0.6	14	4	12	3.4	9	2.6	37	10.6	
Strongly agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1.7	8	2.3	14	4	
Total	9	2.6	26	7.4	33	9.4	224	64	58	16.6	350	100	

4.2.7 The impact of perceived usefulness on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

There is a positive and direct relationship between the respondents' perceived usefulness (PU) of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! and their excessive use of the mentioned platform, where sig=0.000 (less than 0.05). The correlation coefficient value (0.030) refers to a direct relation between the two variables, as the more the perceived usefulness, the excessive use rate will quite increase. The results summarized in Table 8 indicates that 6 % of the respondents with very low and low perceived usefulness index have a low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree), 49.5 % of the respondents with very high and high perceived usefulness index have also a low rate of usage (disagree or strongly disagree). On the other hand, 2.3 % of the respondents with very low and low perceived usefulness index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree) and 10.6 % of respondents with very high and high perceived usefulness index are excessive users (agree or strongly agree).

Table 8. The impact of perceived usefulness on the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!

Excessive use	Perceived usefulness index												Chi square
	Very low perceived usefulness index		Low perceived usefulness index		Neutral		High perceived usefulness index		Very high perceived usefulness index		Total		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strongly disagree	1	0.3	3	0.9	2	0.6	9	2.6	8	2.3	23	6.6	Chi square = 97.919 Sig = 0.000 r = 0.030
Disagree	5	1.4	12	3.4	13	3.7	133	38	23	6.6	186	53.1	
Neutral	2	0.6	14	4	12	3.4	39	11.1	23	6.6	90	25.7	
Agree	0	0	8	2.3	2	0.6	18	5.1	9	2.6	37	10.6	
Strongly agree	0	0	0	0	4	1.1	0	0	10	2.9	14	4	
Total	8	2.3	37	10.6	33	9.4	199	56.9	73	20.9	350	100	

5. DISCUSSION

RQ1: What is the impact of self-esteem and self-control on users' usage behavior of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!?

Pursuant to uses and gratifications, ascertaining factors that contribute to a particular outcome of media use begins with the consideration of potentially relevant background characteristics of media users. Psychological characteristics are potentially relevant to the use of streaming technologies such as SVoD services. The results report that there is a significant effect between the individuals' low self - esteem and the excessive use of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!. Low self-esteem is a strong negative predictor of all dimensions of the excessive use of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! identified in this study. This may suggest that low self-esteem users may be particularly prone to develop a heavy use of the platform WATCH iT!. Consistent with this result and in the context of internet usage behavior, **Armstrong et al. (2000)** found that low self-esteem was a significant positive predictor of addictive internet use. In agreement with these findings, **Hasan et al. (2018)** found that lack of self-esteem is also a significant predictor for excessive usage of the video streaming services. Similarly, past literature suggests that people with low self-esteem tend to find solace in solitude **(Kim and Davis 2009)**.

The study revealed that there is a significant effect between the individuals' lack of self – control and the excessive use of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!. Lack of self-control is a strong negative predictor of all dimensions of the excessive use of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! identified in this study. This may suggest that externally controlled users may be particularly prone to develop a heavy usage of platform WATCH iT!. Consistent with this result, according to **Chak and Leung (2004)**, a higher lack of control-internal predicts less addictive internet behavior. Individuals who believed that they had control over their lives were less likely to be addicted to the internet, because they believed that they could maintain healthy internet usage behaviors. If that argument has merit, individuals who believe that external factors control their lives may be more susceptible to internet addiction. In agreement with this finding, **Hasan et al. (2018)** found that lack of self-control to be the most significant factor in their analysis. People with lower self-control tend to have a much higher propensity to excessively watch online streaming videos. In contrast, **Park et al. (2013)** found that lack of control-internal was significantly associated with smartphone dependency. Their study

indicates that if a person believes that he or she has a higher sense of control over his or her life events, he or she is more likely to be dependent upon smartphones.

RQ2: To what extent do information seeking needs affect users' usage behavior of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!?

In the current study, information seeking uses and gratification did not emerge as a significant precursor of excessive use of platform WATCH iT!. In agreement with this finding, **Shade et al. (2015)** found that instead of traditional television viewing motivations like entertainment, information seeking, companionship and escape, the need for content congruent exposure and technological affordances strongly predicts media migration activities like subscribing to video on demand (SVoD) platforms. This result corroborates the recent findings of **Sahu et al. (2021)**. In their study examining the Indian user's indulgence towards OTT and traditional TV, **Sahu et al. (2021)** found that the competitive superiority of traditional TV is higher than that of OTT platforms in all the gratification components except convenience gratification. That means for gratifying their entertainment, social interaction, companionship, voyeurism and information-seeking needs, Indian users depend on television than OTT platforms. However, in contrast to result of the present study, **Park et al. (2013)** in the context of smartphone use found that motivation for instrumental use (information seeking) influenced perceived usefulness (PU) only and lead to increase smartphone dependency. For the users with a higher motivation for achieving instrumental goals such as information seeking with their smartphones, smartphones could be perceived as easy to use for such goals (**Park et al. 2013)**. Similarly, prior studies on linear and streaming television identified information seeking as one of the significant predictors of linear television usage (**Shade et al. 2015)**. In contrast to result of the present study, **Hasan et al. (2018)** indicate that only information seeking motive leads to excessive usage behavior for online video streaming services, but they could not find support for the effect of pastime and entertainment motives leading to excessive usage.

RQ3: To what extent do pastime seeking needs and entertainment seeking needs affect users' usage behavior of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!?

The participants' motivations for the ritualized use (pastime and entertainment) of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! is a significant antecedent of their excessive use of the mentioned platform. Entertainment uses and gratification refers to the perceived fun and enjoyment while engaging in media

usage. In this case, the research participants sought emotional gratification from the streaming platform. Probably, they allowed them to relax in their free time. Most of the survey respondents (73.4%) revealed that they used online streaming technologies for entertainment and (44.3%) of the respondents revealed that they use online streaming technologies for ease of use. Many scholars argue that entertainment is the most significant predictor of new media technology usage and positively influences different media usage-related dependent variables e.g. **Dhir *et al.* (2017)** concluded that many often individuals consider the media technologies as a form of entertainment. This finding is in line with **Tefertiller and Sheehan (2019)** study on streaming television adoption, in which entertainment is identified as one of the key motivations behind web streaming adoption and cord-cutting. In line with result, past research in addiction and excessive usage behavior has found entertainment and pastime motives to be significant predictors for platforms like SNS and online gaming **(Khang *et al.* 2013)**.

RQ4: How does the users' perceived ease of use and users' perceived usefulness affect their usage behavior of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!?

There is a positive and direct relationship between the respondents' perceived ease of use (PEOU) of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! and their excessive use of the mentioned platform. Also, there is a positive and direct relationship between the respondents' perceived usefulness (PU) of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! and their excessive use of the mentioned platform. The findings from this research indicate that the research participants perceived the ease of use and the usefulness of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT!. The results confirmed that they found it easy and straightforward to access live or recorded content on the platform WATCH iT!. They found it easy to use the platform WATCH iT! through digital and mobile devices including smart TVs, smartphones or tablets. The respondents believed that it is easy for them to navigate through the platform WATCH iT and search for content. They perceived the usefulness as they believed that the platform WATCH iT! allowed them to view TV programs and/or recorded videos in a faster way than traditional TV subscriber services or satellite TV. They can access the platform WATCH iT! in any place if there is a good Wi-Fi or network connection.

In this study, the perceived ease of use (PEOU) and the perceived usefulness (PU) of the SVoD services' platform WATCH iT! are significant antecedents of the individuals' excessive use of the platform. This result corroborates the findings of **Yang and Lee's (2018)** study that the individuals' perceived usefulness of streaming media devices was positively associated with their behavioral intention to use them. Also, this result is in line with **Lane and Coleman (2012)** who applied TAM by looking at perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of the social networking media back in the day, such as Facebook and MySpace, within a group of business students at a U.S. regional university. The results of their study found that higher PEOU led to higher PU, which ultimately led to a higher use of the social networking media. Further, **Park *et al.* (2013)** in their study on Smartphones usage in South Korea, applied TAM. Their study confirmed the basic claims of the TAM – the path from PEOU to PU and the path from PU to intention to keep using smartphones and increase smartphone dependency. This indicates that users become dependent on the technology once they perceive it as useful and easy to use.

6.   CONCLUSION

Certain traits or background characteristics have been considered significant predictors of excessive use of the subscription-based video-on-demand (SVoD) services. This study explores more deliberately users' background characteristics and motives that may make a user prone to excessive usage behavior. Low self-esteem and lack of self-control were negatively related to the excessive use behavior identified in this study. This may suggest that externally controlled users and the users with low self-esteem may be particularly prone to developing an excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!. The survey respondents revealed that they used platform WATCH iT! for instrumental purposes to watch informative programs. That means for gratifying their information-seeking needs, users depend on the platform and watch information content at their convenience. On the contrary, to the expectation, information seeking did not predict the excessive use of the platform WATCH iT! in this study.

The motivation category that affects the demand of users' excessive use behavior the most, is the individuals' ritualized motivations as they were found to have a very significant effect on excessive use. The respondents were watching the platform WATCH iT! on a habitual basis, to break their routine where they considered the media technologies as a form of entertainment. The findings from this research indicated that the research participants perceived TAM's core constructs including the perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness of the platform WATCH iT!. The results confirmed that they found it easy and

straightforward to use their smart TVs, smartphones or tablets to access online streaming services. They perceived the usefulness of online streaming services, as they enhanced their experience of watching informative and/or entertainment programs, particularly when they used their mobile devices.

6.1   Limitations and Theoretical Recommendations

There are several limitations to this study; first, the study's generalizability may be limited by its focus on a specific demographic (Egyptian youth) and platform (WATCH iT!). The sample used in this study may not be representative of the overall consumers in Egypt, as it focused on a certain age group, so future research needs to be done on other different age groups. Also, the study's scope focused on a certain platform which is WATCH iT!, and the findings of the study may not be applicable to suit other different platforms. Therefore, further research can distinguish among different service providers of online streaming, and those that are operating in different settings.

Future research could explore the applicability of the findings to other contexts and platforms. Although individuals in society are aware of the detrimental effects of excessive reliance on digital media, a dilemma exists because one might suffer from social exclusion if she/he refuses to partake in the new social norms associated with new media devices. In this study few psychological characteristics are included. To address this limitation, future researchers need to examine more specific characteristics that had linked with excessive use behavior i.e., shyness, sensation-seeking and loneliness.

Another limitation to note is using only online questionnaires as the main data collection tool, however, this may not be enough, in order to enhance the reliability of the study a real-time response must be used instead of a recalled one. Perhaps, further research may involve interpretative studies to investigate the individuals' in-depth opinions and beliefs on the latest developments in broadcast media. Inductive studies can reveal other important factors about the individuals' consumption behaviors, and may probably shed more light on why, where, when and how they are using online streaming technologies. This way, service providers of recorded video content and/or live broadcasts will be in a better position to understand their audiences' expectations.

6.2   Practical Recommendations

The present study contributes to the understanding of the factors driving Egyptian youth's excessive use of WATCH iT!. The findings have implications for service providers, policymakers, and marketers seeking to understand the motivations behind the adoption and excessive use of video on demand services. The study findings suggest that entertainment is a strong predictor of excessive use of the platform WATCH iT!. So, it is recommended that the subscription-based video-on-demand (SVoD) platforms produce more entertainment programs and introduce structural changes in their content creation, presentation and distribution to attract viewers and garner their loyalty. The contents need to be locally produced and are in tune with local popular interest to cope with exploding market challenges. The study identified that most of WATCH iT! users use this online streaming technologies for ease of use. This indicates that most viewers prefer to watch the platform on their mobile phones with their widespread freedom of access. Hence, on the backdrop of the current study, it is recommended that the subscription-based video-on-demand (SVoD) providers increase their user base substantially by adopting different distribution models. The most preferred programs in WATCH iT! platform are movies and series. So, it is recommended that the subscription-based video-on-demand (SVoD) players micro-target their audience by localized content in Arabic language. More such original content with a good storyline, true-life characters and suspense elements can woo the users to binge watch and continue to renew their subscriptions.

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Appendix (A)

Questionnaire in English

Q1: *How often do you use the Internet for work/ fun?*

All the time	Only sometimes	Rarely

Q2: *What is your usage rate of the platform WATCH iT!?*

Once daily	Several times a day	More than 3 times a week	Once a week	Depending on the situation

Q3: *How many hours do you spend watching content on the platform WATCH iT! per day?*

Less than an hour	From 2 to 3 hours	From 3 hours to 6 hours	6 hours or more

Q4: *How long have you been subscribed to the platform WATCH iT!?*

Less than 6 months	From 6 months to a year	From 1 year to 2 years	From 2 years to 3 years	I am not subscribed

Q5: *Out of all the content featured on WATCH iT!, which is the most appealing to you?*

Movies	Series	Programs & shows	Other

Q6: *In your opinion; which is the most important characteristic in Subscription Video on Demand Services' platform? (choose more than one)*

- Accessibility
- Diversity of Content
- Ease of Use
- Entertainment
- Fulfillment of Desires/ Demands

Q7: *To what extent do you agree with the following statements:*

You can give only one answer in a row.

Psychological Characteristics					
	strongly agree	*agree*	*neutral*	*disagree*	*strongly disagree*
Self-esteem					
I take a positive attitude towards myself					
I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life					
I believe that I am a worthwhile person					
Self-control					
The demands of everyday life often get me down					
My life is controlled by other powerful/ influential individuals					
To a great extent, my life is controlled by accidental happenings					

Motives					
	strongly agree	*agree*	*neutral*	*disagree*	*strongly disagree*
Motivation for Ritualized Use					
I watch the platform WATCH iT! to break my routine					
I watch the platform WATCH iT! only in my free time					
Watching the platform WATCH iT! is a form of entertainment					
I watch the platform WATCH iT! as it saves me time and effort to find content I might like					
Motivation for Instrumental Use					
I watch informative programs, including news and talk shows through the platform WATCH iT!					
I watch the platform WATCH iT!as it offers advertising options, e.g., no advertising, limited advertising or all advertising will be presented in free viewing mode					
I watch the platform WATCH iT!as it keeps me up-to-date with all the new content (*series & programs...etc.*)					

Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
Perceived Ease of Use					
It is easy for me to access live or recorded content on the platform WATCH iT!					
I find it easy to use the platform WATCH iT! through digital and mobile devices, including smart TVs, smartphones and tablets					
I find it easy to navigate through the platform WATCH iT! and search for content					
Perceived Usefulness					
The platform WATCH iT!allows me to view what I want in a faster way than traditional TV subscriber services					
I can watch content on the platform WATCH iT! in any place I like if there is a good Wi-Fi or network connection					
I feel joy when watching content on the platform WATCH iT!					

Excessive Internet Use	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
Whenever I have free time, I watch content on the platform WATCH iT!					
I dedicate time every day to watch content on the platform WATCH iT!					
I continue to have the notifications for the platform WATCH iT! always turned on					

Q8: *To what extent do you agree with the following statements:*

You can give only one answer in a row.

	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
I plan to renew my subscription to the platform WATCH iT! when it ends					
Once my subscription on the platform WATCH iT! ends, I plan to try a different platform offering similar content					
I have multiple subscriptions on multiple Subscription Video on Demand services' platforms which I continue to renew					

http://apc.aast.edu

Q9: *If you strongly agree/disagree with the statement "I plan to renew my subscription to the platform WATCH iT! when it ends", please justify your answer.*

Q10: *How do you rate your own overall experience with the platform WATCH iT!?* *(rate of the quality of WATCH iT!?)*

Very Poor	*Poor*	*Average*	*Good*	*Very Good*

Q11: *Personal Information*

Age

16 – 23	24 – 31	32 – 39

Gender

Female	Male

Education Level

High school student	University student	Graduate	Post-graduate

Marital Status

Single	Married

Occupation *(if any)*

Appendix (B)
Questionnaire in Arabic

س1: كم مرة تستخدم الإنترنت للعمل أو للتسلية؟

نادراً	أحياناً	دائماً

س2: ما هو معدل استخدامك لمنصة WATCH iT!؟

على حسب الظروف	أكثر من ٣ مرات في الأسبوع	مرة في الاسبوع	أكثر من مرة في اليوم	مرة يومياً

س3: كم ساعة تقضيها في مشاهدة محتوى على منصة WATCH iT! في اليوم؟

أكثر من ٦ ساعات	من ٣ ساعات إلى ٦ ساعات	من ساعتين إلى ٣ ساعات	أقل من ساعة

س4: منذ متى وأنت مشترك في منصة WATCH iT!؟

غير مشترك	من سنتين إلى ٣ سنوات	من سنة إلى سنتين	من ٦ شهور إلى سنة	أقل من ٦ شهور

س5: من بين كل المحتوى الموجود على منصة WATCH iT!، ما هو المحتوى الأكثر جاذبية بالنسبة لك؟

أخرى	البرنامج والمسرحيات	المسلسلات	الأفلام

س6: في رأيك؛ ما هي أهم ما يميز منصات خدمة الفيديو حسب الطلب؟

- سهولة الوصول
- سهولة الاستخدام
- تنوع المحتوى
- الترفيه
- تحقيق المطالب

<u>الخصائص النفسية</u>
س7: إلى أي مدى توافق على العبارات التالية:

أرفض بشدة	أرفض	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	
					أتخذ موقفاً إيجابياً تجاه نفسي
					أنا أجيد إدارة مسؤوليات الحياة اليومية
					أعتقد أنني شخص ذو شأن
					غالبًا ما تحبطني متطلبات الحياة اليومية
					يتم التحكم في حياتي من قبل أفراد مؤثرين آخرين
					إلى حد كبير، يتم التحكم في حياتي من خلال الأحداث العرضية

الدوافع

س8: إلى أي مدى توافق على العبارات التالية:

أرفض بشدة	أرفض	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	
					أشاهد منصة WATCH iT! لكسر نمط يومي
					أشاهد منصة WATCH iT! فقط في وقت فراغي
					مشاهدة منصة WATCH iT! هو شكل من أشكال الترفيه
					أشاهد منصة WATCH iT! لأنها توفر لي الوقت والجهد للعثور على محتوى قد يعجبني
					أشاهد البرامج التثقيفية بما في ذلك الأخبار والبرامج الحوارية عبر منصة WATCH iT!
					أشاهد منصة WATCH iT! لأنها توفر خيارات إعلانية، على سبيل المثال، لا تعرض أي إعلانات أو إعلانات محدودة
					أشاهد منصة WATCH iT! حيث تبقيني على اطلاع بكل جديد (مسلسلات وبرامج...إلخ)

سهولة الاستخدام المدركة والفائدة المدركة

س9: إلى أي مدى توافق على العبارات التالية:

أرفض بشدة	أرفض	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	
					من السهل بالنسبة لي الوصول إلى المحتوى المباشر أو المسجل على منصة WATCH iT!
					أجد أنه من السهل استخدام منصة WATCH iT! من خلال الأجهزة الرقمية والمحمولة، بما في ذلك أجهزة التلفاز الذكية والهواتف الذكية والأجهزة اللوحية
					أجد أنه من السهل التنقل عبر منصة WATCH iT! والبحث عن المحتوى
					منصة WATCH iT! تسمح لي بمشاهدة ما أريد بطريقة أسرع من خدمات المشتركين في التلفزيون التقليدية
					يمكنني مشاهدة المحتوى على منصة WATCH iT! في أي مكان أحبه إذا كان هناك اتصال جيد بشبكة Wi-Fi
					أشعر بالبهجة عند مشاهدة المحتوى على منصة WATCH iT!

<u>الاستخدام المفرط</u>

س10: إلى أي مدى توافق على العبارات التالية:

أرفض بشدة	أرفض	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	
					كلما كان لدي وقت فراغ، أشاهد المحتوى على منصة WATCH iT!
					أخصص وقتًا كل يوم لمشاهدة المحتوى على منصة WATCH iT!
					مازالت الإشعارات الخاصة بمنصة WATCH iT! قيد التشغيل دائمًا

س11: إلى أي مدى توافق على العبارات التالية:

أرفض بشدة	أرفض	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	
					أنوي تجديد اشتراكي في منصة WATCH iT! عندما ينتهي
					بمجرد انتهاء اشتراكي بمنصة WATCH iT!، أنوي تجربة منصة مختلفة تقدم محتوى مشابهًا
					لدي اشتراكات في العديد من منصات خدمات الفيديو حسب الطلب والتي استمر في تجديدها

س12: إذا كنت توافق بشدة/لا توافق على عبارة «أخطط لتجديد اشتراكي في منصة WATCH iT! عندما تنتهي»، يرجى تبرير إجابتك.

س13: كيف تقيم تجربتك مع منصة WATCH iT!؟

ضعيف جداً	ضعيف	محايد	جيد	جيد جداً

<u>معلومات شخصية</u>
السن

32 – 39	24 - 31	16 - 23

الجنس

ذكر	أنثى

مستوى التعليم

دراسات عليا	خريج	طالب جامعي	طالب ثانوي

الحالة الاجتماعية

متزوج	أعزب

المهنة (إن وجدت)

152

Categorizing Learners' Needs in English for Occupational Purposes (EOP): A Proposed Taxonomy

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English for Specific purposes (ESP) necessitates exerting tremendous efforts and carrying out tasks prior to the implementation of such courses. These tasks involve identifying learners' needs and developing teaching material with specific discourse. The fact that learners are individuals with unique requirements should be considered, and here is where learning needs come into play. In addition to the learning environment, learning needs should take into account elements like motivation, strategies and skills. The aim of this study is to propose a categorization of learners' needs during the implementation of ESP courses in professional contexts. To this end, the researchers employed a sequential exploratory research design hypothesizing and constructing a taxonomy that included four different dimensions of learners' needs: language, cognitive, psychological and environmental. This was operationalized through an observation process conducted at a Cardiac Care Centre in Aswan, south of Egypt during EOP courses for nurses. To measure learners' perceptions towards the proposed taxonomy, a questionnaire was disseminated to cardiac care nurses. Preliminary findings have revealed that the responses of the participants (n=94) were positive towards the proposed taxonomy of EOP learners' needs. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that ESP instructors take into consideration cognitive, psychological and environmental needs alongside the language needs of learners prior to and during the implementation of ESP courses.

Keywords: English for Occupational Purposes, Needs Analysis, Taxonomy of Needs.

1. INTRODUCTION

ESP is a new approach to teaching English to various domains and industries and is more focused on language in context for certain pre-determined purposes based on an evaluation of the needs and the wants of the targeted group of learners (Paltridge and Starfield 2013; Rahman 2015; Hafner and Miller 2018). It is, therefore, a special language that is primarily used in a specific setting by certain groups of participants (Mackay and Mountford 1978 as cited in Khalid 2016). ESP can be divided into a variety of subfields within specifically prepared English classes, including the social sciences, business and economics, and science and technology. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) are the two primary divisions into which all English classes specifically designed for those professions may be divided (Hutchinson and Waters 1987; Pranoto and Suprayogi 2020). In order to conduct an ESP course, instructors should consider the four pillars of ESP courses (Anthony 2018). These pillars are needs analysis, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation.
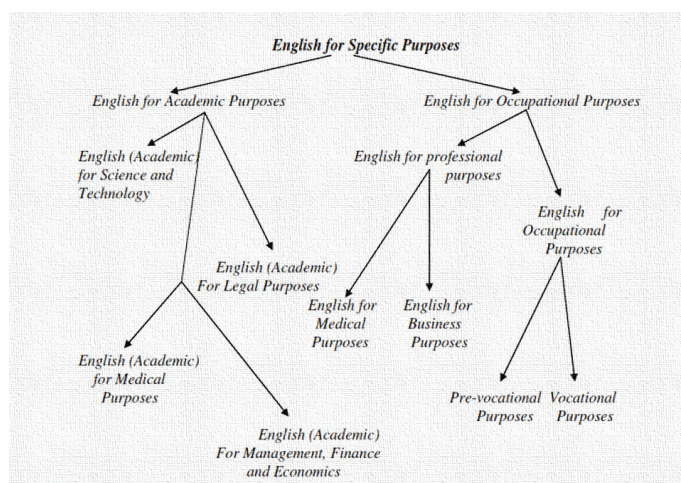
Figure 1: Classification of English for Specific Purposes in Hutchinson and Waters (1987)

Analyzing learners' needs is a crucial step in creating an English language course. It helps ESP instructors to set goals and objectives, and directs the creation of instructional materials, tests, and evaluation techniques (Jihui 2008). Needs analysis has been created for decision-making in education and human services that support grant financing, planning, and resource allocation (Long 2018). According to Otilia (2012), needs analysis in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has changed throughout time, focusing on identifying target situations, evaluating learners' communicative requirements, and putting effective instructional techniques into practice (see Appendix A). It is even more intricate; in addition to identifying the target situation and environment of ESP study, its goals include collecting information about the learners (Yuriatson Jubhari et al. 2022). It involves using questionnaires, interview checklists, and documents to collect information about students' needs and perspectives (Gozali 2018). Furthermore, Aprianto (2020) identified three essential factors that are needed to be taken into consideration: input (content), process (teaching method), and output (outcome). Similarly, Ibrahim (2016) argued that needs analysis in ESL courses includes target needs analysis, present situation analysis, and **learning means** analysis. Furthermore, the process of applying needs analysis follows a specific sequence in order to obtain accurate data and decide to carry out effective or

remedial actions. The steps of conducting a needs analysis are demonstrated in Figure 2.
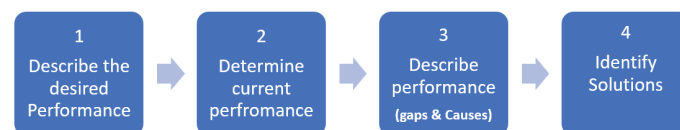
Figure 2: Steps of Needs Analysis according to Berkeley Lab training.
Source: Needs Analysis (2022)

Numerous needs analyses have been conducted in recent years to determine the language requirements for college students and professionals in various domains. Pranoto and Suprayogi (2020) conducted a needs analysis for physical education students. The analysis revealed the desired topics of physical education students (e.g., English for sports, English for journalism, English for professional athletes) and the needs for developing their spoken and written English skills to thrive as professional athletes on an international scale. Alhadiah (2021) conducted a study to investigate the communication requirements of engineering students in Saudi Arabia. The study's conclusion included a set of communication exercises and details on the frequency and difficulty of the activities reported by the students. Meunchong (2023) also looked at the challenges and needs in English that homestay hosts in Thailand's isolated Phetchabun province deal with. The study concluded that the majority of homestay entrepreneurs need English learning resources that are bilingual (Thai – English) with Thai language reading and **meaning**, like a booklet that contains information on how to greet guests, what to expect in each room, how much it costs, what amenities are included, and a self-guided tour schedule of the community. Finally, Chemir and Kitila (2022) explored the role of needs analysis in EAP courses prior to designing a language curriculum for Ethiopian higher education students. The results showed that the students' approaches to learning English are both integrative and instrumental. However, since the majority of research participants believed that students primarily needed English for practical reasons, instrumental motivation outweighed integrative drive.

The fact that learners are individuals with special requirements should be taken into consideration. These requirements may include motivation, strategies, skills as well as the learning situation; i.e. the time and place where the course is conducted (Hutchinson and Waters 1987). Corroborating this argument, Brindley (1989) stated that adult ESL course designers should take into account individual requirements as well as language use when analyzing needs. This involves considering variables such as learning styles, expectations, motivation, attitudes, and personality. Yet, since none of previously mentioned studies classified or proposed the different needs of learners, the current study investigates determining, proposing and categorizing the types of needs for language learners to conduct successful EFL and ESP courses. The significance of the study lies in the classification of the various types of needs that EAP and EOP teachers need to take into account when designing and delivering their courses. In the pursuit of filling this gap, the study purports to answer the following questions:

1.   What are the proposed needs of EOP learners?

2.   How can EOP learners' needs be categorized?

3.   To what extent do these needs enhance language learning from the researchers' perspective?

2.   METHODOLOGY

The methodology section is concerned with the design of the study, participants, data collection, statistical analysis procedures and the research procedures and stages. The main purpose of the study is to propose and categorize EOP learners' types of needs, especially cardiac care nurses.

2.1   Study Design and Participants

The study adopts a pragmatist approach, qualitative and quantitative employing two data collection tools: a participant structured observation and a constructed questionnaire. The observation acted as an exploratory tool whereas the questionnaire acted as a confirmatory tool. The taxonomy was proposed due to the findings of the observation process. The questionnaire was applied to confirm the findings of the observation process. Participants were cardiac care nurses working for one of the cardiothoracic Centers offering free-of-charge services for patients with congenital and developed heart diseases. The vision of Centre revolves around providing optimum patient care, offering professional development

courses and education for its staff members and conducting scientific and academic research to develop its practices.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Study Participants (n = 94)

Demographic Information	No.	%
Sex		
Male	52	55.3
Female	42	44.7
Age		
Between 20 and 25	41	43.6
Between 26 and 30	33	35.1
Between 31 and 35	13	13.8
Over 35	7	7.4
Years of Experience in nursing		
Less than a year	12	12.8
1 to 3 years	33	35.1
4 to 6 years	25	26.6
7 to 10 years	16	17.0
More than 10 years	8	8.5

Table 1 shows the demographic information obtained through the constructed questionnaire administered to the cardiac care nurses following the observation process. As revealed, out of 94 nurses, 52 were male nurses whereas 42 were female nurses. In terms of their age, 74 nurses were between 20 to 30 years old, and 20 nurses were above 31 years old. With regard to their experience, 12 nurses had less than a year, 58 nurses had from 1 to 6 years collectively and 24 nurses had 7 years and above.

2.2   Instruments of Data Collection

The observation process was conducted by one of the researchers, who acted as the English instructor for nurses, over 6 months with 2 sessions a week (see Appendix B). As previously mentioned, one of the researchers was the ESP instructor which leads to the fact that it was a participant observation. Yet, since there was a specific time for the English session and pre-determined schedule, the observation was also a structured process. Notes were taken in every English session. The researcher, then, organized and analyzed the notes to finally classify them in a taxonomy.

As regards the questionnaire, it was constructed by the researchers based on the observation findings.

It consists of six sections: the first section (3 Questions) aims to elicit demographic information about the participants. The following five sections (28 Questions) aim to elicit information on the perceptions of cardiac care nurses regarding the linguistic, cognitive, psychological and environmental needs to conduct a successful ESP course in a professional context. The questionnaire was piloted over 5 nurses in order to check its reliability and validity. A few statements have been modified for appropriate wording. The questionnaire was disseminated through a link to a google form. Google forms are known for their efficiency, reliability and practicality in calculating surveys and quizzes results.

2.3   Statistical Procedures

Data were fed to the computer and analyzed using IBM SPSS software package version 20.0. The used tests were as follows:

1.   **Pearson coefficient** to correlate between two normally distributed quantitative variables

2.   **Cronbach's Alpha** Reliability Statistics were assessed using Cronbach's Alpha test.

3.   **Mean scores and participants proportions** for the questionnaire items.

Table 2. Reliability statistics

Sections	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
B) Linguistic Needs	0.878	6
C) Cognitive Needs	0.863	7
D) Psychological Needs	0.842	6
E) Environmental Needs	0.834	7
F) Direct Questions	0.667	2

As regards the questionnaire validity and reliability, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was applied to each of the questionnaire sections to measure its reliability. As shown in Table 2, the linguistic needs had the highest reliability level (α = 0.878), then comes the cognitive needs (α = 0.863). The psychological needs come in third place with a reliability coefficient (α = 0.842). The environmental needs section had a (α = 0.834) and finally the direct questions coefficient was (α = 0.667). As for the validity of the questionnaire, all sections were statistically significant at ($p \leq 0.05$) following the application of Pearson coefficient (r).

2.4   Stages of the Study

As shown in Figure 3, the study went through 3 stages. The first was the exploration and identification stage as the researchers reviewed the relevant literature so as to gain more knowledge about learners' needs and the needs analysis and discover the gap of the research. Then, one of the researchers conducted a participant structured observation over 6 months in various ESP classes and took notes to be analyzed later on. Following the analysis of the observation notes, a taxonomy of the types of learners' needs was constructed.
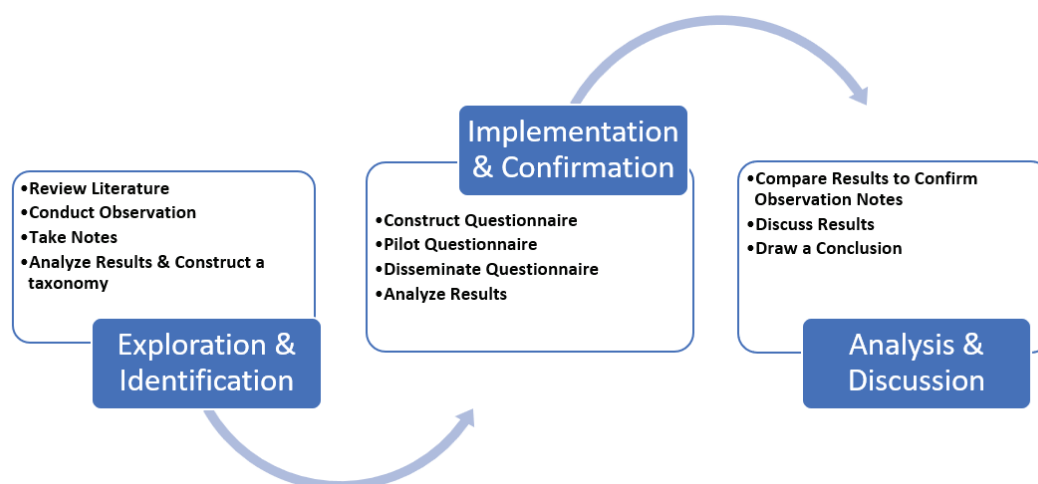
Figure 3: Stages of the study

http://apc.aast.edu

The implementation and confirmation stage (2nd stage) included constructing a questionnaire based on the observation results. After that, the questionnaire was piloted on 5 nurses for its practicality, validity and reliability. It was then administered to nurses and was left open to accept responses for a week. In the end, the results were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program applying various tests as mentioned in the statistical procedures section. Finally, in the analysis and discussion stage (3rd stage), the results were compared following their analysis and some conclusions were reached.

3. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the research were extracted following the analysis of the data collected from the observation first then confirmed by questionnaire. The exploratory tool was the observation, from which the taxonomy was constructed, whereas the data confirmatory tool was the questionnaire.

3.1 Observation

Designing and tailoring ESP courses is never an effortless process. It requires and necessitates collecting a considerable amount of information about learners in terms of their aims, their expectations, their abilities, their educational background and other language learning influencing variables. For this reason, one of the authors carried out a structured, participant observation process on the ESP and general English courses provided by one of the cardiac care Centers to its staff nurses in Egypt. The courses were held over a period of six months. During this time, it was found that learners do not only have language needs, but also cognitive, psychological and environmental needs. The authors sorted out these needs in a taxonomy demonstrated in Figure 4.

The taxonomy is divided into four dimensions: language, cognitive, psychological and environmental. All of them are elements that affect the designing and delivery of not only ESP but also any English language courses. The language needs include language fluency and accuracy, reception and production of the second/foreign language, discourse and genre identification, language contextuality and register and, finally, social interaction. The cognitive needs address matters of mental processing of information and language acquired through the designed activities. It includes various concepts: attention and curiosity, reasoning (critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, analysis, evaluation and synthesizing), visual and auditory processing, learning strategies and, finally, learning preferences. The psychological needs are concerned with the affective or psychological status of the learners and their inclusion in the course activities. It involves promoting self-confidence and raising self-esteem, commitment and self-discipline, the encouragement of autonomy, collaboration and relatedness and finally raising learners' interest. The environmental needs include the avoidance of over-stress, showing professional behaviour, practicality of resources, safety and comfort of learners, cross-cultural understanding, cooperation and empowerment and finally appropriate organization of the courses.

Figure 4: Taxonomy of learners' needs

Learners enroll in language courses to gain the capability of using the target language effectively for various sorts of communication. Writing emails, reports, social media posts, job contracts and other sorts of written communicative linguistic forms are a prime example of such language needs. During the courses implemented at the cardiac care Centre, the instructor noticed that nurses were striving to become fluent in English and requested detailed feedback for their mistakes and errors to improve the way they write or speak. In order to do that, they needed to listen to recorded conversations and lectures, and read a lot of medical texts with various nursing related topics in an attempt to enhance their knowledge of nursing and improve their nursing-related language skills. They even requested the references from which the instructor brought the texts and the recorded conversations. Their ability to write was satisfactory; however, they needed to identify the genres of emails, reports and nursing notes so as to be able to analyze and write them independently in a practical manner. They also needed to identify the real-life language at work. That is why the instructor brought some authentic texts and conversations to show them how language is used in the nursing cardiac care context. The interesting part for the learners was the interaction activity. This activity required them to use the language learned in every session. It provided them with some motivation to continue learning, though there was some anxiety during the activity that needed to be addressed by the instructor.

As for cognitive needs, learners appreciate and conform to whoever respects their minds. They like to be curious about what they learn and how they learn it. They become attentive to the miniature details if they feel interested in the topic. For this reason, the instructor had to always ignite their interest with the learning resources (e.g., visuals and audios), discussions, feedback and the teaching methodology. In addition, a lot of the cardiac care Centre nurses did not know how to study their lessons after they finish their sessions. Yet, it was a must for the instructor to provide them with diverse strategies of learning and recalling while considering their individual differences and learning preferences (e.g., auditorily, visual, kinesthetic). Additionally, before every lesson, it was important to clarify what language functions, rules or vocabulary they will learn and how the instructor is going to implement that. In doing so, the instructor always started the sessions with lead-in questions to identify their expectations and inform them about

what they are going to learn. This is because they were adult learners who always yearned to know the purpose of the session.

The psychological needs were as important as the language and cognitive needs. Nurses needed to feel respected and self-confident in order to be motivated to learn. This was obvious when the instructor asked them politely to do their tasks, praised them and celebrated their tiny achievements. It was also useful to remind them of their commitment to the course time and tasks so that they would remember the due dates of their tasks as they were heavily loaded with job responsibilities. Moreover, the instructor promoted their autonomy through giving them topics to look for on the internet and words to look up their meanings in dictionaries. This need gave nurses a sense of achievement and created an ability to construct their own knowledge. It was uplifting and motivating for them to feel that they are in control of their own learning. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the instructor to prevent any kind of ostracism or rejection in the English class as learners who feel related to the group will always be happy and motivated to learn.

The surrounding environment has to be well-prepared for teaching and learning. Professional behaviour with the teacher and the administration of the workplace and vice versa can pave the way towards a promising learning environment. Learners have to communicate properly, act politely and participate in class enthusiastically. Teachers, on the other hand, have to make sure that learners feel comfortable and safe, avoid giving stressful tasks, use practical resources for teaching, integrate technology, empower learners to use the language effectively and ensure respect is there for all learners even if they are from different cultural backgrounds.

3.2 Frequencies of the Questionnaire Items

Tables 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 demonstrate the quantitative data collected from cardiac care nurses. The tables include data on the language, cognitive, psychological and environmental needs of learners in the ESP classes. As previously mentioned in the methodology section, the questionnaire collected data corroborate the qualitative data collected from the observation process and the suggested needs taxonomy.

Table 3. Language needs: Frequencies of questionnaire items (n = 94)

	B) Language Needs		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean rank	Direction
1	I need to improve my target-language fluency and accuracy in an ESP course through effective activities.	No.	0	0	7	36	51	4.47	High
		%	0.0	0.0	7.4	38.3	54.3		
2	I need to receive and produce target language vocabulary and grammar through field-specific reading texts and listening recordings.	No.	0	0	9	38	47	4.40	High
		%	0.0	0.0	9.6	40.4	50.0		
3	I need to identify the type and the structure of the text used in the activities to be familiar with the language used in it.	No.	0	1	5	44	44	4.39	High
		%	0.0	1.1	5.3	46.8	46.8		
4	I need to see the target language used in various contexts in an ESP course (e.g., listening field-specific situations, field-specific reading texts).	No.	0	1	7	52	34	4.27	High
		%	0.0	1.1	7.4	55.3	36.2		
5	I need to identify the appropriate language for formal, semi-formal and informal field-specific situations.	No.	0	0	7	39	48	4.44	High
		%	0.0	0.0	7.4	41.5	51.1		
6	I need to use the target and field -specific language through activities that provide social interaction with my classmates to be familiar with and practically use it at workplace later on.	No.	0	0	3	51	40	4.39	High
		%	0.0	0.0	3.2	54.3	42.6		

As Table 3 shows, a total number of 87 nurses (92.6%) either strongly agreed or agreed that they need to improve their target-language fluency and accuracy in an ESP course through effective activities and only 7 nurses adopted a neutral disposition. In item 2, 85 nurses constituting 90.4 % stated that they need to receive and produce target language vocabulary and grammar through field-specific reading texts and listening recordings, only 9 nurses were neutral. Moreover, 88 nurses representing 93.6 % confirmed that need to identify the type and the structure (e.g., emails, specialized reports) of the text used in the activities to be familiar with the language used in it whereas only one disagreed and 5 were neutral. 86 nurses comprising 91.5% approved that they need to see the target language used in various contexts in an ESP course (e.g., listening field-specific situations, field-specific reading texts), only one disagreed and 7 positioned themselves in the neutral zone. Added to this, 87 nurses (92.6%) asserted that they need to identify the appropriate language for formal, semi-formal and informal field-specific situations. Finally, in statement 6, 91 nurses constituting 96.9% approved that they need to use the target and field -specific language through activities that provide social interaction with their classmates to be familiar with and practically use it at workplace later on, none disagreed to the statement and only 3 were neutral.

Table 4. Cognitive needs: Frequencies of questionnaire items (n = 94)

	C) Cognitive Needs		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean rank	Direction
7	I need my critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity skills to be developed through activities that enhance them effectively in an ESP class.	No.	0	0	7	52	35	4.30	High
		%	0.0	0.0	7.4	55.3	37.2		
8	I need to improve my detail-attention skill and enhance my curiosity through designed activities, course instructor's mentoring skills or teaching methodology.	No.	0	0	8	49	37	4.31	High
		%	0.0	0.0	8.5	52.1	39.4		
9	I need the instructor to use illustrative and legible pictures that are suitable to my level of English and contain the target and field specific language to understand and process information covered in them.	No.	0	1	8	47	38	4.30	High
		%	0.0	1.1	8.5	50.0	40.4		
10	I need the instructor to use clear and interpretive recordings that are suitable to my level of English and contain the target and field specific language to understand and process information covered in them.	No.	0	2	5	50	37	4.30	High
		%	0.0	2.1	5.3	53.2	39.4		
11	I need the instructor to inform me of the course plan, the aims and the expected outcome.	No.	0	0	8	38	48	4.43	High
		%	0.0	0.0	8.5	40.4	51.1		
12	I need the instructor to teach me some learning strategies to achieve the outcome of the ESP course.	No.	1	2	10	38	43	4.28	High
		%	1.1	2.1	10.6	40.4	45.7		
13	I need the instructor to consider my learning preferences when designing activities in an ESP course.	No.	0	0	5	45	44	4.41	High
		%	0.0	0.0	5.3	47.9	46.8		

In terms of learners' cognitive needs, out of 94 nurses, 87 nurses (92.5%) confirmed that they need their critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity skills to be developed through activities that enhance them effectively in an ESP class. Also, 86 nurses constituting 91.5% approved that they need to improve their detail-attention skill and enhance their curiosity through designed activities, course instructor's mentoring skills or teaching methodology. Added to that, 85 nurses (90.4%) stated that they need the instructor to use illustrative and legible pictures that are suitable to their level of English and contain the target and field specific language to understand and process information covered in them.

87 nurses representing 92.6% stated that they need the instructor to use clear and interpretive recordings that are suitable to their level of English and contain the target and field specific language to understand and process the information covered in them. 86 nurses (91.5%) stated that they need the instructor to inform them of the course plan, the aims and the expected outcome. Furthermore, 81 nurses (86.1%) confirmed that they need the instructor to teach them some learning strategies to achieve the outcome of the ESP course. Finally, in item 13, 89 nurses (94.7%) stated that they need the instructor to consider their learning preferences when designing activities in an ESP course.

Table 5. Psychological needs: Frequencies of questionnaire items (n = 94)

	D) Psychological Needs		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean rank	Direction
14	I need the course instructor to design activities that enhance my self-confidence and self-esteem in an ESP class.	No.	0	0	9	42	43	4.36	High
		%	0.0	0.0	9.6	44.7	45.7		
15	I need the instructor to give me constructive feedback and not to discourage me in an ESP class.	No.	1	1	4	43	45	4.38	High
		%	1.1	1.1	4.3	45.7	47.9		
16	I need the course instructor to enhance my commitment through giving me reasonable tasks to do on my own or with my classmates.	No.	0	4	8	45	37	4.22	High
		%	0.0	4.3	8.5	47.9	39.4		
17	I need the course instructor and the learning resources to enhance my research skills and learning on my own.	No.	0	3	8	39	44	4.32	High
		%	0.0	3.2	8.5	41.5	46.8		
18	I need to feel a sense of belonging to the group of learners and the field in an ESP class.	No.	0	2	11	50	31	4.17	High
		%	0.0	2.1	11.7	53.2	33.0		
19	I need to feel eager and excited to learn through the designed activities by the course instructor and the materials used in an ESP class.	No.	0	2	6	37	49	4.41	High
		%	0.0	2.1	6.4	39.4	52.1		

With reference to learners' psychological needs, a number of 85 nurses comprising 90.4% either strongly agreed or agreed that they need the course instructor to design activities that enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem in an ESP class. 88 nurses (93.6%) reported that they need the instructor to give them constructive feedback and not to discourage them in an ESP class. 82 nurses (87.3%) approved that they need the course instructor to enhance their commitment through giving them reasonable tasks to do on their own or with their classmates. 83 nurses (88.3%) reported that they need the course instructor and the learning resources to enhance their research skills and learning on their own, 3 disagreed with the statement and 8 were neutral. 81 nurses constituting 86.2% confirmed that they need to feel a sense of belonging to the group of learners and the field in an ESP class. 86 nurses (91.5%) stated that they need to feel eager and excited to learn through the designed activities by the course instructor and the materials used in an ESP class.

Table 6. Environmental needs: Frequencies of questionnaire items (n = 94)

	E) Environmental Needs		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean rank	Direction
20	I do not need to feel overstressed in an ESP class though I know that stress is part of the learning process in general.	No.	0	3	15	49	27	4.06	High
		%	0.0	3.2	16.0	52.1	28.7		
21	I need to see professional attitude and behaviour from my classmates, the course instructor and the employees involved in the enrollment process to feel motivated to learn.	No.	0	1	7	48	38	4.31	High
		%	0.0	1.1	7.4	51.1	40.4		
22	I need the resources used for the course to be provided and practical (e.g., books, place, technologies)	No.	0	0	11	39	44	4.35	High
		%	0.0	0.0	11.7	41.5	46.8		
23	I need to feel safe and comfortable during the ESP course.	No.	0	2	6	38	48	4.40	High
		%	0.0	2.1	6.4	40.4	51.1		
24	I need to feel understood and respected in terms of my culture during the ESP course.	No.	3	1	4	37	49	4.36	High
		%	3.2	1.1	4.3	39.4	52.1		
25	I need to feel empowered and assisted during the ESP course.	No.	0	1	13	38	42	4.29	High
		%	0.0	1.1	13.8	40.4	44.7		
26	I need the ESP course time to be appropriate to enhance the learning process.	No.	1	0	4	33	56	4.52	High
		%	1.1	0.0	4.3	35.1	59.6		

As regards the environmental needs, out of 94 nurses, 76 nurses representing (80.7%) stated that they do not need to feel overstressed in an ESP class though they know that stress is part of the learning process in general. 86 nurses (91.4%) reported that they need to see professional attitude and behaviour from their classmates, the course instructor and the employees involved in the enrollment process to feel motivated to learn. 83 nurses (88.3%) approved that they need the resources used for the course to be provided and practical (e.g., books, place, technologies). Additionally, 86 nurses (91.5%) stated that they need to feel safe and comfortable during the ESP course. The same number of nurses approved that they need to feel understood and respected in terms of their culture during the ESP course. 80 nurses representing 85.1% confirmed that they need to feel empowered and assisted during the ESP course. Also, 89 nurses (94.7%) approved that they need the ESP course time to be appropriate to enhance the learning process.

Table 7. Direct questions: Frequencies of questionnaire items (n = 94)

	F) Direct Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean rank	Direction
27	I **want** the course instructor, the material selected and the organization providing the ESP course to consider the cognitive, psychological and environmental needs of the learners along with the linguistic needs.	No.	1	0	9	41	43	4.33	High
		%	1.1	0.0	9.6	43.6	45.7		
28	I <u>**do not want**</u> the course instructor, the material selected and the organization providing the ESP course to consider the cognitive, psychological and environmental needs of the learners along with the linguistic needs.	No.	32	38	20	4	0	0.96	Low
		%	34.0	40.4	21.3	4.3	0.0		

Table 7 presents 2 direct questions to confirm the results of the previous tables. In this endeavor, out of 94 nurses, 84 nurses constituting 89.3% confirmed that they want the course instructor, the material selected and the organization providing the ESP course to consider the cognitive, psychological and environmental needs of the learners along with the linguistic needs, 9 were neutral and the mean score was 4.33. In reverse, 70 nurses comprising 74.4% disapproved that they do not want the course instructor, the material selected and the organization providing the ESP course to consider the cognitive, psychological and environmental needs of the learners along with the linguistic needs, 20 were neutral and the mean score was 0.96.

4.   DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, the researchers conducted an observation process in order to identify learners' needs and categorize them. Following the observation process, the researchers constructed and disseminated a questionnaire in an attempt to confirm the observation results. Based on the data extracted from the observation, then, the questionnaire, the researchers categorized ESP learners' needs into four dimensions: language, cognitive, psychological, and environmental needs associating them to their origin, nature and functioning (see Figure 4).

The language needs in the taxonomy include the pursuit of fluency and accuracy to elevate learners' level of proficiency to the best of their ability and the teacher's ability as well. There has to be a variety of resources and teaching methods that allow the reception and production of language as well. These resources and methods include field-specific well-designed conversation audios, templates of functional writing (e.g., reports, notes) for the acquisition of vocabulary, field-specific common grammatical forms and familiarity with the type of discourse used in the target domain. In addition, learners need to use the target language for social interaction to be familiarized with their field language. Furthermore, all language needs complete one another as the reception and production of language, the social interaction of the target language, the contextualization and authenticity of language and the identification of genre and discourse are conducive to fluency and accuracy which is always the main aim of any ESP course. This also means that the exclusion of any of the needs will prevent the way to the learner's fluency and accuracy.

In order to make an ESP course engaging, instructors must intellectually challenge learners by stimulating their curiosity, grabbing their focus, and creating assignments that require them to reflect critically, express their thoughts, and use creativity. Additionally, it is critical that the instructor be open and transparent with the students by outlining expectations, the degree of difficulty of the target language items, and how the learners should approach them. However, in order to facilitate learning, educators may employ pictures, videos, or any other kind of audiovisual material to assist students establish the connection between what they see and what they hear (processing). Along with educating them using the ways they prefer, it would also be beneficial to teach them specific strategies that make learning easier and more successful.

The process of learning cannot be successful unless learners are respected, motivated, committed, have sense of belonging and interested. Respect and motivation enhance learners' self-confidence and self-esteem, raise their interest and autonomy and leads finally to commitment. When learners are psychologically comfortable, language learning

becomes effective and autonomous. In terms of the environment, an ESP course can only be successful in the presence of professional behaviour, safety, resources practicality, cultural understanding, cooperation and appropriate organization of the course sections. This occurs through collaborative efforts between the instructor and the stakeholders.

5.   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of the study was to propose and categorize different types of learners' needs in an ESP course. Briefly demonstrating the study's results, 1) there are 4 types of needs for language learners that can be considered and employed in ESP courses: language, cognitive, psychological, and environmental. 2) In every category, there are items that directly or indirectly serve the language learning process (see Figure 4).

Course designing and delivering is either a making or a breaking point in the lives and professions of EFL and ESP learners. It makes them continue their target-language education process or stop it due to its uselessness. The taxonomy of needs for English language learners is a feasible and pragmatic move on the way to design effective activities that combine all sorts of involved elements in the learning process: linguistic, cognitive, psychological and environmental. That is why, prior to designing any activities, syllabus designers, EFL and ESP practitioners have to keep in mind the other skills and circumstances, not just the language, to enhance and increase the willingness of the English language learners to learn (e.g., self-confidence, creativity and cross-cultural understanding). Furthermore, identifying learners' needs through the taxonomy accelerates the target-language learning process as it gives the ESP practitioner an idea about their cognitive and psychological status as well as their abilities to perceive, understand and adapt to the surrounding environment.

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Appendix A

Types of Needs Analysis according to Different Researchers.

No.	Type	Researchers
1	Register Analysis	Peter Strevens, Jack Ewer and John Swales -1960s and 1970s
2	Communicative Needs Processor	Munby (1978)
3	Deficiency Analysis	West (1997); Brindley (1989)
4	Learner- Centered Needs Analysis	Nunan (1988)
5	Target Situation Analysis	Hutchinson and Waters (1987)
6	Critically Aware Needs Analysis	Holliday and Cooke (1982); Selinker (1979) and Swales (1990); Tudor (1997); Douglas (2000); Murray and McPherson (2004); Jasso-Aguilar (1995,1998); Carter-Thomas, (2012); Huhta, Vogt & Ulkki (2013
7	Right Analysis	Benson (1989); Goer (1992); Smoke (1994); Leki (1995); Prior (1995); Spack (1997); Benesch (1999, 2001); Dudley Evans and St. Johns (2001).
8	Stakeholder Needs Analysis	Jass-Aguilar (1999); Long (2005); Cheng (2011); Belcher & Lukkarila (2011); Paltridge & Starfield (2013); Huhta, Vogt & Ulkki (2013)

Adapted from Kothalawala et al. (2015)

Appendix B

Observation Schedule

Day	8:00:00 to 10:00 AM	4:00 PM	5:00:00 to 6:30 PM	8:30:00 to 10:00PM
Sat.	A2 (Elementary)	Preparation & Administrative tasks	Nurse Aide	A2 (Elementary)
Sun.	B1- (Pre-intermediate)		B2 (Upper-Intermediate)	B1- (Pre-intermediate)
Mon.	B1 (Intermediate)		C1	B1 (Intermediate)
Tue.	A2 (Elementary)		Nurse Aide	A2 (Elementary)
Wed.	B1- (Pre-intermediate)		B2 (Upper-Intermediate)	B1- (Pre-intermediate)
Thurs.	B1 (Intermediate)		C1	B1 (Intermediate)

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Unleashing Resistance and Decoding the Backstories behind Six: A Post-Structural Reading of Selected Digital Six-Word Memoirs

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is mainly concerned with exploring an intriguing minimalist literary genre, known as the digital 'six-word memoir.' A captivating form of artistic expression, this succinct format is a realm whose brevity and timeliness uniquely suits online platforms and remarkably aligns with the preferences of contemporary readers amidst information overload. Transcending its brevity to become a catalyst for reflection, the six-word memoir manages to encapsulate stories of defiance and resilience, displaying the capacity of individuals to stand up for what is right and to fight for what are theirs. For this purpose, the present study embarks on navigating the contours of this genre: Analyzing the societal, gender, and personal manifestations of dissent and exploring the interplay of form and content in selected thought-provoking digital six-word memoirs. Highlighting the subversive power dynamics embedded within the brevity of each snippet, the study demonstrates the way each condensed story, through a deliberate selection and careful arrangement of words, taps into a contentious issue, distills a social commentary, and encapsulates a different aspect of resistance – be it a tale of personal struggle, a call for societal transformation, or a pursuit of justice. As such, the study draws on the Post-Structural Approach, especially, Jacque Derrida's 'Deconstructive Approach' and Michael Foucault's Concept of Power/ Knowledge as they highly resonate with the brevity and depth of the self-contained, counter narratives under consideration and serve the purpose of the study.

Keywords: *Condensed storytelling, Counter Narratives, Deconstruction, Flash Fiction, Post-structuralism, Power Dynamics, Six-word Memoirs.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

The Transformative Potential of Storytelling and the Six-word Memoir as an Accessible Medium of Resistance

In the digital age, where information overload is becoming rampant, attention spans are diminishing, and brevity is reigning supreme, the way of consuming or engaging with storytelling has undergone a remarkable transformation. In this ever-evolving digital landscape, traditional narratives – with their extensive plot lines and detailed character descriptions – vie for attention with various other compelling, condensed forms of digital content, known as 'micro-fiction,' 'flash fiction,' or 'six-word memoirs' (Jenkins 2023). Besides, the rise of social media and instant messaging platforms, online writing communities, blogs, websites, hashtags, tweets, and trends related to micro-fiction – as thriving spaces or creative outlets – have introduced new demands and constraints that shape the way stories are created, appreciated, and disseminated. As such, the viral nature of social media has been instrumental in amplifying the wide-spread circulation and collective engagement with these succinct narratives among wider audiences who may be less inclined to engage with longer traditional works (Pertivi *et al.* 2023).

Aligning perfectly with the bite-sized content that thrives on social media feeds, resonating strongly with

the expectations of online users, and fitting seamlessly into the rhythm of digital interactions, these six-word memoirs – with their accessibility and share ability through digital platforms – take an added significance within the realm of resistance narratives. Acting as powerful vehicles for expression, communication, and advocacy, these condensed forms of storytelling have the innate ability to communicate messages, catalyze dialogues, evoke powerful responses, engage the digital audience, and thrive in a fast-paced, attention - deficient digital landscape. Through their propulsion to the forefront of online discourse, these micro narratives provide unique avenues and subtle, yet potent, means for aspiring authors ,enthusiasts, activists, marginalized groups, and dissenters to craft narratives that showcase their experiences, voice their concerns, articulate their aspirations, question power structures, confront adversity, critique oppressive ideologies, challenge societal norms, foster solidarity, inspire collective acting, and offer a means for resistance (Privott 2021). In support of the Loyola Marymount University Anti-Racism Project, Erica J. Privott prompts people to reflect on white America, engage in meaningful dialogue, and become more empathetic and proactive towards a more just and equitable society. Highlighting the power of six-word memoirs to encapsulate societal struggles and effectively capture the essence of communal experience, Privott maintains:

> "In six words" will get to the heart of our community's struggles and fight against the unjust and unequal experiences that plague our society, in hopes of sparking conversation, understanding and empathy, as well as further igniting our desire to become better angels (2021).

1.2   Objectives

The present study is primarily concerned with attaining the following objectives: First, unearthing the key factors that have provided a fertile ground for the growth of the six-word memoir. More precisely speaking, assessing how this unique literary form – with its limited word count– emerges, takes shape, reflects, and responds to the demands and constraints of the modern world, thus gaining substantial traction within online communities. Second, exploring the subversive power dynamics and the societal, gender, and personal manifestations of dissent embedded within selected thought-provoking six-word narratives, with the aim of demonstrating the way each ultra-short story encapsulates a different aspect of resistance and opens up space for alternative perspectives to be heard. Third, examining the ways by which the stylistic and thematic elements in these impactful narratives

would push literary boundaries, engage readers' imagination, and evoke powerful responses. Fourth, tracing how these ultra-short counter narratives reverberate with the principles of the Post-structural approach. Finally, highlighting the role of curation and its effectiveness in resistance, social commentary, and addressing pressing societal issues.

1.3   Research Questions

Outlining the specific goals that guide this field of inquiry, the present study aims at addressing the following key questions: First, in what way does the highly abbreviated form of six-word memoir resonate with the preferences of contemporary readers? Second, how effectively do six-word memoirs use subtext to challenge societal norms, question power structures, empower marginalized communities, offer alternative perspectives, and engage online audiences? Third, does the brevity of these succinct narratives impact their effectiveness as tools for resistance and social commentary? Fourth, do cultural nuances affect the way these ultra-short narratives are addressed or perceived? Finally, what is the significance – or lasting legacy – of the six-word memoirs within the broader literary landscape?

1.4   Theoretical Approach

Revealing intriguing connections when examined in relation to the six-word memoirs, the Post-structural Approach is administrated as it represents a significant paradigm shift in discourse analysis, questioning the objectivity or stability of various traditional interpretive structures, considering them to be constituted by broader systems of power and context (Lewis *et al*. 1982, 2-24). Moving away from the idea of fixed structures and meanings emphasized by structuralism, Jacques Derrida's 'Deconstruction' is particularly suited to analyzing the six-word memoirs because it unpacks the layers of meaning within a text, revealing contradictions and multiple interpretations and uncovering deeper insights and counter-narratives. Encouraging a more nuanced understanding of how language, culture, and society shape our individual identities and subjective experiences, Michael Foucault's 'Concept of Power/ Knowledge', as well, aligns seamlessly with the intricate subversive power dynamics at play within counter narratives. Amalgamating these realms – the study maintains – would contribute to highlighting the fluid, deconstructive nature of language, the multiplicity of subjective perspectives, the constant negotiation of meaning, and the complexities of resistance in the contemporary world.

1.5 Rationale

Apart from the researcher's interest in exploring the minimalist descriptions and implied meanings embedded within these digital counter narratives, the basic underlying premises behind selecting this area of study are: First, the researcher is eager to provide valuable insights into the concept of resistance and the power dynamics inherent in personal, gender, or political relationships. Second, the researcher yearns to offer a unique lens detecting the creative possibilities, broader implications, and wide-reaching significance of these bite-sized narratives in the context of contemporary literature and beyond. Finally, the researcher endeavours to encourage a broader understanding of language and its potential for multiple interpretations.

1.6 Significance

The significance of this study – it is hoped – resides in highlighting the transformative potential of literature in the digital era and showcasing the versatile nature of the six-word memoirs. It is also anticipated that this study would serve as a prompt for a further exploration of these ultra-short counter narratives as effective forms of communication, embodying various forms of resistance, allowing a multitude of voices to be thoughtfully heard, and rendering a wide range of perspectives to be critically evaluated. Primarily, the value of the present paper – hopefully – dwells in providing insights into the thematic and stylistic merits of this minimalist format and opening potential avenues for more experimentation and diversity within the broader landscape of literature.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

2.1 The Six-word Memoir as a Multi-Faceted Form of Storytelling:

The Thematic and Stylistic Merits

Known as 'Flash Fiction,' 'Micro Fiction,' 'Sudden Fiction,' 'Postcard Fiction,' or 'Nano Fiction,' the six-word memoir is a condensed – but impactful, meaningful, and open-ended – form of storytelling, where an entire self-contained narrative is distilled within the tight restriction of six succinct, carefully-chosen words (Sustana2021). A minimalist approach to storytelling, this bite-sized narrative is a literary microcosm, requiring minimalistic yet impactful language, skillful word play, and creative imagination to craft powerful tales and evocative experiences. Whether it is a poignant reflection, a thought-provoking snippet, or even a humorous twist, a well-crafted six-word memoir would maximize the impact of every word to convey meaning, evoke emotions, and invite interpretation, while stimulating the readers' imagination to fill in the gaps and contemplate the untold details beyond the limited word count. When this is done well, the best six-word memoir "delivers a punch that sets off sparks in our heads" (Rohan et al. 2014).

Though it is challenging to trace its exact origin, the format of the six-word memoir is often credited to the famous author Ernest Hemingway – who was challenged by fellow writers to draft a complete story in just six words: *For Sale: Baby Shoes, Never Worn* (Sustana 2021). Despite its minimal word count, this masterpiece does not lack poignancy. Implying or allowing the reader to infer that something tragic happened to a baby, it sparked interest and fascination in the literary community, inspiring others to explore the idea of conveying a story in such a concise format.

Extremely short, the six-word memoir is a form of storytelling that subverts traditional narrative structures by packing a punch in just six, precise and impactful words (Graham 2013). In the six-word memoir, every word has to be chosen with care, has to carry meaning, peel back a layer, progress the text, resonate with readers, leave an impression and a maximum impact (Majewski 2023). As Shakespeare's Polonius once quipped to Hamlet, "Brevity is the soul of wit!" (Shakespeare1987, 90-91). William Faulkner suggested this as well: "In writing, you must kill all your darlings" (qtd. in Wickman 2013). Meaning that you must get rid of your most precious, and especially all the flowery or self-indulgent passages for the true core of your literary work.

Implying rather than explicitly stating, this puzzle-like memoir leaves gaps in the narrative, encouraging readers to actively engage with the story, decipher hidden meanings, subtexts, or possible backstories, and create their own personal response through their own interpretive lenses. Through its power of suggestion, the six-word memoir thus creates an air of mystery and intrigue as readers are left with lingering questions and a desire to explore untold stories behind this succinct glimpse (Richard 2021).

An art of carefully chosen words, the six-word memoir communicates profound themes, introduces complex characters, constructs vivid imagery, and encapsulates an entire world within a brief linguistic frame. Every word is carefully crafted to establish an atmosphere, convey multiple layers of meaning, capture the essence of a character or situation, convey a rich sensory experience, and elicit the desired response from the reader. For this purpose, metaphors, similes, and other literary devices are employed to evoke strong emotions and create a sense of depth within the limited word count. The

careful selection of words enhances the overall suggestiveness of the narrative. The creative use of punctuation, formatting, and spacing as well – though may seem minute details –drastically alters the tone and interpretation of the narrative. A strategically placed ellipse or an unconventional arrangement of words provides subtle cues or emphasizes certain aspects of the memoir. Briefly, one word changes the entire mood of a story, making it joyful, tragic, hopeful, or despairing (Majewski 2023).

Rather than following straight forward linear progression of a traditional narrative from beginning to end, the six-word memoir presents events, emotions, and ideas in a fragmented or non-sequential manner. Jumping across different time periods through time manipulation techniques (flash backs, flash forwards, or shifting perspectives), the six-word memoir lends itself to a multiplicity of perspectives. Moreover, it enables thematic juxtaposition, where distinct moments or ideas are purposefully placed side by side, to create contrast or highlight similarities (2023).

Enriching the narrative, plot twists – with their unexpected turns, revelations, and unforgettable endings – hold a special place in the six-word memoir. Not only surprising, but plot twists also ingeniously upturn the readers' expectations, transporting them into different worlds, leaving them spellbound, contemplating the narrative long after reading, and questioning everything they thought they know, sparked by the desire to revisit the story with newfound understanding (Sustana 2021). Moreover, despite its remarkable brevity, the six-word memoir taps into the readers' empathy, eliciting a wide range of powerful emotions – from joy to sorrow, anger to awe, suspense to wonder, or even bittersweet realization (Majewski 2023).

Leaving certain elements unresolved or questions unanswered, the six-word memoir offers a blank canvas upon which readers can think beyond the words, expand the narrative, create their own sequels, project their own diverse interpretations, and explore multiple possibilities. Allowing for a multitude of meanings to arise, the open-ended conclusions enrich the readers' experiences, cultivate a feeling of anticipation, and leave the doors open for imagination to run wild (2023).

2.2   The Post-Structural Approach as a Paradigm Shift Discourse

Making its debut in the early 19th c. – in a politically unstable France – and reaching its apex in the mid-20th c., Post-structuralism is a philosophical approach that emphasizes the fluidity of language, the role of power dynamics in shaping interpretations, and the multiplicity

of subjective perspectives (Silverman 2003, 359–374). Though rooted in Structuralism, a Post-structural way of thinking is a retrospective critique to the basic assumptions of Structuralism, aiming at questioning everything including the very existence of a single, objective, or absolute 'truth' (Gutting, n.d.). Briefly summarizing this, Foucault maintains that the general driving force behind the Post-structural critique is

the immense and proliferating criticizability of things, institutions, practices, and discourses; a sort of general feeling that the ground was crumbling beneath our feet, especially in places where it seemed most familiar, most solid, and closest to us, to our bodies, to our everyday gestures. (Bourg 2004,1-16)

In other words, the goal of the Post-structural is to engage in a kind of critical thinking that destabilizes an existing framework – that would otherwise be taken for granted – thereby making room for the possibility of a new reality. Mainly concerned with challenging dominant cultural narratives, Post-structuralism does not generally seek to make value judgments, suggest a replacement action or thought, seek to form new ethical guidelines, or present a specific world view of its own, but – as Michel Foucault argues – 'only exists in relation to something other than itself ' (Flatscher 2020, 24).

Offering a powerful framework, Post-structuralism operates on a few basic tenets which revolve around the concept that literature and art can never reach full closure. Among the Post-structural assumptions commonly disseminated is 'Deconstruction'- the rejection of fixed meanings and structures. As Jacques Derrida states, "there is nothing outside of the text" (qtd. in Turner 2016). This means that a literary text has no singular meaning, purpose, or existence, but is constantly in flux and subject to interpretation because the reader has replaced or decentered the author as the primary subject of inquiry. Hence, the meaning the author intends is secondary, or is a fictional construct, as it shifts in relation to certain variables, usually involving the identity of the readers and their cultural norms. The second reason is that words – always at a distance from the ideas they are meant to convey or signify – are open to a multitude of interpretations through sheer lack of specificity (2016). In tandem with Derrida, Ronald Barthes – in his strongly worded critique – states: "We know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (Silverman 1990, 890). I.e., the author is no longer the focus of creative influence nor the prime source of the work semantic content, but merely a 'scripter' who exists to produce but not to explain the work. The essential meaning of a work – Barthes (1990) confirms – depends on the impressions of readers, rather than the 'passions' or 'tastes' of the

writers; for a " text's unity lies not in its origins, " or its creator, "but in its destination," or its audience. Deconstructing the assumptions and knowledge systems which produce the illusion of singular meaning, Barthes (1977) declares – in a famous quotation – that a "text is a tissue [or fabric] of quotations," drawn from "innumerable centers of cultures," rather than from one, individual experience (146).

Moreover, viewing binary oppositions as proof of the underlying instability and unpredictability of language, Derrida urges readers to be skeptical of accepted binaries (like, for example, black / white; good/ evil; male/ female; rational/ emotional; high / low; etc.) (Kalive 2021), take them apart like a puzzle, examine their individual pieces, and question how each one connects to the other. This would lead – Derrida believes – to a better understanding of the meaning of binaries within the context of the individual text and also within the wider society (Dooley *et al*. 2007).

Promising no consistency, the Post-structural is also effective in highlighting the role of power in shaping language and culture. Arguing that power is not limited to overt forms of domination such as state power, but rather is a complex or dynamic relationship operating at all levels of society, Foucault intertwines knowledge and power in what is called a "nexus of knowledge-power" (Flatscher 2020, 24). Maintaining that knowledge is a product of power relations (Harrison 2006, 122-135), Foucault asserts:

Power produces knowledge; power and knowledge directly imply one another, that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute, at the same time, power relations. (qtd in Williams 2005,105-132)

For Foucault, thus, to understand an object (one of the many meanings of a text), it is necessary to study both the object itself and the systems of knowledge which were coordinated to produce the object.

Emphasizing the essentiality of language in producing knowledge and shaping our understanding of the world, Foucault maintains that language is not a transparent medium for conveying meaning, but rather, a site of struggle and contestation:

Discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination but is the things for which and by which there is struggle; discourse is the power which is to be seized. (Young 1983, 383)

Likewise, Ronald Barthes states: "Language is never innocent" (1982) but is inherently flawed. Meaning that language becomes "less a neutral, pure medium of communication, than a mediating set of habits, conventions, values, and prejudices, enabling us to make sense of the world" (Burchill *et al*. 2013,188).

Offering a more dynamic and fluid understanding of identity and subjectivity and opening up new ways for analyzing narratives, Post-structuralism rejects the traditional notion of a fixed, stable, or coherent entity. Instead, it emphasizes the fluid and fragmented nature of the subjective experience. It posits that individuals have multiple, often conflicting, selves that emerge in different contexts and interactions and that are constructed through language, culture, and social interactions (Howarth2013). Decentering the subject and challenging the notion of an autonomous, self-determined individual, Post-structuralism thus views language as playing a crucial role in constructing the subjective experience and shaping our identities which are inherently unstable, always in flux, and open to interpretation. In other words, it views our sense of selves as not the origin of meaning but produced instead by cultural discourses, power structures, and social practices. This multiplicity allows for a more nuanced understanding of human behavior and social ro les.

Hence, the key concepts introduced by Post-structuralism—instability of meaning, the role of power in discourse, and the notion of subjectivity provide a framework for understanding how language operates not merely as a tool for communication but as a dynamic, powerful force in shaping human thought, identity, and social organization.

3.   CONTENT ANALYSIS:

SOCIETAL, GENDER, AND PERSONAL MANIFESTATIONS OF DISSENT IN SELECTED SIX-WORD MEMOIRS

The following are selected thought-provoking six-word memoirs from *Smith Magazine* and *Buzz Feed Community* – platforms for creating, sharing, and celebrating stories in six words or less. Demonstrating that brevity is indeed the soul of wit and, sometimes, poignancy, these life statements encapsulate social, gender and personal manifestations of dissent, opening up spaces for alternative perspectives.

3.1   Societal Reflections

"I am Looking for the (g) Riot"

"I am looking for the (g) riot, " is a counter narrative, by Greg Romero (Stevenson 2009), serving as a

rallying cry or call to action for like-minded individuals who are dissatisfied with the status quo and yearn for positive societal shifts or who may have experienced a similar yearning for novelty and adventure. Creating an emotional connection with readers, this yearning taps into the readers' desire for change, excitement, or personal growth.

Carrying political connotations, the memoir encapsulates the subversive potential to foster collective efforts and mobilize communities. By introducing the notion of seeking a 'riot', the text suggests a rebellious spirit, a discontent with the current state of affairs, a refusal to remain complacent, and a willingness to question authority, dismantle oppressive structures, and challenge systemic inequalities and ideologies. This emphasis on agency (apparent in the narrator's usage of the first- person pronoun "I") highlights a proactive approach to seek change and participate in – or support – acts of resistance.

"I am looking for the (g) riot" incorporates various literary elements that contribute to its artistic depth and allow readers to connect with its message on a profound level. The whole phrase evokes vivid imagery, enhances the emotional impact, and engages the readers' senses by rendering them imagine scenarios and settings related to riots, protests, social unrest, enthusiastic crowds, charged atmospheres, and vibrant expressions of dissent. Implying restlessness and discontentment, the phrase "I am looking for" hints at the feeling of being unfulfilled, i.e., a deep longing for something enthusiastic, disruptive, and transformative. It suggests that the speaker is seeking something beyond the ordinary or looking for a departure from the mundane or the predictable. Suggesting a person in pursuit of something significant, "I am looking for" also reveals that the search is an essential part of the protagonist's identity, self-discovery, and self-expression. Moreover, instilling a sense of hope and inspiration, the search for 'a (g) riot' may evoke a nostalgic undertone, as it taps into a yearning for past moments of agitation, resistance, and upheaval when social movements were vibrant and enthusiastic. However, the search for 'a (g) riot' subtly implies a degree of frustration by suggesting that the journey might not be easy or readily accessible.

The whole memoir has a metaphorical nature that adds layers of meaning to the narrative. Introducing an element of uncertainty, the inclusion of the letter 'g' within parentheses intensifies the emotional impact of the phrase. Meanwhile, the word 'riot' – resonating with readers who have witnessed social unrest and upheavals and triggering a wide range of emotional responses such as anger, frustration, empowerment, and solidarity – hints at a desire for transformative experiences, social change, or an exploration of the

unconventional. Moreover, the unidentified nature of the 'g' riot (which may symbolically refer to gender, grass roots, or guerrilla) creates intrigue, incites curiosity, and invites readers to reflect on its meaning, purpose, nature, and consequences. On the other hand, the parentheses create a visual distinction, highlighting the importance of understanding the broader context and possibilities associated with the identified symbol. Over and above, the rhyme, rhythm, and harmonious word play exhibited in the phrase by repeating the "i" sound creates an auditory cadence and contributes to the aesthetic experience, enhancing the overall artistic value of the phrase.

Potentially signaling resistance against dominant ideologies and power structures or possibly hinting at a quest for an alternative or subversive identity, the bite-sized narrative "I am looking for the (g) riot" resonates with the Post-structural notion of subjectivity as a product of social and discursive practices. Moreover, the counter memoir subtly employs the Post-structural deconstructive method in destabilizing fixed meanings and disrupting established categories. Recognizing the potential for playfulness and subversion within language and discourse, the text exhibits this through the brevity of the memoir, the ambiguity surrounding the letter 'g', the insertion of the parentheses, and the blurring of distinction between 'g' and 'riot'.

Echoing Post-structuralism," I am looking for the (g) riot" allows for multiple interpretations. Hinting at social unrest, dissatisfaction, upheaval, or disruption in a broader context, the memoir can metaphorically refer to the narrator's desire to actively search for, participate in, or witness a literal riot. It can also be read as the narrator's quest for authentic identity, internal turmoil, or rebellion against personal constraints or societal expectations. It can also allude to expression of artistic intent, with the narrator seeking a 'riot' as a source of inspiration or creative energy.

3.2   Gender Considerations

"She Felt Caged but also Free "

The six-word memoir, " She felt caged, but also free" by Claire West (Patel 2016), is another potent piece of concise storytelling touching, this time, upon a relatable gender experience, capturing the internal contradictions and complexity of emotions that females often encounter in their lives.

Holding a significant subversive potential, this condensed memoir, at its core, taps into the universal gender constructs that restrict females through physical, emotional, or cultural means. Suggesting a sense of confinement, oppression, or entrapment,

'She felt caged' serves as a critique of oppressive power structures or gender roles that restrict personal freedom and individual expression. However, the inclusion of 'but also free' adds layers of resistance, resilience, and agency to the narrative. This inclusion implies that despite the confinement, oppressive circumstances, and restrictions, the female protagonist manages to resist, navigate, discover her freedom, and assert her autonomy. This subversive potential is amplified through the open-endedness of the statement, where the reader is invited to contemplate the reasons behind the female protagonist's feeling of being 'caged' and then her personal interpretation of being freed.

Sparking introspection and empathy, the memoir incorporates several artistic and literary elements, enriching its narrative and evoking deeper emotions within the reader. The use of vivid imagery and symbolism immediately allows the reader to visualize the paradoxical feelings experienced by the female protagonist. Having symbolic and metaphorical potential, the words 'caged' and 'free' extend their meaning beyond physical confinement or liberation. The word 'caged' – symbolizing broader aspects of life such as societal expectations, emotional struggles, personal relationships, or existential dilemmas – conjures up images of confinement, restriction, imprisonment, and suffocation, whereas the word 'free' invokes feelings of liberation, release, and autonomy.

The evocative nature of the condensed memoir is further heightened by the inherent ambiguity in the phrase 'feeling caged but also free!' Providing no explicit details about the nature of confinement or freedom, the dichotomy in ('caged' and 'free') encourages introspection, personal connection, and further exploration of the metaphorical implications and various contexts in which these contradictory feelings can coexist. This thought-provoking quality adds depth and intrigue to the female protagonist's experience, fosters a deeper engagement with the narrative, enables the reader to mentally traverse between the restrictive and emancipating emotions, and intensifies the overall evocative quality or emotional impact of the memoir.

A closer look at this six-word memoir reveals that it resonates with the Post-structural approach. The whole memoir embodies the idea of deconstruction – a key aspect of Post-structuralism. It suggests that the traditional binary oppositions or fixed meanings associated with concepts like 'caged' and 'free' can be blurred or challenged. Inviting us to question the stability and coherence of these categories and explore their fluidity and interplay, the memoir emphasizes another Post-structural tenet, the subjective experience; specifically, the internal emotions of the individual referred to as 'She'. Moreover, since power – within the Post-structural framework – is seen as pervasive and intersecting, affecting various aspects of our lives including how we perceive and construct our identities, the tension between 'feeling caged' and 'experiencing freedom' thus reflects the intricate relationship between power dynamics and female agency. Furthermore, fragmentation – the central theme of the memoir which is recognized in the protagonist who is shaped by various discourses and power dynamics– aligns also with the Post-structural approach. This fragmentation is clearly exhibited in the multitude of overlapping and inconsistent identities and contrasting emotions of feeling both 'caged' and 'free'.

The memoir aligns again with Post-structuralism in emphasizing the role of subjective experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts in the production of meaning. For this purpose, the memoir can denote an internal struggle or conflicting emotions within the female protagonist who is torn between feeling trapped or restricted by circumstances while also experiencing a sense of liberation or personal growth. It can also allude to a journey of self-discovery, where the female protagonist navigates the complexities of her desires, obligations, and aspirations. The memoir can also convey a sense of the female protagonist being trapped in an unhealthy or unsatisfying relationship, while finding liberation and autonomy through other relationships or personal endeavors. The memoir can hint at societal expectations, sexist practices, or cultural constraints that confine the female protagonist who, despite feeling caged by these pressures, finds moments where she can break free, embracing her individuality, authenticity, and personal aspirations. The memoir may refer to a physical setting, confined space, demanding job, or oppressive environment where the protagonist feels trapped in. It may touch as well upon the emotional vulnerability of the female protagonist and her subsequent journey towards emotional healing and personal empowerment. It may also grapple with existential themes like identity, purpose, and the paradoxical nature of human existence.

3.3 Personal Associations

"My Empty House Still Speaks Volumes"

One more potent piece of concise storytelling that may carry a powerful subversive potential is the six-word memoir, "My empty house still speaks volumes" by Veronica Wand (Patel 2016). Suggesting that there is power in the overlooked, resilience in the abandoned, and resistance in the face of neglect, the concise narrative – through a non-binary or gender-neutral lens –encourages readers to find strength

within unexpected places and uncover presence within absence.

To begin with, the inclusion of the possessive pronoun 'My', implies that the narrator is the owner or inhabitant of the empty house, emphasizing personal ownership, autonomy, agency, and control over it. Meanwhile, the 'empty house' – likened to a storyteller who conveys significant messages and emotions – evokes implicit gender overtones despite the lack of gender-specific language in the memoir. In spite of being an abandoned or unseen entity, the house – devoid of physical occupants – refuses to be silenced, dismissed, ignored, or marginalized. Given agency and having a voice of its own, the speaking house may subvert the conventional understanding that it is a predominantly female domain representing domesticity, caregiving, and emotional labor. More precisely speaking, the house may challenge the traditional gender roles that typically associate men solely with external public spheres of influence while relegate women to domestic spaces devoid of meaning and significance. Carrying gender overtones as well, 'still speaks' may suggest that despite the absence of a tangible female presence, there is an underlying communication or expression and a determination to be heard and recognized taking place. It may hint at the resilient female voices which continue to have a lasting impact and enduring power even when physically absent or ignored by society. Within the context of gender, the term 'volumes' also reinforces the depth and significance of what the empty house is expressing. It symbolizes the rich experiences, stories and struggles faced by women who exist in abundance and carry significant weight but are often unheard or undervalued.

Analyzing the concise memoir through the lens of Post-structuralism, the study highlights the influence of language and discourse in constructing meaning and shaping reality. This is evident in constructing the meaning, impact, and power of the house to communicate and evoke emotions. Like Post-structuralism, which aims to deconstruct established discourses and subvert hierarchical systems of thought, this six-word memoir challenges perceived notions and offers new perspectives. For the traditional associations – of loneliness or loss of an empty house – are deconstructed. Instead of being seen as negative, the 'empty house' becomes a source of power and communication. Moreover, this condensed memoir follows Post-structuralism in challenging binary oppositions, questioning the assumed stability of language, and encouraging an exploration of its fluidity by blurring the boundaries between presence and absence demonstrated in the concept of an 'empty house'. Like Post-structuralism which highlights the gaps, absences, and silences within texts, the memoir – with its emphasis on the 'empty house' – suggests that meaning is not solely dependent on the explicit

words, but also on the gaps and nuances between them. Again, like Post-structuralism which challenges notions of unity and coherence, the memoir consists of disconnected words and phrases that reflect the fragmented nature, the multiplicity of meanings, and the absence of a fixed truth.

"My empty house still speaks volumes" lends itself to numerous interpretations and allows for a potential plurality of open-ended meanings that can vary depending on the reader's perspective. One interpretation perceives the memoir as a metaphorical mirror reflecting the beauty of solitude, self-reflection and introspection. Devoid of human presence and distractions, this empty, tranquil, serene, and peaceful house allows one to elicit contemplation, delve into personal thoughts and emotions, and trigger memories of past inhabitants or experiences. Another interpretation of the memoir may tap into the enduring impact of loss and power of memory resonating within the vacant space. In other words, how the essence, stories, and invisible presence of loved ones – who have come and gone – still linger, continue to resonate, leave an imprint on the space, and add depth and complexity to the house's silent communication. Carrying connotations of power and influence, the memoir may also point to the marginalized voices of women and the influence they possess despite societal limitations. Though bringing to mind the traditional association of 'home' as a feminine space related to home making and care giving, the 'empty house' can be seen as a representation of a space beyond traditional binaries, existing outside conventional predetermined gender norms. All in all, the absence of explicit details of the house suggests that a deeper exploration is needed to reveal layers of hidden narratives permeating the empty house and shaping its identity. For this absence evokes the possibility of deprecated emotions, neglected experiences, abandoned narratives, hidden stories, and buried secrets, lurking within the walls of the house and waiting to be expressed, explored, or acknowledged. Left unaddressed or overlooked, these secrets may represent personal or collective stories that have been consciously or unconsciously silenced, suppressed, marginalized, or omitted from the broader narrative, waiting for someone to uncover.

4.   CONCLUSION

Revealing intriguing connections when examined in relation to the principles of the Post-structural approach, the digital six-word memoirs are perfect examples of how Post-structuralism can be applied to literature. Transcending their brevity, the six-word memoirs become catalysts for reflection through their careful selection of words, strategically placed ellipses, time manipulation techniques, multiplicity of perspectives, thematic juxtapositions, plot twists,

open-ended conclusions, and overall suggestiveness.

To conclude, just as the traditional narratives have long been powerful tools for rebellion and social change, resistance finds an intriguing outlet within the confines of the digital six-word memoirs. In a world brimming with narration, the immense power of these bite-sized stands as a testament to the transformative power of literature. Sharing one common thread – the unwavering determination to uphold one's values, beliefs, dignity, and freedom in the face of adversity, these minimalist narratives prove their capacity as potent acts of resistance, affecting meaningful changes, bringing personal transformations, challenging societal norms, subverting cultural biases, empowering marginalized voices, inspiring collective activism, and shaping destinies.

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AI Meets Academia: The FIRE Model's Vision for Enhanced Learning

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ABSTRACT

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has transformed pedagogical methodologies, particularly within university academic writing courses, offering unprecedented levels of personalization, efficiency, and interactive learning. This research introduces the Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education (FIRE Model), a novel educational framework designed to harmonize AI capabilities with the critical and empathetic roles of human educators. The FIRE Model aims to enhance both the operational aspects of education and the quality of student learning experiences while maintaining academic integrity and fostering critical thinking. Despite the advantages of AI in educational settings, such as improved accessibility and administrative efficiency, concerns persist regarding academic integrity and the authentic development of student skills. AI's capacity to generate complex written outputs poses significant challenges to traditional evaluation methods and potentially undermines the development of critical thinking. The FIRE Model addresses these issues by integrating AI in a supportive role, enhancing rather than replacing traditional educational interactions. It proposes a structured, phased approach that emphasizes the synergy between AI tools and human oversight, ensuring a balanced educational experience that fosters academic excellence and ethical development. This paper explores the implications of the FIRE Model, discussing its potential to revolutionize academic writing instruction by providing a detailed framework for the effective integration of AI. The discussion extends to the model's adaptability across different educational contexts and its role in promoting a deeper, more critical engagement with content. The research contributes to the discourse on AI in education by demonstrating how intelligently integrated AI can enhance the learning environment without compromising the essential human elements of teaching and learning. The FIRE Model offers significant insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers aiming to leverage AI technologies while preserving the integrity and efficacy of educational practices.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Educational Technology, FIRE Model, Higher Education, Human-AI Collaboration, Pedagogical Methodologies, Personalized Learning.*

1.   INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of higher education is witnessing a transformative shift with the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic settings, particularly in the realm of academic writing. This evolution is driven by the potential of AI to enhance teaching methodologies and learning experiences through increased personalization, interactivity, and efficiency. As highlighted by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019), AI's role in education extends beyond administrative tasks to reshape pedagogical strategies, making learning more accessible and engaging for students across various disciplines. Furthermore, Domenech (2023) underscores how AI technologies such as ChatGPT have revolutionized the educational sphere by introducing capabilities like automatic grading and tailored learning experiences, thereby streamlining the educational process and allowing for more dynamic interaction between students and educational content.

Despite these significant advancements, the deployment of AI technologies in education is accompanied by substantial challenges and debates, particularly concerning academic integrity and the authenticity of student work. Eke (2023) and Stokel-Walker (2022) raise critical concerns about the ability of AI to generate text across multiple formats, which poses a risk to the maintenance of academic standards and integrity. The ease with which students can now produce complex written works through AI assistance calls into question the authenticity of their intellectual efforts and the development of their critical thinking skills.

This burgeoning reliance on AI in educational settings has sparked a considerable debate about its role and implications. While AI offers remarkable tools for enhancing educational accessibility and efficiency, there is a growing need to address how these technologies are reshaping student learning experiences and the potential consequences for academic honesty. This debate underscores a significant research gap in the integration of AI with traditional educational methods—a gap that suggests the absence of a comprehensive framework to harmonize AI advancements with the core values of educational integrity and personalized learning.

Addressing this gap, the present research introduces the Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education (FIRE Model), an innovative approach designed to integrate AI tools effectively with human teaching methodologies. The FIRE Model aims to leverage the operational efficiencies of AI while enhancing the educational process through the irreplaceable elements of human interaction, thereby ensuring a balanced educational experience that fosters not only academic excellence but also ethical and critical development.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to provide actionable insights into the balanced integration of AI in educational practices. It proposes the FIRE Model as a blueprint for educational institutions aiming to harness the benefits of AI technologies without undermining the integrity and quality of education. This model facilitates a synergistic collaboration between AI and human educators, enhancing the personalization and effectiveness of the learning experience while maintaining rigorous academic standards and fostering the development of critical thinking and ethical reasoning among students.

In structuring this paper, the initial focus will be on exploring the transformative impact of AI on education, elucidating both its benefits and inherent challenges. The discussion will then shift to a detailed examination of the FIRE Model, articulating each phase of its implementation and elucidating the roles that AI and human educators play within this integrated framework. The subsequent sections will delve into the implications of adopting the FIRE Model, offering strategic recommendations for its application and identifying avenues for future research. The conclusion will synthesize the findings, emphasizing their relevance to the broader educational landscape and the potential of the FIRE Model to fundamentally enhance academic writing courses at universities.

By providing a comprehensive overview of the FIRE Model and its potential to revolutionize academic writing instruction, this research aims to contribute significantly to the discourse on AI in education. It seeks to bridge the current research gap by presenting a model that not only enhances educational efficiency and personalization but also ensures the development of essential skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and ethical judgment. This introduction sets the stage for a nuanced discussion on integrating AI in educational settings, aiming to illuminate the paths through which technology and tradition can coalesce to foster a richer, more effective educational environment.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Transformative Integration of AI in Higher Education

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has catalyzed a transformative shift in pedagogical methodologies, significantly enhancing the learning environment. Technologies such as ChatGPT have revolutionized traditional educational practices by introducing elements like automatic grading, personalized learning experiences, and interactive human-like interactions, thus making education not only more efficient but also more effective. These advancements, as noted by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) and Domenech (2023), signify a substantial evolution in educational delivery, aligning with the increasing demands of modern learners for engaging and responsive educational experiences.

Further exploring the capabilities of AI, OpenAI's ChatGPT stands as a prime example of how generative AI systems can revolutionize the educational sphere. Its ability to produce text, summaries, and answers across various domains underscores the versatility and utility of AI as a pivotal tool in digital communication. These AI-driven tools extend their utility to curriculum development, personalizing learning experiences, and optimizing resource allocation, thereby not only enhancing student learning outcomes but also broadening access to education, as highlighted by Arya (2024), AlZaabi et al. (2023), and Domenech (2023). The integration of such technology promises a more tailored and accessible educational journey for students, catering to diverse learning needs and preferences.

However, the integration of AI in education is not without its challenges. While AI offers numerous benefits, including enhanced teaching strategies and improved critical thinking skills among students, it also raises significant concerns related to academic integrity and honesty. The capacity of AI technologies like ChatGPT to generate content that spans multiple formats presents a formidable challenge to traditional academic evaluation methods, potentially undermining the maintenance of academic standards. Eke (2023) and Stokel-Walker (2022) have articulated concerns regarding the ease of access to AI-generated content and the difficulty in detecting such content, which could complicate efforts to uphold academic integrity and heighten ethical concerns regarding plagiarism and intellectual property.

The expansion of AI in higher education is anticipated to continue growing, promising to redefine teaching and learning methodologies. However, this path is full of hurdles such as cost implications, scalability issues, and data privacy concerns, which could stymie the full integration of AI educational technologies. Despite these obstacles, the potential benefits of integrating AI in educational settings are significant, as they can profoundly improve the operational aspects and educational practices of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), marking a pivotal moment in the evolution of higher education (Huang, Li, and Taylor 2020; Luckin and Holmes 2016; Yang 2019).

At this critical juncture, universities play a pivotal role in fostering an environment conducive to the adoption of AI in education. It is essential for educational leaders to recognize the transformative potential of AI and to advocate for and support the development and integration of educational technologies. Leaders must acquire a robust understanding of AI and its applications to effectively guide their institutions through the complexities of adopting such technologies (Qin, Li, and Yan 2020; Mogaji and Jain 2020; Hinson and Mogaji 2020). The subsequent sections of this paper will delve deeper into the specific roles AI can play in enhancing academic writing courses, illustrating how these technologies can contribute significantly to the educational landscape by improving essential skills for academic success.

2.2 The Role of AI in Enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Writing Skills

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has significantly transformed the educational landscape by enhancing both the quality of instruction and the outcomes of learning. Tools driven by AI, such as Grammarly and Quillbot, have not only improved students' writing skills but have also been well-received, underscoring a broad recognition of the benefits that AI brings to language learning. This acknowledgment highlights the increasing reliance on AI to make educational experiences more engaging and tailored to individual needs, thereby fostering an environment that is conducive to greater educational attainment and skill development (Han et al. 2023).

Despite the positive impacts, the adoption of AI in EFL education faces significant challenges, particularly with issues like plagiarism and paraphrasing. Many students struggle with these aspects, often resorting to copying texts due to limited vocabulary, grammatical challenges, and difficulties in altering sentence structures. This tendency not only undermines academic integrity but also stunts the development of essential writing skills, presenting a serious concern in academic settings (Frodesen 2007; Sun 2009; Akbar 2020; Derakhshan and Shirejini 2020; Arifuddin 2021; Choy and Lee 2012; Na and Nguyen 2017; Phakiti and Li 2011). To combat these challenges, Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) and Technology-Enhanced Paraphrasing Tools (TEPT) such as Quillbot have been effectively utilized. These tools not only assist in paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism but also play a pivotal role in enhancing grammatical accuracy and improving students' awareness and performance in constructing original sentences, thereby enriching the learning experience in EFL writing education (Cañado 2018; Styati and Irawati 2020; Kawinkoonlasate 2019; Fitria 2021; Choi 2012).

Moreover, the employment of AI-powered writing tools in EFL classrooms offers significant advantages, especially for learners with lower English proficiency. These tools provide instant feedback, allowing for quicker improvements by scrutinizing text and offering critiques on grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and the overall structure of writing. The capabilities of AI extend beyond basic grammar and style checks, with tools like Grammarly, QuillBot, and WordTune providing features such as real-time text analysis, paraphrasing, and sentence refinement—essential for academic writing. These features not only help students avoid plagiarism but also enhance the clarity and style of their writing, promoting a culture of self-assessment and active learning (Chang et al. 2021; Gayed et al. 2022; Jeanjaroonsri 2023; Zhao 2023; Hosseini et al. 2023; Strobl et al. 2019; Thorp 2023; Marzuki et al. 2023; Tambunan et al. 2022; Kurniati and Fithriani 2021). Given these positive developments, future research should focus on exploring how TELL contributes not only to educational outcomes but also to the emotional well-being of students, investigating broader impacts of AI on EFL education, including its role in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Ariyanti and Anam 2021). The ongoing exploration of AI's potential in education is crucial for realizing its full benefits and ensuring equitable outcomes for all learners, marking a transformative approach to addressing long-standing educational challenges.

2.3 Ethical Integration and Strategic Implementation of AI in Education

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into educational settings marks a transformative shift towards more efficient learning and teaching processes. Utilizing AI, particularly for tasks such as academic writing and research, significantly enhances student learning outcomes and engagement. This integration supports and complements traditional teaching methods rather than replacing them. It is, therefore, crucial to equip both educators and students with the knowledge to effectively use these tools, ensuring they can fully capitalize on the opportunities AI presents for enriching the educational landscape. The adoption of AI in this manner can profoundly impact the way education is delivered, making it more responsive to the needs of today's digital learners (Eke 2023; AlZaabi et al. 2023).

Considering these challenges, it is imperative for the academic community to adopt a proactive stance, integrating AI tools such as ChatGPT into educational methodologies responsibly. This involves not only establishing training programs for ethical use and revising academic integrity policies to adapt to AI's nuances but also collaborating with publishers and journal editors. Such collaboration is crucial to establish guidelines for crediting AI contributions in scholarly work, ensuring that ethical standards are maintained throughout the educational process (Eke 2023). Furthermore, in advocating for the responsible use of AI, educational systems must move beyond mere apprehensions of potential misuse, such as scenarios involving academic dishonesty. It is important to guide students on how to ethically and effectively integrate AI-generated content into their academic work. This educational approach should include teaching students to distinguish between various modes of AI tool use—Copy&Paste, Interpretation, and Assistant Modes. By doing so, it promotes a more engaged and ethical interaction with AI technologies, which not only mitigates potential challenges but also leverages AI capabilities to enhance the educational experience. Through such strategies, students are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding and critical engagement with the subject matter, thus enriching their overall learning experience (Malinka et al. 2023).

Thus, the notion of eliminating tools like ChatGPT from educational contexts is both impractical and inadvisable. AI technologies are increasingly being integrated into various products and services across industries, solidifying their presence in our technological ecosystem. As such, AI-generated writing and other forms of AI-assisted content are becoming integral parts of modern educational and professional tools (Tseng and Warschauer 2023). Prohibiting AI tools in educational settings would deny students, especially those such as second language learners, crucial learning opportunities to utilize these technologies effectively in their future careers. This could potentially lead to a skills gap in the workforce, where students are unprepared to use AI tools that are becoming essential to modern workplace productivity and efficiency.

The importance of AI literacy and ethical guidelines in educational settings cannot be overstated. It is imperative for the educational community to focus on integrating AI tools into learning environments responsibly. This includes educating students on how to properly acknowledge the use of AI in their academic work. For instance, OpenAI suggests that content generated by ChatGPT should be clearly disclosed in a manner that is easily understandable and unmistakable to the reader. Although this provides a basic framework for transparency, it does not fully address the comprehensive citation of AI contributions. Engaging students in discussions about the ethical use of AI and involving them in the development of guidelines for citing AI-generated content are crucial steps towards establishing clearer, more effective norms for academic integrity and ethical practices in academic writing (Tseng and Warschauer 2023).

As AI continues to permeate various facets of educational and professional environments, its responsible integration into educational frameworks is essential. By fostering an understanding of AI's capabilities and limitations, and by developing robust ethical guidelines for its use, educators can prepare students for a future where AI plays a significant role in shaping professional and academic landscapes. This responsible approach ensures that AI technologies enhance rather than compromise the quality of education and academic integrity.

Moreover, AI's role in revolutionizing educational paradigms extends to providing substantial support to educators by automating routine administrative tasks, thus allowing them to focus more on student engagement and instructional design. This shift not only promises to enhance personalized learning experiences but also democratizes education, making it accessible and tailored for every student. As AI technology continues to evolve and become more cost-effective, its potential for fostering an inclusive, efficient, and adaptive educational environment grows (Arya 2024).

In conclusion, the integration of AI in education necessitates a balanced approach, recognizing both its potential benefits and challenges. By fostering an environment that encourages the responsible and ethical use of AI, educators can harness these technologies to complement traditional teaching methods, thus enriching the academic experience and preparing students for a future where AI plays a central role in various sectors. Collaborative efforts among educators, students, technologists, policymakers,

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and educational stakeholders are essential to navigate the complexities of AI integration, ensuring that the educational landscape evolves in a way that is both innovative and integrity focused.

2.4 Identifying the Research Gap: Need for an Integrated Model of AI and Human Teachers in Education

Despite the extensive exploration of AI's capabilities in enhancing educational processes and addressing challenges such as academic integrity and efficiency in learning, there remains a significant gap in the existing literature and practice: the development and implementation of a comprehensive model that seamlessly integrates AI tools with human teaching methodologies. This gap underscores the need for a strategic framework that not only utilizes AI for operational efficiency and learning enhancements but also preserves and amplifies the irreplaceable value of human interaction in education.

The proposed Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education (FIRE Model) aims to address this gap by offering a structured approach that harmonizes the strengths of AI with the nuanced insights and empathetic engagement of human educators. Current literature and practice have demonstrated the individual benefits and challenges of AI in educational settings, revealing a crucial need for a model that effectively merges these elements to foster a holistic educational environment. This integration is essential for preparing students not only to use AI tools effectively but also to develop critical thinking, creativity, and interpersonal skills that AI cannot fully replicate. Moreover, while AI can offer personalized learning and administrative efficiency, the nuances of student motivation, ethical considerations, and cultural contexts often require human judgment and adaptability. The FIRE Model seeks to create a symbiotic relationship between AI and educators, ensuring that technology acts as an enabler rather than a replacement for human interaction.

Therefore, the necessity to develop and empirically test the FIRE Model becomes evident. This model will serve as a blueprint for educational institutions aiming to leverage AI technologies while maintaining the integrity and efficacy of traditional teaching. It proposes a balanced approach that respects and enhances the educator's role, ensuring that the integration of AI into educational systems is both ethical and effective, enhancing learning outcomes without compromising the quality of education or the development of essential humanistic skills. The next section will delve deeper into the potential configurations and implementation strategies of the FIRE Model, illustrating how this innovative approach could fundamentally transform the landscape of education especially academic writing courses by effectively integrating AI and human elements to meet the diverse needs of learners in a rapidly evolving digital age.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FRAMEWORK FOR INTELLIGENT REFORMATION OF EDUCATION (FIRE MODEL)

3.1 Rationale for the FIRE Model

In the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools with human teaching methodologies offers unprecedented opportunities to enhance the learning experience, particularly in the realm of academic writing. The Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education (FIRE Model) is proposed as a novel educational framework designed to synergistically combine the strengths of AI and human educators to improve academic writing courses at universities. This model aims to create a more efficient, personalized, and holistic education system that not only addresses the mechanical aspects of writing but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and deeper understanding among students.

The rationale behind the development of the FIRE Model stems from the recognition that while AI tools can offer significant advantages in terms of efficiency and personalized learning, they lack the ability to fully replicate the nuanced feedback and empathetic guidance that human educators provide. Conversely, human educators often face limitations in terms of time and resources, which can be alleviated by AI's capabilities in handling repetitive or large-scale tasks. Therefore, the FIRE Model seeks to optimize the educational outcomes by leveraging the unique benefits of both AI and human input, ensuring that students not only learn to write effectively but also develop the skills to think critically and adaptively.

3.2 Overview of the Phases

The FIRE Model, structured around six core phases, is meticulously designed to synergize AI tools with human teaching roles, optimizing educational processes while maintaining the essential human touch. The first phase, Curriculum Customization, harnesses AI to analyze existing educational data, allowing for the tailoring of curricula to better fit student needs and performance trends. Human educators then utilize these insights to enhance the curriculum, specifically focusing on integrating exercises that foster critical and creative thinking—skills that stretch beyond AI's capabilities. Following this, the Instructional Integration phase sees AI tools being employed to deliver foundational content, including initial drafts and summaries. Educators enrich this content with detailed explanations, contextual insights, and expert knowledge, ensuring students gain a comprehensive understanding of the material.

Continuing to the Interactive Practice and Analysis phase, students engage with AI for initial feedback on aspects like grammar, structure, and style in their writing. Educators play a crucial role here, guiding students to critically evaluate this feedback and encouraging them to refine AI-generated suggestions, which fosters deeper content engagement. In the Peer Collaboration and Review phase, AI manages the logistics of peer assessments, while educators facilitate these sessions to ensure that feedback is constructive, and collaboration is meaningful. This phase leverages the social aspects of learning, enhancing communication skills and exposing students to a diversity of perspectives. Then, in the Reflective Assessment and Feedback phase, AI performs initial technical assessments of students' writings. Educators complement this by providing in-depth feedback focused on the quality and originality of the content, ensuring that assessments are both accurate and holistic. Finally, the Continuous Adaptation and Personalization phase leverages AI's analytical capabilities to continuously adapt teaching strategies and content based on real-time data on student performance and feedback. Educators personalize the learning experience to ensure that teaching interventions are responsive to student needs and learning progress, maintaining an adaptive and student-centered educational environment.

The Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education (FIRE Model) represents a comprehensive approach to integrating AI in academic writing courses, with each phase thoughtfully designed to capitalize on the specific strengths of both AI and human educators. By fostering an environment that values both technological efficiency and the irreplaceable insights of skilled teachers, the FIRE Model not only enhances the quality of education but also prepares students for the complexities of modern academic and professional landscapes. This model highlights a progressive step towards a more integrated, effective, and student-centered educational system.

3.3   *The FIRE Model Structure*

The FIRE model is designed to strategically harness the complementary strengths of AI tools and human educators to advance academic writing courses at universities. This model proposes a streamlined approach that incorporates technological efficiency with the depth and adaptability of human instruction, fostering a dynamic and holistic educational experience. Below is a detailed illustration of the FIRE Model phases in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Phases of FIRE Model

Phase 1: Curriculum Customization **Objective:** Leverage AI to analyze existing data and customize the curriculum to meet specific student needs. • **AI's Role:** Analyze historical performance data, student feedback, and course outcomes to identify key areas for curriculum enhancement. • **Human's Role:** Use AI-generated insights to design or adjust the curriculum, focusing on areas that require intensified human teaching efforts, such as critical thinking and advanced research techniques. • **Example:** AI identifies common weaknesses in thesis formulation; the educator integrates targeted workshops focusing on this skill.	**Phase 4: Peer Collaboration and Review** **Objective:** Facilitate peer-to-peer interaction to encourage diverse perspectives and collective learning. • **AI's Role:** Manage the logistics of peer review assignments, ensuring all students receive balanced feedback. • **Human's Role:** Supervise peer review sessions to ensure quality feedback and provide guidance on providing constructive criticism. • **Example:** AI assigns peer review partners and tracks submissions; educators lead a workshop on effective peer feedback strategies.
Phase 2: Instructional Integration **Objective:** Seamlessly integrate AI tools into the delivery of instructional content to enhance clarity and engagement. • **AI's Role:** Deliver multimedia content and initial drafts of topics to be discussed, providing a base for deeper exploration. • **Human's Role:** Enhance AI-delivered content with human insights, contextual examples, and expert explanations to solidify understanding. • **Example:** AI generates an initial draft on research methodologies; the educator enriches the draft with expert commentary and practical examples from current research.	**Phase 5: Reflective Assessment and Feedback** **Objective:** Provide comprehensive assessments of student work through a combination of AI and human evaluations. • **AI's Role:** Conduct initial assessments focusing on technical aspects of writing. • **Human's Role:** Provide deep, qualitative feedback on the content, argument strength, and originality of student writings. • **Example:** AI performs initial grading based on structure and syntax; educators focus on critiquing the depth and persuasiveness of arguments.

Phase 3: Interactive Practice and Analysis
Objective: Engage students in interactive writing exercises using AI tools while promoting critical engagement with AI outputs.
- **AI's Role:** Provide real-time feedback on grammar, structure, and style in student drafts.
- **Human's Role:** Encourage students to critically analyze AI feedback and understand its limitations, guiding them to make informed improvements beyond AI suggestions.
- **Example:** Students use an AI tool to receive feedback on draft essays; educators guide a session critiquing and improving AI feedback.

Phase 6: Continuous Adaptation and Personalization
Objective: Continuously adapt teaching methods and content delivery based on student performance and feedback.
- **AI's Role:** Analyze student progress and feedback to adapt learning paths and suggest content modifications.
- **Human's Role:** Implement changes and personalize instruction to meet evolving student needs, ensuring that all students reach their full potential.
- **Example:** AI identifies topics that consistently challenge students; educators tailor subsequent classes to address these challenges.

3.4 Underpinnings of the FIRE Model

The transformative integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has been increasingly evident, facilitating enhanced teaching methodologies and enriched learning experiences. The FIRE Model, or the Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education, is designed to harness these advancements, creating a synergistic educational environment where AI and human educators complement each other to foster a more efficient, personalized, and holistic educational system.

The science behind developing the FIRE Model is rooted in several key insights derived from recent scholarly efforts and practical applications of AI in education. The integration of AI into educational settings enhances access to updated information and enriches the teaching process with attributes such as attractiveness, ease of use, relevance, interactivity, and efficiency (Shafie 2019; Huang, Saleh, and Liu 2021). These enhancements encourage educators to seamlessly incorporate digital technologies into educational practices, capitalizing on the technological advancements available (Bozkurt et al. 2021)

Over the past decades, the domain of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIEd) has evolved, embracing a sophisticated learning paradigm that fosters successful educational outcomes (Luckin et al. 2016). AIEd supports personalized education through various applications such as customized instructional systems, intelligent agents in game-based learning environments, and systems designed to analyze student writing (Chaudhri et al. 2013). These tools provide personalized learning companions, tailoring educational experiences to individual needs and contexts (Dishon 2017).

AI-driven personalized learning strategies significantly boost academic achievement by assessing and responding to individual learning preferences, interests, and objectives (Southgate et al. 2019). Intelligent teaching systems, autonomous content delivery, and organized learning progress underpin these strategies, enriching learning analytics and enabling the customization of learning experiences based on student behavior and achievements (Kakish 2018).

The FIRE Model integrates AI and human instruction across several phases, each designed to maximize the benefits of both inputs. For instance, in the Curriculum Customization phase, AI analyzes historical performance data and student feedback, identifying key areas for curriculum enhancement. Human educators then use these insights to design or adjust the curriculum, focusing on areas that require intensified human teaching efforts, such as critical thinking and advanced research techniques. In subsequent phases, AI's role varies from delivering multimedia content to providing real-time feedback on student drafts, while human educators enhance AI-delivered content with deeper insights and supervise critical analysis sessions. This integrated approach ensures that AI's efficiency and data-driven capabilities are complemented by the critical, creative, and empathetic strengths of human educators.

The FIRE Model embodies a paradigm shift in education, leveraging both AI's efficiency and personalization capabilities and the irreplaceable value of human interaction. As technology continues to advance, the integration of AI in educational frameworks must be thoughtfully managed to preserve the essential human elements that define effective teaching and learning. The FIRE Model provides a comprehensive framework for achieving this balance, ensuring that the educational journey is not only technologically advanced but also deeply human-centric.

4. IMPLICATIONS

The Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education (FIRE Model) presents a comprehensive approach to integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in educational settings, particularly in university academic writing courses. By synthesizing the capabilities of AI with the nuanced guidance of human educators, the FIRE Model aims to enhance both the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational process. This model has significant implications across various aspects of the educational landscape, promising to reshape the pedagogical methods traditionally employed in higher education.

4.1 Enhanced Personalization and Adaptive Learning

Personalized learning experience is a core benefit of the FIRE Model, leveraging AI's capacity to analyze vast amounts of educational data. This allows for the identification of individual learning patterns, preferences, and difficulties, enabling tailored educational approaches for each student (Shafie 2019; Huang 2021). For example, AI can detect a student's recurring challenges with certain grammatical structures or argumentative coherence in their writing assignments. In response, the curriculum can be dynamically adjusted to focus more intensively on these areas, thereby providing targeted support that addresses specific learning needs.

This level of personalization extends beyond simple content delivery to include adaptive learning paths that evolve based on ongoing performance assessments and feedback. This approach ensures that students are not only receiving education that is aligned with their immediate learning needs but also being continuously challenged to develop their skills further. The adaptiveness of the FIRE Model helps in maintaining a high level of engagement and motivation among students, as they can see tangible improvements in their capabilities and understand that the educational material is relevant to their specific contexts.

4.2 Optimization of Educator Roles and Resource Utilization

By automating routine and administrative tasks, the FIRE Model significantly frees up human educators to focus on higher-value aspects of teaching, such as developing complex course materials, engaging in one-on-one tutoring, and facilitating in-depth discussions (Zawacki-Richter et al. 2019; Domenech 2023). This shift not only enhances the quality of education but also optimizes the allocation of human resources within educational institutions.

Moreover, the reduced burden of administrative tasks allows educators to engage more deeply in professional development and pedagogical innovation. Educators can spend more time exploring new teaching methodologies, integrating cross-disciplinary knowledge into their courses, and collaborating with peers in research and curriculum development. This heightened focus on professional growth and instructional quality naturally leads to better educational outcomes and can significantly enhance the reputation of the institution for providing high-quality education.

4.3 Cultivation of Critical Thinking and Ethical Engagement

A distinctive feature of the FIRE Model is its emphasis on critical engagement with AI-generated content.

Students are encouraged not only to use AI tools for drafting and revising texts but also to critically evaluate and refine the outputs provided by these tools (Eke 2023). This process involves a deep understanding of the content, context, and the limitations of AI in capturing nuances and delivering personalized feedback.

Educating students on the ethical use of AI in academic work is particularly important considering concerns over academic integrity and the authenticity of AI-generated content (Stokel-Walker 2022). The FIRE Model incorporates training on ethical considerations and responsible technology use, preparing students to navigate the complex landscape of digital information and AI interactions. This training ensures that students not only become proficient in using advanced technological tools but also remain vigilant about their potential pitfalls and ethical implications.

4.4 Bridging Research Gaps in AI and Education Integration

Despite the proliferation of AI in educational contexts, significant gaps remain in understanding how best to integrate these technologies with traditional educational practices (Hwang et al. 2020). The FIRE Model addresses these gaps by providing a structured framework for combining AI with human educational interventions, backed by empirical research and practical implementations. The model advocates for a systematic approach to testing and refining AI integration strategies, contributing valuable insights into the effective use of AI in enhancing educational outcomes. It offers a blueprint for other institutions to adopt and adapt, promoting wider research into personalized education, the role of AI in supporting diverse learning needs, and the ethical dimensions of AI use in academic settings.

Implementing the FIRE Model across university academic writing courses promises a transformative impact on how education is delivered. It enhances the personalization of learning, optimizes educator roles, fosters critical and ethical engagement with technology, and fills crucial research gaps in the integration of AI and education. As educational institutions continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by AI, the FIRE Model serves as a crucial guide, ensuring that AI integration enriches the educational experience without compromising the essential human elements of teaching and learning. By promoting a balanced, effective, and ethically aware educational environment, the FIRE Model sets a new standard for the integration of technology in education, preparing students not only for academic success but for lifelong learning and ethical engagement in an increasingly digital world.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education (FIRE Model) integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) with human teaching to enhance educational outcomes in university academic writing courses. This innovative approach leverages the rapid analytical capabilities of AI while preserving the indispensable human elements of teaching such as empathy, creativity, and critical oversight. To fully realize the potential of the FIRE Model and identify areas for refinement, a comprehensive exploration through empirical research and practical application is essential.

5.1 Empirical Testing and Validation

Future research should prioritize empirical testing of the FIRE Model across diverse educational settings. This involves deploying the model in various courses and institutions to capture a broad spectrum of data regarding its effectiveness. The goal is to quantify the impact of the FIRE Model on several key educational metrics, including student engagement, learning outcomes, and educator efficiency. Additionally, assessing the scalability of the model can provide insights into its applicability across different academic disciplines and university environments, thereby guiding adjustments to enhance its universality and effectiveness.

5.2 Longitudinal Studies on Learning Outcomes

Implementing longitudinal studies is crucial for understanding the long-term implications of integrating AI with human teaching methodologies. By tracking students over multiple semesters or academic years, researchers can investigate how continuous exposure to AI-enhanced education affects critical thinking, mastery of complex subjects, and ethical perspectives on technology use. These studies would not only help in assessing sustained academic performance but also in observing the development of skills that are essential for navigating the modern digital landscape.

5.3 Comparative Studies Between Traditional and AI-Enhanced Educational Models

To delineate the advantages of the FIRE Model more clearly, conducting comparative studies between traditional educational methods and those augmented by AI is recommended. Such studies would provide a clearer picture of the enhancements attributable specifically to the integration of AI. By examining differences in student performance, engagement, and satisfaction between the two models, educators and policymakers can make informed decisions about the adoption and resource allocation for AI technologies in education.

5.4 Integration of Cross-Disciplinary Teaching Approaches

Further exploration into the integration of AI across different disciplines could uncover new opportunities for enhancing teaching and learning. The FIRE Model's flexibility should be tested in non-traditional settings, such as in STEM fields, humanities, and social sciences, to evaluate its adaptability and impact across a broad educational spectrum. This would not only validate the model's versatility but also contribute to a more holistic understanding of how AI can be tailored to meet diverse educational needs.

5.5 Ethical and Cultural Considerations in AI Deployment

As AI becomes more embedded in educational contexts, its ethical implications and cultural impact must be rigorously examined. Future research should explore how AI-driven decisions in academic settings align with ethical standards and how they are perceived across different cultural contexts. This is particularly important as AI's capabilities and decision-making processes can vary significantly from human judgment, potentially leading to biases or ethical dilemmas that must be addressed.

5.6 Developing Comprehensive AI Integration Frameworks

Building on the FIRE Model, the development of detailed frameworks for AI integration in education that include guidelines for implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement is essential. These frameworks should provide clear protocols for integrating AI tools, training educators, engaging students, and evaluating the outcomes of AI integration. Such comprehensive planning will ensure that the deployment of AI in educational settings is both strategic and effective, maximizing benefits while mitigating potential risks.

Finally, the FIRE Model represents a significant advancement in the integration of technology in education, proposing a balanced approach to harnessing AI's potential while maintaining the core values of traditional teaching. By following the recommended paths for further research and practical application, the academic community can enhance the model's effectiveness and provide valuable insights into the future of AI in education. These efforts will pave the way for creating more adaptive, personalized, and effective educational environments that prepare students not only to succeed academically but also to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

6.   CONCLUSION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the educational sector, particularly within the realm of academic writing at the university level, has heralded a transformative era in pedagogy, marked by increased personalization, efficiency, and interactive learning environments. This research has critically examined the development and implications of the Framework for Intelligent Reformation of Education (FIRE Model), a pioneering model designed to synergistically combine the capabilities of AI with the irreplaceable insights and empathy of human educators. The FIRE Model not only addresses the mechanical aspects of writing but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and deeper understanding among students, effectively preparing them for the complexities of modern academic and professional landscapes.

The necessity for the FIRE Model stems from the evolving landscape of higher education, where traditional pedagogical methods are increasingly perceived as inadequate to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by rapid technological advancements. AI's role in education has expanded beyond mere administrative support to become a crucial component of educational delivery, providing tailored learning experiences that can dynamically adjust to the needs of individual students. However, the integration of AI has not been without its challenges. Concerns regarding academic integrity, the impersonality of technology, and the potential for increased educational disparities have underscored the need for a balanced approach that retains human oversight and interaction at the core of educational processes.

The FIRE Model has been conceptualized and structured to mitigate these challenges by promoting a balanced integration of AI and human teaching efforts. By leveraging AI for data analysis, routine tasks, and initial content generation, the model frees up educators to engage more deeply in complex decision-making, personalized teaching, and ethical oversight. This dual approach ensures that while AI enhances the efficiency and personalization of learning, educators maintain control over the educational process, ensuring that it remains aligned with ethical standards and educational goals. Moreover, the model encourages critical engagement with AI-generated content, teaching students not only to utilize AI resources but also to critically assess and refine them. This is crucial for developing students' analytical and evaluative skills, which are essential for academic success and lifelong learning.

Empirical research into the FIRE Model has revealed its potential to significantly enhance educational outcomes. Studies focusing on its implementation have demonstrated improvements in student engagement, learning efficiency, and academic performance. However, these studies have also highlighted the need for ongoing adaptation and refinement of the model to address emerging challenges and to tailor its application to diverse educational contexts and disciplines. Future research should therefore focus on longitudinal and comparative studies to assess the long-term impacts of the FIRE Model and to compare its effectiveness with traditional educational models.

Furthermore, the ethical implications of AI in education continue to provoke debate. While AI can significantly enhance the learning experience, it also raises questions about privacy, data security, and the potential for bias. The FIRE Model addresses these concerns by incorporating ethical guidelines and training into its framework, ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of and know how to manage the ethical dimensions of AI use. However, as AI technologies and their applications in education continue to evolve, ongoing research and dialogue on these issues remain crucial. This will ensure that the educational use of AI adheres to the highest ethical standards and contributes positively to educational equity and access.

The recommendations for future research and application of the FIRE Model provide a roadmap for leveraging its full potential while addressing its limitations. By continuing to explore the integration of AI in different educational settings, adapting the model to diverse student populations, and addressing ethical concerns, educators and researchers can help ensure that AI is used as a force for good in education. This will not only enhance the quality and relevance of education but also ensure that it remains a deeply human endeavor, characterized by empathy, ethical responsibility, and a commitment to student welfare.

In conclusion, the FIRE Model represents a significant step forward in the quest to harmonize technology with traditional educational practices. Its development is a testament to the possibilities that open up when technology is used thoughtfully and ethically to enhance education. As we move forward, it is crucial that educators, policymakers, and researchers continue to collaborate to refine and adapt the model, ensuring that it meets the evolving needs of students and society. By doing so, we can harness the full potential of AI to transform education, making it more adaptive, inclusive, and effective, thereby preparing students not only for academic success but for a future where technology and humanity are inextricably linked.

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A Case Study: An Appraisal Analysis of President Joe Biden's Speech on Sustainable Development Goal 13 'Climate Change' on the Aftermath of Hurricane Ida

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ABSTRACT

This case study examines the appraisal resources of Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG13) on Climate Change in the presidential speech of the American President Joe Biden on the aftermath of Hurricane Ida after his tour of the storm damage in New Jersey and New York, adopting an appraisal analysis method. Following Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Model with special focus on the three systems of attitude, engagement, and graduation, this qualitative study aims to reveal how Joe Biden engages with the American audience in his climate change speech in alignment with the United Nations (UN) agenda for sustainable development. For this purpose, the transcript of President Biden's speech on the aftermath of Hurricane Ida was obtained from a New York Times media source to identify the main Appraisal systems that dominate his speech on climate change and to reveal how his speech contributes to enhancing SDGs awareness as far as climate change is concerned. Key findings showcase that President Biden relies heavily on the Attitudinal Resources (namely, Affect of insecurity and dissatisfaction) to convince the public that climate change is everybody's crisis, oscillates between two engagement choices (dialogic contraction and dialogic expansion) to sound objective, and incorporates the Graduation system under Force, employing lexicalization and repetition to convince the public that the worst is imminent, bold actions should be taken, and public co-operation is urged.

Keywords: *Appraisal, Attitude, Climate Change, Engagement, Graduation, Presidential Speeches, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

1.   INTRODUCTION

On September 25, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, outlining 17 ambitious global goals to be achieved by the year 2030 (United Nations, 2015). These goals, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aim to promote fairness and sustainability across a broad spectrum of human and environmental issues, spanning from planetary biosphere health to local community well-being (Morton, 2017). Almost all countries have committed to improving both the planet and the lives of their citizens by 2030 (United Nations, 2021).

This study focuses on Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13), which addresses the critical issue of climate change. The official statement of this goal is to "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" (United Nations, 2015). Climate change has been the most significant environmental issue since the late 20th century (Rahman, 2013), with countries across the globe acknowledging its profound effects.

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in weather patterns and temperatures, which can occur due to natural processes but are primarily driven by human

activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas (United Nations, 2016). The consequences of climate change now include extreme droughts, water scarcity, severe wildfires, rising sea levels, floods, melting polar ice, and catastrophic storms (United Nations, 2016).

Despite the clear and present danger posed by climate change, there remains a significant portion of the American public that denies its existence (Biden, 2021). This disconnect has prompted urgent calls for the U.S. government to launch climate change awareness campaigns that inform citizens about the crisis and empower them with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to take action. Accordingly, this study examines how presidential discourse can persuade the public of the urgency of the climate crisis. While SDG 13 has been addressed in numerous scientific studies (Baliram, 2020), the analysis of public speeches from the perspective of Appraisal Theory is a novel contribution to the discourse.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct an appraisal analysis of President Joe Biden's official discourse delivered in 2021 following his tour of the storm damage in New Jersey and New York. As the climate change crisis intensifies, Biden's speeches aim to convince the public of its severity and foster national solidarity. This study will explore how Biden utilizes appraisal resources to communicate the gravity of the climate crisis and encourage collective action. Additionally, this study offers a foundation for future research, as the methodology can be replicated to analyze other public speeches through the lens of Appraisal Theory.

1.1 Research Questions

The overarching question the study addresses is:

How does President Joe Biden employ Appraisal Resources to convince the public about the gravity of the climate change crisis in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13 to foster national solidarity?

To answer this question, the researchers address these three sub-questions:

1. Which appraisal resources does Joe Biden utilize in his speech discussing the impact of Hurricane Ida?

2. What is the primary appraisal system prevalent in Biden's speech following Hurricane Ida?

3. How does Biden's speech contribute to raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goal related to climate change and promoting sustainable development?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Appraisal Theory

James Martin, a linguistics professor at Sydney University, introduced the Appraisal System in the early 1990s, which quickly gained significant attention from scholars. The primary contributors and advocates of this system are Martin (1992, 1995, 2003) and White (1998, 2003). Like any theory, it is not static or fully developed, and ongoing proposals and considerations for amendments and updates are prevalent. The theory primarily focuses on how speakers express their emotions and incorporate additional voices in their discourses (Martin & White, 2005). Appraisal Theory revolves around the speaker's perception and recognizes that individual variability leads to different reactions to the same event. Within Appraisal Theory, three sub-systems—Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation—are utilized to analyze speeches and explore various areas of interest (Martin & White, 2005). Martin & White's (2005) system of Appraisal Theory helps the researchers to analyze the data that have been collected for this study.

2.2 Attitude System

"The attitude semantic system is concerned with the linguistic expression of positive (+) and negative (-) attitudes" (Painter, 2003: 184). It can also be inscribed (explicit), or evoked (implicit). Attitude is further divided into three semantic regions: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation.

2.2.1 Affect

Affect, as discussed by Martin and White (2005), pertains to the emotions and feelings expressed by the speaker or writer in their discourse. It encompasses both positive and negative emotions, such as pleasure, happiness, sadness, and admiration (Martin & White, 2005: 42). Affect can also be conveyed through nouns representing mental processes, such as grief, admiration, fear, sorrow, and so on. Affect can be classified into three major categories which are related to un/happiness, in/ security, and dis/satisfaction (Martin & White, 2005).

Resources of happiness and unhappiness pertain to internal emotions, including love, happiness, sadness, and hatred. While resources of happiness

are associated with affection and cheerfulness, resources of unhappiness are connected to feelings of misery and antipathy. Resources of security and insecurity are linked to individuals' feelings in relation to their environment. Resources of insecurity involve feelings of unease and surprise, whereas resources of security encompass confidence and trust. Resources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction relate to individuals' emotions stemming from the accomplishment or failure to achieve their dreams and goals. Resources of dissatisfaction encompass feelings of boredom and displeasure, while resources of satisfaction involve feelings of interest and pleasure (Martin & White, 2005).

2.2.2 Judgment

Judgment is related to the evaluation of human behavior and how it compares to social norms. According to different evaluative standards, the Judgment System can be classified into two broad categories, defined as Social Esteem and Social Sanction (Martin & White, 2005). Behaviors within the realm of Social Esteem are evaluated based on widely accepted social expectations and are influenced by conversations and interactions within family social networks. Positive behaviors are encouraged and valued, while negative behaviors are discouraged or criticized. Social Esteem encompasses norms related to normality, capacity, and tenacity, emphasizing what is considered normal, someone's ability to perform tasks, and the quality of being reliable (Martin & White, 2005: 53). In contrast, behaviors falling under Social Sanction are judged based on moral or legal grounds, typically through written texts such as rules, laws, or regulations. Negative behaviors are often condemned as sins or punished as crimes. Social Sanction involves assessments of human actions in terms of their truthfulness and propriety, focusing on the qualities of being honest, trusted, and socially or morally acceptable.

2.2.3 Appreciation

Appreciation accounts for "meanings construing our evaluations of things especially things we make" (Martin & White, 2005: 56). Appreciation can be classified into three sub-types: Reaction, Composition, and Valuation (Martin & White, 2005: 56).

The first sub-type, Reaction, pertains to the effect of things on people and includes words such as captivating, exciting, notable, lively, and fine. The second sub-type, Composition, refers to the balance and complexity of the inner structure of certain phenomena and includes words like unified,

symmetrical, irregular, unbalanced, pure, and unclear, which reflect the speaker's or writer's position towards the composition of certain phenomena.

Finally, the third sub-type, Valuation, is used to appreciate the social significance of things, which can be assessed with words such as creative, authentic, profound, deep, unique, shallow, insignificant, fake, and worthless (Martin & White, 2005: 56).

2.3 Engagement System

The Engagement system, a key component of Appraisal Theory, explores how speakers or writers express their viewpoints and align themselves with or against the positions of others. It examines the ways individuals present their perspectives in relation to other utterances, whether in agreement or opposition (Martin & White, 2005: 93). This system operates through two main strategies: Dialogic Contraction and Dialogic Expansion, which together define how speakers manage the presence of alternative voices in discourse (Martin & White, 2005: 92).

Dialogic Contraction refers to instances where speakers limit the scope for alternative viewpoints, effectively closing the dialogue. Martin and White (2005) describe two main types of contraction: Disclaim and Proclaim. In Disclaim, speakers reject opposing positions, thereby misaligning with the presented utterance and asserting their own authority (Martin & White, 2005: 97). In contrast, Proclaim involves presenting the speaker's viewpoint as widely accepted and reliable, minimizing room for alternative perspectives (Martin & White, 2005: 98). Proclaim strategies include concur, where the speaker expresses agreement or shared knowledge; pronounce, where the speaker explicitly asserts their position, often through intensification; and endorse, where the speaker validates their stance using supporting evidence or references (Martin & White, 2005: 122, 101, 126).

On the other hand, Dialogic Expansion creates space for alternative perspectives, allowing for a more open dialogue. Speakers acknowledge other viewpoints and position their own stance as one among many possible interpretations (Martin & White, 2005: 111). Expansion operates through two primary strategies: entertain and attribute. "Entertain" expressions signal that the speaker's viewpoint is one possibility among many, inviting alternative perspectives. Attribute involves recognizing multiple viewpoints, either by acknowledging other perspectives without necessarily aligning with them or by distancing the speaker from the proposition, indicating a lack of responsibility for

the presented view (Martin & White, 2005: 111-112). While "Entertain" emphasizes the internal perspective of the speaker, "attribution" highlights external voices by associating propositions with specific sources or consensus. Examples include "there is an argument that" or "it is said that" (Martin & White, 2005: 111).

By balancing contraction and expansion, the Engagement system captures how speakers manage their relationship with other voices in discourse, either by asserting authority or fostering dialogue. This dynamic interaction highlights the ways in which speakers navigate agreement and opposition in their communication.

2.4   Graduation System

The third system is Graduation which offers speakers further opportunities to strengthen or weaken their utterances along a scale using two axes of scalability: Focus and Force. Focus is related to strength of feeling and level of commitment to value positions; Force is instead to do with the scalability of the intensity of the evaluation.

2.4.1 Focus

Focus, as discussed by Martin and White (2005), pertains to the level of precision in the meaning conveyed by a text. It involves the use of language to either sharpen or soften the focus of a statement. For instance, the term "real policeman" sharpens the focus by providing a specific and clear meaning, while "a sort of policeman" softens the focus, indicating an intention to diminish the value position.

2.4.2 Force

Force, as the second subdivision of Graduation in Appraisal Theory, enables speakers and writers to convey the intensity of their feelings towards a proposition (Martin & White, 2005). It encompasses two perspectives: intensification and quantification. Intensification can be achieved through various grammatical resources such as isolation, maximization, lexicalization, infusion, and repetition (Martin & White, 2005: 141-143). Isolation involves using an intensifier as a pre-modification of an adjective or adverb, while comparatives and superlatives can also function as intensifiers (Martin & White, 2005: 141). Maximization represents the highest level of intensification. Intensifiers can also be realized through lexical and grammatical resources, like words such as slightly and very, or through figurative implications such as ice-cold and crystal-clear (Martin & White, 2005: 143). Repetition of the same lexeme or semantically related

listing terms can also serve as intensifiers.

Quantification, on the other hand, focuses on scaling the amount, weight, size, strength, and number, which can be either abstract or concrete (Martin & White, 2005:148). Quantifiers are categorized according to different modes, including mass, number, time, and space. Examples of mass quantifiers are small, large, thin, light, and heavy, while number quantifiers include a few and many. Time and space quantifiers comprise near, far, short, and wide (Martin & White, 2005: 150).

2.5   Previous Studies Examining Appraisal Resources

Many studies have attempted to examine Appraisal Resources in several contexts or genres, such as political speeches, digital narratives, and academic writing. These contexts highlight how attitudinal markers like Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation function across different forms of communication, helping to analyze how speakers or writers convey their stance and engage their audience.

Ailan (2017) applies Appraisal Theory to President Obama's victory speech, analyzing the attitudinal resources of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. The study finds that Obama's use of positive attitudinal meanings—especially those expressing hope and optimism—helps to rebuild public confidence and mitigate hostility in the aftermath of the election. The cheerful mood throughout the speech reflects a deliberate use of Affect, aimed at fostering a sense of unity and renewal. While this study effectively uncovers the emotional and evaluative strategies used in Obama's speech, it could further explore how these resources of Affect and Judgment interact with the broader political context or how they are tailored to specific audiences. The reliance on positivity as a communicative tool could be contrasted with other leaders who face more divisive or crisis-ridden situations, such as the climate change discourse analyzed in the present study.

Similarly, Elyamany (2020) explores Jay Shetty's digital narratives, focusing specifically on the Buddhist practices Shetty promotes and the strategies he employs to convey his message globally. The emphasis of this study on audio-visual materials and its analysis of appraisal resources, particularly the dominance of Judgment and Appreciation, provides an intriguing look at how speakers in digital media communicate authority and value. The finding that explicit attitudinal meanings are the primary means through which Shetty conveys his stance is noteworthy, as it underscores a deliberate

strategy to make his wisdom accessible and appealing to a broad audience. However, the study does not delve deeply into how these digital narratives engage with varying perspectives or how the interactive nature of digital platforms may affect the reception of such attitudinal markers. This gap presents an opportunity for further exploration, particularly in relation to how public figures, like presidents, use appraisal strategies in more politically charged settings.

Harti (2020) offers a different perspective by analyzing the use of Attitude in students' expository writing on the COVID-19 pandemic. The study finds that Affect dominates the attitudinal markers in the compositions, revealing students' feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction in response to the pandemic. This focus on personal emotion, rather than broader societal or political evaluations, highlights how different genres elicit different forms of attitudinal expression. While Harti's analysis provides valuable insight into how Affect functions in academic writing, it also opens the door for further exploration into how students balance personal emotion with evaluations of societal responses to crises like COVID-19. The present study, by focusing on presidential discourse, aims to examine how appraisal resources are used to persuade a broader public audience, rather than reflecting individual feelings, thus adding a new dimension to the existing literature.

Muliza's (2018) investigation into Theresa May's speech delivered on July 20, 2018, in Northern Ireland adds another political dimension, but here, Appreciation dominates over Affect, given the political tone required for such discourse. Judgment follows as May appeals to her audience's sense of Tenacity, aiming to unite them around her leadership regarding Brexit. The study effectively uses a descriptive qualitative approach but could benefit from an exploration of how May's use of appraisal compares with her contemporaries. This suggests another potential gap: How different politicians utilize Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation in politically sensitive situations like national crises.

Zhang and Pei's (2018) study provides a comparative analysis of the appraisal resources used by Xi Jinping and Donald Trump in their speeches at the Davos Forum in 2017 and 2018. By focusing on how these leaders express attitudes—particularly Affect and Judgment—the study reveals that both utilize positive language to project a sense of national confidence. Additionally, Zhang and Pei examine the leaders' use of engagement systems, identifying a tendency toward dialogical contraction, where both Xi and Trump generally use language that closes off alternative perspectives, reinforcing their own stances rather

than encouraging negotiation or dialogue. While the comparative approach offers valuable insights into the rhetorical strategies of these two major world powers in high-profile, formal contexts, the focus on formal speeches leaves unexplored how appraisal is handled in more informal or spontaneous settings, such as interviews or press conferences, presenting another opportunity for future research.

3.   METHODOLOGY
3.1   Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the appraisal systems employed by President Biden during his climate change speech following the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, after his visit to the storm-damaged areas in New Jersey and New York in 2021. The researchers provide a comprehensive description of the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques utilized in this study. This description includes an outline of the qualitative research design employed, as well as the sources of data utilized for the investigation.

3.2   Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative research design, which is appropriate for conducting an in-depth analysis of language and discourse. The choice of a qualitative research design allows for a thorough examination of President Biden's climate change speech following the aftermath of Hurricane Ida and the identification of the predominant systems of appraisal.

3.3   Data Collection

For this study, a specific climate change speech delivered by President Biden in 2021 was carefully selected which aims to investigate the appraisal resources utilized by the president to persuade the public about the pressing climate change crisis within the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13. This speech on September 7, 2021, titled "Remarks by President Biden on the Aftermath of Hurricane Ida "holds significance in addressing the topic of climate change, as President Biden discusses his comprehensive plans to tackle this issue and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Emphasizing that climate change encompasses national security, public health, and economic challenges, President Biden highlights the urgency for the United States to take a leading role. The speech entails a range of policy proposals, such as investing in clean energy infrastructure, generating employment opportunities in the renewable energy sector, and collaborating with other nations to address the global

climate challenge. To ensure the reliability of the transcript, it was sourced from the reputable news outlet, the *New York Times*, which is renowned for its comprehensive coverage and provides dependable transcripts of speeches and interviews with prominent public figures (The *New York Times* Company, n.d.).

The transcript of this speech was downloaded from the *New York Times* website:

https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/07/us/politics/biden-speech-transcript-hurricane-ida.html

3.4   Data Analysis

In this case study, the data were analyzed manually. The researchers have carefully read the transcript of President Biden's speech and have identified specific phrases or sentences related to climate change appraisal resources like attitude, engagement, and graduation. By examining in what ways these resources were used, the researchers gained insights into the strategies President Biden employs to effectively communicate his message. The transcript was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involves identifying patterns or themes in the data through repeated examination. Themes and patterns

are important in appraisal analysis as they help identify the overarching ideas and how language is used to express attitude, engagement, and graduation towards a particular topic. The researchers have identified specific phrases or sentences in the speech and grouped them into themes. These themes were then analyzed to understand the specific appraisal resources used by President Biden in his climate change speech and how they contribute to the persuasive impact of his message.

4.   ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

To uncover President Biden's utilization of appraisal resources in his climate change speech and evaluate their persuasive impact, a tabular format is used. Each theme identified in the speech transcript is presented in a separate table, outlining the theme, corresponding phrases, appraisal resources utilized, and a concise analysis. Subsequently, a comprehensive discussion delves into the analysis of these findings. The identification of themes is based on specific phrases or sentences extracted from the speech transcript, which are then examined through the lens of appraisal theory.

Table 1.

Theme 1	Specific Phrases or Sentences	Appraisal Resources	Brief Analysis
The severe effects of climate change and its consequences.	1. "These waves <u>crashed</u> through the streets here, testing the <u>aging infrastructure</u> and <u>taking lives. More lives were taken</u> here than down in Louisiana." (Lines: 41-42)	Attitude: Affect: unhappiness	The speaker conveys a sense of sadness and frustration about the impact of climate change on the community, particularly through the mention of lives lost due to flooding and the reference to aging infrastructure.
.	2. "<u>People are beginning to realize</u> this is <u>much, much bigger than anyone was willing to believe</u>." (Line: 25)	Engagement: Dialogic Expansion: Entertain, Attribution Graduation: Force: Repetition Attitude: Affect: Insecurity	The speaker engages in dialogic expansion by using entertain and attribution expressions. The phrase "People are beginning to realize" acknowledges other perspectives, while "this is much, much bigger than anyone was willing to believe" challenges previous beliefs. This repetition emphasizes the magnitude of the situation and conveys a sense of insecurity.
	3. "And, folks, the evidence is clear. Climate change <u>poses an existential threat</u> to <u>our lives,</u> to <u>our economy</u>, and the <u>threat</u> is <u>here,</u> it's <u>not</u> going to get <u>any better</u>." (Lines 69-70)	Attitude: Affect: insecurity Graduation: Force: lexicalization and repetition.	The speaker uses Attitude and Graduation systems of appraisal. The negative emotion of insecurity is expressed through Attitude, emphasizing climate change as a significant threat. The Graduation system employs repetition and lexicalization to underscore the urgency and severity of the situation. Through these appraisal strategies, the speaker effectively communicates the seriousness of the issue and encourages action.

	4. "The nation and the world are in peril. And that's not hyperbole." (Line 80)	Attitude: Affect: insecurity Engagement: Dialogic Contraction: Disclaim	The quote "The nation and the world are in peril. And that's not hyperbole." exemplifies Attitude through Affect, particularly highlighting emotions of insecurity and fear. The word "peril" emphasizes a sense of imminent danger, portraying a serious threat. Additionally, Engagement is demonstrated via Disclaim in the phrase "that's not hyperbole," where the speaker denies any exaggeration. This strengthens the assertion by rejecting potential doubts, aligning the audience with the speaker's conviction about the gravity of the situation.
	5. "And I know these disasters aren't going to stop. They're only going to come with more frequency and ferocity." (Lines: 101–102)	Graduation: Force: Maximization	In this quote, President Biden utilizes graduation with the subtype of force through maximization. He emphasizes the seriousness and urgency of the issue by employing words such as "disasters," "more frequency," and "ferocity." The phrase "aren't going to stop" indicates the persistent nature of the situation, reinforcing the gravity of the issue. This encourages the listener to acknowledge the significance of the problem and take necessary action.

President Biden utilizes various appraisal systems to emphasize the severity of the situation and persuade the audience to act on climate change. Through attitude, engagement, and graduation, the speaker effectively conveys the urgency and importance of addressing the issue. For instance, the speaker expresses negative emotions of sadness and frustration regarding the impact of climate change on the community, highlighting the loss of lives and the inadequacy of the aging infrastructure. This evokes a sense of hopelessness, emphasizing the need for immediate investment and updates to enhance resilience.

In terms of engagement, the speaker acknowledges varying perspectives and expands the dialogue, recognizing that individuals are increasingly becoming aware of the magnitude of the issue. This demonstrates the speaker's intention to unite people and foster a shared understanding of the significant impact of climate change. The repetition of the phrase "much, much bigger" emphasizes the urgency and seriousness of the situation, aiming to encourage action.

In another quote, President Biden combines attitude and graduation to convey the seriousness of climate change. Through attitude, the speaker expresses insecurity and anxiety, describing climate change as an existential threat to lives and the economy. The use of the phrase "poses an existential threat" intensifies the gravity of the issue. Through graduation, the speaker employs lexicalization and repetition, emphasizing the severity of the threat and motivating the audience to act. Furthermore, the speaker emphasizes the urgency of the situation through attitude, conveying a sense of insecurity and fear by stating that the nation and the world are in peril. The use of the phrase "that's not hyperbole" underscores the accuracy and seriousness of the statement.

In terms of graduation, President Biden uses maximization to highlight the urgency and severity of climate change. Words such as "disasters," "more frequency," and "ferocity" emphasize the intensity of the situation. The phrase "aren't going to stop" implies the ongoing nature of the issue and reinforces the need for immediate action.

The attitude and graduation systems are the primary focus in this theme. The attitude system conveys the speaker's emotional response, particularly the feelings of insecurity and fear. On the other hand, the graduation system is employed to highlight the seriousness and urgency of the issue through techniques like repetition and maximization. These strategies effectively persuade the listener to acknowledge the gravity of the situation and take immediate action.

Table 2.

Theme 2	Specific Phrases or Sentences	Appraisal Resources	Brief Analysis
Government Response and Assistance	1. "The group I have standing with led by Chuck Schumer and your congresswoman I want to <u>thank</u> her personally for <u>her gumption, the way she's fought and hollered and fought so hard for all the people in this alley</u>. I really mean it. <u>Thank you, thank you, thank you</u>." (Lines: 11–14)	Attitude: Affect: Satisfaction and happiness Graduation: Force: Repetition	President Biden expresses positive emotions of satisfaction and happiness towards Chuck Schumer and the congresswoman in this quote, using the Attitude system under Affect. The repeated phrase "thank you" reinforces his positive attitude and appreciation for their efforts. Additionally, there is graduation under force through repetition, as the repetition of "thank you" emphasizes the speaker's sincere gratitude for their contributions.
.	2. "The New York Fire Department, the New York Police Department, the Sanitation Department and other <u>first responders,</u> they're <u>leading</u> with <u>incredible, incredible courage</u>." (Lines: 66–68)	Graduation: Force: lexicalization and Repetition Attitude: Affect: Satisfaction	President Biden persuades the listener to recognize and admire the bravery of the first responders through his use of the Graduation system, specifically the subtype of force involving lexicalization and repetition. The phrase "incredible courage" highlights the exceptional bravery of the responders, and the repetition of "incredible" strengthens the speaker's admiration. Furthermore, this quote reflects the President's satisfaction with the first responders' work.
	3. "If you need help, please go to <u>disasterassistance.gov. Or call 1-800-621-FEMA. 1-800-621-3362.</u> We can get you help now." (Line: 99) Note: FEMA stands for Federal Emergency Management Agency.	Engagement: Dialogic Contraction: Proclaim: Endorse	The quote belongs to the Proclaim category in the engagement system, specifically the technique of Endorse. The inclusion of specific numbers, such as "1-800-621-FEMA" and "1-800-621-3362," enhances the credibility of the statement and emphasizes the availability of immediate assistance.

President Biden expresses his gratitude and satisfaction towards Chuck Schumer, the congresswoman, and the first responders in different quotes. He repeatedly thanks them for their hard work and dedication, demonstrating his positive attitude. The President also emphasizes the bravery and courage of the first responders, using the words "incredible courage" and "incredible" to highlight their extraordinary qualities. Additionally, he provides specific numbers to access immediate help, adding credibility to his statements. Overall, President Biden's messages convey appreciation, admiration, and urgency. The main appraisal systems employed in these quotes are positive attitude under affect and forceful graduation through repetition. They highlight the speaker's satisfaction and admiration for the work being done to assist those in need.

Table 3.

Theme 3	Specific Phrases or Sentences	Appraisal Resources	Brief Analysis
Perspectives on Climate Change: Denial and Awareness. .	1. "And the <u>whole segment</u> of <u>our population denying</u> this <u>thing</u> called <u>climate change.</u> But I <u>really mean it.</u>" (Line: 25)	Attitude: Affect: Dissatisfaction	Biden expresses dissatisfaction towards climate change deniers, emphasizing his sincere evaluation of the situation.
	2. "The <u>people</u> who <u>stand on the other side of the fences who don't live there,</u> they <u>don't understand</u>." (Lines:38-39)	Engagement: Dialogic Contraction: Disclaim	In this quote, Biden engages in dialogic contraction through disclaim by rejecting the perspective of those who "stand on the other side of the fences." He asserts that their understanding of the situation is limited because they don't live in the same situation.

		Graduation: Force: Lexicalization	This quote highlights the importance of collective responsibility and unity during a crisis through forceful language using Lexicalization. The phrase "This is everybody's crisis" emphasizes that the crisis impacts everyone and emphasizes the need for everyone to contribute.
	3. "This is everybody's crisis, we're all in this." (Line: 124)		

Biden's quotes address climate change denial and awareness. One quote expresses his dissatisfaction towards climate change deniers, emphasizing his sincere evaluation and negative emotions. Another quote rejects the perspective of those who do not understand the situation due to their detachment. The quote highlights a division and implies the speaker's expertise, and it falls under dialogic contraction. Additionally, a quote emphasizes collective responsibility and unity during the crisis, emphasizing that it affects everyone. The use of "we" reinforces the idea of shared responsibility.

Overall, in the theme of Climate Change Denial and Awareness, the three appraisal systems are employed through the powerful technique of lexicalization in Biden's discourse. His language underscores the gravity of the climate crisis and advocates for collective responsibility. By using lexicalization, Biden effectively conveys the urgency and significance of the issue, compelling a unified response to this critical challenge.

Table 4.

Theme 4	Specific Phrases or Sentences	Appraisal Resources	Brief Analysis
Urging for Action and Change	1. "We are determined, we are determined that we are going to deal with climate change and have zero emissions, net emissions by 2050." (Lines:55-56)	Graduation: Force: Repetition	This quote shows the speaker's strong determination to address climate change. The repeated phrase "we are determined" emphasizes his commitment and makes it memorable. It reflects his firm resolve to take significant action.
.	2. "We've got to move. And we've got to move the rest of the world. It's not just the United States of America." (Lines:57-58)	Graduation: Force: Repetition Engagement: Dialogic Expansion: Entertain	This quote combines graduation under force through repetition and engagement under dialogic expansion through entertain. The repeated phrase "we've got to move" emphasizes the urgency and importance of acting on climate change collectively. The use of "we" highlights the shared responsibility and willingness to work together. Additionally, the phrase "it's not just the United States of America" underscores the global nature of the issue and promotes international collaboration.
	3. "I'm going to be heading from here to Glasgow, Scotland, for the COP meeting [United Nations Climate Change Conference], which is all the nations of the world getting together to decide what we are going to do about climate change." (Lines: 49-50)	Attitude: Judgment: Social Esteem: Capacity and Tenacity	The quote showcases the speaker's capacity to address climate change by actively participating in the COP meeting and collaborating with other nations. This demonstrates his ability to act and contribute positively to a global issue. Additionally, the quote highlights the speaker's reliability and tenacity as a leader by engaging in discussions and encouraging others to join his efforts.
	4. "I think of one word when I think of climate change: jobs. Good paying jobs. We can put the economy back on a path to real growth." (Lines: 117-118)	Engagement: Dialogic Expansion: Entertain	The quote engages the audience using Entertain expressions, inviting dialogue and diverse perspectives on the relationship between climate change and the economy. The speaker's use of "I think" encourages open discussion. Additionally, the phrase "one word" simplifies the message, while "good paying jobs" expands the conversation to include economic considerations alongside climate change.

President Biden's quotes about climate change demonstrate a mix of attitude, engagement, and graduation systems. He expresses a sense of urgency and determination to address the issue, emphasizing the need for global collaboration. In one quote, he repetitively emphasizes the determination to achieve zero emissions by 2050. Another quote highlights the urgency to act and involve the rest of the world, stressing that it is not just the responsibility of the United States. Biden's commitment is evident through his attendance at international conferences like the COP meeting. Lastly, he connects climate change to the economy, emphasizing the importance of good-paying jobs and sparking a conversation about the positive outcomes of addressing climate change.

Table5.

Theme 5	Specific Phrases or Sentences	Appraisal Resources	Brief Analysis
Working Together for Common Goals .	1. "<u>Sometimes</u> some very <u>bad things happen</u> that <u>have a tendency to bring out the best in a people and a country</u>." (Line:27)	Attitude: Judgment: Social Esteem: Capacity Appreciation: Normality Graduation: Force: Intensification	This quote exemplifies the social esteem norm of judgment through capacity, reflecting a belief in people's ability to rise to challenges and showcase their best qualities. The phrase "bring out the best" highlights this belief, demonstrating appreciation (normality) for the resilience and strength of individuals and nations. Additionally, there is a use of graduation via intensification, as the phrase suggests a strong effect of tough situations, emphasizing the significant response to challenges.
	2- "The <u>great thing</u> about <u>America</u>, <u>every time we end up with a problem, going into a serious circumstance we come out better than we went in</u> that is <u>because we are so diverse</u>. That's America <u>be proud of it</u>." (Lines: 7-8)	Attitude: Affect: Satisfaction Graduation: Force: Lexicalization Appreciation: Normality	The quote combines the attitude system under affect and appreciation with the graduation system under force through lexicalization. The speaker expresses satisfaction with America's diversity and its resilience in overcoming challenges. The phrase "be proud of it" emphasizes this satisfaction, showcasing appreciation (normality) for the country's strength and adaptability. Additionally, the speaker highlights the pattern of improvement that occurs every time a problem arises, indicating that challenges can lead to progress.
	3. "<u>We</u> have to take some <u>bold action now</u> to tackle the <u>accelerating</u> effects of climate change." (Line: 48)	Engagement: Dialogic Expansion: Entertain Graduation: Force: Lexicalization	The quote demonstrates engagement under dialogic expansion through entertain, as the speaker urges immediate action to address climate change. The phrase "we have to take some bold action now" invites the audience to actively participate and emphasizes the urgency. Furthermore, the speaker uses strong words like "bold" and "accelerating" within the graduation system to underscore the need for decisive measures.

President Biden's statements in theme 5 incorporate various appraisal systems. In the first quote, he suggests that challenging circumstances can bring out the best in people and countries, highlighting their capacity for resilience. The second quote emphasizes satisfaction towards America's diversity and its ability to overcome problems. It also expresses the belief that challenges lead to improvement. The third quote urges urgent action on climate change, engaging the audience and highlighting the need for bold measures to address the accelerating effects. Overall, Biden's statements showcase his ability to connect with the audience and convey his ideas effectively.

Table 6.

Theme 6	Specific Phrases or Sentences	Appraisal Resources	Brief Analysis
Caring and Support for Communities in Need.	1. "I wish every American could walk down this valley with me to see and talk to the people who have been devastated." (Lines: 3-4)	Attitude: Affect: Unhappiness and Dissatisfaction	In this quote, the speaker conveys unhappiness and dissatisfaction regarding the situation in the valley. The word "devastated" highlights the suffering of the people, while the word "wish" underscores the speaker's desire for improvement.
.	2. "You all saw the harrowing images of stories and families trapped in flooding basements and struggling to survive." (Lines: 43-44)	Attitude: Affect: Unhappiness Graduation: Force: Lexicalization	In this quote, Biden combines the attitude and graduation systems. He expresses unhappiness through the description of distressing images and families facing challenges. Additionally, he uses strong words like "trapped" and "struggling" to emphasize the seriousness of the situation and the urgency for action.
	3. "My message to everyone grappling with this devastation is: We're here, we're not going home till this gets done. I really mean that. We're not leaving. We're going to continue to shout as long as it takes to get real progress here. (Lines:46-47)	Attitude: Judgment: Social Esteem: Capacity Engagement: Dialogic Contraction: Proclaim: Pronouncement	President Biden confidently asserts his capacity and determination by stating that he will persistently advocate for significant progress. He establishes his position as reliable and challenges opposing views by emphasizing his sincerity with the phrase "I really mean that." Using these techniques, President Biden presents a strong authorial voice and demonstrates his firm stance on the matter.

In President Biden's quotes in theme six, he expresses his dissatisfaction and unhappiness. He utilizes the attitude system under Affect to convey his message. In the first quote, he expresses unhappiness and dissatisfaction with the suffering of people in the valley. He wishes for every American to witness the devastation and calls for change. In the second quote, he expresses unhappiness with distressing images and describes the severity of the situation. He emphasizes the need for immediate action. In the third quote, he demonstrates his capacity and determination to address the issue of climate change. He proclaims that progress will be made and challenges alternative views. Overall, President Biden's quotes highlight his firm stance and the urgency of the situation.

5. CONCLUSION

In analyzing President Biden's speech on climate change on the aftermath of hurricane Ida, it becomes evident that he employs a diverse range of appraisal systems to effectively convey his message. Throughout his statements, the dominant appraisal system utilized is the attitude system under Affect, where he skillfully expresses his negative emotions of unhappiness, insecurity and dissatisfaction. By doing so, he emphasizes the urgency and severity of the situation, compelling his audience to recognize the gravity of climate change.

President Biden also incorporates the graduation system under force, employing lexicalization,

repetition, and maximization to underscore the severe consequences of inaction. Through the careful selection of words and the repetition of impactful phrases, he highlights the immediate need for decisive action and inspires a sense of urgency in his listeners. By utilizing these techniques, President Biden effectively communicates the severity of the issue and motivates individuals to act.

Furthermore, President Biden's speech demonstrates his proficient use of the engagement system through dialogic expansion and contraction. He acknowledges opposing views and aims to foster a sense of collaboration and unity among listeners. By engaging in a dialogue, he encourages a collective understanding of the challenges posed by climate change and emphasizes the importance of working together towards a common goal. This approach helps to bridge gaps in understanding and encourages individuals to actively participate in finding solutions.

Overall, President Biden's skillful employment of appraisal systems in his speech on climate change plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and driving action. His use of the attitude system under affect, graduation system under force, and engagement through dialogic expansion and contraction effectively conveys his emotions, highlights the severity of the issue, and inspires individuals to join the collective effort towards sustainable development goals. Through his rhetoric, President Biden contributes to raising awareness, motivating action, and fostering a

sense of unity in the face of the pressing challenges posed by climate change.

5.1   Limitations and Implications for Further Research

While examining Biden's speech on climate change following Hurricane Ida yields valuable insights, it is crucial to acknowledge the constraints of this analysis. Firstly, it centers on a solitary speech, which may not fully encapsulate Biden's broader communication patterns or the breadth of issues he addresses. Variations in his speech across other contexts not covered in this study could significantly influence the outcomes. Additionally, the analysis is exclusively focused on the speech content and does not consider how diverse audiences might perceive or react to Biden's language, potentially differing from the researchers' observations.

Despite these limitations, the findings provide valuable perspectives on the application of a diverse range of appraisal systems in political speeches and suggest avenues for future investigation. To expand on this research, exploring Biden's language in other speech formats like debates or interviews could illuminate potential variations across different communication settings. Moreover, comparing Biden's climate change discourse with that of other politicians addressing similar topics might reveal similarities or distinctions in their communication approaches. Furthermore, conducting follow-up studies that incorporate audience feedback through surveys or other methods could offer insights into how various demographic groups perceive Biden's language strategies.

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The Artist is Present (2010): A Psychoanalytical Performance Study

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ABSTRACT

*Marina Abramović was engaged in an extended performance called **The Artist is Present** in 2010 at The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). The work was inspired by her belief that stretching the length of a performance beyond expectations serves to alter the audience's perception of time and foster a deeper engagement in the theatrical experience. The objective of the study is to examine both the psychological and theatrical aspects of **The Artist is Present** by applying Freudian defense mechanism, Alfred Adler's Compensation Theory, Brené Brown's Vulnerability and the Power of Connection Theory, and Schechner's Make Believe/Make Belief Performance Theory on **The Artist is Present**. By dissecting the psychological aspects manifested in the show, light is shed on the inevitable impact of trauma and pain on the human psyche and the effect of forgiveness and its healing power. The results showed that Marina faces her trauma, embraces pain, and decides to heal her broken parts by forgiving herself and her parents. The study has also manifested that pain can never heal pain, and trauma cannot be surpassed through repression or any other defense mechanism. Pain heals through embracing the whole grieving process and reconciling with one's suffering. Only then does trauma stop reenacting itself, and the traumatized embark on a lifetime journey of self-healing. Pain and trauma are inescapable, but Marina managed to turn her pain into a universal piece of art: **The Artist is Present**.*

***Keywords:** Forgiveness, Healing, Pain, Performance Art, Psychoanalysis, Trauma, Defense Mechanism, Suppression, Grief.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Trauma is a psychological disorder that could be caused by experiences that overwhelm people's ability to cope (Herman 2015). Trauma is a central theme in Marina Abramović's performance, *The Artist is Present*, which was held at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in 2010. It offered an exploration of trauma, pain, and healing through Marina's personal history. The research paper mainly focuses on the traumatized Marina and how she manages to find her voice in *The Artist is Present*. The study examines *The Artist is Present* performance through Freud's defense mechanisms, Alfred Adler's theory of compensation, and Brené Brown's vulnerability and the power of connection, in addition to Schechner's Make Believe/Make Belief performance theory.

Marina Abramović, a renowned performance artist born in Yugoslav in 1946 to strictly communist parents, has explored art firsthand since her twenties only to realize that true art has to break all set boundaries and go against society's most sanctified conventions. Once the artist breaks free, he/she can create from the heart. Since the early 1970s, Abramović has been pushing past the perceived limits of the body and mind. She has been exploring the complex relationship between artist and audience through performances that challenge both herself and, in many instances, participants emotionally, intellectually, and physically. The concepts inspiring her works are crucial, such as using her body to convey her ideas. She has been making art since childhood and has early realized that

art does not have to be produced in a studio or take a concrete form of MOMA (Museum of Modern Art) Learning.

Abramović has used her body to deliver a universal message to the audience. In every single performance, she chose to defy her body's limits and conquer uncharted territories:

> *"I understood that...I could make art with everything...and the most important [thing] is the concept," she relates. "And this was the beginning of my performance art. And the first time I put my body in front of [an] audience, I understood: this is my media" (MOMA Learning).*

Accordingly, Abramović has acted as a legendary performance artist for years. Her art techniques are being taught, and her pain has turned into stories of survival. Artists can only produce from the heart once they are liberated. Abramović frequently conveys a global message to the audience by using her body. Every time she performed, she decided to push the boundaries of her body and explore realms that none of the other modern artists of the period would have dared to explore. Abramović has thrown *The Artist is Present* performance to connect with the audience, then herself. She lost all connection with herself long ago, lost her voice since childhood, and managed to roam around as an apparition without a soul for years. *The Artist is Present* performance was Abramović's wake-up call to reconnect with her disintegrated parts, embrace her pains, and heal her trauma through performance.

The study examines the reasons behind *The Artist is Present* performance and its influence on the audience involved. Ulay, Abramović's ex-lover, had shown up as an unexpected visitor on the inauguration night, which altered the show's performative course a great deal. Accordingly, the reasons why Ulay's presence brought Abramović to tears as well as her body language and facial expressions the moment she met him after a twenty-four-year separation are examined through Freud's defense mechanisms, Alfred Adler's theory of compensation, and Brené Brown's vulnerability and the power of connection, in addition to Schechner's Make Believe/Make Belief performance theory to gain insight into her work's deeper psychological motivations and implications. The research paper concludes with Abramović's journey to self-healing after long years of being unable to reconcile with her soul and body.

Freud's defense mechanism offers a lens through which we can examine the unconscious desires, emotions, and conflicts that may be at play within Abramovic's performance (Forrester 1974). As such, Abramovic's performance can be interpreted as an expression of repressed desires or traumas, and how the effect of presence and the reciprocal gaze can be seen as a way for her to confront and work through these repressed aspects of her psyche (Abella 2016).

Alfred Adler's Compensation Theory offers a compelling framework for understanding Abramovic's performance. Adler's theory emphasizes the importance of social interest and the individual's pursuit of superiority and significance. In *The Artist is Present*, Abramovic's unwavering presence and willingness to confront discomfort and pain can be seen as a quest for superiority over physical and emotional limitations. Thus, Abramovic's powerful exploration of human connection, vulnerability, and endurance invites the audience to engage in a deeply personal and intimate experience through her unflinching gaze and unwavering presence (Fisher 2012).

Since Abramović's performance blurs the lines between reality and fiction and performer and audience, Schechner's performance theory offers a window through which we could examine its transformational impact. The experiential nature of *The Artist is Present* dissolves the lines between art and life while offering the audience a room to imagine themselves in the present. Through the application of Schechner's Make Believe/Make Belief Performance Theory to Abramović's artistic work, a more profound comprehension of how performance art may challenge our assumptions is acquired which generates significant collective experiences. This examination adds to a more comprehensive dialogue on the relevance and influence of Abramović's creations on modern performance art.

Finally, the rationale behind using Brené Brown's vulnerability and power theories in Marina Abramovic's performance *The Artist is Present* lies in the profound exploration of human connection and authenticity (2015). Through Brown's vulnerability theory, the performance aims to create a space where participants feel safe enough to let their guard down and fully engage in the present moment (Ciccone 2020). Additionally, incorporating Brown's power theory allows the examination of the power dynamics at play within the artist-participant interaction. By leveraging vulnerability as a relational tool, Abramovic's performance seeks to dismantle societal norms and challenge conventional notions of power.

Based on previous research, this study investigates *The Artist is Present* by using the Freudian defense

mechanism, Adlerian compensation theory, Brené Brown's theory of vulnerability, and Schechner's performance theory. *The Artist is Present* is Abramović's first human performance. She lets go of all sorts of violence occasionally employed in her art, where we can see the real Abramović, her bare human side with no pretense. She looked too vulnerable, and she embraced her vulnerability in the presence of every single soul she had laid eyes on that night. The gap in the analysis lies in the following: Abramović reaching the peak of her self-actualization upon the arrival of her ex-partner Ulay, whom she held hands with, unlike the nature of the show, in a trial of healing. She shed tears, and they did not sound like grief but rather joy as she finally managed to heal her shattered soul. This study casts light on that moment of self-realization, self-love, and self-forgiveness that Abramović seemed to anticipate, as shown in Figures 9, 10, and 11. Marina Abramović's *The Artist is Present* is not just a show but rather an act of salvation where Abramović finally liberates herself from any pains and embraces her destiny. Although countless research studies have been conducted on The MOMA show and performance theory, none touched upon how that show was not just meant to heal the audience who took their seats before Abramović but rather Abramović herself, see Figure 3.

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the defining characteristics of Abramović's performance art in *The Artist is Present*?

2. What specific emotional responses did *The Artist is Present* evoke in its audience?

3. How did Schechner's performance theory influence Abramović's show compared to other contemporary performance art theories?

4. How did Brené Brown's vulnerability theory manifest itself in *The Artist is Present* and Marina's reactions to the audience?

5. What are Abramović's stated goals for staging *The Artist is Present*?

6. Through which specific actions and interactions in *The Artist is Present* did Abramović express or achieve self-actualization?

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Marina Abramovic, a renowned performance artist, has played a significant role in exploring the boundaries of bodily presence and the relationship between art and audience. Through her groundbreaking work, particularly in her performance piece *The Artist is Present*, Abramovic challenges traditional notions of presence and immerses her audience in a deeply transformative and profound experience (Saurisse 2022). In *The Artist is Present*, Marina Abramovic creates a deeply transformative and profound experience by immersing her audience in a unique exploration of presence and human connection. In this seminal performance piece, Abramovic sits silently and motionless in a chair for hours, inviting audience members to sit across from her one at a time.

However, Amelia Jones, a Professor and Grierson Chair in Visual Culture at McGill University in Montréal, argues over the paradoxical nature of Abramović's recent practice and the reliance of both Abramović and MoMA on documentation—preceding, during, and following the exhibition's actual duration—to disseminate information about her "presence". The show's transformative impact highlights stark inconsistencies in the current preoccupation with live art, its histories, and its documentation and reenactments (Jones 2011, 18). Jones looks profoundly into such paradoxical allegation:

> *Abramovic's recent practice, in its desire to manifest presence, points to the very fact that the live act itself destroys presence (or makes the impossibility of its being secured evident). The live act marks the body, understood as an expression of the self, as representational. Thus, as someone who sat across from Abramovic; in the atrium of MoMA, surrounded by a barrier like a boxing ring, itself surrounded by dozens of staring visitors, cameras, and lit by klieg lights, I can say personally I found the exchange to be anything but energizing, personal, or transformative (Jones 2011, 18).*

Jones's interpretation of *The Artist is Present* foregrounds Marina's failure to maintain the so-called presence amid the show's chaos and noise. Thus, Jones refutes the performative practice and deems it as non-representational after all.

'If the Tibetans can learn, in four years, a technique for sitting in the snow at twenty degrees below zero without freezing, why can't we learn these techniques in school?' (Abramović *et al*. 1998, 49). Such sophisticated human nature as Abramović's with a complex psyche must have developed a meditative vision of the future of performance art. Mary Richards has managed to explore Abramović's artistic vision in her book *Marina Abramović.* According

to Abramović, teaching young people how to focus, meditate, and discover the potential of stillness and "emptiness" is the way to the future. Through the practice of meditation, it is possible to experience a pan-dimensional awareness of oneself and one's environment when space and time are exceeded, and one experiences a feeling of "being-at-one-with-it-all." Meditation causes a higher frequency wave pattern in the brain. Such mind training, in the opinion of Abramovic, ought to be routinely taught to children in schools (Richards 2009, 82).

Margolin (2016) paints a sophisticated human picture in her heartfelt description of the MoMA show. Abramović sat for eight hours daily for three months as spectators waited in line to sit across from her. Nobody was allowed to talk. Some persons remained in the visual embrace for a few seconds, while others did so for several minutes or even hours. Each person who sat at the table was photographed by the museum's photographer, who captured something incredible: They all had a raw, painful vulnerability attached to their faces that was unlike anything else. These spectators tended to think that Abramović could see right into their souls. Abramović claims that this response occurred due to her ability to give each person her undivided attention and love.

Eventually, Richards (2018) relates Abramović journey with appalling physical performances in her *Marina Abramović* in the following statement, "So even as a young artist, Abramović's desires in art-making were radical, uncompromising." She soon came to feel that "art was a kind of question between life and death" (Abramović et al. 1998, 15). She even proposed to several institutions a performance piece that had death as a possible outcome.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research follows a qualitative methodology. Marina Abramovic's *The Artist is Present* is examined through the lens of *Sigmund Freud*'s defense mechanism, Alfred Adler's compensation theory, Brené Brown's theory of vulnerability, and Schechner's performance theory. The following subsections include the theoretical and theatrical frameworks of the study.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The research paper is mainly focused on Abramović's trauma and pains reflected in her performance; *The Artist is Present*. The performance is analyzed from two aspects: theoretical and theatrical. From a theoretical perspective, Abramović's art cannot be explored without employing Freud's defense mechanisms, Alfred Adler's theory of compensation, Brené Brown's vulnerability and the power of connection, and Schechner's Make Believe/Make Belief performance theory. The theatrical aspects in Abramović's non-verbal cues were the loudest in the show, especially at the moment Ulay arrived unexpectedly at the inauguration night.

3.1.2 Freud's Psychoanalysis Defense Mechanisms

Saul MacLeod looks into psychoanalysis and the tremendous role Freud played as a founding father of the field in his article "Sigmund Freud: Personality Development." He elaborates on Freud's contributions to psychoanalysis: the case of Anna O, the typographical model of the mind, divisions of the psyche, and defense mechanisms where repression works as a focal interest for the study (Macleod 2013). The following research underlines Freud's significant contribution to psychoanalysis, "Three Contributions to the Field of Human Development and How It Relates to My Teaching Experiences," with McLeod's ideas on *The Artist is Present*. Sigmund Freud highlights that human psychology is divided into the unconscious mind, the psyche, and defense mechanisms. Each plays a separate role in shaping one's psychology. Those are not physical organs but more or less hypothetical conceptualizations of essential mental functions (Macleod 2013). Freud would encourage his patients to lie down on his famous couch, talk freely about their symptoms, and let out their very thoughts. Only then did he believe they would ultimately find their solace (Macleod 2013).

However, to a tormented soul like Abramović's, who had it rough as a child and then became torn between love and farewell as an adult, Abramović has not truly experienced such a self-healing process. It seems that she has always been on the run from her trauma, whether as a child or an adult. She never dared to encounter it face to face. Abramović has mastered the art of repression as a defense mechanism against her excruciating childhood traumas. She has repressed her agony, and pain instead of confronting it all in her performances. Abramović discovered that the most effective mechanism to overcome her fears and heal childhood wounds was to fight her past demons. Thus, Abramović made that resolution of facing the world's unkindness with an act of kindness; *The Artist is Present* was her gesture of kindness towards her unkind world of pains. Abramović is a genuine artist who ventilates her pains of trauma through harsh channels only to reflect the cruelty of her world. This

world she has always depicted is molded into softness and loving-kindness.

3.1.3 Compensation Theory

According to Alfred Adler, there is always a reason behind any sense of inferiority that grows in a child over the years. Applying Adler's Theory of Compensation to the female Marina Abramovic, the study comes down to a set of findings. According to Deutsch and Kadis (2005), psychological compensation for a particular phenomenon might occur due to the presence of inferiority experienced by the lack of some indispensable life aspect. Applying the theory to Abramović simply projects her psychological failures back at her homeland, Yugoslavia, where self-deprivation and a sense of rejection accompanied her throughout childhood. Marina never developed a sense of belonging to family or homeland due to her parents' cruelty and Belgrade's tough economic conditions at the time. Therefore, Abramović in *The Artist is Present* is a live embodiment of need, a need for care, love, and fulfillment. As an artist, she shares a compelling need for psychological compensation after years of oppression and denial.

3.1.4 Schechner's Performance Theory

The theoretical part would not be whole without referring to performance studies and applying Shechner's Make Belief/Make Believe performance theory, which is widely tackled in his book *Performance Theory* (2013) to Abramović's *The Artist is Present*. According to Schechner, the Make Belief/Make Believe Theory is all about pretending who you are, as if you are putting on "a Halloween mask" and you are fully aware you are masked. A quite demonstrative example Schechner underlines is political elections and how politicians give "costumed and tightly tailored" promises to the public in the election arena, something they know might not be down-to-earth or even doable (Schechner 2012). The influence of Schechner in Drama and Modern Theatre is discussed in Richard Schechner's *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, where he clearly states that performativity is found everywhere: in daily conduct, diverse careers, and even in disciplines like arts and languages (Schechner 2013, 110).

Performance in the Schechner universe is inseparable from reality, following post-modernism notions where rationality, universal truth, and objectivity are constantly defied. Accordingly, all the previous boundaries that separate reality from the performance have been "wrenched away," proving both Plato's and Aristotle's notions of artistic representation and how art is a mere representation of nature were proven right in Schechner's world.

Schechner (2013) claims that performing onstage is similar to social situations, such as public ceremonies, and is considered a continuum. Performance is taking a different form in Schechner's world of drama. In today's "surveillance societies" of the West, where there are closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras everywhere, acting often resembles role-playing, and the opportunity for performance as an extension of being has never been greater (Schechner 2012).

Schechner (2012) illustrates that individuals are performers, and life is like a 'reality show,' with every member playing a particular role in this show. Such a role-play concept takes us to a new notion in Schechner's universe. Even though its goals are different from those of drama improvisation classes, role-playing in many contexts, such as psychotherapy sessions and teacher training exercises, uses similar strategies. This is because both the self-conscious and unconscious impulses that underlie performance are addressed. It depicts the ingrained routines, rituals, and customs of daily living that are ingrained from birth and through early life experience.

Schechner (2013) explicated that performativity has several facets, including relying on 'improvisation.' This is clearly reflected in how he underlines "Performativity [as taking place] everywhere – in daily behavior, in the professions, on the internet and media, in the arts, and in the language" (123). The question lies in whether individuals are being true to themselves or are just showing off. Traditional rules of conduct have developed for several occupations and professions, some of which have manifested as distinctive personality traits, behavioral patterns, and vocal tones. These have then been stylized into conventional depictions, such as the roles of the serious court judge, impassioned reporter, and stately cleric. They typically follow tradition, yet they have developed into performing modes. The implication is that many people going about their "daily business" are not always being who they truly are. In certain circumstances, they are performing roles that have been prearranged and even programmed.

Abramović wholeheartedly adopted Schechner's performance theory in her show. She has woven a "Make-Believe" world of her own where she let her audience in, let them sit before her across the table, battled with them through their agonies and fragmented memories, and had them believe in the very existence of that world of a dream of hers. Abramović made that fragile, vulnerable world of hers theirs, too. That belief of hers is the reason why the performance was a great success.

3.1.5 Brené Brown's Psychological Theory

Brené Brown, a sociologist and research professor who called herself a storyteller, investigated in her long research on human nature the power of vulnerability and connection in human lives. In Berne's "Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead," she introduces us to the concept of vulnerability in the following statement, "Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren't always comfortable, but they're never weakness." Then, she takes us on a journey of self-revelation to highlight how vulnerability develops a sense of belonging in us, as clearly reflected in another statement, "because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance" (Brown 2017).

This vulnerability is a dilemma we all struggle with in our daily lives; Brown elaborates in her TED talk "The Power of Vulnerability" on the concept of Shame and how it is another agonizing sense that might haunt us and hinder our social development. This sense of not being enough hinders the process of connection. For connection to happen, according to Brené, we have to allow ourselves to be seen and deconstruct that very sense of shame (Brown 2017). Brown reveals the devastating effect of both trauma and repressed emotions on human nature. It seems like repressed emotions never really die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways. With reference to Sigmund Freud, unexpressed emotions of love, fear, loss, pain, agony, failure, or even need are all merely a set of repressed emotions that pile up in the human mind and never die by time as mistakenly perceived. They are buried down in the darkest abyss of the human soul and, when not surfaced, grow more ferocious until they detonate when most unexpected. In light of this, Marina never embraced nor forgot about her traumatized childhood.

By applying various psychological frameworks, such as theories of compensation, vulnerability, and repression as defense mechanisms, the study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the psychological underpinnings of Abramović's work and its experiential impact on both the artist and the audience. Through this endeavor, the complex interplay between art and psychology will be illuminated to provide new insights into how performance art can both engage and challenge the human psyche (Garza 2022).

The Artist is Present performance offers a rich and complex terrain for psychological analysis, inviting us to examine how art can shape our perceptions of ourselves and others, and the potential for profound human connection through the medium of performance art. Thus, the prolonged act of sitting and making eye contact with visitors creates a unique space for exploring the dynamics of human interaction and the impact of sustained attention. Moreover, the performance also raises questions about the role of the artist in shaping the emotional and psychological experiences of the audience, as well as the potential for art to elicit deep and personal responses (Garza 2022).

Gibellini (2014) reveals the nature of the performance to her readers and its theatrical aspects, which makes people believe and feel that this is their actual social-political reality. Gibellini starts her article with a manifest of the human nature of the performance by stating, "It is not just a matter of Abramović being present 'in body and soul' in the museum's atrium-the realization of the performance which lends the show its title" (Gibellini 2010). Gibellini expands her analysis to show the reader how Abramović herself plays a pivotal role in the show. The show would not be whole without her artistic and human contributions. She identified herself with the audience's pain and agony only to heal herself through healing them. Gibellini successfully managed to crystalize Abramović's artistic ideas and prove how such aesthetic performance is a means of documenting her liberating art. For Abramović, the significance of the performance lies in the instant when the artist, conscious of herself, enters her own physical and mental constructed world before an audience over a time that is always emphatically present, turning her presence, the passing of time, and silence—as well as her physical, mental, and emotional resilience—into a constant in her work. Abramović must, therefore, "be present" for the whole duration of the performance, which will last more than 700 hours.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Abramović commented on her performance *The Artist is Present*: "It was [a] complete surprise... this enormous need of humans to have contact" (Abramović 2010). She eventually understands, after countless years of giving blatantly cruel performances, that one's need for connection goes beyond any other. Art does not heal through re-living physical and mental pain, but it instead heals by understanding the pain, growing empathetic, and embracing it. That peace of mind Abramović has been seeking for decades and never managed to find presented itself in *The Artist is Present.* Abramović could not see beyond

her pains until she faced others' bare pains in the performance. In every eye she looked into during the whole three months of her performance, she could see unspeakable suffering, lost love, suffocated forgiveness, hatred, belief, doubt, and peace.

Trauma is an indispensable component of Abramović's performance art. This is clearly reflected in how "she has been traumatized as a child by her parents, the daughter of partisan parents who fought the Nazis and then became national Communist heroes under Marshal Tito's regime, where they were rewarded with plum jobs and a beautiful home" (Margolin 2016). Despite being raised in such patriotic family, her parent's marriage was "explosive," which reflected on her childhood. Abramović was frequently locked in a closet after being severely beaten by her mother. Initially scared of the dark, Abramović soon discovered it to be a soothing place where she felt surrounded by "ghosts, spiritual presences — glowing beings, shapeless and quiet but not at all terrifying" (Margolin 2016).

One of the significant findings of the study is learning about the strong impact of repressed emotions on human nature through researching repression as a defense mechanism for trauma, in addition to connection, shame, and the power of vulnerability. It is reasonable to say that suppressed emotions rarely fade away. They are buried alive and eventually reappear in more repulsive ways. More than any other psychologist at the time, Sigmund Freud was able to decipher the innermost workings of human nature. He was able to explain that repressed feelings of need, love, fear, loss, pain, and agony are all simply a collection of emotions that accumulate within the human mind and never actually go away as is commonly believed. To apply this, Marina sits on a chair at one end of the table while guests sit in silence on the chair facing her on the opposite side of the table and observe the activity, see Figure 1. Therefore, it is crucial to "reproduce" some of her most well-known practices since, if performance is connected to the present, documentation is insufficient to express its intensity (Gibellini 2010).

Given that repressed emotions are nothing but an inevitable product of an act of trauma, the question lies in defining trauma and how far it can affect the human mind. Paul Valent unraveled trauma and its hidden hazards in a paper he wrote on "Trauma and Psychoanalysis" (2003). Valent (2003) introduced it as follows: "Trauma derives from the Greek meaning penetration and wounding. It can be defined as a state where a previous equilibrium favoring life is irrevocably altered. If death does not occur, a compromised

equilibrium is established. It is like bone fracturing after being bent and stressed and then repaired, leaving a permanent vulnerability or a wound, which will leave a scar and sensitivity."

It has been disclosed that Abramović had been hiding her vulnerability for years, even attempting to numb it with her grievous artistic performances and giving her sense of disgrace the upper hand. Abramović believed that by doing this, she would be able to mend her broken pieces and regain her lost identity. Her soul grew weaker, and her heart became more bitter. Abramović could only truly heal what she had believed to be beyond healing when she decided to embrace her shame and vulnerability through *The Artist is Present*.

Examining the semiotics of theatre and performance in *The Artist is Present* reveals that tables have a particular significance. Only two people are seated at *The Artist is Present*'s little wooden table, placed in the middle of the room: Abramović, who is serving as the host on one side, and her guest on the other. From a semiotic perspective, this denotes a welcoming, friendly, private, and safe environment. Wooden kitchen tables are typically used for smaller, more private gatherings rather than round tables, which may accommodate more people. The presence of the table also alludes to the connection that Abramović hoped to establish with every member of the audience. She wanted to foster this understanding by keeping a fixed gaze on her visitors, who had traveled so far to reveal their wounds and begin to mend them. By encouraging them to sit across that table, Abramović nurtures her audience's soul. Such a symbolic setting signifies the solemnity of the incident shared by Abramović and her guests at that large table.

For Abramović's costumes in *The Artists is Present* and their significance, she wore a wide variety of basic garments in the hues red, dark blue, and white. Each color has a special meaning. Over the three months, Abramović shifts between the three colors based on the energy and mood that each dress brings at a certain point of the show. The dresses Abramović chose suggest a pressing desire to present a particular image at each moment of the performance. The inaugural brilliant red outfit denotes strength, vitality, and vivacity as a new beginning for the performance. Later, Abramović chooses the dark, contemplative blue outfit that gives the show a profound meaning because of its meditative quality. She ultimately chooses the white one on the finale night because it represents the final stage the performance has reached—illumination, freedom, and purity. It also evokes the feeling of reaping the harvest after many

months of labor. There is nothing accidental about Abramović's subdued decisions since she was well aware of the significance each dress held for the viewer and the crucial part it played in realizing the primary purpose of the performance.

When Ulay arrived at the inauguration night, Abramović extended her arms to hold his hands, and it was a moment that will always be remembered. By reaching out to hold Ulay's hands, Abramović signifies warmth, a release of strain, empathy, reconciliation, and ultimately healing. After a brief period of holding hands, Abramović lets go of Ulay's hand. This does not mean that she no longer loves him; instead, she chooses to love him while letting him go. Reaching the pinnacle of self-realization, self-love, and self-healing is symbolized by her letting go of Ulay's hands at that precise moment.

Only when she saw it all could Abramović finally fathom that her inner peace lingers in letting go of her childhood pains, adulthood lost dreams and failures. By the arrival of her ex-lover and partner Ulay that night, that moment she laid eyes on him after twenty-four years of separation, she could finally restore her inner peace. Whatever sense of guilt, fear, or regret she held towards Ulay deep down for the past years just healed itself the moment she shed tears in his presence, extended hands across the table to reach his in a moment of reconciliation, and finally left her in peace at his kind departure. Her reenacted trauma and lack of self-love healed themselves as well every single time she looked one of her visitors in the eye in an attempt to see through herself.

With respect to Freud's analysis of repression and how it acts as an effective defense mechanism in the presence of trauma, he underlines that the human mind is divided into main parts in perceiving the world: the conscious and unconscious. The unconscious mind is where all rejected, most feared, and painful emotions are kept locked away, and that is what we call repression (McLeod 2013). Repression acts as a defense mechanism among trauma patients, as they tend to keep in detention whatever is unacceptable to the conscious mind or would if recalled, arouse anxiety. This is reflected in the following statement made by Abramović "I had experienced absolute freedom—I had felt that my body was without boundaries, limitless; that pain didn't matter, that nothing mattered at all—and it intoxicated me" (2016).

Abramović believes in the power of fear, and it is instilled into our innocent souls by others. She commences her memoir, *Walk Through Walls: A Memoir,* with a story from her dull childhood:

> I was walking into the forest with my grandmother one morning. It was so beautiful and peaceful. I was only four years old, a tiny little one. And I saw something very strange, a straight line across the road. I was so curious that I went over it; I just wanted to touch it. Then my grandmother screamed so loud. I remember it so strongly. It was a huge snake. That was the first moment in my life that I felt fear- but I had no idea what I should be afraid of. It was my grandmother's voice that frightened me. And then the snake slithered away fast. It is incredible how fear is built into you by your parents and others surrounding you. You're so innocent in the beginning; you don't know (Abramović 2016).

Thus, fear has always been a close friend of Marina's since childhood and she learned how to tame it, even suppress it by repressing her worst fears whenever encountered by one. Marina never developed a healthy mechanism to deal with her persistent fears whenever they emerged and this explains her brutal physical performance which was her way of self-expression.

The work that Abramović is doing is creative insofar as anyone can sit in a chair; nearly anyone can decide to do what she has chosen to do, which is to reflect, impose boredom on oneself, and analyze the events of her life thus far. Her skill lies in seeing the holiness of everyday existence and doing what, to most of us, appears implausible to do. She does this by contextualizing the action and adding a touch of the grandiose to the ordinary (Kaganskiy 2022).

Adler believed that any inferiority complex that develops in a child over time always has a cause. According to the study's application of Adler's theory of compensation to Abramovic, a series of insights could be drawn. It is asserted that psychological compensation for a particular situation may happen when inferiority brought on by the absence of a necessary life component is present (Deutsch & Kadis 2005). Marina missed a necessary life component; emotional affection. Having compensated for the sense of inferiority that accompanied her entire life through her love for Ulay, Abramovic managed to fill in such a gap and make up for her childhood longing for affection. Eventually, the moment Abramović held hands with Ulay upon his arrival at the inauguration night was highly significant. The gesture of Abramović's extending hands to hold Ulay's signifies warmth, pain

release, empathy, reconciliation, and finally, healing. It signifies finding her other half after so many years of being stranded and scarred; see Figures 13 and 14. Upon holding hands for a while, Abramović lets go of Ulay; it is not like she holds no love for him anymore, but she instead chooses to love him, yet let him go. Thus, letting go of Ulay's hands signifies reaching the ultimate phase of self-realization, self-love, and self-healing, see Figure 15.

5.   CONCLUSION

When discussing the power of vulnerability and shame, it is essential to note that repressed emotions have a devastating effect on human nature, as unexpressed emotions never actually die. They are buried and will come forth later in uglier ways. Sigmund Freud could tell those unexpressed emotions of love, fear, loss, pain, agony, failure, or even need are all merely a set of repressed emotions that pile up in the human mind and never die by time as mistakenly perceived. They are utterly buried down in the darkest abyss of the human soul and, when not ventilated, grow more ferocious until they detonate when most unexpected.

Applying Freud's defense mechanisms and looking

deeper into Abramović's "unexpressed emotions," one can tell how far Abramović has long repressed her emotions of anger, pain, and loss since childhood. It must have been quite relieving to discharge those repressed emotions through *The Artist is Present* show after a long time suppressing them. On top of that, the research looks into the nature of vulnerability and how it can never be detached from trauma through Brené Brown's vulnerability theory.

In the end, the study fills the gap in analyzing *The Artist is Present* by using psychoanalytic and performance theories. Abramović was able to heal her fragmented soul and troubled psyche through her performance, which aroused a sense of reconciliation with her unresolved past traumas. Another gap this study fills is how female voices rise against oppressive societal conditions. Each female figure can liberate her voiceless identity, voice out her affliction, and break free from the shackles of norms imposed on her. As such, Abramović realized that her power lies in her muffled voice, and the only way to restore that voice is by fighting for her right to live, not just to exist. She fought her unthinkable battles bravely and never stepped down; she lost some rounds and won others, but eventually emerged victorious as she found her genuine voice.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1. Marina Abramović's The Artist is Present Inauguration, MOMA, 2010.

Figure 2. The Artist is Present Setup at MOMA, 2010.

Figure 3. MOMA audience's emotional reactions to Marina's presence in The Artist is Present.

Figure 4. Marina and Ulay as performance partners in the 1970s.

Figure 5. One of Marina and Ulay's bizarre performances was when they had their hair tangled together with slight chances of untying it as a representation of unity.

Figure 6. Marina and Ulay, in another performance, holding arrows against one another in an attempt not to get one another shot.

Figure 7. Marina and Ulay, walking in the Great Wall of China to bid each other farewell.

Figure 8. Marina and Ulay's farewell moments before a twenty-four-year separation.

Figure 9. Marina is sitting across the small wooden table, waiting for her next guest.

Figure 10. Marina is wearing a bright red dress to The Artist is Present.

Figure 11. Marina is wearing the dark, meditative blue dress to The Artist is Present.

Figure 12. A moment of standing ovation on the finale of The Artist is Present, to which Marina chose a plain white dress.

Figure 13. Ulay's arrival at *The Artist is Present* inauguration night in MOMA, 2010.

Figure 14. Marina and Ulay's reunion after a twenty-four separation in *The Artist are Present*, 2010.

Figure 15. Marina and Ulay in a moment of reconnection and reconciliation, *The Artist is Present*, MOMA, 2010.

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A Multimodal Approach to the Investigation of COVID-19 Related Memes on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Multimodality is the communication of verbal and visual elements in various discourse modes. Internet memes are forms of communication that enable internet users to communicate with one another on specific occasions, crises, pandemics, political concerns, and even wars by sharing funny images. This study aims to present how multimodality can be used in the visual and verbal analysis of COVID-19 memes in social media and how the visual and verbal elements serve to create a message or to make a comprehensible meaning that can be communicated to the viewer. Therefore, it examines a corpus of fifteen memes extracted from social media websites like Facebook, Instagram, and search websites like Google Images from 2019 to 2021. The study applies Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) theoretical framework of visual grammar. It aims at analyzing the narrative representations and interactive metafunction elements that exist in the selected memes and demonstrating how the elements combined together in COVID-19 memes in social media to deliver the intended meanings. In fact, the findings of the study have revealed that Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) emphasizes the importance of multimodal analysis in understanding memes. Moreover, multimodality can interpret, decipher, and evaluate the visual and verbal resources of COVID-19 memes, enabling integration across multiple modes in a single meme within the selected data. The researcher's analysis of memes in this study focuses on representational and interactive metafunctions, identifying actions and reactions through verbal text and visual elements. Hence, the collaboration between title, content, and visual representation gives memes deep significance. Moreover, memes function similarly as any other literary story that aims to be dynamic through the processes of narrative representation. To conclude, the creator's gazes and gestures, the memes' angles, and social distance all help to establish a connection with the viewer.

Keywords: Internet memes, Multimodality, Narrative representation, Visual grammar.

1.   INTRODUCTION

As a general rule, multimodality has affected the communication process between people. Man's life is full of several forms of non-signs that become crucial aspects of communication and meaning-making. Texts that have clarified visual representations with design elements tend to grab people's interest more (Kress 2003, p. 7). When interpreting a text with multiple modalities of expression, there is a number of non-linguistic factors that need to be considered. In these types of texts, meaning is created not only through language but also through the application of diverse semiotic tools. Therefore, the purpose of this study is

to analyze the verbal and visual elements of internet memes, which are thought to be one of the major ways that indicate how language has evolved into a communication tool to increase global engagement.

In fact, internet memes are widely available on many social media platforms and come in various types. Internet memes proliferate to convey a message, mock a situation, and ease the anxiety around unpleasant occurrences such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the Internet is a virtual environment where many activities occur, online comedy, particularly internet memes, is represented in literature, aesthetically, in writing, orally, and in other materials. Due to the greater flexibility offered by the Internet, users can express themselves in a variety of ways. This is because, in recent times, people have been using the internet as an extremely efficient language, resulting in various patterns of communication.

Evidently, during the COVID-19 outbreak, some people started making comics about the virus utilizing online social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, advertisements, and so on to reduce the amount of tension that broke out throughout society. Basically, humor is essential to mankind because it makes stressful events appear a bit funny and magnifies positive feelings while reducing negative ones.

This research contributes to shedding light on how visual and verbal elements collaborated together through COVID-19 memes in social media to deliver the meanings.

In light of this background, the main questions that the study addresses are:

1. What are the representational and interactive metafunctions that exist in COVID-19 memes?

2. What is the role of multimodality in analyzing verbal and visual elements in COVID-19 memes?

3. In what way does this interaction of visual and verbal elements contribute to the creation of the desired meaning?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Multimodality

The term "multimodality" describes the use of all communication modalities to convey meaning. In addition to the spoken language, multimodality may be applied to other non-verbal means of communication, such as gesture, color, audio, and visual (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, p.73). According to Jewitt (2014, p. 37), "one of the key ideas that makes communication and representation understandable greater than words is the focus on multimodality". Correspondingly, van Leeuwen (2005, p. 30) defines multimodality as the "combination of diverse semiotic moods in a communicative process or event".

In addition, Stöckl (2004, p. 9) describes multimodality as "Communicative items and procedures which include several systems of signs, and its production and reception demand upon the transmitters to conceptually and functionally connect all sign repertoires present". He mentions that language and image have different semiotic structures and features which make them support one another. Furthermore, multimodality refers to a range of tools for creating meaning that are readily adjusted to the current cultural environment, rather than being limited to a single text or entity, as noted by Baldry and Thibault (2006, p. 21). As a matter of fact, it is believed that a multimodal analysis is a social semiotic method of visual communication.

It is noteworthy to mention that the investigation of the tools employed by image developers reveals that the placement of the elements was deliberate. Viewers can gain knowledge of the potential meaning behind the setting, framing, prominence, color, size, gaze, and other aspects of various elements through this analysis. Accordingly, with the use of iconographic symbolism, people are capable of understanding what symbols represented by objects, gestures, or other components of visual composition may mean for particular individuals, concepts, or ideals (Machin 2007, p. 21).

Multimodality, multimodal analysis, social and semiotic analysis take many forms recently in examining political speeches, cartoons, brochures, memes, ads, portraits, and other online content. Correspondingly, the application of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) theoretical framework of visual grammar sheds light on how to analyze verbal and visual element.

2.2 Internet Memes

According to Díaz (2013), a meme can be any kind of content, such as a funny video file, caricature, or image. Dawkins initially used the word "meme" in his 1976 book as the selfish gene. He proposed the idea

of a meme as a potential cultural replacement for the gene and described memes as cultural components like music, slogans, or even religions that spread like DNA. In other words, Dawkins wanted to explain how information related to culture traveled by equating it to evolution and viral transmission. According to Dawkins, a meme needs three conditions in order to spread: 1) how long a meme lasts, 2) how far a meme spreads, and 3) how true a meme remains to its beginnings (Milner 2016, p. 64). Internet memes are distributed throughout online platforms through user-to-user(s) interaction (Yus 2016; Dancygier and Vandelanotte 2017). Another distinction is that the internet meme's unit is obvious and solid, like popular YouTube videos or picture macros.

Wiggins (2019) argues that memes are visual arguments that replicate specific ideological behaviors as well as content transmitters or culture replicators. A meme, according to Shifman (2013, p. 7-8), is a grouping of content components that incorporate the three elements of content, attitude, and form. In addition, Shifman highlights the importance of memes. She indicates that internet memes are, (a) a group of digital objects sharing similar features in content, form, or posture; (b) generated while being aware of one another; and (c) shared, copied, and/or enhanced by other people through the Internet.

Memes are categorized as virus-like classifications (Shifman 2013) made available online or via specialized carriers to draw attention to them and market their authors (Denisova 2019), and instill specific ideas in the receiver's mind. Kariko (2013) explains that internet memes allow people to infer or make claims about a picture's meaning and provide a linguistic equation. Likewise, Brown (2013) states that "Memes aren't just funny cat portraits; they're how people express themselves and think about their culture" (p. 190).

Memes come in a variety of forms. Some examples are image macro memes, which display a caption text overlaying the image; sarcastic comments made by prominent figures or celebrities; and exploitable memes, which use a single image manipulation to create humor. Other examples include character memes, which depict individuals who are unable to communicate personally; and social components, which are utilized to describe social behavior. However, the goal and content of these memes vary; they might be anything from cruel comments to funny character and object alterations (Habib and Wittek 2007).

In order to make a visual explicature easy to understand, dealing with a visual implicature requires internet users to simply recognize the visual information in the image and link it with the most appropriate mental reference right away. Conversely, visual implicatures are entirely inferential and need to be derived from context. Therefore, interpreting a meme requires a "division of tasks" between processing the image, processing the text, and figuring out possible connotative readings for the text, image, and text-picture pairings.

2.3   Previous Studies

Findeisen et al. (2020) examine the representations and interactive meanings in a Korean webtoon series named The Remarried Empress. The study analyzes characters, settings, and panel compositions to understand their contribution to the narrative. The study identifies themes like gender roles and power dynamics in the visual representations. The interactive elements, like dialogue bubbles and sound effects, enhance the immersive experience. The paper emphasizes the importance of visual analysis in understanding complex meanings and narratives in visual media, such as webtoon, and the role of interactive elements in creating immersive experiences.

Hussein and Aljamili (2020) explore COVID-19 humor on Jordanian social media using a socio-semiotic approach, identifies themes like self-mockery, societal critique, and political commentary. The authors argue that humor serves as a coping mechanism for stress and anxiety during the pandemic. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural context in which humor is produced and shared.

Ortiz et al. (2020) research paper where they investigate the use of memes as a collective coping mechanism during the Covid-19 pandemic in Puerto Rico. The study uses a qualitative content analysis approach to analyze the memes shared on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, between March and June 2020. The study identifies several themes in the Covid-19 memes, including humour, community building, and social commentary. The use of humour is particularly prevalent in the memes, with many memes using satire, irony, and parody to comment on the pandemic and associated lockdown measures. Therefore, it highlights how memes emphasize the importance of social solidarity and mutual support during the pandemic.

Literat) 2021) explores the role of internet memes during the COVID-19 pandemic, using an auto-ethnographic approach. The author discusses how memes provide emotional support, connection, and a way to process the rapidly changing situation. The paper highlights the resonant memes and their ability

to enhance community and shared experiences during isolation and uncertainty. Moreover, it explores the potential of memes as political commentary, with some criticizing government responses and supporting social justice causes.

Norstrom and Sarna) 2021) conducted a study that revealed four main themes: humor, coping mechanisms, information sharing, and social commentary. The memes reflected challenges faced by individuals, such as boredom, anxiety, and frustration, and the impact of COVID-19 on society. In addition, they served as a form of social commentary and political critique, with some memes targeting the government's handling of the pandemic.

Hassan's (2022) research paper examines internet memes created during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on virtual meetings and working from home. The study uses Cognitive Linguistics to analyze 40 memes collected through Google search, with 14 chosen for detailed analysis. The analysis uses Mental Model Theory (van Dijk 2014) and Discourse Viewpoint Space (Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2016) to examine how text and image in memes create humor and reflect societal ideologies. The study reveals that the combination of text and image in memes often conveys humor and serves as a platform for expressing satirical commentary on contemporary issues. Memes not only entertain but also reflect and critique societal experiences and ideologies, especially those shaped by the pandemic.

Since multimodal analysis has developed and has been widely used in several data, the adopted theoretical framework of visual grammar in addition to multimodality were used in several studies. Seddeek and Elyamany (2016) explore Cummings' visual poetry, focusing on foregrounding and the various semiotics in his texts, which aims to understand the poetic effects of these devices and explore the potential of Systemic-Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) in the love poem "all in green went my love riding." The researchers argue that both verbal and visual semiotics in Cummings' poems carry meaning potentials, despite their less deviant nature.

Hathout et al. (2023) analyze anti-harassment posters designed by women in two campaigns by using a multimodal approach to understand the verbal and visual manifestations of women's empowerment discourse. Sexual harassment is a significant obstacle to women's empowerment, as it restricts their freedom to move, study, and work. Using Visual Grammar tools, the study deconstructs the posters' empowering messages, revealing the representational identity of the female figure and her interaction with viewers and other visual elements. The study demonstrates that the multimodal construction of the posters effectively conveys the empowerment discourse through the representation of women as brave figures.

Taymour, Sarwat, and Seddeek) 2023) examine the eccentric mind style of Arthur Fleck, an anti-hero in an American feature film, using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2021) visual design grammar. The study uses camera techniques like oblique angle, demand and offer gaze, and framing elements to alienate Arthur from both the represented and interactive participants, heightening his odd behavior and alienating him from both the represented and interactive participants.

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper examines COVID-19 memes in social media using a qualitative approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), qualitative research has its own unique data collecting, analysis, and interpretation processes in applied linguistics because it takes many methodologies into consideration and takes a naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject. However, qualitative studies in applied linguistics have started to capture the attention of the applied linguists later than other social sciences (Benson 2013).

The data in this paper are image macro memes that include a verbal text that consists of words, phrases, and clauses, and a visual text consists of the images' components of memes. By applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) theoretical framework of visual grammar, the researcher investigates fifteen internet memes that spread during COVID-19 pandemic from 2019 to 2021 on social media such as Facebook pages, Instagram, and Google images in order to analyze the objectives targeted.

The selected memes were examined using the two dimensions of the visual grammar framework developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). In order to determine whether the selected data are dynamic and imply actions or reactions, the first dimension would emphasize the representational meanings of the represented participants with a focus on the narrative representation. The interactive dimension would then be used to determine the relationships that the author or creator implies between the represented participants and their viewers through various gazes, framing with varying sizes, angles, and points of view (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

3.1 Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) theoretical framework of visual grammar

Social Semiotics was first found in Functional Linguistics, precisely in the work of Halliday (1978), and has been later developed as a theory of multimodal sign-making in the works of Robert Hodge, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (Hodge and Kress 1988; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; van Leeuwen 2005). The framework of visual grammar developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) aids in the comprehension of visual pictures; i.e. this model was a development of Fernand de Saussure's earlier work. De Saussure (1985, p.10), in describing semiotics, said that semiotics is a science that studies the life of signs inside a society. Semiotics is "the study of signs". It is the field that investigates indicators and their social importance in this field. Several things can be indicated by a sign and this implies that a sign represents anything that conveys meaning, including words, pictures, symbols, etc. (Chandler 2002, p.1).

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotics approach is a multimodal approach that highlights the belief that meaning is produced by integrating all of the semiotic elements provided in a text because they have the potential to have meaning in certain social contexts (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001). Furthermore, the method employs the two semiotic codes (written and visual) for defining meaning as well as the representational and interactive metafunctions for Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006), which concentrate on the visual social semiotic resources that are realized in semiotic signs or multimodal texts.

Additionally, two categories of participants are mentioned in Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework. The first category includes the identified subjects, actors, places, and topics that are depicted in written or visual media. The second group, known as "interactive participants," consists of those who create the words and pictures (such as illustrators, photographers, or painters) as well as those who read and watch them. The rationale behind choosing this approach for this paper is that, as Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework points out, the representational analysis of images involves identifying the denoted participants, the action shown, the characteristics of the participants, and the settings in which the action was produced (Kress 2003) and this fits the goal of the study.

3.1.1 The Representational metafunction

This dimension depends on the ideational metafunction of language, which is concerned with the representation of things and their relationships with one another in one's environment (Halliday 1978). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) present what is referred to as visual "grammar" in accordance with multimodal text analysis strategies particularly those that combine verbal and visual elements, considering Halliday's (1994; 2004) viewpoint, who did not view grammar as a standard but as a means of conveying messages. They developed the "representation" analysis, which is based on Halliday's ideational function.

Participants are things or components in visual pictures. Participants in these processes can be objects, places, people, or even circumstances. In the sense of the realization of the process that identifies participants' doings and happenings, the representation analysis is divided into two categories; namely, narrative and conceptual. Kress and van Leeuwen stated that the difference between the narrative and conceptual representation is the presence or absence of vectors. In contrast to the conceptual thought, which lacks a vector but includes structures, a narrative employs vectors to link participants and actions. The Representational meaning can also be achieved through the visual construction of the nature of events, objects, and participants involved as well as the circumstances in which they occur (Seddeek and Elyamany 2016).

The Narrative Representation "portrays actors in terms of their unchanging or timeless essence, displays unfolding acts and occurrences, impermanent particular configurations, and processes of change" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, p. 46). Participants are shown in the narrative representations as being connected to one another by vectors. According to Kress and Leeuwen, "when individuals are connected by a vector, they are portrayed as doing something to or for each other" (p. 59). Narrative representation has four processes which are: Actional, Reactional, Verbal and Mental, and conversion processes. They need a marked agent (such as actor, sayer, etc.) and are considered agentive processes. Actor and Goal are the only two participants in this analysis. Actor refers to the component of the image that is interpreted as the active participant. An item must interact or produce with a vector to transmit activity in order to qualify as an actor. The passive action-playing objects are the intended target. The actor's vector is tied to the objective. Multiple types of the narrative representation can be distinguished based on the forms of participants and vectors found in the visual imagery.

3.1.1.1   Actional process

The actor is the represented participant from which the vector is produced. The most prominent participants in the visual portrayal are typically actors. They are grouped according to their dimensions, location, background contrast, colour saturation, emphasis, etc. As there is only one participant, some visual representations lack a purpose; i.e. this kind of structure is known as a non-transactional action because there is no objective. No one is the target of the activity. The audience is left to use his or her own imagination to speculate as to who or what the represented participant may be conversing with in non-transactional behavior (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, p. 63).

3.1.1.2   Reactional process.

In contrast to action processes, a vector that passes through an eye line initiates a response process. It is "the direction of the glance of one or more represented individuals," says Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 67). Actors are referred to as reactors in this process, and objectives are referred to as phenomena. A reactor is the represented participant who, by viewing, generates the vector. It must be a human or human-like animal with eyes that show "distinct pupils and capable of facial expression" according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 70). The reactor's view of the phenomenon in this procedure or a comprehensive visual proposal might be the phenomenon. Reaction processes, like action processes, can be either transactional or non-transactional. If the phenomenon is present, it is viewed as a transactional reaction. Yet, the reaction process is non-transactional when there is no phenomenon.

3.1.1.3   Verbal and Mental process

"Balloons and thinking bubbles" are used to form the verbal and mental processes. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 68), "These processes link a person (or an animate being) to content". Although it is the content of a perception in transactional reactions, it is the content of an inner mental process (thinking, fear, etc.) in the case of thought bubbles and similar devices, and in the case of speech vectors it is the content of the speech. A mental process focuses on the speakers' ideas about the phenomenon which are being highlighted as vectors. A verbal process focuses on the vector which is formed to connect the sayer with the utterance.

3.1.1.4   Conversion Process

A participant is a target of one participant and the Actor with respect to another, (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). It also includes a change to the status of the participant who is being represented in the image's title.

3.1.2 The Interactive metafunction

The dimension of interaction is introduced by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), who concentrate on the relationships between the viewer, the creator of the visual domain, the interactive participants, and the participants represented in the visual designs. As a result, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), this dimension examines three different kinds of relationships among the participants; namely, relationships between represented participants, relationships between interactive and represented participants, and relationships between interactive participants. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework serves as an illustration of these relations, which are subsumed into the following four categories; i.e. gaze, social distance, angles, and modality.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) recognize that the act of gazing establishes a hypothetical bond between the interactive entity, the viewer and the represented participant, and the gazer. This interactive relationship between the two participants becomes the vector, which could also be supported by another vector in the same manner. There are two categories of gazes; i.e. offer and demand. Demand images show how participants interact through their body language and facial expressions with the people portrayed in the picture. Offer images, on the other hand, depict participants who are not making any eye contact or engaging with the recipient. Moreover, social distance is linked to the frame size. This category shows how the viewer and the represented participants relate to each other in terms of the viewer's ability to interact socially with the participants or not. Moreover, Angle is the point of view or perspective that establishes relationships between the viewers and the represented participants. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), two types of angles are used to achieve these interactive relationships between participants. This means that the vertical angle indicates power relations between the represented participants and the viewer, while the horizontal angle relates to relations of involvement or disengagement.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Actional process

Example 1

https://scontent.fcai19-5.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t1.6435 9/131669038_10221472404633775_225667598 3942888628_n.jpg?_nc_cat=100&ccb=15&_nc_ sid=825194&_nc_ohc=TAOSRR7LalYAX-XkgJ2&_ nc_ht=scontent.fcai19_5.fna&oh=fc286221ff434c-5cda94eec08cdfc880&oe=61987C56

This meme shows a boy who is making bubbles and spreading them into the air. The caption reads "When you test positive for Covid and hate your neighbors".

- **Representational metafunction**

As seen in this meme, there is a boy representing an actor doing an action which is making bubbles. According to the caption, the boy is already tested positive for COVID-19 and he also hates his neighbors, so he is making bubbles full of his breath and directing them towards his neighbor's house in order to make them catch the virus. It reveals the sad reality of the neighbors' hatred moving ahead throughout the pandemic and this informs viewers that the goal is his neighbors as if he intends to infect them.

This example has an Actional process due to the existence of both an actor and a goal. Moreover, it is considered to be a transactional process.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: This is an offer image because the participants do not form any type of communication with the viewer. So the viewer is not a part of their world.

b) Distance: The social distance to the represented participant is a close shot as only the head and shoulders are visible which indicates close personal distance.

c) Angle: This meme includes an oblique angle. The viewer is not a participant in the same reality as the represented participant.

Example 2

https://perfectdaytoplay.com/wp-content/up-loads/2020/05/Travel-funny-meme-covid19-pan-demic-joke-humor-30.jpg

This meme shows the actors Chris Pine (Kirk) and Zachary Quinto (Spock) from the famous movie series Star Trek, the meme represents the two actors' time traveling to 2020 but after that, they discovered that it is a bad idea. In addition, there is a caption "We are time traveling to the year 2020 – 5 minutes later – Nope, Nope, Nope. Bad idea".

- **Representational metafunction**

In this meme, Chris Pine and Zachary Quinto are representing the actors, doing the action of time traveling to 2020 which represents the goal as one understands from the caption. Likewise, the meme mocks the idea that people are in desperate need to get rid of the virus so they tend to time travelling but, in the end, they discovered that 2020 is full of Covid-19 as well; therefore, they changed their minds because it is a bad idea.

This example has an Actional process due to the existence of both the actor and the goal, and it is also considered to be a transactional process.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: The viewer and the subject inside the meme do not share an eye line, so the viewer is not a part of the same world as the subject, so this is an offer image.

b) Distance: It is a medium-long shot where the full subject is shown to show close social distance to the viewer.

c) Angle: This meme has a horizontal frontal angle because the viewer sees the subject directly.

Example 3

2020 showing 2021 around the workplace

https://scontent.fcai19-5.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t1.6435-9/135484575_10221600198388539_4925423577033212243_n.jpg?_nc_cat=104&ccb=1-5&_nc_sid=825194&_nc_ohc=haBSgvdOlQQAX8VVAfb&_nc_ht=scontent.fcai19-5.fna&oh=26ca61e05d-bee0f00724be5719b6c4b3&oe=619653009/135484575_10221600198388539_4925423577033212243_n.jpg?_nc_cat=104&ccb=1-5&_nc_sid=825194&_nc_ohc=haBSgvdOlQQAX8VVAfb&_nc_ht=scontent.fcai19-5.fna&oh=26ca61e05d-bee0f00724be5719b6c4b3&oe=61965300

The meme features two well-known movie characters standing on stairs: The Joker, who is widely recognized in the film industry as a psychopath, is the one wearing the red suit, and The Creature IT, who is portrayed as a clown, is from the film IT. These two characters are well-known for their hatred, aggression, criminal mindset, and destructive attitude toward people. The caption depicted on the meme says "2020 showing 2021 around the workplace".

- **Representational metafunction**

As seen in example 4, there are two represented participants, one of which is The Joker who is pointing to something to attract Creature IT's attention, and on the other hand, there is Creature IT who is attracted and completely focused on what The Joker is pointing to.

According to the caption, the 2020 coronavirus is portrayed as The Joker, a notoriously violent and psychopathic figure, signifying that the year was filled with unfortunate events and numerous individuals suffered, got infected, and lost their lives due to the coronavirus. The Joker also suggests that 2021 will be worse than 2020 or the worst year ever by showing Creature IT, a more dangerous person than himself, the workplace, which is the world of human beings.

Example 3 shows an Actional process with the joker as a represented participant doing an action which is pointing to something to get the other person's attention; additionally, the goal is represented by Creature IT, another represented participant. Because there is an actor and a goal, the meme is regarded as a transactional process.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: The participants do not look at the viewer or engage in any kind of conversation. This is an offer image because it appears like they are having a conversation.

b) Distance: It is a long shot because the two subjects are fully depicted with space around them to indicate a far social distance to the viewer as if they are trying to conquer the world.

c) Angle: The subject in this meme is directly visible to the viewer, or they can see what the subject sees, due to its horizontal frontal angle.

Example 4

Doctor: Protect the ones you love most from Coronavirus
Me:

The meme depicts a human hand assisting a cat in wearing a face mask, with the cat itself appearing in the other image after the mask has been put on. The caption reads: "Doctor: Protect the ones you love the most. – Me: ......"

• **Representational metafunction**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant fear among people, who were terrified of losing their own lives as well as those of their friends, family, and pets. A significant number of people also died from the virus. In order to avoid the virus and protect the people they care about, they began to wear face masks, stay home, and use a lot of hand sanitizers.

The meme mocks the idea of protecting one's loved ones either animal or human from COVID-19. The human hands are the represented participant who is the actor and forcing the cat to wear a face mask in order to protect it. As one understands from the caption, there is the cat which is the goal of protection.

Example 4 includes a narrative representation which is an Actional process. Moreover, it is regarded to be a transactional process because of the existence of both the actor and goal.

• **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: The subject and viewer are not sharing eye contact, which isolates the viewer from the subject's reality. This makes the image an offer image.

b) Distance: This meme has a close shot because only the head and the shoulders are visible to reveal a close personal distance to the subject. It can also show his deep love for the cat.

c) Angle: This meme's horizontal frontal angle allows the viewer to either see the subject directly or what the subject sees.

4.2 Reactional process

Example 5

When you work at a bank and 2 guys with mask come in but they're just robbing the place

This meme shows the actor Robert Downey Jr putting his hand on his chest as if he is thanking God for a bad thing which was about to happen and it did not. This meme has a caption which is (when you work at a bank and two guys with masks come in but they are just robbing the place).

• **Representational metafunctions**

This image has one represented figure Robert Downey Jr (the reactor). The phenomenon is represented through the caption of the image.

As mentioned before in Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the reaction process occurs when a vector is formed through an eye line. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) add that it is "the direction of the glance of one or more represented participants" (p. 67). In this process, actors are referred to as reactors, and goals are called phenomena. A reactor is the represented participant who creates the vector through his looking. So, Robert Downey Jr represents the reactor who puts his hand on his chest as if he is thanking God as a reaction towards the phenomenon which is represented that he was terrified of the masked men who entered

the bank because he thought that they were carrying the virus but thanks God they were robbing the bank.

The message received from combining the elements in this figure is that people are afraid of catching the virus so they prefer to be robbed than to catch COVID-19.

Example 5 contains a narrative representation which is the Reaction process due to the existence of both the reactor and the phenomena. In addition, it is considered to be a transactional process.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: This is a demand image because the viewer and the subject in the picture share an eye line, which places the viewer in the same reality as the subject. In addition, there are facial expressions on the represented participant's face and the viewer which indicate thanking.

b) Distance: This meme has a close-shot to indicate close social distance because only shows the head and shoulder are visible.

c) Angle: this meme has a horizontal frontal angle as the viewer sees the subject directly or is able to see what the subject sees.

Example 6

https://propertyonion.com/education/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/coronavirus-memes-42.jpg
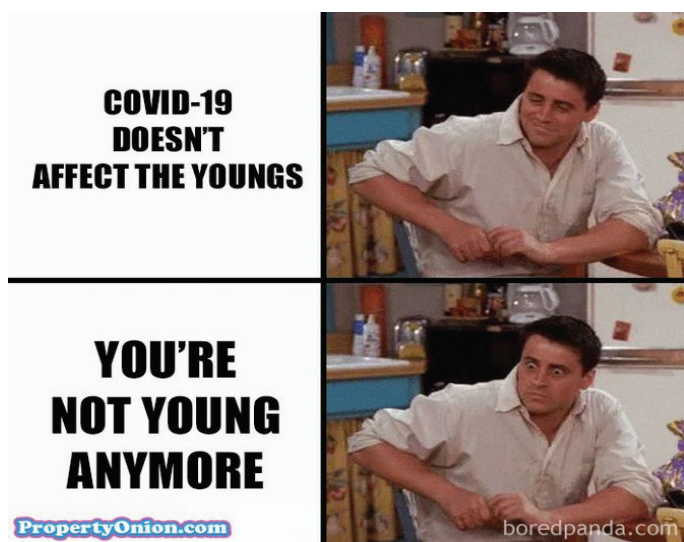
This meme shows the actor Matthew Steven looking with surprise as if he realized something that made him look surprised. There is another caption that states (covid19 does not affect the Youngs) and (you're not young anymore).

- **Representational metafunction**

This meme shows the actor Matthew Steven (the reactor), the reactor here does the act of looking with surprise as a reaction and the phenomenon here is the deep meaning realized from the caption which made him look with surprise, which made him realize that he is no longer young and this will not save him from getting infected with the virus.

This meme mocks the idea of when you are considering yourself a young person feeling happy that COVID-19 will not affect the young and then realized that you are not young anymore. Moreover, it shows how people are afraid of getting infected.

Example 6 contains a narrative representation which is the Reactional process due to the existence of both the reactor and the phenomena. It is also considered to be a transactional process.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: The viewer and the subject in the image share an eye line, placing the viewer in the same reality as the subject, making this a demand image. Moreover, there are facial expressions between the represented participant and the viewer that are made by the represented participant to indicate surprise.

b) Distance: It is a medium close shot because the subject is cut off at the waist to indicate a far personal distance as they are thinking of an important issue.

c) Angle: This meme includes a horizontal frontal angle to indicate the involvement of the viewer in the represented participant's world.

Example 7

Hand sanitiser company CEO's right now

https://www.northshoremums.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Hand-sanitiser.jpg

In this meme, a man can be seen hiding behind a tree and smiling with pride as if he had won the lottery, with the caption "Hand Sanitiser Company CEO´s right now".

- **Representational metafunction**

People frequently use a lot of hand sanitizers, alcohol, and spend a lot of money on safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. This meme makes fun of the idea that consumers overpaid for hand sanitizers, making the CEOs of the Hand Sanitizer Company wealthy. This meme depicts a man as the reactor and reacting by looking with pride. The deep meaning of the caption, which makes fun of the idea of making a lot of money by purchasing hand sanitizers, is what represents the phenomenon.

Because the reactor and the phenomenon are present in Example 7, the narrative representation represents a Reactional process. It is regarded as a transactional process as well.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: Due to the subject's and the viewer's shared reality and eye line, this is a demand picture. Additionally, the represented participant is looking straight at the viewer with triumph facial expressions that indicate how happy he is.

b) Distance: this is a close shot; the head and shoulder are visible to demonstrate the close

social distance.

c) Angle: The subject of this meme is directly visible to the viewer, or the viewer can see what the subject sees. The meme has a horizontal frontal angle.

Example 8

Everyone: How things are going to be okay in 2021

Meanwhile corona's new strain:

https://memezila.com/wp-content/Everyone-How-things-are-going-to-be-okay-in-2021-Meanwhile-coronas-new-strain-meme-8849.png

The meme features a doll's face staring with a sneaky smile. In addition, the caption reads: "Everyone: How things are going to be okay in 2021"- Meanwhile Corona's new strain".

- **Representational metafunction**

People believed that Covid-19 had been defeated by the end of 2021 due to the discovery of a cure. Sadly, Covid has been evaluated to new strains, which worsen the situation. The meme makes fun of the idea that the new strains of the virus will react negatively towards humans.

A new strain of COVID-19 is represented by the doll, which represents the reactor. The doll reacts to people by staring at them and smiling slyly. The phenomenon is revealed by the deep meaning of the caption, which represents people in general.

Example 8 highlights a Reactional narrative representation process. Since the phenomenon and reactor exist, it is also regarded as a transactional process.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a)   Gaze: The shared eye line between the viewer and the subject in the image places them in the same reality, so this is a demand image and the viewer is part of the same world as the subject who is slyly smiling.

b)   Distance: This is an extremely close shot, where anything less than the head or face only appears to indicate a very close social distance.

c)   Angle: This meme has a horizontal frontal angle; the viewer sees the subject directly or is able to see what the subject sees.

4.3   Verbal and Mental process

Example 9

Teacher: what are you laughing at
Me: nothing
My brain: Corolla virus

https://scontent.fcai19-5.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t1.6435-9/241568680_2653128434989542_1038094513277401296_n.jpg?_nc_cat=109&ccb=1-5&_nc_sid=825194&_nc_ohc=4RhnDHSs4mUAX975M-y&_nc_ht=scontent.fcai19-5.fna&oh=196ac1e08a-85b42ae196f1b7bdc17f85&oe=619497188

This meme shows a group of Toyota Corolla cars surrounded by red cells as if they are floating through something carried by the red cells. The caption reads:

Teacher: what are you laughing at

Me: nothing

My brain: Corolla virus

Likewise, this meme represents a human brain and indicates that someone is thinking or remembering something made him laugh.

- **Representational metafunction**

As one understands from the caption depicted on the meme, there are three represented participants, which are the red cells, the cars, and the person who is thinking.   All of them are connected with a vector indicating a process of thinking that shows the red cells are carrying cars through blood, and this is happening inside someone's mind. In addition, it mocks the idea that the person who is thinking connected the spelling of Coronavirus with Corolla virus in his mind to make a funny image.

Example 9 contains a narrative representation which is a mental process it is considered to be a transactional process because the speakers' ideas about the phenomenon are being highlighted as vectors.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a)   Gaze: This is an offer image because there is no eye contact between the viewer and the subject, separating the viewer from the subject's reality.

b)   Distance: This is a medium long shot because the full subject is shown to indicate far social distance.

c)   Angle: This meme has a horizontal frontal angle; the viewer may directly see the subject.

Example 10

Sir, they have all retreated to their homes. What now?

We wait a few hours for them to get bored

https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTwFXb-6lOiOgan--yZd1moj_dO7sWbE24cTQ&usqp=CAU
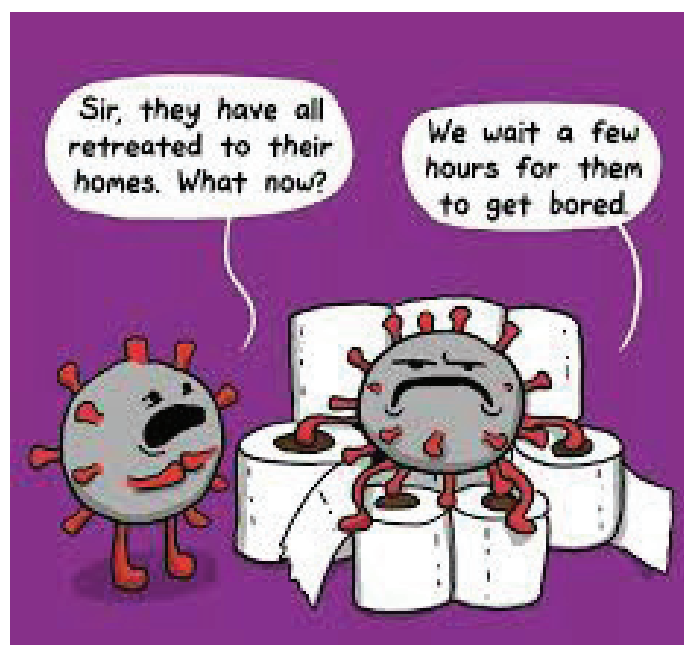
This meme shows two Coronavirus cells, one of which is sitting on hand tissues with two captions "Sir, they have all retreated to their homes. What now?" and "We wait a few hours for them to get bored".

- **Representational metafunctions**

There are two represented figures which are the Coronavirus cells discussing and trying to find a solution to infect people. After the spread of Coronavirus, people tend to stay at their homes for more protection. The outcome of reading all the elements in this figure reflects mocking the fact that the Coronavirus cells have nothing to do to make people go out, so they decided to wait until people got bored.

Example 10 contains a narrative representation which is a verbal process. Likewise, it is considered to be a transactional process because the vector links the sayer and the utterance together.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: This is a demand image because the viewer and the object in the picture have the same eye line, which separates them from the same reality as the subject. The participant portrayed shares a grim face.

b) Distance: This is a medium long shot because the full subject is shown to indicate far social distance.

c) Angle: This meme has a horizontal frontal angle and the viewer may directly see the subject.

Example 11

https://www.northshoremums.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/d5wrxx9avir41.jpg

This meme shows two men sitting in an office, in which the young man is having a job interview and the old man is testing him. Moreover, the meme has two captions one of them is (There is a gap in your resume. What were you doing in 2020?) and (I was washing

my hands...).

- **Representational metafunctions**

Two represented participants are depicted as the two men. During the quarantine, people tend to stay at home and do nothing except eat, sleep, watch TV, and wash their hands all the time for more safety. The outcome of reading all the elements in this figure and relating the captions to the represented participants reflects mocking the idea that Coronavirus has a very bad impact on one's life and destroys all their plans as if the young man spent all the quarantine washing his hands and did not prepare himself for the interview.

Example 11 contains a narrative representation which is a Verbal process. Similarly, it is considered to be a transactional process because the vector links the sayer and the utterance together.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: This is an offer image because the viewer and the objects in the picture do not have the same eye line, which makes them in the same reality as the subject.

b) Distance: This is a medium long shot because the full subject is shown to indicate far social distance.

c) Angle: This meme has a horizontal frontal angle and the viewer may directly see the subject or part of the participant's reality.

Example 12

https://static.thehoneycombers.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/03/Best-funny-Coronavirus-memes-2020-Honeycombers-Bali-1.jpg
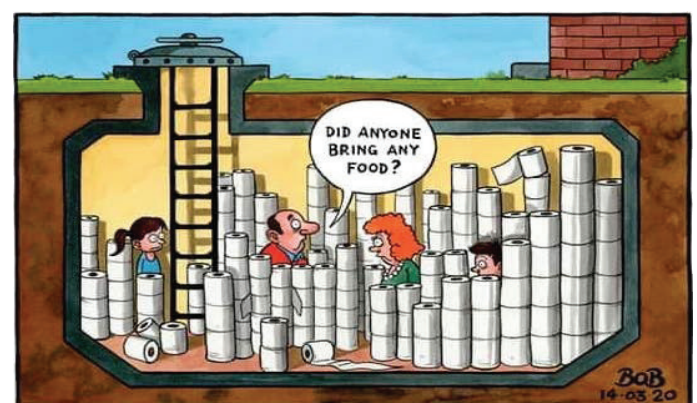
This meme depicts a family hiding underground and with them a huge quantity of toilet paper rolls. Moreover, there is a caption said by their father (DID ANYONE BRING ANY FOOD?).

- **Representational metafunction**

COVID-19 was a terrible time for the world. It forced people to do things they had never done before to avoid infection. People used to lock themselves in their homes and collect huge quantities of hand sanitizers, toilet paper rolls, face masks, and tissues to be prepared for anything that could happen to them. This meme has four represented participants who are family members. The outcome of relating the captions to the represented participants indicates that people were rushing to gather and have all the protective tools against COVID-19 to prevent infection.

Example 12 contains a narrative representation which is a Verbal process. In addition, it is considered to be a transactional process because the vector links the sayer and the utterance together.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: This is an offer image because the viewer and the objects in the picture do not have the same eye line, which makes them in the same reality as the subject.

b) Distance: This is a medium long shot because the full subject is shown to indicate far social distance.

c) Angle: This meme has a horizontal frontal angle and the viewer may directly see the subject or part of the participant's reality.

4.4 Conversion Process

Example 13

https://i.pinimg.com/originals/1b/27/92/1b27925f-c22b8ab4abb951cd2abd8c7f.jpg

This meme shows a man driving in three different months with three different appearances and there is a caption "Driving in 2020 be like: February – March – April".

- **Representational metafunction**

This meme is mocking the severity stages of Covid and its effect on people. As one knows Covid spread at the end of February and its peak was in April. The meme shows a man driving in February in a normal way, the same man driving in March wearing a face mask, and again the same man driving with protective clothes in order to protect himself from the virus, and also there is a change of state.

There is one represented participant in the meme who is the man as the actor doing the action of driving. Therefore, the goal is the same man but there is a change in his state.

Figure 13 includes a narrative representation process which is a Conversion process because it represents a change of state. Moreover, the actor and the goal are the same represented participant. Due to the existence of both the actor and the goal; hence, it is considered to be a transactional process.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: This is an offer image because the viewer and the subject do not share eye contact, separating the viewer from the reality of the subject.

b) Distance: This meme is a close shot because only the head and shoulder are visible to show a close social relation.

c) Angle: This meme has a horizontal frontal angle as the viewer sees the subject directly or can see what the subject sees.

Example 14

https://i.imgflip.com/4kbgii.jpg
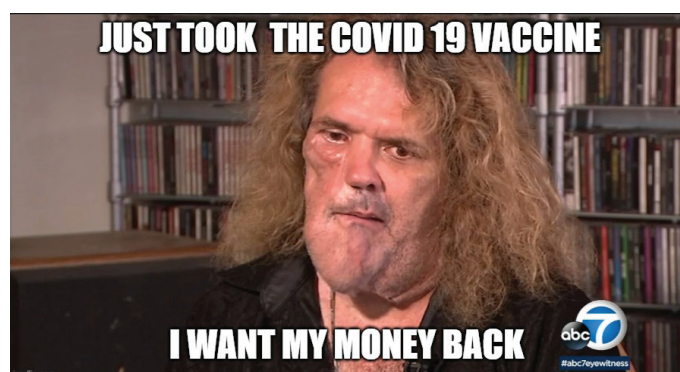
This meme depicts a man with a deformed face, as though something terrible had happened to him. There is a caption "Just took the Covid 19 vaccine – I want my money back".

- **Representational metafunction**

Several countries announced during the Pandemic that they had discovered a vaccine or a treatment for COVID-19 to save their lives; however, they clarified that this would only reduce the severity of symptoms and not stop people from getting the virus. People began to lose faith in the vaccine at this point because they were afraid it would harm them, change their genes, make changes in their bodies, cause them to die, and most of them believed it would turn their genes into zombies. Thus, the meme makes fun of the idea that the vaccination will cause them to get sicker or possibly die.
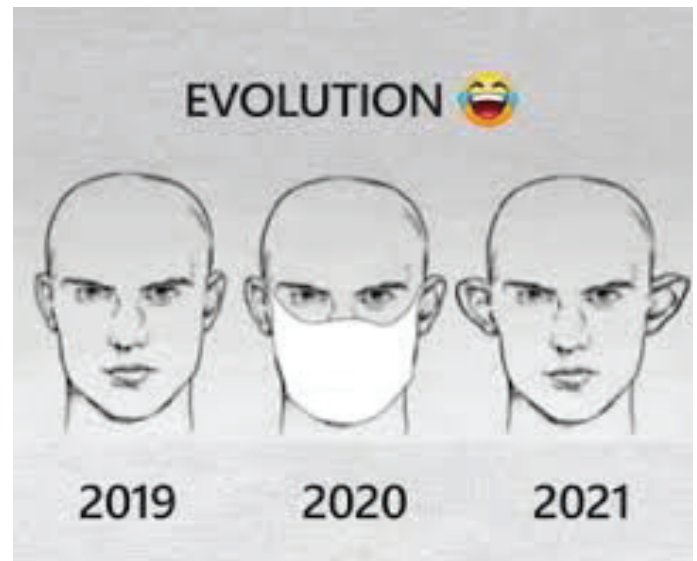
The man who is the represented participant in the meme is also the actor who actually has taken the Covid vaccine. The man, who wants his money back because the Covid vaccine has damaged and distorted his face, also represents the goal here.

Example 14 shows a narrative representation process which is a conversion process as it shows a change of state and both the actor and the goal are the same represented participant. Due to the existence of both the actor and the goal, it is also considered to be a transactional process.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: The image is a demand image because it places the viewer in the same reality as the subject by sharing an eye line. Additionally, the represented participant is staring directly at the viewer with regret.

a) Distance: This meme includes a very close shot, where the head or face only appears indicating a close social distance.

a) Angle: The subject in this meme is directly visible to the viewer or is visible to them through a horizontal frontal angle, and they are a part of his world.

Example 15

https://encryptedtbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tb-n:ANd9GcTPQGdkYdRxHhbRRPu6tAKFW7585I-vOiF3swQ&usqp=CAU

In this meme, a bald man is shown staring straight at the viewer in three different poses; i.e. the first is normal, the second displays the man wearing a face mask with slightly different ear shape, and the third shows the man without a face mask but with a significantly different ear shape. Furthermore, there is a caption "Evolution 2019 – 2020 – 2022".

- **Representational metafunction**

This meme mocks the idea of the changing in the ear shape from 2019 to 2021. In order to protect themselves, people were required to wear facemasks at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. The majority of people assert that the longer one wears facemasks, the worse their ears are affected with their shape changing in the long term, which is also a change of state that happened to the same person.

This meme has one represented participant who is the man; the man represents both the actor and the goal because the action affects the man itself.

Example 15 has a narrative representation process which is a conversion process because it depicts a change in state and the actor and the goal are the same represented participant. Moreover, it is considered to be a transactional process as both the actor and goal exist.

- **Interactive metafunction**

a) Gaze: This is a demand image because the subject and the observer share the same eye line and also share the same world.

a) Distance: This meme includes a very close shot, where the head or face only appears to indicate a close social distance.

a) Angle: The subject in this meme is directly visible to the viewer, or they can see what the subject is seeing, due to its horizontal frontal angle.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Studying language has evolved from focusing only on spoken and written words to including other modes like gestures, pictures, sounds, etc. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) state that visual and verbal communication processes have rules in order to be understood. Visual images have ideas and symbols that represent various forms of social interaction, and these ideas and social interactions combine to achieve the process of meaning-making (Halliday 1978, p.112).

As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) highlight that "no sign is innocent" (p. 5), the sign can shape the comprehension of visual signs. The analyses of memes focus on representational and interactive metafunctions. In the representational metafunction, the actions and reactions of the narrative patterns are identified through the selected memes as the memes have harmony between verbal text and visual elements as they work together and complete each other.

According to the investigation and research questions of the study, the findings are discussed as follows:

First, regarding the representational metafunction, a goal or purpose for representing an action is indicated by positioning the represented participants on the right side or the left, as in examples 1, 2, 3, 13 and 14. As seen in examples 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 15, the viewer is drawn to the center of the visual representation and may respond or react to specific actions and attract the viewer's attention when the represented participants are positioned there. Likewise, relating the represented participants to the captions depicted on each meme through vectors helps in conveying the meaning.

Regarding the interactive metafunction, using gazes such as demand images, the memes show the interaction between the viewer and the depicted participants as in examples 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, and 15. Apparently, the images show the viewer and the represented participant share no eye line and do not interact with each other as in examples 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, and 13. Moreover, using social distance shows how the viewer and the represented participants relate to each other in terms of the viewer's ability to interact socially with the participants or not. The angle is also used to show involvement or disengagement. Correspondingly, the collaboration between the title, which identifies the thesis topic, the content included in each meme, and the visual representation gives the memes their deep significance.

Second, multimodality can interpret, decipher, and evaluate COVID-19 memes' visual and verbal resources. Additionally, it enables integration across the many modes in a single meme. Moreover, multimodality has the capacity to decipher meme symbols using text, images, individuals who are represented, phenomena like the COVID-19 epidemic.

The analyses support the presence of the visual grammatical structure that can be analyzed to obtain the meaning. However, external sources emerge such as COVID-19 pandemic, the state of anxiety, and stress that spread around the world, fear, and even the sense of humor that affected people during this pandemic and then reflected on the memes that people share and spread on social media platforms. All of these circumstances are essential to be known. Without them, one cannot understand the meaning or convey the desired message. Moreover, images alone cannot convey the required meaning; rather, images need to rely on some external source, such as a phenomenon or textual information, in order to give them the appropriate meaning (Barthes 1977, p. 53). So, the process of creating meaning would be simpler and clearer if verbal resources were combined with non-verbal symbols that were used in the visual representation in memes.

6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the verbal and visual content play a crucial role in enriching memes and making them more effective in conveying messages. The verbal content, such as captions or text which exist in images, can help to explain the intended meaning of the meme and make it more accessible to the audience who may not be familiar with the context or cultural references. The Verbal content can also be used to add layers of meaning to memes; i.e. this can make memes more engaging and thought-provoking for the audience.

Furthermore, using memes with well-known characters or celebrities can be very effective in getting the audience to laugh and participate and that is why the humor inside memes can be improved by adding a visual content such as pictures or movies. Additionally, the use of images of animals or objects can be used to convey complex ideas or emotions in a visually engaging way and that is why a visual content may be applied to offer visual metaphors that strengthen the meme's meaning. Overall, the combination of verbal and visual content can make memes strong and improve their capability to share ideas and provoke responses from viewers.

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Investigating Online Gender Empowerment Campaigns: A Multimodal Feminist Discourse Analysis Approach

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ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment and the promotion of women's rights have emerged as significant global movements, continually breaking new ground. This study aims at investigating how women empowerment is visually and verbally codified in advertisements. This study examines two beauty advertisement campaigns launched by Olay and Reebok in 2018: Olay's "#FaceAnything" campaign and Reebok's "#BeMoreHuman" campaign. Both campaigns aim to empower women to believe in themselves. These campaigns focus on promoting awareness of women's individuality rather than asserting women's superiority over men. Presented in the form of advertisements, these campaigns use discourse crafted by producers to convey persuasive messages. To unveil the empowering messages in these advertisement campaigns, this study employs Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of Visual Grammar and Michelle M. Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (2005, 2007) framework. The findings reveal that both campaigns utilize a variety of linguistic and visual techniques to empower women, challenge traditional gender roles, and promote feminist values. Furthermore, this study explores the inversion of patriarchal discourse within these campaigns as a strategy to empower women. By subverting traditional gender roles and expectations, both Olay and Reebok campaigns challenge patriarchal norms and assert feminist identity and positionality. This analysis sheds light on how advertising language is utilized as a powerful tool to empower women, promote gender equality, and contribute to the ongoing conversation about gender representation in advertising.

Keywords: women empowerment, advertisements, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, Visual Grammar.

1.   INTRODUCTION

In today's world, women are gaining more support in many areas of life, advocating for their right to be treated and seen as equal to men. Gender equality is a fundamental human right essential for creating a more peaceful and prosperous world. However, it is surprising that even now, women still struggle to change societal perceptions about their roles and capabilities. Despite progress, women continue to face significant challenges globally, often remaining underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making.

Women's empowerment and the promotion of women's rights have become integral parts of a major global movement, breaking new ground in recent years. Numerous empowerment campaigns have emerged to raise awareness about women's individuality. Notably, the 2018 campaigns "#FaceAnything" by Olay (Olay 2018) and "#BeMoreHuman" by Reebok (Reebok 2018) aimed to encourage women to believe in themselves, fostering strength and confidence in their abilities and potential. These campaigns seek not to assert women's superiority over men, but to promote equality between genders. This study examines 4

women empowerment advertisements from both campaigns.

Women empowerment campaigns encompass a wide array of initiatives aimed at advancing the rights, opportunities, and representation of women. These campaigns often use various media, including advertisements, to convey messages that challenge stereotypes, promote gender equality, and empower women in different spheres of life. Analyzing such campaigns through the frameworks of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar (VG) theory and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) by Michelle Lazar (2005, 2007) can provide valuable insights into the construction of these messages, the visual elements employed, and the underlying ideologies they convey. Women empowerment campaigns often employ diverse strategies to convey their messages.

In light of this background, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the representation of women empowerment visually and verbally codified in advertisements?

2. How can multimodality along with Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis shed light on verbal and nonverbal signification of women empowerment?

3. How are Olay and Reebok exposing and countering sexist discourse through the multimodal representation of women's modern existence and vocations?

4. How does the multimodal representation of feminist agency subvert patriarchal sexist discourse to showcase feminist identity and positionality?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Advertisements

The primary goal of advertisements is to promote or sell products or services (Stanton 1984). They reach the masses through various media channels, including traditional media like newspapers and television, and new media such as social media and websites (Bovee & Arens 1992). With the rise of internet usage, which has reached 4.1 billion users globally (Brantner 2016), new media has become more crucial for businesses in promoting their products. Advertisements can also promote ideas, particularly social issues, including social justice (Stanton 1984; Kotler & Sarkar 2021).

A company's stance on social issues can significantly affect its sales, as 64% of global consumers consider this before making a purchase (Gray 2019).

Advertisements function as acts of communication involving the producer (addresser), the message, and the audience (addressee). Derived from the Latin "advertere" meaning "to turn towards" advertisements aim to capture the audience's attention. Advertisements come in two main forms: printed (e.g., magazines, newspapers, billboards) and audiovisual (e.g., TV commercials, social media videos). They convey complex meanings through both linguistic and visual elements, engaging audiences in interpreting their messages (Goldman 1992). Initially, advertisement analysis focused solely on linguistic elements. In the 1970s, multimodal analysis began integrating linguistic and image analysis to uncover hidden meanings, marking a shift in advertisement interpretation (Barthes 1977).

Advertisements not only aim to increase product sales but also raise awareness and instill new ideologies. For instance, companies like Olay and Reebok use advertisements to empower women and challenge sexist representations, promoting social responsibility and gender equality. Recently, there has been a notable shift in how women are portrayed in advertisements. Instead of being passive objects of the male gaze, women are now depicted as active, independent, and powerful (Gill 2008). This change in representation influences societal perceptions, contributing to the ongoing movement for women's empowerment.

2.2 Gender Empowerment Campaigns

Women's empowerment campaigns have evolved significantly, influenced by social, political, and cultural movements advocating for gender equality. The history of these campaigns can be divided into several key periods:

2.2.1 Early Movements

The 19th century was a pivotal time for both feminist movements and the abolitionist cause. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were instrumental figures in the first wave of feminism, particularly in the United States. Their efforts laid the groundwork for the suffrage movement, which sought to secure voting rights for women and address broader issues of gender equality and women's agency (DuBois 1999). Many women involved in advocating for the abolition of slavery recognized the parallels between the oppression of slaves and the subjugation of women (Davis 1983). For example, prominent abolitionist and

women's rights advocate Sojourner Truth delivered her famous speech "Ain't I a Woman?" in 1851, highlighting the intersections of race and gender in the struggle for equality (Painter 1996). The activism of these women helped shape the social and political landscape of the 19th century, laying the foundation for future movements for equality and justice.

2.2.2 Early to Mid-20th Century, Second Wave

The mid-20th century to the 1980s marked the second wave of feminism, focusing on broader issues beyond suffrage, such as reproductive rights, workplace equality, and challenging traditional gender roles. Key figures like Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, and Audre Lorde played crucial roles in raising awareness and pushing for legislative changes (Davis 1983). Despite criticisms of lacking inclusivity, this wave significantly shaped public discourse on gender equality (Mann and Huffman 2005). The achievements and challenges of the second wave of feminism continue to inform ongoing discussions and efforts to advance gender equality and social justice today.

2.2.3 Late 20th Century to Present

Significant advancements have been made from the late 20th century to the present. Key developments include:

1. Legislation: Laws addressing domestic violence, workplace discrimination, and reproductive rights have been enacted globally, reflecting increased recognition of women's rights (Cook and Cusack 2011; Tripp 2016).

2. Global Conferences: The UN's World Conferences on Women, particularly the Beijing conference in 1995, have mobilized international efforts to address gender disparities (Evans and Evans 2003).

3. #MeToo Movement: Starting in 2017, this movement highlighted the pervasive nature of sexual harassment and assault, prompting significant social and legislative changes (Gill and Orgad 2018; Keller, Mendes, and Ringrose 2018).

4. Gender Equality in Business: Recent campaigns have focused on achieving gender parity in corporate leadership and addressing workplace stereotypes, although progress remains uneven (Beaman and Buchstaller 2021).

5. Grassroots activism, led by women's organizations and individual activists, has been crucial in driving change. Social media platforms have amplified these efforts, enabling global advocacy and solidarity through hashtags like #MeToo and #HeForShe (Keller, Mendes, and Ringrose 2018; Mendes 2015).

Despite progress, challenges such as gender-based violence, pay gaps, and unequal access to education and healthcare persist. Ongoing advocacy is essential for addressing these issues and achieving full gender equality. Overall, women's empowerment campaigns have built upon past movements while adapting to contemporary challenges. Continued efforts and new strategies are needed to push for gender equality and create a more inclusive society.

2.3 Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1985), initially developed in the 1950s and 1960s, conceptualizes language as a system of meaning-making. It identifies three semiotic functions of a register. First, field is the context in which a text operates. Second, tenor is the relationships between communicators. Third, mode is the communication medium.

SFG emphasizes three metafunctions that are realized through the choices of field, tenor, and mode resources. First, the ideational metafunction, which focuses on representing experiences and construing the world through language, emphasizes the content and meaning of a message. Second, the interpersonal metafunction, which deals with the interaction between speaker and listener, highlights how language enacts social relationships and expresses attitudes. Third, the textual metafunction, which pertains to the organization and coherence of texts, ensures clarity and cohesion in communication (Halliday and Matthiessen 2013).

SFG provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing language use within specific contexts, viewing language as shaped by its functions. This approach has significantly contributed to linguistic studies by allowing detailed analysis of language structure and function in diverse contexts. The theory's metafunctions have been applied to various languages, such as English, Spanish, and Chinese, and fields like teaching English as a Foreign Language and translation studies, demonstrating its versatility and importance in linguistic research and education

2.4 Multimodality

Multimodality is an approach that examines how multiple modes of communication, such as text, color,

images, gestures, and sounds, interact to create meaning. This approach was significantly advanced by scholars like Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, who laid the foundation for multimodal analysis. They, along with others like Bob Hodge (1988), Kay L. O'Halloran (2004), Anthony Baldry (2000), and Paul J. Thibault (1991), introduced Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), which investigates how various semiotic resources come together in discourse to convey complete meaning.

Multimodality acknowledges that communication extends beyond language, incorporating social semiotic elements that influence meaning-making. It is a rapidly developing field in linguistics, driven by the increasing recognition of how these diverse modes are used in daily communication. Scholars such Carey Jewitt (2014), David Machin (2012), and Andrea Mayr (2012) have contributed significantly to the field, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of multimodality and its application across digital media, advertising, education, and everyday interactions.

The approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the interplay between different modes and how they collectively construct meaning. Multimodal analysis reveals the psychological impact of these combined modes, influencing how messages persuade and lead audiences to specific actions. Overall, multimodality provides comprehensive insights into the dynamic relationship between various communicative modes and their role in shaping discourse and meaning.

2.5   Visual Grammar

The theory of VG is a valuable tool in visual communication, complementing verbal language. In VG theory by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the SFG metafunctions are redefined: ideational becomes representational, interpersonal becomes interactive, and textual becomes compositional. The representational metafunction relates to the relationship between participants, objects, settings, and viewers, visually encoding our experiences of the world. It encompasses two categories: narrative and conceptual. The narrative structure clarifies actions and events using vectors (oblique lines) to indicate directionality and relate participants. On the other hand, the conceptual structure focuses on analyzing participants in terms of classifications, serving as carriers of symbolic meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

The interactive metafunction, inspired by the interactive metafunction of SFG, addresses the

interaction between viewers and participants in the image. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), this interaction is created through elements such as gazes, frame size, social distance, and viewing angles. Analyzing this metafunction requires attention to the visual configuration of the image act, social distance, and the visual recognition of attitude or perspective. These elements determine how viewers engage with and interpret the image, influencing the communicative impact.

The compositional metafunction, derived from the textual metafunction of SFG, integrates the representational and interactive metafunctions into a cohesive whole. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), this is achieved through three systems of analysis: information value, salience, and framing. Information value assigns different meanings to various spatial zones within an image. Salience determines the prominence of elements in an image, guiding viewers' attention. Framing draws boundaries within an image, highlighting relationships between different elements. Together, these systems help to create a unified and meaningful visual composition.

2.6   Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

FCDA combines CDA and Feminist Linguistics, with its paradigm attributed to Lazar (2005, 2007). FCDA aims to examine social change and understand the complexities of gender, language, power, and ideology. It deeply explores how dominant gender identities are maintained through power and ideology in discourse. Lazar (2005, 2007) emphasizes that gender intersects with factors like sexuality, religion, ethnicity, age, social class, education, and geography, making FCDA an interdisciplinary approach that highlights both obvious and subtle gender assumptions across different contexts and communities.

The necessity of a feminist label for FCDA, despite its roots in CDA, stems from the need to create a feminist perspective on language and discourse studies to critique and challenge patriarchal ideology (Lazar 2005). While CDA aims to expose all forms of hegemony and injustice, not all gender-focused studies within CDA adopt a feminist perspective (Lazar 2007). For feminist scholars, it is crucial for CDA to include a distinct feminist voice that critically examines gender as an underlying oppressive category in social practices (Lazar 2005). This feminist labeling would enrich literature on feminist views and highlight the restrictive nature of gender norms, enhancing the visibility and recognition of feminist contributions to CDA (Lazar 2007).

FCDA is a framework for examining language and communication through a feminist lens, aiming to uncover and challenge gender inequalities, stereotypes, and power dynamics embedded in discourse (Lazar 2005). It analyzes texts, conversations, media representations, and societal discourses to reveal hidden biases and inequalities, exploring how language constructs and maintains gender norms and identities (Cook and Cusack 2011). FCDA goes beyond traditional discourse analysis by incorporating feminist perspectives, providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, power, and gender (Lazar 2007). It examines how language is used to negotiate, dominate, or resist power, revealing imbalances in discourse (Gill 2007).

FCDA aims to expose hidden power dynamics and inequalities in discourse, showing how language shapes and reflects societal attitudes toward gender. It seeks to empower marginalized voices, challenge oppressive discourses, and advocate for more equitable and inclusive communication practices. By combining feminist approaches to language with CDA methods, researchers can thoroughly explore how social inequalities and power structures are created, sustained, and can be changed. Lazar (2005, 2007) highlights that CDA's multimodal semiotic techniques are useful for understanding the connections between gender, language, power, and ideology in texts and conversations, providing a comprehensive critique of how gender is constructed through discourse.

FCDA is dynamic and evolving, adapting methodologies and theoretical frameworks to address emerging issues related to gender and power. It is used across academic disciplines to analyze and challenge gender-related discursive practices, contributing to the broader goal of gender equality and social justice. Lazar (2005, 2007) outlines five fundamental interlinked praxes of FCDA, including feminist analytical activism, gender as an ideological structure, the complexity of gender and power relations, discourse in the (de)construction of gender, and critical reflexivity as praxis.

Feminist analytical activism combines critical analysis with activist approaches to challenge gender inequalities embedded in discourse (Lazar 2005). Gender as an ideological structure highlights that gender is socially constructed and influenced by societal ideologies. The complexity of gender and power relations explores multifaceted power dynamics within gender dynamics (Gill 2007). Discourse in the (de)construction of gender examines the role of language in shaping and reshaping gender identities and power dynamics. Critical reflexivity as praxis emphasizes self-reflection and reflexivity

within feminist activism and scholarly pursuits (Lazar 2007). Together, these tenets form the foundational framework of FCDA, providing a comprehensive approach to understanding and challenging gendered discourses, power structures, and inequalities through both analytical and activist lenses.

2.7   Previous Studies

Numerous studies on multimodality have been conducted in different discourses. Farooq's (2020) research investigates the persuasive and attractive modes used in six e-advertisements. The analysis is done using the theoretical framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996). The data collected is analyzed based on the three metafunctions of VG: representational, interactional and compositional. The data was analyzed like semiotic resources, focus on the font, capitalization, boldness etc. in detail. The findings showed that the visuals were rich in semiotic meaning and all the elements served the purpose of persuasion and attractiveness to persuade and attract the audience to buy the products

On the other hand, some studies have been conducted with a feminist perspective. Murad, Mushtaq, and Binth E. Zia (2022) delved into the feminist traces present in advertisements within Pakistan. The research aimed to dissect the implicit meanings embedded in these advertisements, which seemed to challenge entrenched gender norms while advocating for feminist perspectives on body image, skin tone, and traditional gender roles. By conducting a thorough analysis of both the linguistic and visual elements of these advertisements, the study highlighted their crucial role in dismantling gender stereotypes and promoting feminist ideals within the context of Pakistani society. Grounded in the visual multimodal approach proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), the study revealed a notable trend in Pakistani advertisements wherein numerous companies rejected conventional socio-cultural norms associated with women, instead championing feminist ideologies as the emerging societal standard. Through a focus on the theme of transformation, the research argued that this shift in advertising strategies reflected an intentional effort to challenge the entrenched patriarchal mindset prevailing in Pakistani society regarding the roles and status of women.

Moreover, ElYamany (2024) explored similar themes within FCDA, offering valuable insights into the intersections of gender and discourse. ElYamany's research emphasizes the significance of language in constructing gender identities and reveals how discourse perpetuates or challenges existing power

structures. Her findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of gender relations and the role of language in both reflecting and shaping societal ideologies.

Despite the variety in investigating visual elements in advertisements, there seems to be a research gap when it comes to investigating online gender empowerment campaigns while integrating both a Multimodal and FCDA perspective. Combining these approaches provides a deeper understanding of how visual and verbal elements interact to construct and convey messages of gender empowerment, revealing detailed insights into the representation and empowerment of gender in digital media.

3.   METHODOLOGY

3.1   Theoretical Framework

The current research utilizes a dual theoretical framework, combining Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) VG theory with FCDA as proposed by Michelle Lazar (2005, 2007). This study employs VG theory to analyze the visual elements of advertisements, while adopting a FCDA perspective to examine the broader discourse present within the advertisements.

3.1.1 Visual Grammar

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) VG theory focuses on analyzing how semiotic modes are utilized in visual communication to convey meanings effectively. Their theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the interplay between different semiotic modes in advertisements to communicate ideologies and meanings to the target audience. Theory of VG is composed of three metafunctions: the representational, interactive, and compositional. As mentioned before Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) used the three metafunctions of language in SFG –ideational, interpersonal, and textual function- to produce corresponding metafunctions of images– representational, interactive, and compositional meaning.
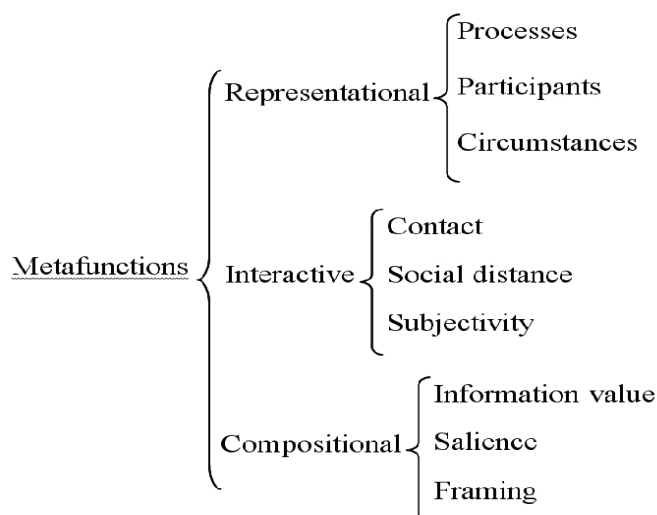

Figure 1: The three metafunctions of VG Theory by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006)

3.1.1.1 Representational Metafunction

The representational metafunction, derived from Halliday's ideational metafunction, focuses on how relationships between elements in the world and within us are visually represented. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), any semiotic mode must represent objects and their relationships as experienced by humans. This metafunction is concerned with two categories: participants, processes. Participants are either represented or interactive, while processes are divided into narrative and conceptual.

Participants in visual images, which can include people, places, objects, or identifiable entities, are depicted in various ways that contribute to their roles within the visual representation. For example, in an image of a family picnic, the family members are the participants. These participants can be either interactive or represented. Interactive participants engage in the act of communication, such as those who speak, listen, write, read, create, or view images. Represented participants are the subject matter of the communication, encompassing people, places, and things depicted in the image.

Processes in VG refer to actions, events, or relationships shown in the image, conveyed through visual techniques such as composition, framing, and other elements. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) classify images into narrative and conceptual categories. Narrative processes depict dynamic actions and events, with vectors indicating interactions between participants. These vectors can be formed by bodies, limbs, tools, eye-lines, or gestures, connecting actors and goals. Narrative processes include action processes, where vectors originate from the actor, and reactional processes, where vectors are created

by participants' gazes.

Conceptual process, on the other hand, refers to the relationship between participants according to a specific class. They are essentially not involved in any dynamic activity, rather they show participants according to their class or meaning. For instance, how participants engage and interact (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006). The conceptual processes are classified into three main types: classificatory, analytical, and symbolic; however, this thesis focuses solely on the symbolic type.

Symbolic processes are specifically concerned with what an image "means" in a broader, more abstract sense. They deal with the ways in which participants in an image represent more than just themselves; they symbolize ideas, values, identities, and more. Symbolic processes can be further categorized into symbolic attributive processes and symbolic suggestive processes. In symbolic attributive processes, one participant in the image serves as the "carrier" and is associated with symbolic attributes that provide meaning. These attributes are elements that convey qualities or abstract concepts about the carrier. For example, a person depicted wearing a crown symbolizes royalty. The crown here is the symbolic attribute, and the person is the carrier of this attribute. The attribute is usually an object, a piece of clothing, or a specific element added to the carrier. The relationship is one of meaning rather than action or identity.

In contrast, in symbolic suggestive processes, the symbolic meaning is not attributed to a specific carrier through an attribute, but rather the entire setting or elements within the image suggest a symbolic interpretation. The symbolism arises from the overall composition and context rather than specific attributes. The interpretation is often broader and more interpretive, involving the viewers' knowledge and cultural context. For example, an image of a stormy sea can symbolize turbulence or chaos, where the symbolic meaning is suggested by the scene as a whole rather than by a specific attribute attached to a particular element.

3.1.1.2 Interactive Metafunction

The interactive metafunction, inspired by Halliday's interpersonal metafunction, explores the interaction between the producer and viewer of an image. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), producers encode social meaning into images through elements like gaze, social distance, camera angle, and modality.

Firstly, gaze is divided into "demand" and "offer". A "demand" is created when participants in an image look directly at the viewer, establishing a connection. An "offer" occurs when participants do not look directly at the viewer, presenting them as objects of contemplation. Secondly, social distance refers to the relationships implied by the distance between participants and the viewer, ranging from intimate close-ups to detached long shots. Thirdly, camera angles, both vertical (high, low, eye level) and horizontal (frontal, oblique), affect how participants are perceived in terms of power, involvement, and status. Fourthly, modality, in visual terms, refers to the credibility and accuracy of an image, expressed through elements like contrast, color saturation, and detail. High modality images appear more realistic and credible, whereas low modality images convey a more abstract or symbolic representation.

3.1.1.3 Compositional Metafunction

The compositional metafunction, derived from Halliday's textual metafunction, integrates the representational and interactive metafunctions to create coherent visual designs. This metafunction involves three systems: information value, salience, and framing. Firstly, information value refers to the significance attributed to different visual elements based on their placement within the image. This can be categorized into "ideal" and "real" (top and bottom), "given" and "new" (left and right), and center and margin. These placements influence how information is perceived, with "ideal" conveying general or emotive information and "real" conveying factual information. "Given" elements represent familiar concepts, while "new" elements highlight novel information. "Center" placement signifies core information, while "margin" indicates subordinate elements (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

Secondly, salience determines the prominence of visual elements through factors like size, contrast, and placement, guiding viewer focus. For example, in a group photo, a centrally placed person in bright clothing might have higher salience. Framing involves the use of visual elements to connect or separate components within an image. This can include dividing lines, cropping, or composition choices that establish visual hierarchy and guide viewer interpretation. Thirdly, framing can create cohesion by connecting elements or emphasize individuality by separating them. Together, these metafunctions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how visual elements combine to create meaning in visual communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

3.1.2 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

FCDA is a term that is generally attributed to Lazar (2005, 2007). FCDA critically approaches texts using linguistic methods with an overarching feminist impetus (Lazar 2005a, 2007). FCDA is a sub-discipline of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a whole, which is in very general terms an approach to language that considers its connections to power through linguistic analysis. Lazar outlines the main goal of FCDA as: '[...] to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities' (2007, p. 142). Lazar (2005b, p. 5–19, 2007, p. 145–155) identifies the five key tenets of FCDA. These five tenants are feminist analytical activism, gender as ideological structure, complexity of gender and power relation, discourse in the (de)construction of gender, and critical reflexivity as praxis. These five tenets encapsulate the fundamental pillars of FCDA.

This research has employed FCDA with a specific focus on the **discourse in the (de)construction of gender**. This approach centers on understanding how discourse shapes and reshapes gender identities and power dynamics. FCDA perceives discourse as a social practice that both reflects and perpetuates social norms and power structures. By examining how language constructs gender identities and power relations, the study aims to uncover the complexities of gender dynamics and contribute to broader goals of gender equality and social justice.

3.2 Data Description

The data selected for this research is gathered from online resources. Four online advertisements are gathered from two different online campaigns. The first data selection is Olay's #FaceAnything" campaign which was featured in Vogue magazine in the September 2018 issue. The campaign includes ten advertisements, while only two are selected for analysis. The second data selection is Reebok's "#BeMoreHuman" campaign which was featured in 2018 on Vogue website. The campaign includes 5 advertisements while only two are selected for analysis. Both, #FaceAnything and #BeMoreHuman campaigns, aim to empower and support women. These 4 advertisements were accurately chosen to serve the purpose and the objective of the research.

3.3 Procedures of Analysis

The procedures of analysis follow a structured sequence. Firstly, the researcher transcribes each ad.

Secondly, an in-depth exploration of the VG Theory is used, starting with the representational, then the interactive, and concluding with the compositional aspects. Thirdly, each advertisement is examined from a feminist perspective. Fourthly, the advertisements undergo examination from a patriarchal viewpoint to uncover how language inversion affects traditional gender roles, aligning with FCDA's discourse (de) construction principles. This systematic approach ensures comprehensive analysis of each ad.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section includes the analysis and discussion of four advertisements: two from Olay's campaign and two from Reebok's campaign.

4.1 Olay #FaceAnything Campaign

4.1.1 Olay - #FaceAnything – Confident

Figure 2: Olay - #FaceAnything – Confident

According to Figure 2, the title is "~~TOO~~ CONFIDENT". The subtitle is "Not just for me, but for all the girls like me". The model is represented with a strong confident look. At the bottom right corner, the description says "Mama Cax, Role model, Cancer survivor". The footnote says, "Cax is fearless like that. See why at Olay.com/FaceAnything #FaceAnything".

According to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework in VG theory, the researcher analyzes the ad using representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions. Firstly, the **representational metafunction** deals with the participants and the processes. Cax, the bald black model, is the central participant. She is presented in a non-transactional narrative process, meaning she is portrayed without engaging in direct actions or interactions within the ad. Instead, her conceptual symbolic portrayal emphasizes qualities of confidence and empowerment.

Secondly, the **interactive metafunction** examines the social interactions between the represented participants and the viewer. The model's direct, strong gaze from a high-angle, close-up shot of her face creates a "demand image," inviting the viewer to engage. This direct gaze suggests that the model embodies strength and confidence. There is full color saturation of modality and maximum representation of details to emphasize the focus on the model.

Thirdly, the **compositional metafunction** deals with the arrangement of elements within the image to create meaning through information value, salience, and framing. According to the information value, the direction of the writing and the model draws the viewers' attention from top to bottom. The title "T̶O̶O̶ CONFIDENT" in bold font draws attention, positioning confidence as a statement rather than a negative attribute. The subtitle "Not just for me, but for all the girls like me" extends this message to all women, encouraging them to embrace their strength. This subtitle carries a welcoming meaning to all girls and women who will see this ad. They should all stand strong and confident against any patriarchal label. The vertical orientation of the descriptive text about Cax, who is presented as an American-Haitian model, disabled rights activist, and cancer survivor, reinforces her role as a symbol of resilience. The model is Cacsmy Brutus, known as Mama Cax, who was an American-Haitian model and disabled rights activist. With her prosthetic right leg, Cax was an unusual figure in modern fashion modeling. She is also a cancer survivor who is sending a message to all the girls to be strong like her. Lastly, the footnote at bottom, "Cax is fearless like that. See why at olay.com/FaceAnything #FaceAnything" stresses the idea of confidence and empowerment while providing a concrete call for action from the viewer. The strategic placement and font size of the textual elements guide the viewer's eye from the top to the bottom. The clear framing of Cax with minimal distractions ensures that she remains the focal point. This layout creates a visual hierarchy, leading the viewer from the aspirational message at the top, through the central representation, to the actionable information at the bottom. In conclusion,

this ad verbal and visual elements clearly support women empowerment.

According to a feminist perspective, this ad verbal and visual messages are clearly employed to empower women. The title "T̶O̶O̶ CONFIDENT" challenges traditional gender norms by affirming confidence as a universal trait, not limited by gender. The cross-out of "too" suggests that confidence should not be seen as excessive or atypical for women, but rather as a standard trait. This inversion of patriarchal discourse reclaims the label "confident" for women, countering societal norms that stigmatize confident women as "too confident".

According to patriarchal sexist discourse, women are presented as "too confident", while according to language, this attribute shames women with the presupposed masculine trait of confidence as if she is out of norms—i.e. patriarchal norms for what is deemed good women. The empowerment message here is that "I am only confident as a human being regardless of my gender identity". In conclusion, Olay's #FaceAnything empowerment campaign subverts societal ideologies to later undermine any sexist attributes. This ad clearly fits an example of **discourse in the (de)construction of gender,** according to FCDA, as it deconstructs and criticizes the typical gender stereotypes that are associated with women.

4.1.2 Olay – #FaceAnything – Defiant

Figure 3: Olay - #FaceAnything – Defiant

According to Figure 3, the title is "T̶O̶O̶ DEFIANT". The subtitle is "I see things differently. That's all". The model is represented with a strong confident look. At the bottom left corner, the description says, "Jillian Mercado, Voice for diversity in Fashion". The footnote says, "Jillian is fearless like that. See why at Olay.com/FaceAnything #FaceAnything".

According to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework in VG theory, the researcher analyzes the ad using representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions. Firstly, the **representational metafunction** depicts Mercado as a defiant model who is characterized by a "boyish" look and strong stance that conveys non-conformity and strength. She is depicted in a non-transactional process, wherein she is shown without engaging in direct actions or interactions. This conceptual symbolic meaning emphasizes Mercado's defiance through her appearance and pose.

Secondly, the **interactive metafunction** shows Mercado's direct gaze and the close-up shot of her face creating a demand image that work together to convey confidence and create a strong, intimate connection with the viewer. The full color saturation of modality and maximum representation of details emphasizes the focus on the model.

Thirdly, the **compositional metafunction,** according to the information value, the direction of the writing and the model draws the viewers' attention from top to bottom. The title at the top, "T̶O̶O̶ DEFIANT" with "too" crossed out, sets an aspirational, redefining tone. Meanwhile, Mercado is centered and prominently framed, making her the focal point and emphasizing her importance. At the bottom, the brief description of Mercado as a "voice for diversity in fashion" highlights her significant role in advocating for representation and inclusivity within the fashion industry. Mercado, who has muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair, challenges conventional beauty standards and stereotypes in the fashion world. By modeling and being prominently featured in campaigns, she demonstrates that beauty and fashion are inclusive and diverse. She actively promotes the idea that fashion should be accessible to and representative of all people, regardless of their physical abilities, race, gender, or other characteristics. She represents marginalized groups within the fashion industry. In addition, the footnote, "Mercado is fearless like that. See why at olay.com" grounds the message with a concrete call to action. According to the information value, the strategic placement, and font size of the textual elements guide the viewer's eye from the top to the bottom. The clear framing of Mercado

with minimal distractions ensures that she remains the focal point. This layout creates a visual hierarchy, leading the viewer from the aspirational message at the top, through the central representation, to the actionable information at the bottom. By analyzing the ad through the lens of VG theory, one can see how it strategically uses representational, interpersonal, and compositional metafunctions to convey its message of defiance and empowerment.

According to a feminist perspective, this ad supports women. The title "T̶O̶O̶ DEFIANT" sends a message of rebelliousness. By labeling Mercado as "too defiant" the ad celebrates her defiance and non-conformity as empowering traits. The striking out of the qualifier "too" suggests that defiance is not excessive but appropriate and necessary, challenging the viewer to reconsider their perceptions and highlighting the strength in being defiant. The subtitle "I see things differently. That's all" reinforces the idea that it is acceptable and even admirable for women to have their own perspectives and opinions, challenging the patriarchal notion that women should always comply with societal expectations. Mercado's role as a "voice for diversity in fashion" highlights the importance of representation and inclusion in the industry, advocating for diverse perspectives and experiences. Moreover, the juxtaposition of Mercado's boyish appearance with the title "T̶O̶O̶ DEFIANT" further emphasizes her defiance against societal expectations, disrupting stereotypical representations of women in advertising, which often adhere to narrow ideals of beauty and femininity. Instead, it celebrates Mercado's unique identity and challenges viewers to reconsider their preconceived notions of gender. In doing so, the ad promotes inclusivity and diversity while also challenging patriarchal discourse that seeks to enforce rigid gender roles. By featuring a "boyish" model in a position of empowerment and visibility, the ad sends a powerful message about the importance of embracing authenticity and rejecting societal expectations of how women should look and behave. This presents an intriguing narrative that can be interpreted differently through feminist and patriarchal lenses.

In patriarchal sexist contexts, the title "T̶O̶O̶ DEFIANT" is seen negatively, implying disobedience to established norms. Patriarchal sexist discourse expects women to be submissive and compliant without question. The subtitle "I see things differently. That's all" softens this rebellious tone for a patriarchal audience but still challenges the idea of unquestioning conformity. The footnote "Jillian is fearless like that" threatens patriarchal norms by suggesting that women who defy expectations are unafraid to challenge power structures. While the ad supports women's

empowerment from a feminist perspective, it also challenges patriarchal norms. This aligns with FCDA's critique of traditional gender stereotypes through the **discourse in the (de)construction of gender**.

4.2 Reebok #BeMoreHuman Campaign

4.2.1 Reebok - #BeMoreHuman – Stand Together

Figure 4: Reebok - #BeMoreHuman – Stand together.

According to figure 4, Gigi Hadid is centered in the middle as the model. The slogan is split on both sides of the model; left side says, "Stand together. Move together.", while the right side says "Change the world together. #BeMoreHuman". On the top right corner, the Reebok logo is placed. Lastly on the bottom left corner there is a description, "Gigi Hadid / Model, Designer" then "Shop4Reebok.com".

According to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework in VG theory, the researcher analyzes the ad using representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions. Firstly, the **representational metafunction** shows that Hadid is centered in a non-transactional process. The conceptual symbolic meaning represents empowerment through the slogan "Stand together. Move together" and "Change the world together". These phrases highlight the power of solidarity and collective effort in driving change.

Secondly, the **interactive metafunction** is portrayed in Hadid's direct gaze at the viewer which acts as a demand, inviting the audience to engage with the message and take part in the collective action. The horizontal frontal angle suggests involvement from the viewers and gives a sense of inclusion and invitation. The far personal distance allows for a connection with Hadid, making her approachable yet maintaining a degree of professionalism and aspiration. The use of full color saturation and maximum representation of details enhances the realism and vividness of the ad, making it visually striking and attention-grabbing.

Thirdly, the **compositional metafunction** addresses the arrangement of elements within the image to create meaning through information value, salience, and framing. Hadid is placed centrally, acting as the nucleus of the ad and drawing immediate attention. The slogan and Reebok logo are arranged vertically, guiding the viewer's attention from top to bottom, while the bottom description, model and designer, and website link provide actionable steps for the viewer. Hadid is an American fashion model who launched her first fashion brand in 2022 and is renowned for her appearances on prestigious fashion runways and her influence on global audiences. The ad foregrounds Hadid and the empowering slogan, making them the most salient elements and directing the viewer's focus to the key messages of unity and change. The clear framing with minimal distractions ensures Hadid remains the focal point, creating a visual hierarchy that leads the viewer from the aspirational message, through the central representation, to the actionable information. Overall, the ad successfully employs visual and verbal elements to promote the idea of empowerment.

According to feminist perspective, this ad calls to empower women to unite and advocate for change collectively. The main message emphasizes solidarity among women, encouraging them to "stand together, move together, and change the world together". The ad highlights the strength and resilience found in female unity, suggesting that when women support each other, they become a formidable force capable of achieving significant accomplishments.

According to a patriarchal sexist discourse, the advertisement reinforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes about women's dependence on men. Instead of emphasizing female solidarity and empowerment, the patriarchal interpretation focuses on the idea that women need each other because they are weaker or less capable than men. This view could suggest that women's strength derives from their ability to support and rely on each other, rather than from their individual agency or capabilities. Additionally, the patriarchal sexist perspective downplays the importance of women making decisions for themselves, implying that they should defer to male authority or seek validation from men. Contrary to this interpretation, the advertisement clearly deconstructs traditional gender roles. By emphasizing female empowerment, the ad challenges stereotypical portrayals of women as passive or subordinate and contributes to the **discourse of the (de)construction of gender** by offering an alternative, more empowering narrative for women.

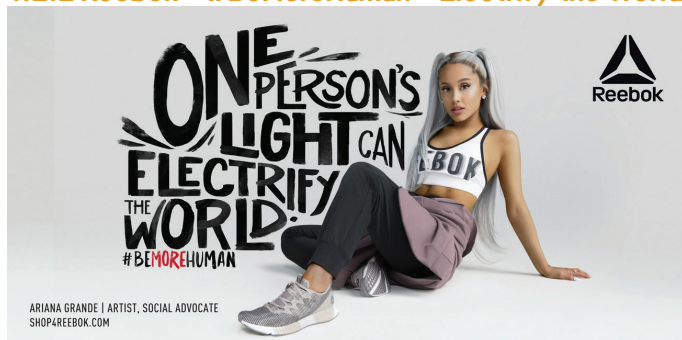### 4.2.2 Reebok – #BeMoreHuman – Electrify the World

Figure 5: Reebok – #BeMoreHuman – Electrify the World

According to Figure 5, Ariana Grande is centered in the middle. On the left side the slogan says, "One person's light can electrify the world. #BeMoreHuman". On the top right corner, the Reebok logo is placed. Lastly on the bottom left corner, there is a description, "Ariana Grande/ Artist, Social Advocate" then underneath "shop4reebok.com".

According to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework in VG theory, the researcher analyzes the ad using representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions. Firstly, the **representational metafunction** is Grande portrayal through a non-transactional process. The conceptual symbolic process is presented in the slogan "one person's light can electrify the world" symbolizing power through the powerful impact one individual can have.

Secondly, the **interactive metafunction** is presented in Grande's direct gaze at the viewer creates a demand, engaging the audience directly. The frontal horizontal angle suggests directness, making the viewer feel on the same level as the model, fostering a sense of connection and involvement. She is depicted at a close social distance, allowing viewers to connect with her. The ad uses full color saturation and maximum representation of details, enhancing its vividness and appeal, making the visual elements stand out and seem more realistic.

Thirdly, the **compositional metafunction**. According to the information value, Grande is placed centrally, making her the focal point of the ad. The slogan is placed from left to right, which draws the viewer's attention naturally across the ad. This placement utilizes the conventional reading direction in many cultures, making the slogan more accessible and prominent to the audience. By aligning the text in this way, the ad ensures that the message is easily noticed and absorbed, enhancing its overall impact and effectiveness. The bottom description, "artist and social advocate", along with the website link, represents the real and provides actionable steps for

the viewer. Grande, as an artist and social advocate, has made significant contributions to the music industry and championed various social causes, including mental health awareness and racial equality. The ad ensures that Grande and the slogan are the most prominent elements through foregrounding, using color contrast and size to draw the viewer's attention immediately to these key components. The bold black font and capitalization of certain words emphasize details, making them stand out. The clear framing with minimal distractions ensures that Grande remains the focal point. This layout creates a visual hierarchy, leading the viewer from the aspirational message, through the central representation, to the actionable information. Overall, the ad effectively uses visual and verbal elements to communicate its empowering message.

According to a feminist perspective, this ad featuring Grande as the model with the statement "one person's light can electrify the world" serves to empower women by highlighting the potential for individual impact and influence. The ad message aligns with feminist principles by emphasizing the importance of recognizing and celebrating the unique qualities, talents, and abilities of each person, regardless of gender. By focusing on the idea that every individual possesses the power to illuminate the lives of others and spark positive change, the ad challenges traditional gender norms and stereotypes that may limit women's sense of influence. The word "one" is powerful because it emphasizes individuality and inclusivity. It signifies that a single person, regardless of gender, can have a profound impact. By using "one" the statement avoids specifying gender, thereby promoting equality and suggesting that anyone, whether male or female, has the potential to "electrify the world". This inclusive language underscores the idea that every individual possesses unique power and significance, contributing to a message of universal empowerment. It is more powerful than using the word "women" because it broadens the scope of the message, making it applicable to all people and highlighting the equal potential and worth of every individual. Furthermore, by featuring Grande, a prominent female figure known for her talent, creativity, and resilience, the ad reinforces the message of empowerment and encourages women to embrace their own strengths and capabilities. The ad inspires women to recognize their own power and value, and challenging gendered expectations and limitations.

From a patriarchal sexist perspective, this ad reinforces traditional gender roles by focusing on individual success and beauty, suggesting that women's empowerment is tied to their appearance and personal

achievements. It seems to imply that women's worth and influence depend on their ability to stand out as individuals, rather than through collective efforts or solidarity. This focus can perpetuate gendered stereotypes and overlook systemic barriers and inequalities that prevent women from fully realizing their potential. However, despite these patriarchal sexist interpretations, the ad supports women through the **discourse of the (de)construction of gender**. By featuring a highly successful and empowered female celebrity, it challenges conventional gender norms and stereotypes, while reinforcing the idea that women can make a meaningful impact on the world around them. According to FCDA, this ad deconstructs traditional gender expectations and promotes a narrative that supports women's empowerment, while challenging patriarchal sexist ideologies.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

This study employed a Multimodal Feminist Discourse Analysis Approach. The selected data was analyzed using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) VG Theory and the principles of FCDA as outlined by Lazar (2005, 2007) with an emphasis on the discourse in the (de)construction of gender. Olay "#FaceAnything" and Reebok "#BeMoreHuman" campaigns were used for analysis. In summary, the analysis of Olay and Reebok campaigns offers valuable insights into the representation of women in advertising and the strategies employed to convey messages of empowerment and identity.

The Olay campaign, with its emphasis on diversity, inclusivity, and the celebration of natural beauty, challenges traditional beauty standards and promotes self-confidence among women. By featuring women of different ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds, Olay portrays beauty as multifaceted and inclusive, resonating with a diverse audience and promoting a more inclusive definition of beauty. Furthermore, the campaign's use of empowering slogans and affirmations encourages women to embrace their individuality and reject societal pressures to conform to narrow beauty ideals.

On the other hand, the Reebok campaign focuses on physical strength, resilience, and empowerment through physical activity. By featuring strong and influential women Reebok presents athleticism as a source of empowerment and self-expression for women. The campaign's emphasis on action, determination, and solidarity underscores the importance of physical and mental resilience in

overcoming challenges and achieving success.

Overall, both campaigns contribute to the ongoing conversation about gender representation in advertising and the empowerment of women. By showcasing diverse representations of femininity and promoting messages of self-confidence, resilience, and empowerment, Olay and Reebok challenge traditional gender norms and inspire women to embrace their authentic selves. As advertisers continue to evolve their approaches to gender representation, these campaigns serve as examples of how brands can empower and uplift women through thoughtful and inclusive storytelling.

In summary, the analysis of both the Olay and Reebok campaigns reveal how advertising language can be used to empower women, challenge traditional gender roles, and promote feminist values. While both campaigns have their strengths and weaknesses in terms of addressing issues of sexism and gender bias, they ultimately contribute to the ongoing conversation about gender representation in advertising and the empowerment of women. These findings underscore the potential of advertising to not only reflect societal norms but also to actively shape and redefine them, particularly in relation to gender equality and empowerment.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

The study focused on only two women empowerment campaigns, which may not be representative of the broader spectrum of such campaigns. This limited scope can restrict the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or types of advertisements. Moreover, both FCDA and VG theory involve a degree of subjective interpretation by the researcher. While efforts were made to maintain objectivity, personal biases may have influenced the analysis and interpretation of the data. In addition, the campaigns analyzed may be rooted in specific cultural contexts that influence their design and reception. The findings might not be directly applicable to campaigns from different cultural or societal backgrounds, limiting the cross-cultural applicability of the results. Addressing these limitations in future research could enhance the comprehensiveness of the findings, contributing to a deeper understanding of gender representation in advertising and its broader social implications.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should include a larger and more diverse set of advertisements from different

cultural contexts to understand the global dynamics of gender representation in media. Conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in the portrayal of women in advertising over time could provide insights into the evolution of gender norms and the impact of feminist movements. Also, incorporating an intersectional approach that considers race, class, sexuality, and other social categories would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different identities are represented and empowered in media. Finally, comparing women empowerment campaigns across different brands and industries could reveal best practices and common pitfalls, contributing to more effective and impactful advertising strategies. These recommendations for further research aim to build on this foundation, encouraging more nuanced and inclusive approaches to women representation in advertisements.

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Transitivity, Verbal Humour and the Construction of Identity in Trevor Noah's Narratives

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research paper is to analyze both Son of Patricia's stand-up comedy show and Born a Crime memoir by Trevor Noah to find out how the experience of racial discrimination, identity, social commentary, and personal anecdotes have been manifested in Noah's language choice. This descriptive study uses an eclectic approach combining Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), discourse analysis, and humour studies. The data from both genres were analyzed using Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Transitivity theory and the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). The research combines qualitative and quantitative data. The results highlight the distinct uses of transitivity processes in both excerpts, with the stand-up comedy employing more dynamic verbs, denoting action, while the memoir uses more relational processes. The GTVH analysis revealed that humour in stand-up comedy often challenges racial stereotypes more directly than in the memoir. The discussion pinpointed that Noah's strategic use of language not only constructs his racial identity, but also critiques societal norms. The study concludes that the combination of transitivity and humour effectively unveils deeper layers of identity and societal commentary, suggesting a powerful interplay between language use and personal narrative in Noah's work.

Keywords: Born a Crime, Discourse Analysis, Identity, Racial Discrimination, Son of Patricia, Transitivity, Trevor Noah, Verbal Humour .

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   The Scope of the Study

Trevor Noah is a South African comedian, television host, actor, and writer. He was born on February 20th, 1984, in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is best known for his role as the host of the American satirical program *The Daily Show*. Before his tenure on *The Daily Show*, Noah gained international recognition as a stand-up comedian. His comedy often focuses on race, ethnicity, nationality, and social issues, drawing heavily from his experiences growing up in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. His mixed-race heritage (having a black South African mother and a white European father) provides a unique perspective that he incorporates into his work, using humour to address complex social themes (Levin 2023; Shabrina & Pratama 2023).

The struggle related to establishing an identity has played a significant role in shaping his public image and the material of his comedic performances, both in South Africa and the United States, where he currently lives (Levin 2023). As demonstrated by Noah in his stand-up comedy acts, a hurdle he has faced in defining his identity is reconciling the varying perceptions of how those around him categorize him as he transitions through different racial identities based on his skin colour (Levin 2023). In writing *Born a Crime*, Noah incorporates the themes, conversational style, and humour from his stand-up routines into his narrative. This allows him to use the satirical perspective from his performances to address his American readers' perceptions of race on both a local and global scale (Levin 2023).

This study aims to explore Trevor Noah's racial identity through his discourse in both *Son of Patricia's* stand-up comedy and *Born a Crime* memoir, compare transitivity processes in both excerpts, and analyze verbal humour using the general verbal theory of humour.

1.2   Statement of the Research Problem

Based on the literature review, an abundance of research has focused solely on humour without transitivity, and other research has fixated on transitivity but not with humour; accordingly, linking both together is of utmost importance (Yuwana et al. 2019).

1.3   Aims of the Study

1.   To investigate Trevor Noah's identity emanating from his discourse in *Son of Patricia* stand-up comedy and *Born a Crime* memoir.

2.   To analyze the verbal humour in stand-up comedy and memoir discourse by implementing the general verbal theory of humour.

3.   To compare the transitivity processes and verbal humour used in both genres: stand-up comedy and memoir.

1.4   Context of the Study

Trevor Noah comes from South Africa. He is a comedian, television host, and author. He is mostly known for his satirical news program, *The Daily Show*. He was born during the apartheid period in South Africa. His father is white European, and his mother is Black South African. When he was born, his mixed-race heritage was considered a crime under the apartheid laws. He discussed his upbringing and career on numerous occasions, including his memoir, *Born a Crime*, and stand-up comedies, such as *Son of Patricia*. Usually, he addresses race, identity, culture, and societal issues in his works. In this study, an excerpt from his memoir *Born a Crime*, specifically Chapter Two, and another from his stand-up comedy *Son of Patricia* are analyzed using Halliday's transitivity framework and the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) to identify how his views about identity, racism, and societal issues are emphasized. A summary of the chosen excerpts, along with a rationale for the choice, are provided in the methodology section.

1.5   Research Questions

1.   How does the use of transitivity help shape Trevor

Noah's character and identity as presented in his *Son of Patricia* stand-up comedy and the second chapter of *Born a Crime* memoir?

2.   What are the implications of verbal humour presented in *Son of Patricia's* stand-up comedy and Chapter Two of *Born a Crime* memoir?

3.   What are the differences between the transitivity processes and verbal humour employed in *The Son of Patricia* stand-up comedy and Chapter Two of *Born a Crime* memoir?

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Systemic Functional Grammar

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is theorized by Halliday (1978, p. 108), who argued that language is a social semiotic resource that is considered a tool for meaning making in social contexts. SFG encompasses three language metafunctions; namely, interpersonal, ideational, and textual.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 85) explicate the three language metafunctions. First, the interpersonal metafunction investigates the language function in social contexts, including the grammatical choices that reflect the individuals' attitudes and stances. They also explain the relationships between the individuals involved in a conversation. The interpersonal metafunction involves analyzing the mood, modality, and evaluative language in a particular conversation. Second, the ideational metafunction involves the experiential aspects and content of language, including expressing processes, participants, and surrounding circumstances. The ideational metafunction comprises two components; i.e. experiential and logical. The experiential metafunction represents events, actions, and state of affairs, while the logical one deals with the logical relationship between events and prepositions, such as time sequence. Third, the textual metafunction is concerned with the text's organization in terms of coherence and relevance to the context being discussed. The textual metafunction includes thematic structures, information focus, and cohesive device usage.

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) includes a crucial concept called transitivity, which is central to encompassing how language represents the experience of the world (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Analyzing language using the transitivity framework is a widely used tool among scholars in SFG, focusing on the means through which language is represented in a social context (Radzi et al. 2021).

2.2   Transitivity

Transitivity is part of Systemic Functional Grammar and is theorized by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Transitivity is defined as

The study of what people are depicted as doing and refers broadly to who does what to whom and how this allows us to reveal who plays an important role in a particular clause and who receives the consequences of that action (Machin & Mayer 2012, p. 104).

Transitivity explores how multiple processes, such as actions and events, are encoded in language and helps reveal not only the actions but also the social dynamics (Machin & Mayer 2012, p. 105). There are three core elements of a transitivity analysis, i.e. participants, circumstances, and processes (Machin & Mayer 2012, p. 105). Machin and Mayer (2012) explain these three core elements. First, the participants are the entities that take part in the action. To elaborate, they correspond to the subjects and objects in a sentence. Second, circumstances are the surrounding or additional elements that provide context to the action, such as manner, time, place, cause, and space. Third, there are six processes, i.e. material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational, and existential (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, p. 214), which will be explicated in the theoretical framework section.

2.2.1. Transitivity and Identity

Human identity is defined as
A continual work in progress, constructed and altered by the totality of life experience. While much of the work in support of this belief concentrates on the larger aspects of identity – especially gender, ethnicity, and sexual preferences – in fact, human identity involves many other categories. Identity is constructed in complex ways, more or less consciously and overtly. (Lakoff 2006, p. 142)

An identity is considered fixed and continuous (Bassiouney 2012). Moreover, an identity is manifested and expressed through language use (Bassiouney 2020; Walters 2011). Albirini (2016) explains that identities are continuously evolving constructs that are shaped by social constituents. Identity has several definitions, one of which being "the social positioning of self and other" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005, p. 586). Hussain et al. (2023) emphasize that transitivity uncovers identities and ideologies by analyzing the linguistic participants of individuals.

The grammar of a language is "a system of 'options' from which the speakers and writers choose according to social circumstance" (Machin & Mayer 2012, p. 104). The authors assert that participants' choice of words has a role in meaning-making. This statement implies that some language choices and stances might be loaded ideologically. They also add that transitivity helps in analyzing not only what is in the text, but also what is missing from it. Matu (2008) explains that transitivity participates in shaping public opinion as well as reflecting broader ideological stances within the media. Different scholars explain that individuals employ specific linguistic choices to convey specific meanings consciously or unconsciously, yet they highlight ideologies and identities; it is how people "compose" themselves (Johnstone 2007; Kiesling 2022).

Haque and Janjua (2023) analyze the language employed by Markle (2021) during her interviews on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. This study aims to investigate and interpret how experiences are represented through language. The data from the interview are analyzed using Halliday's transitivity framework, focusing on different processes; namely, material, mental, behavioral, relational, existential, and verbal. The results of this study show her experiences of racism, which reflected her identity as a Black American. Her reflected experiences varied, including her unborn child facing offensive comments about his complexion. She also faced inequality within the Royal family in terms of security, title, and status. Moreover, she was bullied internationally through the media. The dominant processes in her language were mental and verbal, demonstrating her internal reactions to racism and verbal interactions that contributed to these experiences. Employing Halliday's approach not only underscores racism and prejudice, but also accentuates societal and cultural consequences.

Larbaoui and Guerroudj (2021) apply Halliday's transitivity analysis to a section from *Heart of Darkness* (1902) by Joseph Conrad. The aim is to identify Conrad's ideology toward imperialism and racism in Africa by analyzing the employed language. The authors use the transitivity material, mental, behavioral, relational, existential, and verbal processes to analyze the text. While the article does not provide a frequency analysis of these processes, it gave an overview of the interpretations of these articles. The results uncover the implicit ideologies in Conrad's writings, which sympathize with the suffering of colonized people. Conrad does not provide a mere story or a narrative; he adds a historical and cultural context to it.

2.3 Humour

Humour does not merely occur in discourse for the sake of amusing the participant but rather as a means of communication and the construction of identity (Archakis & Tsakona 2005). Shared humour is essential for the "in-group vs out-group boundary marker" (Holmes 2000, p. 159). One of the aims of humour is the construction of in-group identity and solidarity, which are the sense of belonging to a specific group (Archakis & Tsakona 2005; Holmes 2000).

Archakis and Tsakona (2005) aim to apply the GTVH (1991) to conversational narratives to explore how humour constructs social identities among young Greek males. The objective is to examine the target of adolescents' humour to find out what precisely the humour is about. The results show that humour, when targeting participants from the outside group, criticizes their behavior, portraying these behaviours as undesirable and deviant from the social norms. However, when the target is members from the in-group, it serves as a covert correction mechanism and is more subtle. Humour in this study strengthens the bonds among group members. It acts as an evaluation of social interactions, which allows group members to express their opinions and judgments about specific behaviours subtly and collectively.

Archakis and Tsakona (2006) also aim to explore the role of humour in constructing the social identity of young Greeks. The study applies GTVH to the conversational data of 29 individuals aged between 17 and 20 years. The data are from 13-hour taped conversations collected over two months. The analysis shows three results. First, when humour targets the outside social group, it is to criticize behaviours perceived as external or other. Second, when the target is within the inside group, humour serves as a covert mechanism to correct the in-group behaviour. Third, humour aims at oneself indicates that individuals employ humour as a tool to construct a positive self-image. The study illustrates that humour serves as a means to reinforce social norms, bonds, and values.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Both the theory of Transitivity by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) and the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) (1991) are used to explore the cultural and social themes in Noah's comedy, such as race, politics, and the immigrant experience. Analyzing Noah's performances and writings can reveal how he uses humour to comment on these themes and engage with his audience.

2.4.1. Transitivity Framework

Halliday's transitivity system, a powerful tool for analyzing how language is used to represent experiences, is applied to gain insights into how Noah uses language to convey his experiences and observations and how these contribute to the humour in his performances and writings. This theory involves understanding the semantic roles of words in sentences and how they work together to convey a particular meaning. As discussed, the transitivity framework is theorized by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) and includes six processes, as seen in Figure 1.

Process Types	Category Meaning	Participants, directly involved	Participants, obliquely involved
Material			
• Action	• 'Doing'	'doing' Actor, Goal	Recipient, Beneficiary, Client; Scope; Initiator;
• Event	• 'Happening'		Attribute
Behavioural		'behaving' Behaver	Behaviour
Mental		'sensing'	
• Perception	• 'Seeing'	Senser, Phenomenon	Inducer
• Affection	• 'Feeling'		
• Cognition	• 'Thinking'		
Verbal		'saying' Sayer, Target	Receiver; Verbiage
Relational		'being'	
• Attribution	• 'Attributing'	Carrier, Attribute	Attributor; Beneficiary
• Identification	• 'Identifying'	Identified, Identifier; Token, Value	Assigner
Existential		'existing' Existent	-

Figure 1: Transitivity process types and their meanings (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 311)

The six transitivity processes act as a powerful tool to analyze different contexts. First, the *material processes* represent physical actions and events. For example, *the dog chased the cat across the yard*. The actor is *the dog*, and the goal is *the cat*. In this sentence, the physical action is chasing, in which the dog initiates the action, and the cat is affected. Second, the *mental processes* portray cognitive and perceptual actions. For instance, *she understood the problem quickly*. The sensor is *she*, and the phenomenon is *the problem*. This sentence indicates a mental process of understanding, where she is processing her comprehension of the problem. Third, *relational processes* relate to the status of being or having something. They identify (equate one thing to another) or attribute (assign a quality to something) two entities together. For example, *the car is blue*. *The car* is the carrier, and *blue* is the attribute. Another example: *Malak is a musician*. Here, *Malak* is the token, and *a musician* is the value. Fourth, the *verbal processes* relate to the act of saying and involve a sayer, a receiver, and the verbiage. For instance, *John told Mary the news*. *John* is the sayer, *Mary* is the receiver, and *the news* is the verbiage. Fifth, *behavioral processes* involve psychological or physiological behaviors that are neither purely internal nor external. For example, *the kid smiled at his mother*.

Here, *the kid* is the behaver, and the behavior is *smiling*, which is directed at his mother. Lastly, *the existential processes* include the status of something happening or existing. For instance, *there is a cat under the table*. The existent is *the cat*. The statement asserts the presence of a cat in a specific location: *under the table*.

2.4.2. The General Theory of Verbal Humour

The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) (1991) is a progression and an expansion of the first formal semantic theory of jokes, the Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH) (Raskin 1985, as cited in Ruch et al. 1993). GTVH is theorized by Attardo and Raskin (1991). This theory provides a comprehensive framework for the analysis of verbal humour. Verbal humour includes many forms, such as "sarcasm, mockery, irony, puns, and other rhetorical skills" in a specific context (Mulyadi et al. 2021, p. 2).

The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), which provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing verbal humour, will be used to dissect the linguistic structure of Noah's jokes, understand the source of humour, and identify the elements that make his comedy effective. This theory, deeply rooted in semantics, is based on the idea that a text can be humourous if it is compatible with two different semantic scripts or contexts that are in opposition. This involves a deep understanding of the meanings of words and phrases and how they can be interpreted in different contexts to create humour.

The SSTH proposes two essential conditions for a text to be considered humourous:

1. Each joke should have two intersecting scripts, meaning the joke can be interpreted, wholly or partially, according to two different scripts.

2. These two scripts should be in opposition, i.e., they should negate each other, at least within the context of a specific text. This opposition is based on a set of fundamental contrasts, such as real/unreal, possible/impossible, and so on.

First, the *Script Opposition* identifies two scripts — semantic structures—that are opposing each other but are present in the exact text. Second, the *Logical Mechanism* links the two scripts in the joke. Third, the *Situation* is the place where the joke took place, which includes the setting and participants. Fourth, the *Target* is the entity against which the humour is directed. Fifth, the *Narrative Strategy* includes how the joke was told. Lastly, the *Language* involves the language choices and features that influence the joke's delivery and interpretation.

The Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH) suggests that a text can be humourous if it contains two scripts that overlap and contradict each other. Here, scripts refer to substantial semantic information related to a word and triggered by it, along with a cognitive structure internalized by the native speaker. These scripts go beyond the lexical definition of the word, encompassing the speaker's comprehensive knowledge and experiences related to the concept in their personal world. It is essential to note that the application of the GTVH is not limited to jokes. It can also be applied to other forms of text, including short stories and poems. Essentially, the GTVH provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing and understanding the complexity of verbal humour, making it a valuable tool in humour studies (Attardo 2017, pp. 5-6).

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study investigates Trevor Noah's racial identity, which emanates from his discourse in *Son of Patricia's* stand-up comedy and Chapter Two, titled *Born a Crime* from *Born a Crime* memoir. This section discusses research design, data collection, procedures, and data summary.

3.1 Research Design

This exploratory and descriptive study employs a mixed-method design and considers qualitative and quantitative data. The research study's nature is primarily descriptive, as its aim is to provide a detailed account of racial identity, social commentary, and personal narratives. First, *Son of Patricia* and *Born a Crime* were analyzed using the transitivity framework and general theory of verbal humour (GTVH). Second, both excerpts were compared to identify the differences between the two genres.

3.2 Data Collection and Procedures

The data are chosen based on different reasons. First, both researchers are interested in Trevor Noah's topics in his TV show, *Daily Shows*. Data are collected online through YouTube and from his book. Afterwards, the data are transferred to a Word document, where the researchers identify the processes used in an Excel sheet. Subsequently, they record the frequency of each process. Lastly, the data are analyzed qualitatively, and the two genres are compared. The rationale behind choosing Chapter Two of his memoir and the segment titled *The Love of Jesus*, from Noah's stand-up comedy, *Son of Patricia*, is the similarities in the themes addressed in both excerpts. It is intriguing to explore how his linguistic choices could signify his

inherent racial identity. Moreover, the rationale for this approach is rooted in the understanding of the linguistic mechanisms that underpin the representation of experiences in language and humour.

3.3 Data Summary

3.3.1. Son of Patricia

In a segment titled *The Love of Jesus*, from Trevor Noah's stand-up comedy, *Son of Patricia*, Noah shared his anecdotes about growing up in South Africa during the apartheid era. He explicated the racial laws in which his family lived. He described his family's living situation as illegal and complex. His story showed his mother's resilience, wisdom, and unconventional methods of handling racism at that time. He recalled an incident when a man shouted racist comments at them, and his mother urged him to respond to racism with The Love of Jesus. He shared another experience in Chicago where he encountered another racist incident and handled it with humour, which confused the racist individual and diffused the situation.

3.3.2. Born a Crime, Chapter Two

In the second chapter of Trevor Noah's memoir, titled *Born a Crime*, he narrated his experience growing up as a child of mixed-race during apartheid in South Africa. He explained that his mother is black, while his father was a white Swiss/German individual, which was considered unlawful during the era of apartheid. He depicted that his mother was fearless, rebellious, and determined. She opposed the norms by taking secretarial courses, which secured a job for her that was usually reserved for white people. His narrative portrays social injustice, racism, and segregation.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Frequency of the Transitivity Processes

Both excerpts are analyzed qualitatively using Halliday's Transitivity framework. Firstly, a frequency count of the processes identified in each excerpt will be presented, followed by an interpretation of these findings.
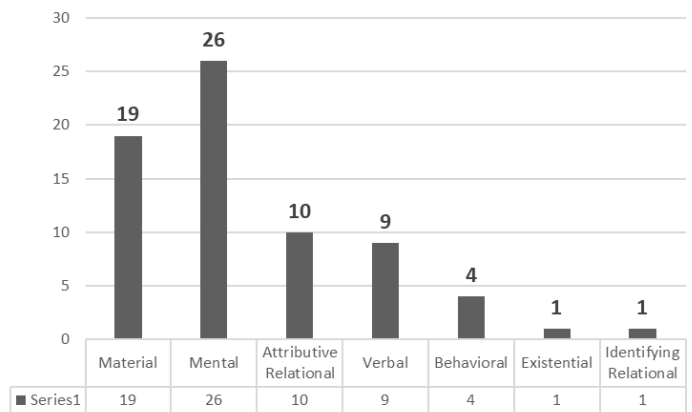

	Material	Mental	Attributive Relational	Verbal	Behavioral	Existential	Identifying Relational
Series1	19	26	10	9	4	1	1

Figure 2: Frequency of the processes in The Love of Jesus from Son of Patricia

Figure 2 demonstrates that in the first excerpt, mental processes are the most frequently used process, appearing 26 times. Material processes follow with 19 instances. Attributive relational processes occur ten times. Next, verbal processes are noted four times. Finally, existential and identifying relational processes are employed only once.

The mental processes have the highest number, which highlights the reflective nature of Noah's narrative. This conclusion highly emphasizes the internal psychological responses of the characters to their experiences, whether Noah or the racist person. Though the material processes are employed less than the mental ones, they are crucial in describing the actions that caused a significant impact on Noah and the racist guy. The heavy reliance on attributive relational processes indicates a strong focus on status and qualities. This conclusion shows that Noah's narrative is heavily reliant on the characters' internal status, relationships, and descriptions rather than simple actions. As for the verbal processes, they were central in conveying the dialogues that were crucial to understanding the interactions between both characters.

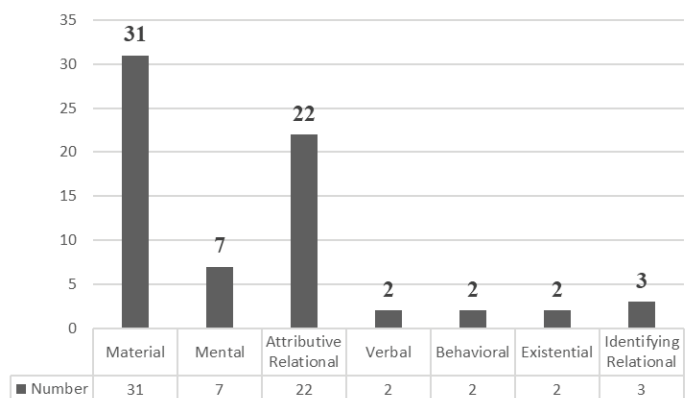|	Material	Mental	Attributive Relational	Verbal	Behavioral	Existential	Identifying Relational
Number	31	7	22	2	2	2	3

Figure 3: Frequency of the processes in Born a Crime, Chapter Two

According to Figure 3, in the second excerpt, the number of material processes used is the highest, with 31 occurrences. It is followed by the attributive relational ones 22 times. Then, there are seven mental processes. This is followed by three identifying relational processes. Lastly, the behavioral, existential, and verbal processes are each employed twice.

Since the use of material processes is the highest, this indicates the focus on the actions and events of the narrative. This fits with the memoir genre, as it is a description of a series of events. The second highest occurrences are the attributive relational processes, which are used extensively to highlight the identity and characteristics of the individuals. Furthermore, the use of mental processes is less frequent; however, it provides an understanding of Noah's psychological and internal feelings while describing his mother's life. The two instances of verbal processes are only to report quotations. The rest of the processes are not central to the narrative.

4.2   Analysis of the Transitivity Processes

This section analyzes some remarks made by Noah in his stand-up routine, *Son of Patricia,* and Chapter Two of *Born a Crime.*

4.2.1. Transitivity in The Love of Jesus segment in Son of Patricia

(1)   I grew up in this family (Material), and we couldn't live together. (Attributive Relational) I could live with my mom (Attributive Relational), but my dad couldn't live with us (Attributive Relational); it was illegal (Attributive Relational). And, and... people would be racist to us all the time (Behavioral).

The verb *grew up* describes the physical and developmental action of maturing or aging within the family context. There is a change over time, which is associated with gaining experience and maturity. The second clause is an attributive relational process. It describes the condition of not being able to live together, not equating *we* or *my dad* with something else. Using modal verbs here indicates the possibility or potentiality. Saying *it was illegal* asserts a particular action. The verb *"was"* links the pronoun *it* to its attribute, *illegal*. The last sentence highlights how individuals are engaged in the act of racism and that racism is an ongoing and continuous action.

(2)   Oh my God! And this man. This man was so offended by what I had done (Mental)

Here, the contrast between what Noah mentioned and what this man is feeling is contradicting and absurd.

(3)   That he drove his truck around me, rolled the window down, looked me dead in the eye, (Material)

Here, the material processes analysis indicates the aggressor's intention to harm. Besides, the use of the adjective *dead* indicates threat and aggression.

(4)   And he was like, "Get out of the road, n i g g e r."

The verbal assault is vivid. Noah stated this word for the third time. However, while saying the n-word, he spelled it out in a funny way, again to cope with racism.

(5)   Oh, you could see he wanted to hurt me.

Using the verb *see* indicates an apparent threat towards Noah from his oppressor. Using the modal verb *"could"* indicates intent to hurt because it is evident that a bystander can see it.

(6)   We locked eyes (Behavioral), and I could see in that moment (Mental) he was waiting for me to be like [slow motion "No"] [mock gunshot sound] (Verbal). What that man didn't know was where I was from (Mental).

The humour in these statements is vivid in the exaggerated, cinematic, and dramatic portrayal of a gunshot. By using slow motion and the mocking sound, Noah transforms the tense moment into a light one. He also mocks the racist person and shows his absurdity. The final remark is a reference to the profound impact his mother had on him as a child in dealing with complex issues, such as racism.

(7)   He looked at his hands like they'd somehow magically turned black (Material).

Using *looked* involves the physical action of directing his gaze toward his hands. Using *magically turned black* emphasizes the surprise and disbelief humourously. This reflects the racist man's identity and how he cannot stand black people.

(8)   Like I had cursed him with a n i g g e r bomb (Mental).

This phrase involves a racial curse by the victim. Noah used this expression as a form of ironic or retaliatory commentary against the racism he experienced. Noah attempted to reclaim power over a situation while he might have felt marginalized. It is a form of linguistic resistance against the perpetrator.

(9)   Oh... I actually felt bad for him, man (Mental).

The use of the mental process *felt bad* indicates that Noah is experiencing sympathy or empathy towards *him*. This statement shows a connection or concern for the other person's well-being, indicating an emotional depth.

(10) *Because I've been called that word before (Material), but that was his first time.*

This statement shows that Noah experienced racism, discrimination, and verbal abuse multiple times during his life.

(11) *I didn't realize how right my mother was until decades later, which I feel is what always happens with your parents, right? (Mental)*

Here, there is an elaboration of his mother being wise. He explains his cognitive and emotional journey. Using the rhetorical question *right?* invites the listeners to think about his words, which shows that this is a universal experience, not just personal.

(12) *He didn't realize that that was the son of Patricia stepping into the road.*

Referring to his mother again is quite strong. He acknowledges her strength, resilience, and wisdom, further showing her strong effect on him and his life, especially when dealing with complex issues like racism.

4.2.2. Transitivity in Born a Crime

(13) *I grew up in South Africa during apartheid (Material), which was awkward (Attributive Relational) because I was raised in a mixed family, with me being the mixed one in the family (Attributive Relational).*

By using a material process in the first part of the sentence, the focus is placed on the action of growing up, which introduces the reader to the narrator's life journey. It sets a dynamic starting point for the narrative, grounded in a specific socio-political context.

(14) *My mother, Patricia Nombuyiselo Noah, is black (Attributive Relational). My father, Robert, is white (Attributive Relational).*

Noah labels his mother as black to emphasize her racial identity. Using attributive relational processes provides unambiguous information. He also highlights his father's identity as a white male.

(15) *During apartheid, one of the worst crimes you could commit was having sexual relations with a person of another race (Attributive*

(16) *Race-mixing proves that races can mix— (Mental) and, in a lot of cases, want to mix (Material).*

Relational).

By using an attributive relational process, the sentence emphasizes the classification of an action (having sexual relations with a person of another race) as a severe crime within the apartheid context. It not only states that the action was criminal but underscores its severity by labeling it one of the *worst* crimes, thereby highlighting the strict and oppressive racial laws of apartheid.

(16) *Race-mixing proves that races can mix— (Mental) and, in a lot of cases, want to mix (Material).*

Using *proves* highlights that race-mixing serves as a reality for racial integration, which challenges the assumptions about racial boundaries. Using "*want to mix*" introduces a behavioral aspect, which depicts the natural desire and inclination of races to interact together.

(17) *Because a mixed person embodies that rebuke to the logic of the system (Attributive Relational), race-mixing becomes a crime worse than treason (Identifying Relational).*

In the first clause, the attributive relational process is used to portray the qualities of a mixed-race person. In the second clause, identifying the relational process is used to categorize race-mixing as a specific type of crime, intensifying its perceived severity. This statement shows the severity of the radical views on race during the apartheid era.

(18) *Unlike in America, where anyone with one drop of black blood automatically became black, in South Africa, mixed people came to be classified as their own separate group, neither black nor white but what we call "coloured" (Identifying Relational).*

The process of "*became black*" is identifying relational. It defines the identity of *anyone with one drop of black blood* as *black*. This process does not attribute a quality but instead identifies the subject with a new classification. As for the second segment, it explicitly redefines or names the identity of the mixed people in terms of a new social category. However, the phrase *what we call 'coloured'* is attributive. It provides a label that describes their racial classification within a social context.

(19) *Coloured people, black people, white people, and Indian people were forced to register their race with the government (Material).*

Using the passive voice indicates that the action was not voluntary but instead imposed under the pressure of the law. Such a statement reflects sociopolitical implications on society. Moreover, he emphasized the identity of each category of oppressed individuals.

(20) Indian areas were segregated from coloured areas, which were segregated from black areas—all of them segregated from white areas and separated from one another by buffer zones of empty land (Material).

The sentence reflects a systemic approach to segregation, where different racial groups are not only kept apart from each other but are also separated by physical barriers. This statement included a repetition of the word segregation three times, which indicates the insistence and intent of segregation policies.

(21) The police would kick down the door, drag the people out, beat them, and arrest them (Material).

These sentences vividly illustrate a sequence of violent actions by the police, signifying force, aggression, and misconduct. Such aggressive tactics would likely have led to strained relations between the police and the community, fostering fear, resentment, and possibly resistance among the population.

(22) She wanted to do something (Mental), figured out a way to do it (Attributive Relational), and then she did it (Material).

The combination of mental, attributive relational, and material processes portrays a logical flow from thought to action. They also depict Patricia's capability, resilience, and strength.

(23) The ultimate goal of apartheid was to make South Africa a white country, with every black person stripped of his or her citizenship and relocated to live in the homelands, the Bantustans, semi-sovereign black territories that were, in reality, puppet states of the government in Pretoria (Material).

This excerpt highlights the control mechanisms of black people during the apartheid era. Using *otherwise* introduces the severe consequences of not adhering to the rules.

4.3 Frequency in GTVH

The four tables below provide a detailed breakdown of Logical Mechanisms, Target, Language, and Situation Knowledge Resources (KRs).

Table 1. Logical Mechanisms (KR) Count

Logical Mechanism	Count
Absurd Interpretation	11
Absurd Neologism	1
Fallacious Reasoning	6
Twisting Homonymy	4
Grand Total	**22**

Table 1 lists various logical mechanisms used, with 'Absurd Interpretation' being the most common, recorded 11 times, indicating it may be a prevalent technique in creating humour. 'Fallacious Reasoning' appears six times, suggesting a moderate reliance on flawed logic to achieve comedic effects. 'Twisting Homonymy' is noted four times, showing it played a smaller role in humour generation. 'Absurd Neologism' is the least frequent, occurring only once, which might imply it is a less effective or less commonly used strategy. The total of 22 instances across these categories highlights the diverse approaches in employing logical mechanisms for humour. Table 2 highlights the Target KRs.

Table 2. Target (KR) Count

Target Type	Count
Behavior	4
Group of People	1
Individual	14
Institution	1
Societal Norm	1
Grand Total	**21**

Table 2 classifies the Target Knowledge Resource, with 'Individual' being the category that is most often cited, occurring 14 times. This suggests a focus on personal attributes or actions as central elements in the humour. 'Behavior' follows four times, indicating that specific actions are also a significant target. The single occurrences of 'Group of People,' 'Institution,' and 'Societal Norm' suggest these are less frequently used as targets, possibly implying their limited role or specific context in the humor being analyzed. The total of 21 instances underscores the varied focus on different targets within the material. Table 3 displays the language KRs.

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Table 3. Language (KR) Count

Language Type	Count
Argumentative Language	1
Descriptive Language	3
Dialogue	2
Expository Language	7
Narrative Language	9
Grand Total	**22**

Table 3 presents a classification of Language (KR) used, with 'Narrative Language' being the most prevalent, appearing nine times. This suggests a strong reliance on storytelling to convey ideas. 'Expository Language' follows with seven occurrences, indicating a focus on explaining or informing within the content. 'Descriptive Language' appears three times, highlighting its role in painting vivid images. 'Dialogue' is recorded twice, suggesting limited use of conversational elements. 'Argumentative Language' appears once, implying a minimal emphasis on persuasion. The total of 22 instances reflects the varied linguistic approaches employed in the material. Table 4 demonstrates the situation KRs.

Table 4. Situation (KR) Count

Situation Type	Count
Absurd	7
Concern	2
Confusing	1
Curious	2
Hoping	1
Misunderstanding	1
Scary	4
Surprise	4
Grand Total	**22**

Table 4 categorizes the Situation (KR), highlighting 'Absurd' as the most frequent, with seven occurrences suggesting a strong emphasis on illogical or nonsensical scenarios to engage the audience. 'Scary' and 'Surprise' each appear four times, reflecting their importance in creating tension or unexpected outcomes. 'Concern' and 'Curious' are mentioned twice, indicating a moderate presence in the material.

The single occurrences of 'Confusing,' 'Hoping,' and 'Misunderstanding' suggest these situations are used sparingly, possibly to add specific nuances. The total of 22 instances illustrates the diversity of situational contexts within the content.

4.4   Analysis of the GTVH

This section analyzes the application of GTVH on remarks made by Noah in his stand-up comedy *Son of Patricia* and Chapter Two of *Born a Crime.* Noah's comedic works are rich in examples of semantic mechanisms that underpin humour. In his stand-up comedy show *Son of Patricia*, Noah frequently introduces two conflicting scripts or contexts that generate humour. A case in point is his humourous commentary on the absurdity of racial classifications in South Africa, where he states, *"I was never black enough, I was never white enough."* The humour in this instance stems from the incongruity between the expectations of the black and white communities and Noah's own mixed-race identity.

Noah's comedy also often involves the humourous resolution of incongruities, a concept known as the Logical Mechanism in GTVH. For instance, in *Born a Crime*, he narrates how his mother pretended to be his maid to circumvent the stringent racial laws of apartheid-era South Africa. The humour in this scenario arises from the unexpected resolution of the incongruity between his mother's actual role and the role she feigned.

Noah's works also exemplify the use of language to represent experiences, a concept central to Halliday's Transitivity theory. In *Son of Patricia*, he employs language to articulate his experiences and observations on subjects such as race, politics, and the immigrant experience. His choice of words, sentence structure, and the way he describes these experiences all contribute to the humour in his performances. His jokes cleverly use transitivity to navigate the sensitive topic of interracial relationships during apartheid, using humour to challenge and subvert racial stereotypes. This also highlights Noah's ability to use his mixed-race identity to navigate and joke about sensitive racial topics.

4.4.1. GTVH in Son of Patricia

The segment provides a rich exploration of the Script Opposition Knowledge Resource (KR) from GTVH. This KR involves the juxtaposition of two opposing scripts or scenarios to create humour. Examples of Script Opposition in this particular segment are outlined in Table 5, which displays the script oppositions KRs.

Table 5. Script Oppositions KRs

Script Opposition	Example from Text
Vehicle (Pickup Truck/Prius)	*Mostly because he was driving a pickup truck. Yeah, I just feel like that was an unnecessary stereotype that he didn't need to perpetuate. You know... I feel like if you're going to be racist, do something different. Think outside the box. Drive a Prius.*
Colour Perception (See/Don't See)	*I was crossing the road and then the light turned red for me, but I decided to walk anyways, because I don't see colour.*
Identity (Known/Unknown)	*What that man didn't know was where I was from. More importantly, who he didn't know was my mother.*
Reaction (Planned/Spontaneous)	*And let me tell you something, LA, it was so beautiful, because I didn't plan it. I didn't think about it.*

Table 5 presents the Logical Mechanism (LM), another key component of the GTVH, which is predominantly utilized in the segment. This involves the use of absurd interpretations, fallacious reasoning, and twisting homonymy to generate humour. For example, Noah's family dynamics, his encounters with racism, and his mother's counsel are all humourously depicted through absurd interpretations. Noah's jaywalking is humourously presented as a significant factor in the man's racist insult through fallacious reasoning. The phrase *I don't see colour* is humourously used to refer to Noah's disregard for traffic lights and then to his attitude towards race.

Humour often emerges from the semantic incongruity or opposition between different interpretations of a situation or phrase. For instance, the term *crazy* is humourously used to refer to Noah's mother's unusual advice and then to her wisdom, creating humour through the semantic twist. The GTVH enables us to dissect the humourous elements and comprehend the cognitive processes involved in perceiving and appreciating humour. The Logical Mechanism in this particular segment is outlined in Table 6, which demonstrates the logical mechanisms KRs.

Table 6. Logical Mechanisms KRs

Text Segment	Logical Mechanism
I grew up in this family, and we couldn't live together. I could live with my mom, but my dad couldn't live with us; it was illegal.	**Absurd Interpretation.** The text humourously presents Noah's family situation as a simple inconvenience, rather than a result of oppressive laws.
I remember one day, in particular, walking through the streets together. And some guy across the road shouted something really mean at us.	**Fallacious Reasoning.** The text humourously presents the man's racist shout as simply "something really mean," rather than a manifestation of racism.
And I was like, "What?" I was like, "This lady's crazy." She was crazy, but she was also right.	**Twisting Homonymy.** The text plays with the word "crazy," using it first to refer to Noah's mother's unusual advice and then to her wisdom.

Accroding to Table 6, 'Situation Type' is the third component of the six Knowledge Resources (KRs) that are essential for joke creation. It refers to the specific context or scenario in which the humour occurs. This could be a real or imagined event, a particular setting,

or a specific emotional context. The situation type provides the backdrop against which the joke unfolds and plays a crucial role in shaping the humour. Table 7 demonstrates the situation KRs.

Table 7. Situation KRs

Situation Type	Text Segment
Curious. Noah's unusual family situation due to legal restrictions.	*I grew up in this family, and we couldn't live together. I could live with my mom, but my dad couldn't live with us; it was illegal.*
Concern. Noah's concern about the frequent racism they experienced.	*And, and... people would be racist to us all the time.*
Surprise. Noah's surprise at his mother's resilience and toughness.	*But I was really lucky growing up, because my mom is probably the most gangster human being you'll ever meet in your life. Nothing got to her. –Nothing fazed her.*
Absurd. Noah's perception of his mother's advice as absurd, yet correct.	*And I was like, "What?" I was like, "This lady's crazy." She was crazy, but she was also right.*

Table 7 displays that 'Target' is the fourth KR and refers to the person, group, behaviour, or societal norm that the humour is directed at. The target can be an individual, a group of people, a behaviour, an institution, or a societal norm. The humour often arises from the incongruity or absurdity associated with the target.

The laws that prevented Noah's mixed-race family from living together are humorously presented as a curious situation. Additionally, the people who were racist towards Noah and his family are humorously portrayed as a concern. Meanwhile, Noah's mother, who is resilient and unfazed by racism, is humorously depicted as a surprise. Similarly, the man who shouted something mean at Noah and his mother is humorously presented as an individual target. Furthermore, the behavior of being racist, which Noah's mother suggests should be countered with love, is humorously portrayed as a confusing situation. Noah's behavior of jaywalking, which he presents as a relevant factor in the man's racist slur, and his behavior of ignoring traffic lights, which he humorously justifies by saying he doesn't see color, are also humorously presented as behavior targets. Finally, the stereotype of racists driving pickup trucks, which Noah finds unnecessary, is humorously presented as an absurd situation.

The Narrative Strategy, which is the fifth KR in the GTVH, refers to the specific techniques or methods used to deliver the joke. In the context of Trevor Noah's *Son of Patricia*, the narrative strategy is characterized by several key elements:

Noah uses personal anecdotes, particularly his experiences growing up in South Africa and his encounters with racism. These anecdotes serve as the foundation for his jokes, providing a relatable and engaging narrative for the audience. Additionally, Noah brings his stories to life through vivid characterization, particularly his mother, who is portrayed as a resilient and wise figure. This characterization adds depth to his jokes, making them more memorable. Furthermore, many of Noah's jokes involve absurd situations or reactions, such as his mother's unconventional advice on dealing with racism or his humorous disappointment at a racist's choice of vehicle. This element of absurdity enhances the humor. Moreover, underlying many jokes is sharp social commentary on issues like racism, stereotypes, and societal norms, adding a layer of depth and making it thought-provoking. Finally, Noah frequently engages with his audience, reacting to their laughter and involving them in his stories, sometimes even incorporating their responses into his jokes. Together, these elements form the narrative strategy of Trevor Noah's Son of Patricia, making it not just a comedy show but a rich, engaging, and thought-provoking narrative experience.

The sixth and final Knowledge Resource in the GTVH is Language. This refers to the specific linguistic techniques used to deliver the humour, such as descriptive, expository, narrative, dialogue, and argumentative language. Here are some examples from the text:

Noah uses descriptive language to paint a vivid picture of his upbringing and his mother's resilience. Additionally, he employs expository language to provide factual information about the racism they experienced, his mother's advice, his decision to jaywalk, and the man's ignorance of his background and his mother. Furthermore, Noah uses narrative language to recount specific incidents of racism, the moment that led him to fully understand his mother's advice, his spontaneous physical reaction to the man's racist slur, and the man's shock at his response. Moreover, he uses dialogue to recount conversations with his mother about dealing with racism, expressing his initial confusion and eventual understanding of her advice. Finally, Noah uses argumentative language to suggest a different approach for racists.

4.4.2. GTVH in Born a Crime

In the GTVH, 'Script Opposition' is a key Knowledge Resource (KR) that refers to the juxtaposition of two opposing scripts or scenarios to create humour. In the context of Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime*, various forms of script opposition are employed, each representing a different facet of societal norms and personal experiences. These oppositions range from racial classifications and societal norms to personal actions and expectations. The following table provides examples of these script oppositions from the text, offering a deeper insight into how humour is generated through the interplay of contrasting scripts. Table 8 presents the script oppositions KRs.

Table 8. Script Oppositions KRs

Script Opposition	Example from Text
Race (Black/White)	*My mother, Patricia Nombuyiselo Noah, is black. My father, Robert, is white.*
Law (Legal/Illegal)	*During apartheid, one of the worst crimes you could commit was having sexual relations with a person of another race.*
Society (Normal/Abnormal)	*In any society built on institutionalized racism, race-mixing doesn't merely challenge the system as unjust; it reveals the system as unsustainable and incoherent.*
Classification (Black/Coloured/White)	*In South Africa, mixed people came to be classified as their own separate group, neither black nor white, but what we call "coloured."*
Expectation (Possible/Impossible)	*At the time, a black woman learning how to type was like a blind person learning how to drive.*

According to Table 8, Logical Mechanism is used to create humour through various techniques such as absurd interpretations, twisting homonymy, and fallacious reasoning. The following are some examples from the text:

Noah humorously presents his unique upbringing, the illegality of black people living in downtown Johannesburg, and the laborer status as privileges or minor inconveniences rather than serious issues through absurd interpretation. Additionally, he highlights fallacious reasoning by illustrating the absurdity of considering a relationship between two consenting adults as a crime, portraying his mother's unconventional career choice as a logical consequence of her nature, and depicting the requirement to carry a pass as a reasonable condition for leaving the township.

In *Born a Crime*, the Situation Type is used to create humour through various emotional contexts or reactions. Each situation type represents a different emotional context that contributes to the humour in the text. The following are some examples from the text:

Noah's unique family situation in the context of apartheid South Africa piques interest, and the fact that Noah's mother did not consider the ramifications of having a mixed child is also presented as a curious situation. Additionally, the absurdity of considering a relationship between two consenting adults as a crime under apartheid, along with laws prohibiting sex between racial groups and the comparison of a black woman learning to type to a blind person learning to drive, all contribute to the humor. Furthermore, the hopeful determination of Noah's mother to act despite challenges, her fearless portrayal, and the message that considering ramifications can prevent action all add to the humor in the text.

'Target' is a key KR in the GTVH. It refers to the person, group, behavior, or societal norm that the humour is directed at. The target can be an individual, a group of people, an institution, or a societal norm. The humour often arises from the incongruity or absurdity associated with the target. The following examples illustrate how the Target KR is employed to generate humour in Chapter 2 of *Born a Crime*, providing a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes involved in perceiving and appreciating humour.

The apartheid system, which is criticized and challenged by the existence of mixed-race individuals; the racial classification system in South Africa, which is different from that in America and creates a separate category for mixed-race individuals; the government, which enforced racial registration and segregation, the apartheid system which enforced strict racial segregation and separation, the legal system which passed and enforced laws prohibiting interracial relationships, the government which went to extreme lengths to enforce the apartheid laws, the legal system which imposed severe penalties for breaking the apartheid laws, the legal system which enforced racial discrimination in job opportunities, the South African government which is criticized for making only minor reforms in response to international protest, and the employment system which is criticized for only token hiring of black workers in low-level white-collar jobs. Furthermore, the societal norm of racial segregation under apartheid was the societal norm or expectation that black women would not learn skills like typing.

In Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime*, the Language, a key KR in the GTVH, is used to create humour through various linguistic techniques. These techniques include descriptive, expository, narrative, dialogue, and argumentative language. Each type of language serves a different purpose in conveying information, telling a story, presenting a viewpoint, or creating a dialogue. The following examples illustrate how the Language KR is employed to generate humour in Chapter 2 of *Born a Crime*, providing a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes involved in perceiving and appreciating humour.

Noah uses descriptive language to provide background information about his upbringing. Moreover, he employs expository language to provide factual information about his parents, race-mixing, racial classifications in America and South Africa, racial registration under apartheid, laws prohibiting interracial relationships under apartheid, the penalties for breaking the apartheid laws, and the absurdity of a black woman learning to type under apartheid. Additionally, Noah uses narrative language to tell stories about his parents' relationship, human attraction, mixed-race children in South Africa, the exploitation of native women, the government's efforts to enforce apartheid laws, the absurdity of police enforcement, severe consequences for interracial couples, racial bias, his mother's determination, and the risks and luck his family faced to evade the apartheid system. Moreover, Noah uses dialogue to recount a conversation between someone asking his mother a question and her response. Finally, Noah uses argumentative language to present a viewpoint on race-mixing and institutionalized racism and the societal implications of being a mixed-race individual.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, three common themes have emerged. In both the stand-up comedy and the memoir, Noah stressed the profound influence of his mother, Patricia, on his life. He described her as strong, wise, unique, and resilient. In both excerpts, she taught him how to handle racism with grace when he was young. The second theme is racism and cultural identity. Both excerpts delve deep into racism and Noah's cultural identity. In the stand-up comedy, he explained that he faced direct racism in the United States, and he used humour to deal with the issue. Similarly, he narrated his difficulties while growing up as a mixed-race child during the apartheid era in South Africa in his memoir. The third theme depicted in both excerpts is using humour as a coping mechanism. This method lightened the mood and communicated his cultural identity, as well as discrediting racist people. Moreover, Noah typically employs humour in his dealings with serious life subjects such as societal issues, identity, and racism.

In both excerpts, the analysis of the transitivity processes revealed distinct narrative focus and thematic emphasis, which reflected different aspects of Noah's storytelling style and content.

In *Son of Patricia*, the dominant use of mental processes underscored the reflective nature of the narrative. This conclusion suggests that this stand-up comedy is centered around the psychological status

and responses of the characters. It also focuses on how they perceive and react to their circumstances. Furthermore, the significant occurrence of attributive relational processes draws attention to the conditions and inherent attributes of the characters. Although the Material processes were less frequent, they still played a huge role in depicting the actions that impacted the characters, which added a dynamic element to the reflective narrative.

On the other hand, Chapter Two of *Born a Crime* exhibits a higher frequency of material processes, which places a strong emphasis on actions and events. This aligns with the memoir genre, where the recounting of events and actions forms the backbone of the narrative. The prominence of the attributive relational processes also pinpoints the prominence of identity and the characteristics of the participants, which are also crucial in constituting any memoir, as they deal with personal and historical realities such as apartheid. Although the mental processes were fewer, they enriched the narrative by providing insights into Noah's feelings and reactions, which added depth to the physical and social actions.

In both excerpts, the focus is more on action, reflection, and description, which are more effectively conveyed through material, mental, and relational processes. While *Son of Patricia* focuses more on the psychological and reflective aspects through the use of mental processes, *Born a Crime* leans towards a more action-oriented narrative with its predominant use of material processes. Both styles effectively cater to the different thematic needs of a stand-up comedy routine and a memoir, respectively, showcasing Noah's versatility as a storyteller who adeptly uses linguistic processes to shape his narratives.

Both excerpts utilized the GTVH to explore and highlight the absurdities of societal norms and personal experiences through various logical mechanisms. *Son of Patricia* employed techniques like absurd interpretations and twisting homonymy to create humour from serious topics such as racial prejudices and the complexities of family dynamics under apartheid laws.

In *Born a Crime*, it is apparent that Noah continues to use similar comedic strategies to critique the harsh realities of apartheid. The humour in *Born a Crime* likely stemmed from a juxtaposition of Noah's difficult childhood experiences against broader societal expectations, using absurdity and exaggerated logic to provide insight and commentary on South Africa's socio-political landscape. Both texts show how Noah leverages humour to tackle and reflect on deeply ingrained racial and cultural issues.

In summary, Noah's adept use of GTVH in both *Son of Patricia* and *Born a Crime* not only entertains but also educates his audience, making complex societal issues accessible and engaging. By contrasting personal anecdotes with societal norms, Noah highlighted the absurdities and injustices in a profoundly humourous manner. This approach not only enhances audience engagement but also highlights the potency of humour as a tool for social critique and personal reflection.

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A Damsel in Distress No More: Shifting the Narrative of Female Leading Characters in Video Games

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ABSTRACT

For decades, women have been the subject of several video game narratives, which relied on "saving the girl" as the main quest for many of these games. Moreover, for years, gender representations in video games were a part of an ongoing debate about gender inequality in video games narratives, which are considered one of the most popular, interactive fields of entertainment that young people currently enjoy. This, however, brings up some pressing questions about how reality is reflected in the content of video games regarding women`s representation. The research at hand is a qualitative analysis determined to examine the shift in the common narrative of women in video games as "a damsel in distress" to be a lead character on a special quest, through tracking changes in female representation in video games in recent years. This was conducted by analyzing how the portrayal and character development of female protagonists evolved across different gaming generations and trends. The researcher relied on Consalvo, and Dutton, (2006) model of critical game analysis to examine case studies of three popular video games: Horizon: forbidden west; Rise of the Tomb Raider and The last of Us. The research underlines how these games feature women as Lead characters of the gameplay. The analysis will examine the character design, game narrative and game interface of the video games understudy to discover the shift in the portrayal of female characters in these gaming experiences.

Keywords: Videogame, Gender studies, Media portrayals, Women`s representation, Digital games.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1970s, video games have emerged as a powerful medium of storytelling and entertainment, shaping the narratives and experiences of millions of players worldwide. As the industry has grown in both size and influence, it has experienced a transformative evolution in the depiction of the role of female leading characters. Historically, female characters in video games were often portrayed as secondary characters, demoted to passive, one-dimensional roles that perpetuated stereotypes about the role of women and limited their interaction in these discourses.

However, recent years have witnessed a noticeable shift in this stereotypical portrayal of women in video games, where a new challenging discourse about the depiction of female roles in video games has emerged. Hence, the paper at hand delves into this significant transformation in the video game industry. Through a careful examination of previous literature, it explores the historical portrayal of female characters as vulnerable and in need of rescue, which is juxtaposed with the contemporary narrative that showcases female characters as strong, multifaceted, and independent protagonists.

The depiction of female characters in video games narratives often reflects the dynamic relationship between video games, culture, and gender. However, the early days of video games witnessed a limited representation of female characters, with archetypal roles such as the "damsel in distress" or the "sidekick" being predominant. This representation was not limited to the videogame's discourses; indeed, the whole mainstream media relied on presenting females as helpless, existing primarily to serve as an incentive for the male hero's journey. Such depictions contributed to a narrative framework that became the core of many scholarly examination of these discourses including,

gender studies, gaming, and framing studies.

However, as video game culture grew more diverse and inclusive, a noticeable shift has been apparent in the displayed narratives of women representations in the track of women empowerment, creating a new discourse with strong leading female protagonists who have embarked on their journeys as heroes not sidekicks. Accordingly, this paper seeks to analyze the profound transformation in the portrayal of female characters in video games through the examination of such female characters in videogames like Lara Croft in the *Tomb Raider* series and Aloy in *Horizon Forbidden West*, in order to exemplify the shift in the common "Damsel in distress" narrative in video games.

The games are categorized as "third person shooter"; in this gaming structure, the body of the avatar is visible to the player throughout the game play. Furthermore, the sample video games featured female protagonists as main players/ avatars in the games; these lead female characters filled the role of the leading hero. For the selected sample, all three ladies acted as the player's mediator to the narratives of the games. These games are all open world games that provide the players with story rich choices in the plot that allow them to make decisions in the game play based on these options.

With regard to the main objectives, the paper at hand aims at evaluating character development of female protagonists through assessing the character design in the sample video games. In addition, it is essential to identify the narrative shifts and how the concepts of female characters in video games have transitioned from prototypical "damsel in distress" roles to empowered lead roles with distinct quests. This is achieved through evaluating game design elements and components, such as narrative structure, and interface, which contribute to reshaping the representation of female characters.

1.1   Proposed Research Questions

- How has the representation of female characters in video games evolved over different gaming generations?
- What are the main differences among *Horizon: Forbidden West, The Last of Us, and Tomb Raider* in terms of character design, narrative structure, and game interface?
- What are the distinguished elements that reflect the design of the character, in terms of clothing, weapons, and avatar interface in representing female protagonists across diverse gaming experiences under investigation?
- What specific narrative and gameplay elements

contribute to the transformation of female characters as an empowered lead character in video games?

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   The Damsel in Distress Narrative

According to the Macmillan dictionary (2023), The word damsel is originated from the Latin word "lady" or a young woman who is not married , whereas, the pop culture dictionary (2023) stated that the term "a damsel in distress" is used in cultural contexts as a young woman in danger who is rescued by a male hero". The initial emergence of the term "A damsel in distress" in literature was during the 17th century in 1692, featured in the poem, "Sylvia's Complaint" by Robert Gould, describing "a damsel in distress" who is having an inner conflict between her passionate lust and decent love and that she needs to be rescued by her knight (Mermin 1986). Since then, the term damsel in distress has become a common story line in several literary works during the 18th to the 20th centuries. Subsequently, this narrative of saving the girl has been frequently used in literature, movies, comics and even Disney cartoons, and in recent years, it has been the main story line of several video games. This story line was applied by depicting women as helpless, weak, often-sexualized objects, and needing to be saved as the main quest of the protagonist male hero (Bell 2013; Demarest 2010; Fulop 2012; Lynch *et al*. 2016; Solis 2017).

The apparent reinforcement of this narrative was a result of the early days of Hollywood mainstream cinema, which insisted on including a female character in the movies to create a romantic sub-story line apart from the original story line, even if it was not adding anything to the original story (Bordwell *et al*. 1985; Fulop 2012). As a result, this placed a female character in almost every movie with the sole purpose of being a motive for the male protagonist, whether to save her, to help her achieve a personal errand or even to engage into fights to win her heart.

However, in any given narrative of those Hollywood movies, even if the female character is the protagonist and fighting crime per say, she was often depicted in a stereotypical portrayal with revealing clothes and high heels reflecting the commonly suggestive hourglass body shape. Although these representations are not reflective of the female character's journey, she is a sexually objectified subject **whom the audience would not believe as part** of the hero's journey narrative (Demarest 2010; Solis 2017).

The traditional narrative of "Damsel in distress" is not only used in literature or movies, but also scholars

argue the presence of this narrative in famous video games for years (Kondrat 2015; Jansz and Martis 2007; Sarkeesian 2013).

2.2 Female Representation in Video Games

Examining women representations in video games has long been a persistent quest for many scholars, as they agreed on some common characteristics reflecting how women were portrayed in video games over the years. The first common notion was the underrepresentation of women

either in the main player or supporting characters narratives in numerous video games (Beasley and Collins Standley 2002; Burgess *et al*. 2007; Dietz 1998; Dill *et al*. 2005; Downs and Smith 2010; Williams *et al*. 2009). Furthermore, another common depiction technique used in video games for women was the sexualized narrative, through creating a sexualized or hypersexualized body features in addition to revealing outfit for the character`s *avatar*. In addition, female characters are usually displayed as a nonviolent character in comparison to male characters in the same game. Similarly, scholars agreed on the recurrent inhabitation of the "damsel in distress" narrative for female characters in video games through the years (Dickerman *et al*. 2008; Dietz 1998; Haninger and Thompson 2004).

In recent years, a new line of research analyzing the latest portrayal of women in video games as a powerful protagonist having her own quest has emerged. However, these female protagonist narratives were still depicting the female lead character in a sexualized body features and outfits (Jansz and Martis 2007). Lynch *et al*. (2016) thoroughly studied 571 playable female characters in video games from 1989 to 2014; results showed that female characters were contextualized in supporting roles and regarding their appearances, they were often more sexualized than male characters. However, in a notable observation, these aforementioned sexualized contexts for female characters in video games were perceptibly reduced since the 1990s; nevertheless, most video games, especially the ones identified as male genres games which include shooting and fighting, are still depicting female characters in secondary roles and in a sexualized context.

Soukup (2007, 162) mentioned the existence of different representation of women in video games like *"Half-Life"*, *"Radiata Stories"*, and *"Elder Scrolls"*, where these new representations do not rely on the common stereotype of female characters as sexual object. However, these games presented women as skilled, smart, and self-confident characters. Unfortunately, these representations continue to be a minority due to commercial considerations, where the main consumers of video games remain to be young males.

It is worth noting that the "Damsel in Distress" narrative of women in video games did not change much in the past three decades. According to Provenzo (1999), in the 1990s only 8 percent of video games displayed female characters in their narrative mostly as secondary characters and usually in the context of "Damsel in Distress". Furthermore, Grimes (2003) debated that in the early 2000s, more female users started playing video games, which called for character development approaches by gaming publishers, where the narratives of video games started to have lead female protagonists following their own quest and engaging in violent actions to conquer these quests. However, a notable paradox was apparent in this narrative, as female characters were featured with the traditional sexuality in body type and clothing and yet employed a violent behavior in the game play.

In light of the above, Perreault *et al*. (2018) argue that female representation in video games narratives, took a great leap in 2013. The number of leading female characters grew larger in several leading video games with more diversification in their narrative. Such characters include those of Elizabeth in *Bioshock Infinite*, Ellie in *The Last of Us*, Jodie in *Beyond: Two Souls*, and Lara Croft in the reboot of *Tomb Raider*.

Scholars argue that the declined number of female presentations in video games is related to the gender-role experience of players. Several studies concluded that females perceive most video games with displayed violent behavior as a male game, and sometimes they feel uncomfortable playing these games even if they had female characters in it. (Lucas and Sherry 2004; Williams *et al.* 2009). Others argued that the perceived masculinity of video games forces women to play with male avatars to face the gender stereotyping that woman are incapable of playing action video games (Kaye *et al.* 2018).

Furthermore, Consalvo (2012) and Lucas (2019) argue that the marginalization of female characters in video games has been an organized behavior for years to meet the male consumer needs, regardless of the numerous calls for gender representation equality by many feminists' activists in the gaming industry. Examples include game developers Zoë Quinn and Brianna Wu along with Anita Sarkeesian a game critic and host of Feminist Frequency's series Tropes vs. Women in Games. These voices actually faced a backlash over their public calls for equality and they faced a targeted harassment campaign against them that reached the level of creating a video game titled "Beat Up Anita Sarkeesian" that featured a photo of Sarkeesian's face as a punch bag for players to beat it using several weapons.

Lin (2023) conducted massive research to challenge the ongoing debate about female representations

in video games in recent years, as over 100 games from the 10 highest selling games, released between 2017-2021, from major publishers like Activision, EA, Nintendo, Ubisoft were examined. The results of this detailed research concluded that only 5 percent of the games had female characters as lead characters and almost 32 percent of games displayed male characters only. Similarly, Solska (2022) observed that even though there has been a shift in the number of female lead characters in video games in recent years, a relatively few video games construct a game narrative for these characters to display their journey. For years the dominating frame of the studies of video games as an expressive medium focused on analyzing the highest grossing games in terms of purchase rates and number of players (Murray 2017). Later, the focus was shifted to examine the effect of these videogames as a violent medium that has a negative effect on youngsters and adolescence. This sort of negative impact reached the extent that first shooter video games, like *Doom* for instance, were accused by several scholars of being a catalyst for the mass shootings in schools that infected the societal spectrum in the United States since the early 2000s (Brook 1999; Anderson *et al*. 2003).

As that trend of academic research started accelerating, another research mainstream appeared to rebuttal the arguments and accusation of video games being the stimuli of violence in society. Scholars argued that violent people can be drawn to playing violent games; additionally, some researches point out that the number of violent incidents carried out by youth have dropped to a notable rate compared to past decades (Adams 2010).

It was not until the release of the first *Lara Croft: The Tomb Raider* video game, being remarkably successful among both male and female players, that scholars started to revisit the area of female representations in videogames. With *Lara Croft* supposably introducing the first lead female character in video games to defy the male gazing theory that defined the mainstream representation of female lead characters in video games for so long (Kennedy 2002; MacCallum-Stewart 2014; Mikula 2003).

2.3 Constructing Video Game Narratives

Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2003, 55) discussed the notion of comprehending the structure of any video game, where they stressed that we need to understand games as a system that consists of a set of parts that interrelate to form a complex whole. Similarly, Barthes (2004) proposed a structure for any narrative applied in video games, as he proposed that the narrative of any game consist of several units that interact with each other in a pre-determined time and space structures. These interactions amongst the proposed units construct the meaning in the narrative discourse. Similarly, Carr (2009) argues that analyzing the structure of any video game includes the examination of the whole discourse construction, including game design, typologies of rules or genres in the game, characters and studying the spatial structure and its functions.

Regarding the analysis of video games, scholars argue that video games are a combination of ludology and narrative elements along with storytelling approaches, as some videogames rely on narrative design in their stories whilst others do not apply these narrative elements in their gameplay design. (Jenkins 2004; Rayan 2006; Solska 2022).

Jenkins (2004, 121) for instance, explains the notion of constructing a game narrative as "a story experience established by sculpting game spaces, primary and secondary characters, and character-driven story arcs". In this regard, (Farca 2018) argues that the construction of narratives in video games relies on creating characters and creating special elements the character interacts with, including a spatial environment, objects and other secondary characters that construct the game world, sometimes with no vivid story structure for these characters except for their interactions in these spatial arenas, constructing what is commonly known as the "game world".

Some video games use these spatial arenas as part of the game structure development; for example, some games implement a spatial puzzle as part of the game narrative, where they play the role of game play accelerator, which according to Carr (2009, 4) definition "are areas accessed in turn, and each one comes in a particular arrangement of obstacles, enemies, and potential damage, balanced by a certain number of resources like ammunition, medicine, etc.".

However, some video games do not implement character development much with each new version released of the game; they rather employ new spatial worlds with minimal changes in the storyline if existed; however, it is always the same main character just placed in a new spatial challenge; some notable examples of these games are the *Legends of Zelda, Tomb Raider, Resident Evil and Elder Scrolls.*

The other variable in constructing a game narrative is the characters' design and functionality in the game play. Egenfeldt-Nielsen *et al*. (2019) proposed a certain typography for classifying characters in any game narrative; the first character type is "The "player" character, which is the avatar controlled by the person playing the game. The second type is "The functional" characters, which are designed for a serviceable purpose in the game play like attacking the

main player character and hindering their progress. The third type of characters are "The stage characters", which are usually non playable characters. The fourth type is the "narrative/companion" characters. This classification refers to primary characters that aid and support the player characters in their quest without further involvement in the game play.

Other scholars argue the notion that locative is a part of any narrative structure in the game play, where characters can function as a setting or a tool to other characters in the game, where some characters are placed in the narrative just to function as an accompaniment of the main player; others, are engaged in dialogs with the lead characters to reveal a back story for them or a new goal they must unlock (Kress and van Leeuwen 2020; Toh 2015).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Consalvo and Dutton (2006) provided a descriptive critique arguing that analyzing video games received a lot of attention from scholars and has been debated several times regarding the suitable methodological procedures for analyzing video games. In that matter, scholars studying digital video games have been approaching it from two perspectives: the first approach was analyzing the content of the games , whereas as researchers have argued that video games could be analyzed as any another media format, using textual analysis or ideological analysis to its contents by examining the levels of violence and aggression per say , in addition to the ideological assumptions in the game (Juul 2000; Poblocki 2002). Other scholars, however, focused on examining the portrayals of minorities and women representations in the content of video games (Banks 1998; Heintz-Knowles and Henderson 2002; Kennedy 2002; Kinder 1991; Okorafor and Davenport 2001; Provenzo 1991). The second approach of studying video games focuses on investigating the players of these games, through conducting experimental studies, surveys, in depth interviews and analyzing the chat log between players in the games (Oksman 2002; Sherry et al. 2003; Wright, et al. 2002; Yates and Littleton 2001).

Consequently, Consalvo and Dutton (2006) suggested a methodological approach, referred to as the "Critical game analysis", to test the different variables being analyzed in the qualitative examination of video games, which is examining the meanings, the context, and the intertextual connotations produced. These variables include interface study or the games' interface, object inventory, interaction map and character design. In this respect, a model of analysis that applies   three variables (game interface, game narrative and character design) is drawn upon in the
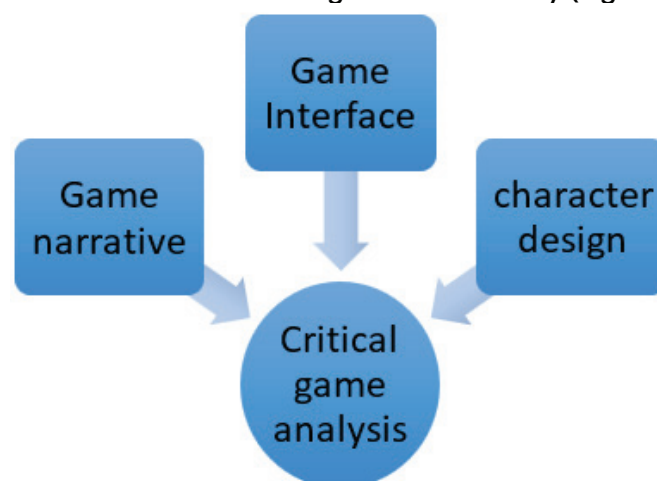
examination of the video games understudy (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Suggested model of analysis

The proposed model relies on three levels of analysis. The mentioned areas of analysis help better understand the dynamics and interactions within the game, in addition to the positioning and representation of the characters within the game through the analysis of the character design. Furthermore, these areas allow for conducting a comparative analysis across the three games under investigation to identify the similarities and differences in patterns applied in the video games.

The first level of analysis consists of comprehending the "Game narrative", which includes analyzing the background story and plot of the game, in addition to analyzing the spatial spaces where the game takes place and players interact. Also, the research examines the narrative design which includes identifying the main characters and the secondary characters in the game. (Carr 2009; Egenfeldt-Nielsen *et al*. 2019; Farca 2018; Jenkins 2004). The second level of analysis is examining the "Character design", including the avatar interface, clothing or "the skins" which is a term that is commonly used in the gaming industry as the clothing of the playing avatars and any added accessories or gadgets that can be added to the custom of the character. In addition to analyzing the weapons used by the main playing characters. (Consalvo 2012). The third level of analysis is the "Game interface", which is according to (Consalvo and Dutton, 2006, 4) "is any on-screen information that provides the player with information concerning the life, health, location, or status of the characters".

For the data analysis, three case studies were examined from Console video games. According to Egenfeldt-Nielsen *et al*. (2019, 7) "console is an electronic device designed for the sole purpose of playing games and often sold without a keyboard like Microsoft (Xbox), Nintendo (Wii) and Sony (PlayStation)". The three video games selected for examination are *Horizon: Forbidden West (2022), Rise*

of the Tomb Raider (2015) and The Last of Us (2013). All three games under investigation are combat based games, where the protagonist rely on her fighting skills and using weapons to fulfill her quest. Finally, the sample selection was also constructed on the game's popularity. The analysis will be conducted in a reverse chronological order.

Although this research does not examine players' interactions, the games popularity was considered based on sales statistics and top ten gaming lists provided by a variety of sources. Furthermore, in order to provide a clear, high resolution, photos from the video games under investigation, the online database of IMDB is drawn upon to retrieve still photos and screenshots from videos on the same data base.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Horizon: Forbidden West

4.1.1 The Game Narrative

As mentioned earlier, the game narrative of a video game is constructed through the analysis of three dimensions: the background story of the main character, the plot of the game, and how characters develop in the gaming sequence and finally the spatial areas which include the missions and events that the player should go through to fulfill the quest of the game.

First, the background Story of *Horizon Forbidden West* is set in a post-apocalyptic world where the land is controlled by animal-like machines, and human civilization has regressed to tribal societies. The protagonist, Aloy, is a female skilled hunter and archer from the Nora tribe who possesses a unique ability to override and control machines. With her skills, Aloy is destined to save her world from these machines and try to restore power to mankind over earth. *Horizon Forbidden West* is the second installation of the first version of the game under the name *Horizon Zero Dwan.*

The plot of this version of the game goes as follows: as Aloy travels a journey through diverse landscapes to reach the mysterious area of the forbidden west, along the way she unravels the secrets of the Old Ones, an ancient civilization that perished long ago during the first apocalypse that destroyed the human civilization. This time, Aloy must walk a new path that takes her to the Forbidden West, a dangerous and unexplored region, where she is trying to save humankind from a deadly plague that could destroy life on Earth.

The third part of the game narrative analysis examines the spatial spaces of the game. As for *Horizon Forbidden West,* the game features an open world

with four diverse environments, each with its own challenges and missions for Aloy to fulfill. The first spatial area is in a place called "Redwood Forest", which is a real location in The United States, California, but it was restructured in the game design to feature ancient trees tower overhead and ruins beneath their roots (Figure 2). In addition, Aloy has to go through an icy wilderness of the "Frostreach" Mountains that test her survival skills (Figure 3). On the contrary, Aloy faces another mission in "The Sunlands" which features a vast desert that she must navigate to progress and complete her mission. The game also includes the underwater area of "Coral Highlands", where Aloy can dive into the water depth to uncover sunken cities and ancient secrets as part of her mission (Figure 4). The variety of locations where Aloy is destined to go through are considered challenges that test her different survival skills.

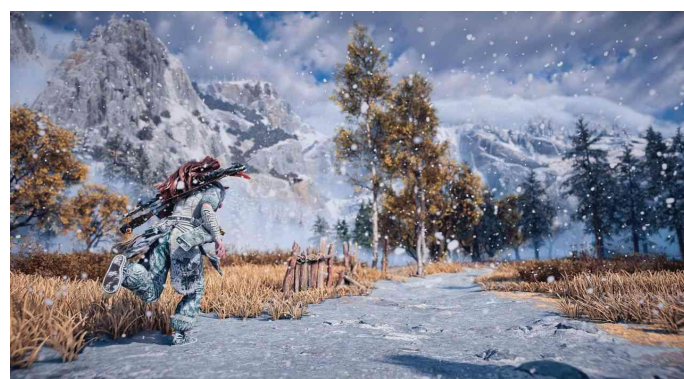
Figure 2: Horizon Forbidden West (2022 Video Game) – IMBD

Figure 3: Horizon Forbidden West (2022 Video Game) – IMBD

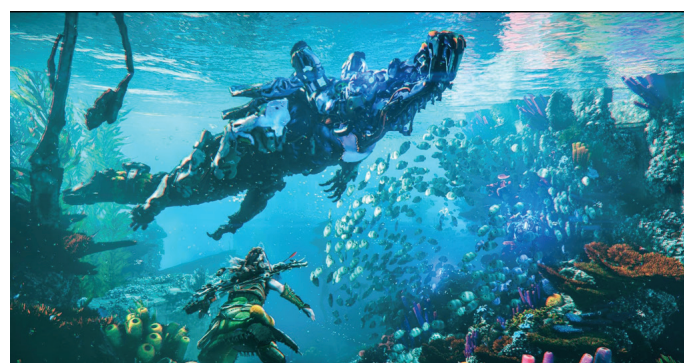*Figure 4: Horizon Forbidden West (2022 Video Game) – IMBD*

4.1.2   The Character Design

The first dimension of the character design analysis is to examine the avatar interface. In that matter, Aloy`s avatar is featured as a young woman with red hair and slightly muscular body (Figure 5). Furthermore, Aloy possesses small facial features that defy the stereotypical image of female characters in video games which depicts them as blond with large, featured bodies as the only way of looking beautiful.
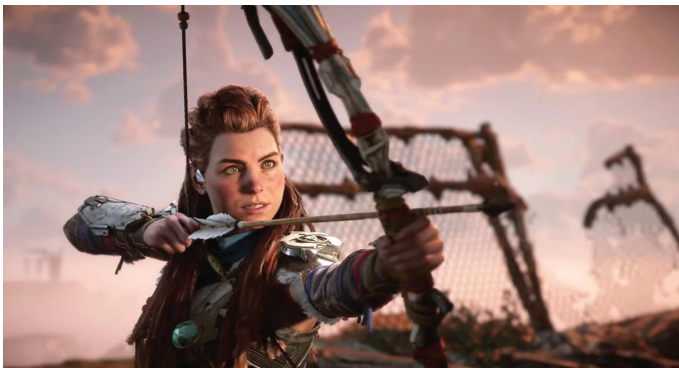

Figure 5. Horizon: Forbidden West (2022 Video Game) – IMBD.

The second dimension of the character design is the skin or the clothes of the character; Aloy is depicted as wearing a tribal outfit with a primal clothing texture that is not revealing her body; the outfit choices in the game are different formats of these tribal outfit (Figure 6).

Figure 6 : Horizon Forbidden West (2022 Video Game) – IMBD.

Third dimension of the character design is the weaponry of the main player; in *Horizon Forbidden West* Aloy's avatar uses primitive weaponry in her mission. The weapon selection reflects the post-apocalyptic world she is living in, where humans are now living in a tribal like communities with primaveral tools, including weapons. However, as the world is being took over by animal like machines, even the primitive weapons are actually explosive and constructed to takeover these machines. She mainly uses the arrow and bow along with a sack of arrows attached to her back. These arrows are actually diversified according to their shooting range and amount of explosive they shoot; the arrows have several names including (*Legacy's Reach, Riv's Downfall, The Gravesinger's Lament and The Forge Fall*). In addition, there are other weapons including a blast forge which releases explosive bolts used to melt the machines and a laser gun.

4.1.3 The Game Interface

Regarding the gaming interface in *Horizon Forbidden West,* the map of the game very clearly displays the four main spatial areas that Aloy must go through to fulfill her quests, her positioning on the map during the game play, as well as the vivid visual display of the life\health of the character. The game interface also featured a visually instructive inventory that the player could easily select from several options in the game play, including the set of skills for Aloy, weapon selection (Figure 7) and skins (clothing), in addition to gadgets and machine animals that she uses for transportation (Figure 8).
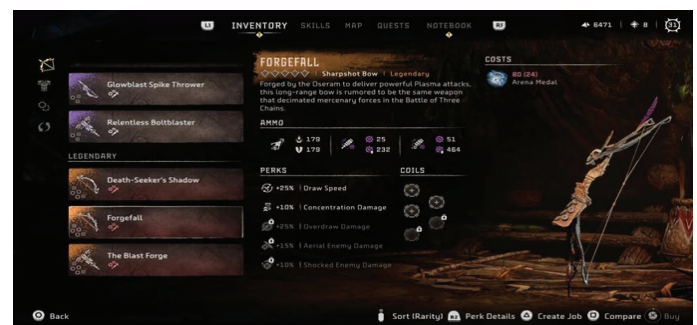

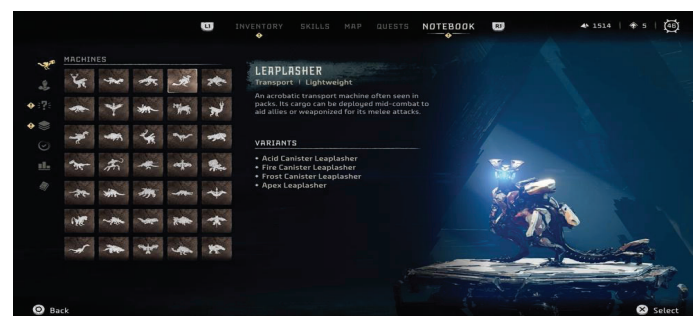Figure 7: Horizon Forbidden West (2022 Video Game) – screenshot.

Figure 8 : Horizon Forbidden West (2022 Video Game) – screenshot.

4.2 Rise of the Tomb Raider

4.2.1 The Game Narrative

The Rise of the Tomb Raider first element of analysis is the game narrative design, that is the background story of the main character. Following the previous versions of the game series, with the main character and player as Lara Croft, an archeologist who is hunting for hidden treasures and secrets while globing the world searching for antiquated tombs. Croft's background story has been always following the paths of her late father, lord Richard Croft, who was a famous archeologist, known for searching for hidden treasures all over the world. This was until he started researching an ancient secret that he lost his life during the search, leaving his daughter several clues that she can follow to continue his search.

Second, the plot of this game demonstrates the journey of Lara croft, where she is following the clues left to her by her late father to find the lost city of "kitzeh", a place that has an ancient tomb that embraces the source of eternal life known as the "Devine source". This time Lara is trying to prove that her father was not a crazy man looking for the source of internal life and that he didn't waste his life on an illusion. In addition, the plot introduces more than one antagonist that she must fight. Essentially the antagonist presented as "Trinity", an evil organization investigating supernatural events and hunting for hidden treasures, has kidnapped her best friend John, so she is racing against time to save him from their hands and reach the Divine source before they get to it. Another antagonist she is combatting is Constantine, who is also looking for the Devine source in order to save his ill sister, Ana. Although he is searching for the source of eternity to save a loved one, he is taking a dark path to fulfill his quest which is trying to kill Croft before she reaches the Devine source before he does.

The third element of analysis in the narrative design is the spatial spaces in the game. For the analysis of this game, the setting was diversified through every stage of the game. At the early stages Lara has to fulfill some missions in a coastal forest. The second stage is in Siberia, which is a place characterized by heavy snow and cold weather, with several mountains and caves she must walk through. The location and weather are with important significance, that they are featured on the main poster of the game, as shown in (Figure 9). This harsh weather and location play the role of some unmatchable odds she has to fight against. Also, the cold weather reflects the emotional status she is in, where she is alone, afraid yet she is embarking on a mysterious journey to defend the lost honor of her father.

In addition, the spatial areas in the main location of Siberia include several locations for various missions in the gameplay. First, she goes through an old Nazi facility, structured as cliffside bunker, and connected Research Base (Figure 10). This area reveals that the "Devine source" was in quest for several years where many groups, including the Nazi, were searching for it, like her father was. The following assignment, she has to go through a mission in an old Soviet research facility, this spatial dimension, like the previous one is highlighting the construction of the "Evil Other". Most American media mainstream signifies the fact that Nazi Germany in the 1940s and the Soviet Union during the 1950s and 1960s are considered the sources of all evil during these times (Bather 2007). For the *Tomb Raider* game, the construction of evil is not different, although there are no Nazi or soviets in the game, their old buildings are still holding and being used by the evil Trinity organization. This manifestation of evil is reflected by highlighting that they are using the old sites of what was considered as the enemy one day. Henceforward, for Croft, this organization with all its members are considered the enemy and she must conquer these locations as a metaphor of conquering those evil countries.

As for Raider's final destination, her mission this time is based in an ancient monastery exhibited in a circular structure with snow covering everything. Moreover, the last spatial area she has to go through is the ancient, buried city of "kitzeh" to fulfill her final quest of finding the divine source. These two locations specifically, reflect the core idea of the *Tomb Raider* game plot, which is invading unknown and mysterious places to find some hidden ancient secrets or treasures. This time her quest is not just for finding a new treasure, she is trying to find a secret that will restore her father's reputation as an honorable archeologist not just a crazy man chasing an illusion.

These remarkable spatial areas and cold weather depicted in *Rise of the Tomb Raider* create a challenging environment for Lara which forces her to constantly adapt to them and manage her resources wisely. In addition to having to fight her enemies for conquering her quest, she is constantly facing the utmost challenge of survival in these harsh surroundings, although her survival skills are still to be tested.
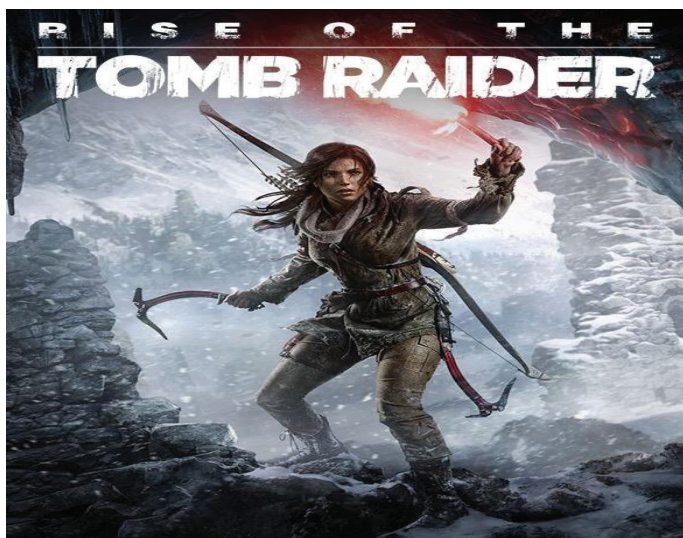
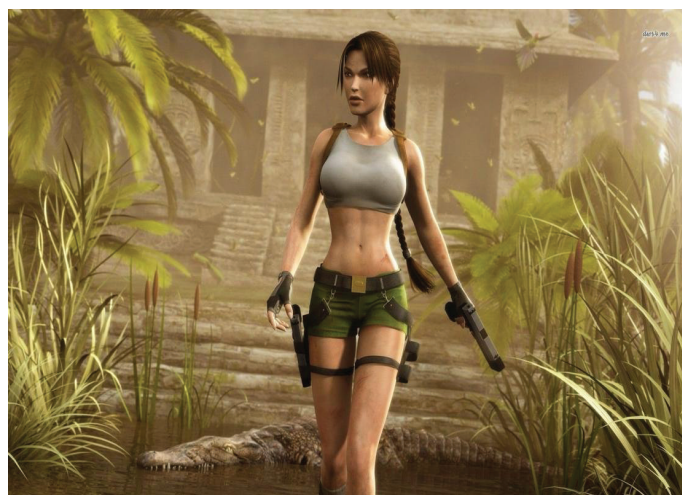Figure 9: Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – Photo Gallery – IMDB

Figure 11 : Tomb Raider: Anniversary (2007 Video Game) – IMDB

However, with latest versions of the gaming series the avatar interface of Lara Croft started to appear with full body clothes or unrevealing outfits. The avatar now appears with brown hair, black eyes, and slightly muscular body (Figure 12). The focus of the character's design is on the various skills of croft, her intelligence and resourcefulness during the gameplay.

Figure 10: Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – Photo Gallery – IMDB

4.2.2 Character Design

As per analyzing the avatar interface of Lara croft, the avatar design of this gaming series went through some remarkable changes across the different releases of the game throughout the years. In the early versions of the tomb raider game, Lara's avatar was sexualized with revealing clothes and a glass hour body shape (Figure 11). Although Croft was characterized as breakthrough in the gaming industry being a female lead protagonist in a combat action/ adventure gaming series, she was also considered a sexual object that can be appealing to the male gaze (Kennedy 2002; MacCallum-Stewart 2014).

Figure 12: Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – screenshot.

http://apc.aast.edu

As per the second level of analysis of the character design in considering the avatar's clothing, the player can select from 19 available outfit selections for Lara's avatar; the colors are all dark: grey, black, green, blue, red, brown and teel (Figure 13). Most of the outfits are covering Lara's full body; she wears a climber outfit that does not reveal her body and the outfit choices in the game are different formats of very practical combat outfits. In addition to the clothes, the avatar is using some gadgets to help her in her missions, such as a glow stick and climbing Axe (Figure 14).
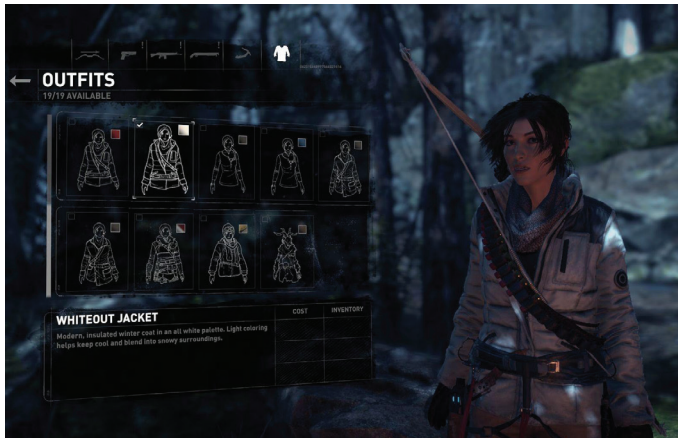
Figure 13: Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – screenshot.

Figure 14: Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – screenshot.

As for the weaponry, the main weapon of this avatar is the arrow and bow along with a sack of arrows attached to her back; there are other weaponry she relies on including a blade and a combat knife. The selection of these weapons is mainly because they are silent weapons used in combat to avoid alerting her enemies, because she is mainly sneaking on people without being seen. These weapons are useful in other close encounters when the ammo is not available with her. There is other weaponry she relies on including rifles, shot gun, handgun, and bombs she uses in the game play for long range combats because of their high shooting range as well as their suitability for holding a large number of ammos when she is fighting a large group of enemies (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – screenshot.

4.2.3 Game Interface

The last level of the narrative analysis in the matter of The Rise of the Tomb Raider is the game interface which contains a very clear display of the character on the map, in addition to displaying the set of skills (Figure 16), weapon selection (Figure 17) and skins (clothing) (Figure 18) for croft' avatar in a very informative visual inventory displaying all the options of the avatar, clothes, weapons and skills for the player to choose from.
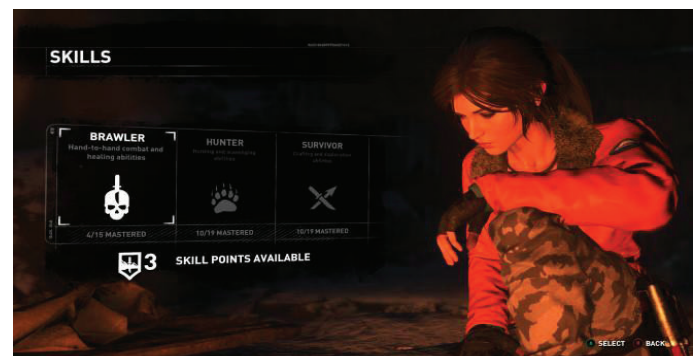

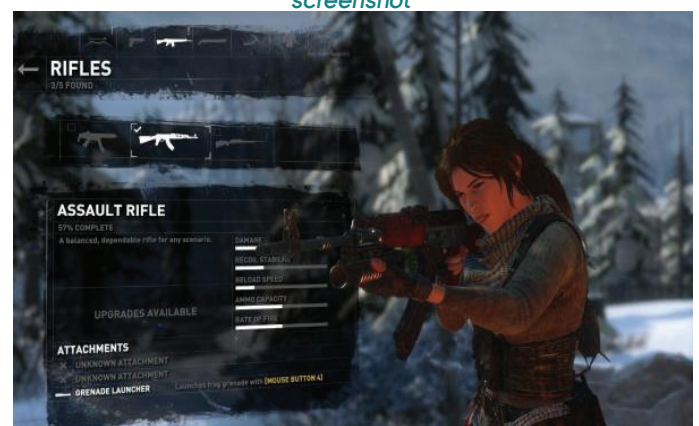*Figure 16 : Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – screenshot*

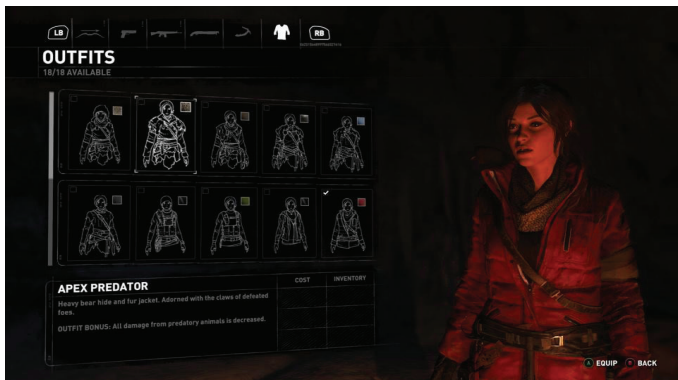*Figure 17: Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – screenshot*

Figure 18: Rise of the Tomb Raider (2015 Video Game) – screenshot

4.3   The Last of Us

4.3.1 The Game Narrative

The second game under investigation, *The Last of Us*, the first level of analysis examines the narrative design of the game, which includes the background story of the game, the main plot of this version of the game and finally the spatial spaces where the events of the game are unfolding.

Regarding the background Story of the game, the main story is set in a post-apocalyptic world that has been destroyed by a fungal outbreak that turns humans into zombies. The main characters of this game are actually two players that have to embark on a journey and fulfill the head quest of the game, which is staying alive by joining their forces and acquiring survival skills. The first protagonist, Joel, is a survivor of this outbreak who has lost everything and now lives as a smuggler in a quarantined zone. The other protagonist is Ellie, a young girl who has not been infected by the fatal disease, she is the only human immune to this disease and may hold the key to a potential cure for it. Their main quest is for Joel to escort Ellie across the country to a group of scientists who are trying to find a cure for this outbreak. During their dangerous journey both protagonists form a father daughter bond that would later become the emotional core of the game.

The plot of the game follows Joel and Ellie as they navigate a treacherous world filled with infected humans who turned into zombies and ruthless survivors. Along the way, they encounter various factions and individuals, each with their own agendas. The plot mainly explores the theme of survival, as Joel and Ellie travel through different spatial areas to reach their final destination. Through their journey, they face numerous challenges, fighting not only infected zombie like creatures, but other hostile survivors who are struggling to eke out a living in such a dystopian world.

The analysis of spatial areas in the game features a variety of spatial areas that serve as both settings for gameplay and storytelling. Ellie and Joel have to travel through cities that have been previously populated and have a counterpart in real life like the cities Boston and Pittsburgh. However, for the game design they are now full of abandoned buildings and deserted areas, where players can use these spaces to hide or collect survival gadgets and weapons, or even engage in a fight with the zombie creatures spreading all over these towns (figure 19). These abandoned areas of once very crowded and lively cities reflect the status of the main characters, where they have to go through the cities, they once lived a normal busy life with people they once knew and loved. They are now forced to walk again through these places, but this time they are trying to survive this dark post-apocalyptic world filled with zombies and aggressive survivors who are trying to kill them as well. Throughout their quest, the two main protagonists take their journey through rural areas, including forests and mountains, where they are isolated and relying on each other to survive this wasteland. These spatial areas reflect the theme of isolation the characters are facing; they only have each other against not only their enemies but against the harsh environment. These spatial area plays a role constructing the main relation between them as they both need each other to survive and complete their journey.

Figure 19: The Last of Us (2013 Video Game) – IMDB

4.3.2 Character Design

With regards to analyzing the character design of Ellie, the protagonist of *The Last of us*, the process will focus on examining the avatar interface, the avatar clothing's or skins and the weaponry she is entitled to use in the game play.

The first level of analysis is the avatar interface; Ellie ` Avatar is a teen aged girl, which is not the common age of protagonists in most video games, especially combat-based games; they usually depict a young lady that suits the male gaze as the main protagonist, but this game is defying this norm by having the main character as a child. Ellie ` Avatar is depicted with brown hair and small facial features and no muscular body which defies the image of the strong women

in video games although she is the key player of a combat game (Figure 20).

Figure 20: The Last of Us (2013 Video Game) – IMDB

The second aspect of analyzing the avatar interface is the clothing of the character; in that matter, Ellie wears a pair of practical jeans and a sweater not revealing her body; the outfit choices in the game are different formats of these practical outfits in different colors, mostly dark colors. In addition, the outfit she is wearing seems to be a little bit dirty and her hair is rather messy, which fits the story line of a girl trying to survive a dying world and doesn't have the time or the resources to dress according to her age. Furthermore, the character is always carrying a backpack where she places her personal stuff, along with her weapons (Figure 22).

Finally, the weapons which the avatar is using during the game are diversified; however, the main weapon she uses is the arrow and bow, along with a sack of arrows attached to her back, in addition to a blade that she uses in combat. These weapons are mainly silent weapons which are used in combat to avoid alerting enemies and other close encounters when the ammo is scarce. Also, there are other weaponry she relies on including a pistol and a sniper which are perfectly used for long range encounters and can hold a large number of ammo (Figure 21).

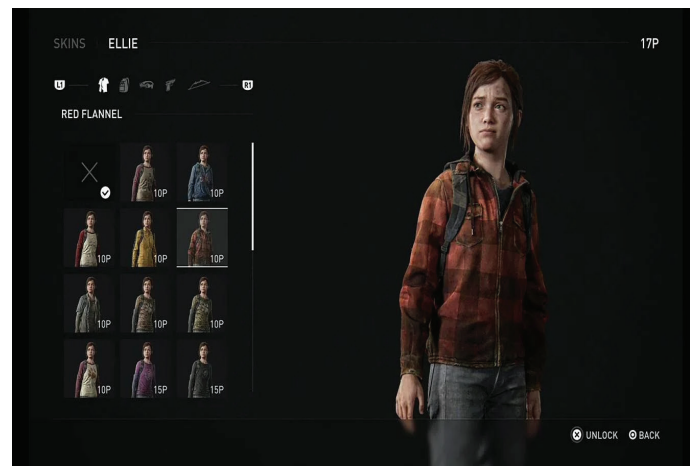*Figure 21: The Last of Us (2013 Video Game) –IMDB*

Figure 22: The Last of Us (2013 Video Game) –IMDB

4.3.3 Game Interface

Analyzing the gaming interface in *The Last of Us* relies on examining the map of the game, where characters appear on the different spatial areas during the game play. In that matter, the map and the location of the main avatars, Ellie, and Joel, are very clear and display the main spatial areas, both the cities and the rural areas, where they have to go through to reach their final destination. In addition, the game play features a clear visual display of the life/health of the characters. The game interface featured a visually instructive inventory, for the weapons sections, clothing/skins of the avatars (Figure 23) and skills acquired by both avatars during the game play.
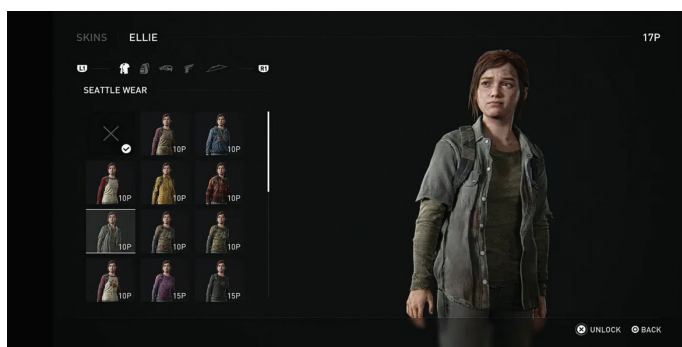
Figure 23: The Last of Us (2013 Video Game) – screenshot

5.   DISCUSSION

For years, female representation in media has been the core of many academic efforts. For most, these representations would reflect the notion of saving the girl. (Dickerman *et al*. 2008; Dietz 1998; Haninger and Thompson 2004). Hence, the main purpose of the research at hand was to analyze the female representation in video games, particularly the transition from the traditional "damsel in distress" narrative to empowered lead roles, which reveals a significant shift in the gaming industry's approach to gender portrayal. In order to challenge that notion and examine the shift in this narrative, this research has employed a qualitative analysis, concentrating on the examination of character design, narrative development, and game interface elements in the three video games; *The Last of Us, Horizon: Forbidden West and Rise of the Tomb Raider* to explore the changing landscape in female representation in video games.

The evaluation of character design of the game protagonists in "The Last of Us" as Ellie, and Aloy in "Horizon: Forbidden West" and finally Lara Croft in the "Rise of the Tomb Raider" illustrates a notable difference from the stereotypical portrayal of the female characters in video games. Meanwhile, the previously employed character designs of female avatars in video games depicted women in revealing clothes, a sexualized body shape. In addition, these female characters were usually engaged in the game as a secondary character or representing the main quest of the game, where the male character must save her (Bell 2013; Demarest 2010; Fulop 2012; Lynch *et al*. 2016; Solis 2017).

Nonetheless, the examination of Ellie, Aloy and Lara Croft, who are the main players of these games, demonstrates a shift in the character design, reflecting a more powerful, slightly muscular avatars, with choices of wardrobe or clothing that fits the environment they are placed in, in addition to equipping these characters with very advanced weaponry and skills to use fearlessly, along with a set of survival skills that reflects their resourcefulness and power.

Furthermore, examining the shift in the narrative design of these games was also an indicator of the shift in the previously mentioned narrative of the damsel in distress. Through analyzing the plot, background story and spatial spaces of the game, the research points out a shift in the story line of the gameplay, where most previous vidoe game narratives displayed the female charters as someone who needs to be saved. (Dickerman *et al*. 2008; Dietz 1998; Haninger and Thompson 2004). However, in the research at hand the game narrative is displaying complex and multifaceted background stories, where both games *The Last of Us and Horizon: Forbidden West* are set in a post-apocalyptic world, where the fate of the main character, who happens to be young resourceful women, obligates her to save the earth from another dooming fate. In addition, the "Rise of the Tomb Raider" story line reflects the journey of another young women who is following a hidden secret to save her late father's reputation and save her best Friend. Moreover, the spatial spaces in the games were very challenging diversified environmental spaces, from a harsh forest and deserted wilderness to cold mountains along with deserted cities with no resources. These spatial areas examined the survival skills of the main characters and challenged their welfare, by placing them into these wildernesses fighting the harsh nature along with fighting for their lives from other hostile creatures, or even fighting malicious humans to remain alive and fulfill the ultimate quest of the game, the narrative of the damsel in distress is now shifted to the damsel is actually saving the day.

6.   CONCLUSION

It is worth noting that this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender representation in video games, emphasizing the importance of the employment of more diverse and empowering narratives of women. Moreover, the research at hand illuminates a progressive transformation in the representation of female characters within the video game medium. The transition from passive roles to empowered leads signifies a departure from traditional gender stereotypes. The analysis of *The Last of Us, Horizon: Forbidden West* and finally *Rise of the Tomb Raider* exemplifies the industry's commitment to showcasing diverse narratives that transcend gender norms.

The comparison of case studies of female characters in the video games under examination emphasizes the wide shift towards portraying female protagonists with depth and agency. As the results suggest, the

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portrayal of female characters is becoming more reflective of the diverse experiences and narratives of women, reflecting how young women would like to see themselves, as strong resourceful human being defying the male gaze complex.

While progress is evident, it is essential to acknowledge that challenges persist; that is why it is recommended for future research to delve into the ongoing developments in video game narratives, examining how the portrayal of women continues to evolve in response to societal shifts and player expectations. For future recommendations for the gaming industry, it is important to point out the potential for more inclusive storytelling and character representation, which offers a promising path towards promoting a gaming environment that resonates with a broad spectrum of players.

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