

# THE PERSPECTIVE AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION OF THE STUDENTS AT VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

Vocational schools form an important part of the vocational education in Turkey. The world is becoming global and the business world needs qualified work force in order to sustain its presence in a competitive environment. In this world in which information and technology are developing quickly, foreign language education has become very important during vocational training to increase employees' professional proficiency level and its sustainability. This study was conducted to determine the perspective and expectations of the students from different departments at Uludađ University İnegöl Vocational School about the importance, weekly hours and methods in foreign language education. Data were collected by interviewing one-to-one with 30 students from different departments. Content analysis and codification method were used to analyse the data. Data analysis has been continuing. The collected data will be discussed in view of the methods of foreign language education applied in Turkey and the students' attitudes and behaviours against foreign language education.

Key words: Foreign language education, Students' attitudes and expectations, Vocational school

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of traditional profession has also changed as a result of the fact that information and technology have developed at an extraordinary speed in our day. Information is now 'the ability of going into action in profession or 'the skill of motivating' (Stehr, 2001). When considered from this point of view,

vocational education should be compatible with the changes in professional life. The analysis of information, the use of it, its transfer to related and necessary fields revealed the importance of a foreign language much more than it was in the past. Global competition will only be maintained by human resources provided with this kind of knowledge and skills. Today's individuals should be able to transfer the acquired skills and competency to the profession life by his/her knowledge with foreign languages. As a result of this, the developed EU countries make a point of increasing the choices in compulsory language education in addition to the regulations which will be able to answer to the international competition in their educational programmes. As in other countries, there are different educational programmes prepared for different professions in our country, too. Since English has become a global language in economic, social, political, artistic, technical and scientific fields in the world, it is also the most important language to be taught as a second language in Turkey. The most important aim in teaching English as a second language in our vocational colleges is to provide students with skills in written and oral communication, and vocational terminology as well. There are some important factors that affect the learning process in a positive or negative way. According to Conteh-Morgan (2002), five important factors affecting the language learning are learners' characteristics, learning process, social context, learning effects and learning conditions. Students' attitudes form an important part in language teaching and learning process. In addition, students' expectations about learning English is another important factor affecting the teaching and learning process. When taken into consideration that students show different attitudes during the learning process according to their individual characteristics (Cotteral, 1999), it is inevitable that learners' characteristics affect the success in learning a foreign language in a positive or negative way. In order to be able to evaluate the students' attitudes and expectations, let us begin with the definition of the term 'attitude'. Attitude is one of the most important factors to initiate learning a second language and the driving force to sustain the long learning process. What should we understand from attitude? How is it formed? Can we change it if it is negative? Latchanna and Dagnev (2009) point out that attitude is accepted as an important concept to understand human behaviour and is defined as mental state that includes beliefs and feelings. According to Brown (2011:6), attitude is characterized by a large proportion of emotional involvement such as feelings, self, relationships in community. He also points out (1994: 168) in his famous work that 'attitudes, like all aspects of the development of cognition and effect in human beings, develop early in childhood and are the result of parents' and peers' attitudes, contact with people who are different in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in the human experience.' According to Chamber (1999), learning occurs more easily, when the student has a positive attitude towards the language and learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972) point out that positive attitudes toward language enhance proficiency as well. What is an expectation? How can it be described? According to the *Oxford Dictionary* (2012), the term of *expectation* refers to 'a strong belief that something will happen or be the case'. Student expectations have been defined

as an important affective variable, especially in the English as a Second language (ESL) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classrooms (Throp 1991; Bordia et al. 2011a, 2011b). Almost everybody accept that expectations impact on student performance, engagement, learning outcomes and overall satisfaction. Bordia et al. (2011a, 2011b) point out that fulfilled or aligned student expectations foster a productive learning environment, while a mismatch between expectations and reality can result in lowered motivation, disengagement and attrition.

The expectations which are not met can have serious implications for students. We should state that unmet expectations can severely affect student behaviour in class and their overall engagement with a course. Bordia et al.'s (2011a) study pointed out that unmet expectations cause a decrease in attendance and performance, effective reactions such as anxiety, nervousness and disappointment, and a lack of engagement with the class, resulting a rebellious behaviour.

To sum up, students' attitudes and expectations about learning a foreign language shape their behaviours towards learning.

### **1.The Aim**

The aim of this research was to investigate the perspective and expectations about foreign language education of the students at vocational higher schools in Turkey. The questions to investigate the students' perspective and expectations were as follows:

1.In your opinion, is foreign language education necessary at vocational higher schools?  
2.Is the teaching of foreign language education sufficient at your school?  
3.What is your opinion about the language teaching at your school (weekly hours, method, material, seating arrangement, etc)  
4.What are your individual efforts in learning English?  
5.If you cannot learn a foreign language or you have difficulties in learning it, what are the reasons in your opinion?  
6.How should the learning and teaching model be in your opinion, etc)

#### **1.1.The Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study was to investigate the perspective and expectations about foreign language education of the students at Uludağ University İnegöl Vocational School.

#### **1.2.Participants**

The participants were the second year students from ten different departments / programmes, the 2015-2016 Academic Year Spring Term, at Uludağ University İnegöl Vocational School.A total of 30 voluntary students (3 students from each department) at the 2015-2016 Academic Year participated in this study.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the interview technique was used and a 10-items interview form developed by using national and international sources related to literature review was used. Within this scope, the students participated in the study were interviewed face-to-face.

### **2.1.Data collection**

In the first part of the interview form, there are questions related to the personal information of the students (gender, the programme where he/she studies, the high school where he/she graduated from, academic standing in foreign language)

- 1-Is foreign language education necessary at vocational schools? Why?
- 2-Do you think that foreign language education sufficient?
- 3-What is your opinion about the education of foreign language at vocational schools?
- 4-Do you make an extra effort to learn a foreign language?
- 5-In your opinion, what are the difficulties in learning or not learning a foreign language?
- 6-In your opinion, what kind of language teaching methods and techniques should be used in language educations at vocational schools?

### **2.2.Data Analysis**

The data obtained by determining the students' opinion and suggestions about foreign language education were analyzed according to main category and subcategories. The content analysis technique was used in analysing the quantitative data obtained through open ended questions. The content analysis enables to analyze the data in depth and to expose the category which is not explicit before and its dimensions. The main object in content analysis is to reach the concepts and relations that will be able to explain the obtained data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). The data obtained through interviews were analyzed at three stages: the identification of the categories, the sampling and the codification (Mayring, 2000). In the study, the main categories and subcategories were presented first, and some examples of the students' opinions obtained through quotations were cited. Since the participants' private professional lives and opinions will come in view, using their names directly is not ethic (Ekiz, 2003). In general, researchers are suggested to change the participants' real names and use nicknames. This is an important way to hide the participants' identities in researches (Patton, cited by Kılıç, 2009: 42). In this study, the direct citations were used to quote the students' opinions by giving a number to each student. Instead of their real names, codifications like student 10, student 20 were used. The students' answers to the questions were coded by two researchers separately. The identified codes were examined by the researcher first, and then by an instructor specialized in her field and educated in data analysis separately, and in the end, the 'agreed' and 'disagreed' codes were identified. Later, necessary arrangements were done. The percentage and frequency values were used in analysing the data.

## **FINDINGS**

In this part, the findings obtained from 30 students from ten different departments at İnegöl Vocational School and the implications related to these findings. When we examined the personal information about the students participated in the research, it was seen that %53,3 of the students were female and %46,7 of them were male. The rate of participation for each department was %10. %13,3 of the students graduated from common high school, %10 of them graduated from technical high school, %73,4 of them graduated from vocational high school, %3,3 of the students graduated from religious vocational high school.

‘1-The question, ‘Is foreign language education necessary at vocational schools? Why?’ was accepted as the main category. The categories obtained from the analysis and the subcategories were indicated in Table 1 and 1.1.

**Table 2. The necessity of foreign language education at vocational schools**

	F	%
Absolutely necessary	7	<b>23,3</b>
Necessary	23	<b>76,6</b>
Total	30	<b>100,0</b>

When Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that the ‘necessary’ category has the highest frequency.

**Table 1.1. The reasons for the necessity of teaching a foreign language at vocational schools**

	f	%
To be succesful at work	12	<b>40</b>
For professional development	19	<b>63,3</b>
To apply for a job	3	<b>10,0</b>
To communicate with people from other countries	11	<b>36,6</b>
To go abroad	4	<b>13,3</b>

When Table 1.1 is examined, it can be seen that the ‘For Professional development’ category has the highest frequency.

**Table 3. Accepting the teaching of foreign language at vocational schools**

	F	%
Sufficient	3	<b>10,0</b>
Partly sufficient	1	<b>3,3</b>
Insufficient	26	<b>86,6</b>
Total	30	<b>100</b>

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that the ‘insufficient’ category has the highest frequency.

The interview question, 'What is your opinion about teaching a foreign language at vocational schools' was accepted as the main category and the obtained categories and subcategories were shown at Table 3.

**Table 3. The opinion and suggestions about foreign language education at vocational schools**

<b>About weekly hours</b>	f	%
Weekly hours are not sufficient	22	<b>73,4</b>
Weekly hours are sufficient	8	<b>26,6</b>
Total	30	<b>100</b>
<b>About curriculum</b>		
Only basic foreign language is taught.	14	<b>46,7</b>
Advanced level language is not taught.	3	<b>10,0</b>
Vocational foreign language is not taught.	3	<b>10,0</b>
Foreign language is taught at the same level even though students have different level of language	2	<b>6,6</b>
<b>About methods and techniques</b>		
Speaking is not sufficient	17	<b>56,6</b>
Vocabulary teaching is not sufficient	3	<b>10,0</b>
There are not exchange programmes	1	<b>3,3</b>
<b>About materials</b>		
Motivating materials are insufficient	15	<b>50</b>
<b>About seating order</b>		
There is not a classroom for foreign language education	15	<b>50</b>
Classes are crowded	7	<b>23,3</b>
<b>About teaching staff</b>		
They are not sufficient to motivate students	4	<b>13,3</b>
He/She is not regular in teaching	1	<b>3,3</b>

When Table 3 is examined, it can be seen that 'weekly hours are not sufficient' subcategory is the most frequent among 'Opinions about weekly hours' category. Two students' opinions related to the 'About weekly hours' subcategory were given below: '*Weekly hours should be more. While organizing weekly hours, the departments should be taken into consideration. (Student 28).*' '*Weekly hours should be more to have a face-to-face class. (Student 29).*

The interview question 'Do you make an extra effort to learn a foreign language?' was accepted as the main category. The categories obtained from the analysis were shown at Table 4 and 4.1.

**Table 4. The determination of the efforts related to learning a foreign language**

	f	%

I don't make any individual effort	14	<b>46,7</b>
I make some individual effort	16	<b>53,3</b>
<b>Total</b>	30	<b>100</b>

When Table 4 is examined, it can be seen that the 'I make some individual effort' category has the most frequency.

**Tablo 4.1 Individual efforts to learn a foreign language**

	f	%
I am taking private courses.	1	<b>3,3</b>
I make use of the Internet (online) sites	8	<b>26,6</b>
I study grammar.	2	<b>6,6</b>
I watch foreign movies.	7	<b>23,3</b>
I listen to foreign songs.	2	<b>6,6</b>
I try to learn vocabulary.	6	<b>20,0</b>
I translate.	2	<b>6,6</b>

When Table 4.1 is examined, it can be seen that the 'I make use of the Internet (online) sites' has the most frequency. In your opinion, what are the difficulties in learning or not learning a foreign language? category was accepted as the main category. The categories obtained from the analysis and subcategories were shown at Table 5.

**Table 5. The reasons of having difficulties in learning /not learning a foreign language**

	f	%
<b>About weekly hours and curriculum</b>		
Insufficiency of weekly hours	2	<b>6,6</b>
Only basic foreign language is taught	5	<b>16,6</b>
<b>About methods and techniques</b>		
Only grammar-based education	1	<b>3,3</b>
Insufficient speaking education	10	<b>33,3</b>
<b>About students</b>		
Insufficiency of the students' background	8	<b>26,6</b>
Low motivation	11	<b>36,6</b>
Prejudice towards learning a foreign language	6	<b>20,0</b>
<b>About teaching staff</b>		
Insufficiency in motivating students	4	<b>13,3</b>
Insufficiency in teaching	7	<b>23,3</b>

When Table 5 is examined, the subcategories having the most frequency are as follows: The ‘Low motivation’ category under the category ‘About students’ is the most frequent. This is followed by the ‘Insufficient speaking education’ category under the ‘Methods and techniques’ category. After this, it is seen the ‘Insufficiency in teaching’ subcategory under the ‘About teaching staff’ category. Some examples supporting the subcategories at the most frequency (after interviewing with the students) are as follows: Here are two students’ opinions about the ‘About students’ subcategory are given below. ‘*We are not eager to learn a foreign language. We have some prejudices. Our motivation to learn a foreign language is very low. (Student 20). Loss of motivation is the most important factor to learn’ (Student 23).*

Two students’ opinions related to the ‘About methods and techniques’ subcategory are given below: ‘*Weekly hours are not sufficient. There are a lot of students in the classrooms. Materials are not sufficient and there are no extra activities and project works. (Student 5).*

The interview question, ‘In your opinion, what kind of language teaching methods and techniques should be used in language educations at vocational schools?’ was accepted as the main category. The items that should take place in the model related to foreign language education according to the students were shown at Table 6.

**Table 6. What kind of language teaching method?**

<b>Prep Class</b>	f	%	Toplam
Prep class is necessary	24	<b>80</b>	100
Prep class is not necessary	6	<b>20,0</b>	100
<b>Total</b>	30	<b>30</b>	100
<b>About weekly hours</b>			
Language education should be given every year	1	<b>3,3</b>	100
There should be more weekly hours	7	<b>23,3</b>	100
<b>About curriculum</b>			100
Vocational foreign language education should be given at each department	9	<b>30</b>	100
Classes should be arranged according to the students’ level	2	<b>6,6</b>	100
In addition to English, other foreign languages should be taught too	1	<b>3,3</b>	100
<b>About methods and techniques</b>			
Teaching speaking should be of top priority	12	<b>40</b>	100
Face-to-face education should be of top priority	1	<b>3,3</b>	100
<b>About teaching materials</b>			
Motivating materials should increase	5	<b>16,6</b>	100
<b>About class seating order</b>			

A private language classrom should be prepared	3	<b>10,0</b>	100
There should be less students in classrooms	1	<b>3,3</b>	100
<b>About teaching staff</b>			
The qualityof the teachers should increase	3	<b>10,0</b>	100
Native speaker teachers should give speaking classes	1	<b>3,3</b>	100

When Table 6 is examined, it can be seen that the 'Prep class is necessary' category under the 'Prep Class' category is the most frequent. After this is the 'Teaching speaking should be of priority' subcategory under the 'Methods and Techniques' category.

Two students' opinions related to the 'Prep class is necessary' subcategory are given below: 'Prep class should absolutely be organised for some departments. (Student 4). 'A certain educational model should be organized by taking the teachers' quality and our level determined according to a level exam.' (Student 2).

Two students' opinions related to the 'Teaching speaking should be of priority' subcategory under the 'About methods and techniques' category are given below: 'Speaking should be of priority, face-to-face activities should be organized. (Student 8). 'Vocabulary and daily expressions should be taught. There should be a language laboratory at school. (Student 20).

Also, from these results, it can be deduced that almost all the students suggest vocational language classes according to their departments and that weekly hours should be more than now. It can also be said that prep class is very important and vocational language education should be taught through a suitable curriculum according to the students.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this research carry implications for teaching staff and school managers especially within domestic universities. The primary implication for university and school managements concerns their awareness of student expectations about language teaching at vocational schools. Most of the students think that language teaching at vocational schools is necessary but weekly hours are not enough for them. They also think that learning English in a prep class will be more useful so they will be able to acquire reading, writing, listening and speaking skills better. Since organizing a prep class depends on the regulations about higher education, the school managements have sometimes difficulties to open it. In that case, most of the students think that weekly hours can be increased and vocational English courses should be increased. In other words, almost all the students think that English courses should be given in each semester. The second implication for university teaching staff concerns the students' expectations about teaching methods and techniques. Almost all the students agree that learning English is not only learning its grammar but also learning how to speak. Teaching grammar is not teaching a language through grammar translation method. A language includes the four skills which are reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students want to

learn how to speak and write (for example an e-mail at work), not only to learn its grammar. As a result, the teaching staff should take the students' expectations about speaking and writing skills and revise their teaching methods and techniques. The third implication is about materials used during English classes. According to most of the students, using materials increasing motivation such as visual materials, listening materials, subtitled simple films, games, etc will help to learn English better. The fourth implication is about classroom seating order. When the students in an English class sit in a normal class order, they usually see their classmates' backs and they generally can't see their teachers especially sitting at the back rows. Another problem is that, according to them, there are a lot of students in the classrooms. Almost all the students think that a language class should be organized in U-seating form and the number of students in a class should not be high. The last implication concerns the teaching staff quality. Most of the students think that language teachers should be better qualified. Some of them think that native speaker teachers can be more useful if some of the courses are given by them.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implications of unmet student expectations can have negative consequences for a language course. Unmet expectations can impact on variables such as motivation, performance, engagement, student satisfaction and feedback. Since the primary primary expectation about language courses is the the number of courses in a week, the school manager should take this into consideration. If possible, they should organize prep classes especially for students at foreign trade, marketing and business management departments; if not, they should increase weekly hours so that students can practice the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) at school in a sufficient way. They also put vocational English courses in curriculum at third and fourth semesters. Vocational English courses should also be given to students at each semester and especially vocational terminology should be taught them. In addition to teaching grammar and reading, listening, speaking and writing skills should also be given importance during educational process. Teaching staff should be given seminars about how to teach speaking and writing at some periods. Teaching staff should choose the suitable and motivating materials for teaching. The seating order should be U-form so that students can communicate with their teacher and classmates easily since it is one of the most important elements for a face-to-face education.

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# DOES A VENTING OUTLET EXIST VIA FAVORITE ONLINE GAMES? THE MODERATING ROLE OF THERAPEUTIC CATHARSIS SEEKING ON AGGRESSION

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## ABSTRACT

Evidence from empirical research on players' aggression suggests that playing violent games does not increase aggression. Therefore, we conducted a study on aggression tendencies among various types of online game players engaged in violent and non-violent games by including mental and psychological health aspects. We examined mental therapeutic care factors (therapeutic catharsis seeking) in combination with psychological factors (independent and interdependent self-construal) and problem factors (depression and loneliness) in relation to players' aggression. The results showed that therapeutic catharsis seeking was particularly important for the players not only because their aggressive tendencies greatly decreased but also because it revealed interaction effects between depression and loneliness, which can be extended beyond the game therapy area. This study thus makes novel contributions by revealing therapeutic mechanisms through online players' internal factors.

Keywords: aggression, therapeutic catharsis seeking, self-construal, depression, loneliness

## I. INTRODUCTION

Aggression is typically defined as a behavior that is intended to harm others (Averill 1983; Baron & Richardson, 1994). Although the levels of aggression appear to vary in our daily lives, human aggression is an inevitable natural occurrence (Lorenz, 1963; McCall & Shields, 2008). Over the last decades, research about players' enhanced aggression based on the General Aggression Model (GAM) has dominated the literature (Anderson and Carnagey 2004), but recently, opposing opinions have begun to emerge. Many scholars argue that the GAM does not appropriately explain aggression and especially fails to explain players' aggressive tendencies in the violent game context (Bushman and Whitaker 2010); (Denzler, Hafner, and Forster 2011); (Ferguson and Kilburn 2010); (Ferguson and Dyck 2012) (Ferguson 2007).

Furthermore, even though aggression is regarded as a severe risk to our mental health (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002) previous literature in media research regarding aggression has revealed that aggression does not predict violent behavior or physically or psychologically aggressive tendencies (Bushman & Whitaker, 2010; Ferguson & John, 2010; Ferguson et al., 2014; (Sherry 2007)). Numerous studies demonstrate that playing games can serve as a means of mood repair (Przybylski, Rigby, and Ryan 2010); Russoniello, O'Brien, & Parks, 2009) and alleviate aggression, particularly when playing violent games (Bushman & Whitaker, 2010; Denzler et al., 2011). Both aspects of playing games can foster

therapeutic relaxation in the form of outburst experiences that can extend to daily lives. This assumption is generally associated with the catharsis effect. It is time to look at this issue from new and different angles (Ferguson & Dyck, 2012). Thus, we aim to study the potential of games as a therapeutic venting outlet based on the catharsis perspective of aggression.

Many people can play together online without boundaries between nations and languages. The virtual area around some of these online games is huge, equivalent to the size of a large city or even a small nation (Webber, 2014). Similar to the real world, the behavior in online games converges on a consensus about what the players want and what they do not want, that is, they construe their own behavioral norms. Players' practices take place within the framework of these norms and may meet with other players. Players may express these norms privately within the game or through a more direct exercise of power, such as obstruction or combat, with the result that the players' aggression may be affected by the level of catharsis seeking, self-construal, depression, and loneliness.

To the best of our knowledge, no prior study has examined mental therapeutic care factors (therapeutic catharsis seeking) together with psychological factors (independent and interdependent self-construal) and problem factors (depression and loneliness) with respect to players' aggression. This study thus aims to make novel contributions by revealing therapeutic mechanisms through which online players might seek stress relief or vent aggressive energy via favorite game playing. Findings from this study will also help game-related researchers and practitioners to develop better strategies for addressing important therapeutic internal factors that contribute to aggression.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Therapeutic catharsis seeking as a mental health care predictor. The concept of catharsis has had a long history and created interest in philosophy, for example, in Aristotle's *Poetics VI* (Aristotle, trans. 1987) and behavioral sciences (Lorenz 1963). The catharsis hypothesis posits that acting aggressively, or even viewing aggression, is an effective way to vent aggressive feelings, anger, and frustrations. Catharsis is defined as "the verbal or non-verbal expression of intense affect associated with a coherent narrative of experience that provides relief of chronic anxiety states" (Chefetz, 1997). This definition describes an emotional release from repressed negative feelings through vicarious experiences, which is reflected in game characteristics such as interactivity, narrative, social use, and provision of specific experiences (Klimmt 2009).

The uses and gratifications (U&G) theory posits that individuals use certain media to satisfy specific needs (Davis and Baran 2006). In line with this notion, playing a favorite game could be a useful tool to satisfy certain desires and needs of players. (McGonigal 2011) suggested that some of the most positive emotional experiences are induced in the context of playing games. Several studies have shown a relation between playing favorite games and enhanced mood, and how a negative emotion can be turned into positive emotion. Colwell (2007) (Colwell 2007) identified popular reasons for playing games among adolescents, which included companionship, fun, and stress relief. These results emphasized players' needs and desires for ameliorating negative mood as reasons for playing games. (Przybylski, Rigby, and Ryan 2010) suggested that the motivations for game playing are associated with the potential to satisfy basic psychological needs. (Russoniello, O'Brien, and Parks 2009) found that playing games could enhance players' moods, boost relaxation, and alleviate anxiety. Therefore, gaming activities allow the players to express their current feelings and intervene with a negative mental or physiological situation.

Several recent studies have challenged the catharsis theory in regard to violent games. Kutner and Olson (2008) found that violent games help many players "get their anger out." Continuing research also reports that players respond less aggressively and feel calmer after playing violent video games. Likewise,

Ferguson et al. (2014) found that violent video games are suitable for players that want to seek catharsis. Under experimental conditions, Bushman and Whitaker (2010) nevertheless reported that the catharsis theory was false, and that belief in catharsis partially supports players' experience of blowing off steam through violent games. Taken together, playing violent games may be understood as a means of stress reduction. From this perspective, it would be expected that individuals with mental health problems, which include aggression triggered by the stress in their daily lives, would be more inclined to use games to reduce stress. Likewise, (Reinecke 2009) identified that playing games after stressful events helps reduce stress because playing games is effective in alleviating stress by activating the nervous system and increasing positive mood (Russoniello et al., 2009). Furthermore, Allahverdipour et al. (2010) (Allahverdipour et al. 2010) suggested that individuals playing certain games improved mental health outcomes compared to non-gamers.

These findings suggest that the catharsis aspect needs to be examined more deeply and include not only violent games but various types of games. Moreover, previous studies suggest that the catharsis effects in game studies need to be examined in a broader game use context (Bandura 1973); Denzler et al., 2011; Ferguson et al., 2014). Therefore, we attempted to extend this assumption by adding accessible games irrespective of game form and genre (e.g., role-playing games, action or fighting games, adventure games, sport games, and shooting games) by including violent and non-violent games. We assumed that games, as a favorite leisure activity of people, would be influenced by catharsis seeking in the way of psychological healing. In line with this notion, we combine these therapeutic aspects and catharsis seeking with other mental health perspectives. Thus, we propose that playing favorite games encompassing a wide range of game genres affects therapeutic catharsis seeking.

Role of independent and interdependent self-construal. Self-construal can be defined as thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of heterogeneous individuals from a homogenous group (Markus and Kitayama 1991; Markus and Nurius 1986). People see themselves as similar or distinct to others depending on how they view themselves based on the embodied self-concept. Cultural norms, personal values, and attitude all have an effect on individuals' self-construal, as well as cognitive performances, social interactions, emotions, and motivations of individuals (Markus and Nurius 1986). In that games become part of the culture and cognitive leisure activity, players' aggression could be affected by their self-construal.

The self-construal is divided into two types: independent and interdependent. The concept of independent self-construal refers to an individual's higher level of autonomy, uniqueness, and self-expression. Individuals who use more independent self-construal are likely to describe themselves in relation to their distinctive values and preferences. In particular, these individuals are psychologically more stable despite a changing social context than individuals relying on interdependent self-construal. In contrast, the interdependent self-construal highlights the social role and relationship to others. These individuals tend to be more cooperative and supportive (van Baaren et al. 2003).

With regard to game playing, players face various options during the process of playing. In these contexts, the decision-making, problem solving, and reasoning inherent in the game are all affected by different self-construal mechanisms, depending on whether an individual uses independent or interdependent self-construal from the perspective of aggressive thinking. In other words, players' thoughts involved in in-game events or activities can be either independent or interdependent since people mentally construe such events differently in accordance with their own perspectives.

According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), self-construal could lead to different cognitive experiences and emotional responses. Since playing games can be affected by thoughts and feelings, self-construal of

the players within a game might influence the degree of the players' aggression. Furthermore, gaming worlds require more active involvements with the players' own role and interpretation. Thus, we suspect that players' independent and interdependent self-construal will influence the degree of aggression in the context of the game environment.

Psychological problem factors: depression and loneliness. Mood management theory posits that people naturally peruse positive moods and avoid negative moods. When an event induces a negative mood, such as loneliness and depression, people are willing to reverse that feeling. Likewise, (Nabi et al. 2008) found that people with depressed mood seek out strategies that best allow them to enhance their feelings in a positive way. Thus, individuals may depend on playing favorite games to alleviate negative feelings or meet their needs for control that cannot be fulfilled in reality because gaming allows them to satisfy certain desires. In other words, some individuals might use these means to cope with loneliness and depression.

Loneliness refers to an unpleasant experience that is derived from the lack of a social network (Peplau et al. 1982). Feelings of loneliness may result from unfulfilled desires and gaps between one's actual and desired social position. Thus, it is highly probable for these individuals to indulge in playing games to fill the deficiency in social ties. Particularly, playing online games is the best way to socialize and avoid feelings of loneliness for such individuals (Griffiths and Meredith 2009).

Depression is defined as "feelings of sadness, diminished interest in activities, fatigue and diminished ability to think or concentrate, indecisiveness, recurrent thoughts of death" according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed., text rev, DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 366). (Dillman Carpentier et al. 2008) found that depressed adolescents tend to pursue violent content, and that such media may boost their depressed mood. This implies that depression also involves lethargy and aggression, and playing favorite games in particular may offer an environment for venting negative feelings.

In line with findings from previous studies, we predict that players' aggression will decrease along with depressive mood and loneliness because of mood change tendencies. Moreover, as aggression decreases, loneliness and depression should also decrease because of the ripple effect showing mood contagion (Barsade 2002). Furthermore, assuming that this effect exists, it would be interesting to examine if these psychological problem factors have moderating effects on therapeutic catharsis seeking.

### **III. METHOD**

#### ***3.1. Data Collection***

We conducted an online survey among Korean online game players over two weeks. The study was conducted by the Hankook Research Company (<http://www.hrc.co.kr/>), which is one of the major research companies in Korea. Participants were randomly recruited from Seoul, the capital city. The age of respondents varied between 16 and 59 years ( $M = 35.5$ ,  $SD = 11.5$ ). A total of 918 participants, including 532 (58%) males and 386 (42%) females, took part in this study. All the participants were asked by e-mail to complete an online questionnaire. To allow choice of the favorite game, various options about different types of games were presented, including arcade, console, solo play on computer, and online games. The respondents were informed beforehand that they had to be currently involved in game playing or had played a game within the past 6 months. After selecting the variables significantly correlated with aggression, we used a regression analysis to examine how each variable affected aggression. All analyses were conducted in SPSS version 18.

### **3.2. Research Instruments**

To measure aggression, we used the Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) (Buss and Perry 1992). The AQ is one of the most extensively used self-report measures of aggression. The 29-item scale is composed of four subscales: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. A 5-point Likert scale is used for the questionnaire ranging from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic of me) to 5 (extremely characteristic of me) ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

For therapeutic catharsis seeking, we created a scale by combining both Ferguson's catharsis seeking scale (Ferguson et al., 2014) and the Therapeutic Realizations Scale-Revised (TRS-R) (Kolden et al. 2000) to measure an individual's degree of therapeutic catharsis seeking by adding "gaming" and "therapeutic aspects" to the questions (Lee, Jeong, & Kim, 2016) (e.g., "I think that gaming helps me relieve my stress," "I think that gaming helps me share my joys and sorrows," and "I think that gaming helps me feel satisfied."). The scale consists of 20 items in the form of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

Self-construal was measured with the independent ( $\alpha = .792$ ) and interdependent ( $\alpha = .845$ ) subscales of the Self-Construal Scale developed by (Singelis 1994). Each subscale consists of six items. The response to each item uses a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Depression was measured with the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D). A screening version of the CES-D consists of a subset of the 11-item CES-D scale and has been used extensively in general populations (Hann, Winter, and Jacobsen 1999). The scale items ask about the degree of sadness, gloominess, and so forth ( $\alpha = 0.74$ ) and are rated from 1 to 4 according to how often the symptoms are present (1 = never/rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, and 4 = very often) ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

Loneliness was measured with the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell 1996). The scale consists of 20 items designed to measure one's subjective feelings of loneliness as well as feelings of social isolation. The items are rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ).

In order to measure game genre, the participants were asked for details about what their favorite game of all time was (e.g., adventure games, sport games, social games, action or fighting games, shooting games, role playing games, simulation games, web board games, physics simulation games).

## **IV. RESULTS**

### **4.1. Descriptive Analysis**

The average duration of online gaming time each day was 86 minutes (SD = 1.55), with men playing for 91 minutes (SD = 1.59) and women for 79 minutes (SD = 1.50). Considering the ratio of each age group, 65 (7.1%) were teens, 246 (26.8%) were in their 20s, 246 (26.8%) were in their 30s, 228 (24.8%) were in their 40s, and 133 (14.5%) were in their 50s. The average aggression score was 3.38 (SD = 0.53). The average level of therapeutic catharsis seeking was 2.62 (SD = 0.72). The average level of independent self-construal was 3.10 (SD = 0.69) and interdependent self-construal was 3.56 (SD = 0.53). The average depression score was 1.83 (SD = 0.42). The average violent games score was 2.55 (SD = 0.44). The average loneliness score was 2.19 (SD = 0.31).

Regarding the ratio of each game type, violent games represented 48% while non-violent games represented 52% of reported games. Demographic factors, scoring of the different measures, and corresponding means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Measures and Descriptive Statistics**

	Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	0 = female 1 = male		
Age group	1 = teens 2 = 20s 3 = 30s 4 = 40s 5 = 50s	3.12	1.16
Daily online gaming time	Minutes	86.50	1.39
Game type	1 = Violent games (Lineage, StarCraft, The King of Fighters, Rainbow Six, Quake) 2 = Non-violent games (Tetris, Anipang for Kakao, SimSE Online, SimCity, Korean chess)	1.52	0.49
Aggression	1-5 (low-high)	3.38	0.53
Independent self-construal	1-5 (low-high)	3.10	0.69
Interdependent self-construal	1-5 (low-high)	3.56	0.53
Therapeutic catharsis seeking	1-5 (low-high)	2.62	0.72
Depression	1-4 (low-high)	1.58	0.52
Loneliness	1-4 (low-high)	2.55	0.44

**Table 2 Correlations between Variables**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. AG	1									
2. TCS	-.290**	1								
3. INDI	-.250**	.230**	1							
4. INTER	.113**	.027	.108**	1						
5. DEPREE	-.404**	.150**	.074*	-.033	1					
6. LONE	-.429**	.099**	.093**	-.117**	.407**	1				
7. OGT	-.200**	.328**	.096**	-.067	.171**	.154**	1			
8. GT	-.004	.027	.069	-.022	.056	.007	.015	1		
9. GEN	.082*	-.180**	-.073*	-.071*	.044	.105**	-.140**	-.087*	1	
10. AGE	.088**	-.152**	-.177**	.112**	-.149**	-.067*	-.277**	-.238**	.052	1

Note. AG = Aggression; TCS = therapeutic catharsis seeking; INDI = independent self-construal; INTER = interdependent self-construal; DEPREE = depression; LONE = loneliness; OGT = online gaming time; GT = game type; GEN = gender; AGE = age. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

#### 4.2. Correlation Analysis

To examine the relationship between variables, we employed a Pearson correlation analysis using the SPSS statistical software (see Table 2). The analysis compared players' therapeutic factor (therapeutic catharsis seeking), two psychological factors (independent and interdependent self-construal), two psychological problem factors (depression, loneliness), and demographic variables (age, gender) and game type.

The analyses identified a significant negative relationship between therapeutic catharsis seeking and aggression ( $r = -.290$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Independent self-construal showed a negative association with players' aggression ( $r = -.250$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while interdependent self-construal showed a positive association with players' aggression ( $r = .113$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Psychological problem factors, such as depression ( $r = -.404$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and loneliness ( $r = -.429$ ,  $p < .01$ ), were also significantly and negatively correlated with players' aggression. Online gaming time showed a negative association with players' aggression ( $r = -.200$ ,  $p < .01$ ) while game type did not show any association with players' aggression. Both gender ( $r = .082$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and age showed a positive association with players' aggression ( $r = -.076$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while age showed a positive association with players' aggression ( $r = .088$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

#### 4.3. Regression Analysis

Table 3 shows the results of the regression analysis for the different variables. Regarding therapeutic factors, the players' catharsis seeking was an important predictor for the degree of aggression. Players who reported higher levels of therapeutic catharsis seeking had a significantly decreased degree of aggression ( $\beta = -.207$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Independent self-construal showed a significantly negative effect on players' aggression ( $\beta = -.140$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while interdependent self-construal showed a positive effect on aggression ( $\beta = .121$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The stronger the independent self-construal of the players, the lower the degree of aggression; while the stronger the interdependent self-construal, the higher the degree of aggression.

For the factors of psychological problems, interestingly, both depression ( $\beta = -.187$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and loneliness ( $\beta = -.279$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were significant negative predictors for the degree of aggression. However, we could not find any significant relationships between online gaming time and game type and players' aggression. With respect to demographic variables, gender showed a positive effect ( $\beta = .076$ ,  $p < .05$ ) while age did not show any significant effects on aggression.

**Table 3. Regression Analysis and Interaction Effects**

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	t	p-value	Collinearity statistics	
	B	$\beta$			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	119.351		21.232	.000		
Therapeutic catharsis seeking	-.213***	-.207***	-5.259	.000	.847	1.180
Independent self-construal	-1.446***	-.140***	-3.648	.000	.896	1.116
Interdependent self-construal	.547**	.121**	3.234	.001	.932	1.072
Depression	-.571***	-.187***	-4.660	.000	.813	1.230
Loneliness	-.636***	-.279***	-6.857	.000	.795	1.258
Online gaming time	-.278	-.031	-.784	.433	.841	1.189
Game type	.138	.038	1.018	.309	.932	1.073
Gender	1.832*	.076*	2.027	.043	.925	1.081
Age	-.046	-.043	-1.094	.274	.842	1.188
Durbin-Watson = 2.193 R square = .272 ( $p < .001$ ) * $p < .05$ , ** $p < .01$ , *** $p < .001$						
Interaction effects						
TCS $\times$ depression	-3.194**	-.464**	-2.738	.006	.045	22.240
TCS $\times$ loneliness	3.625*	.533*	2.274	.023	.024	42.429
Durbin-Watson = 2.164 R square = .284 ( $p < .001$ ) * $p < .05$ , ** $p < .01$ , *** $p < .001$						

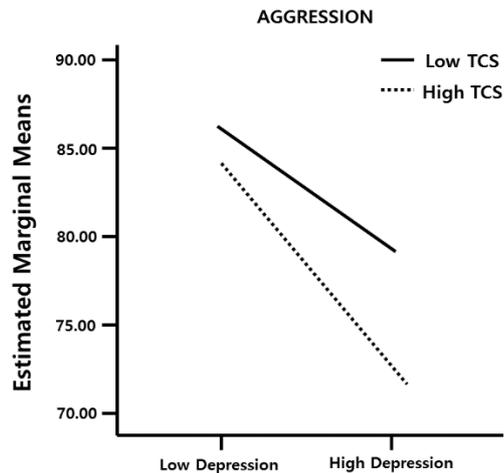
Note. TCS = therapeutic catharsis seeking; VIF = variance inflation factor.

#### 4.4. Interaction Effects

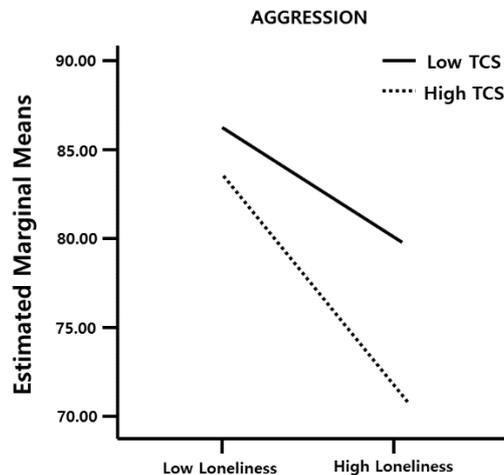
As expected, we found two interaction effects on aggression. An interaction effect on aggression was

observed between therapeutic catharsis seeking and depression,  $F(1, 914)=4.221, p < .01$  (see Figure 1) and between therapeutic catharsis seeking and loneliness,  $F(1, 914)=7.069, p < .05$  (see Figure 2). For depression, there were significant differences between low and high levels of therapeutic catharsis seeking and between low and high levels of depression. For loneliness, there were differences between low and high levels of therapeutic catharsis seeking, and between low and high levels of loneliness. These findings suggest that therapeutic catharsis seeking moderates the relationship between aggression and depression as well as loneliness.

**Figure 1. Interaction effect between therapeutic catharsis seeking (TCS) and depression**



**Figure 2. Interaction effect between therapeutic catharsis seeking (TCS) and loneliness**



## V. DISCUSSION

Although many issues regarding players' aggression remain in dispute and might not get resolved in the near future, it is worth revealing that games might lead to a reduction of aggressive thoughts in terms of mental health, because games could serve as effective tools to vent repressed negative feelings. This concept is generally associated with the catharsis concept, mood management theory, and uses and

gratification theory. This study examined the relationships between therapeutic catharsis seeking, self-construal, psychological problem aspects, gaming duration, game type, and players' aggression. The results of this study provide empirical evidence that gaming activities are negatively related with the degree of players' aggression.

Therapeutic catharsis seeking is particularly important to players because it not only greatly decreases their aggressive tendencies but also interacts with depression and loneliness. This finding is in line with the results of previous studies stressing that playing games fulfills players' needs and desires far more effectively via infinite vicarious experiences that reflect the unique properties of games. This implies that games may be outlets for relieving aggressive energy, have mental healing powers, and provide a means to satisfy certain desires. This perspective agrees with the uses and gratifications theory and is also associated with therapeutic catharsis seeking in the way of psychological healing.

More notably, therapeutic catharsis seeking could be regarded as moderator, which acts through either mood repair or mood management, and affects players' depression and loneliness related to aggression tendency; thus, playing a favorite game triggers a chain reaction for players suffering from negative emotions. Especially among players suffering from loneliness and depressive symptoms, therapeutic catharsis seeking can be a key element in inducing positive feelings as well as a tool for blowing off steam. From this perspective, it would be expected that individuals with mental health problems, which includes aggression triggered by stress in their daily lives, would be more inclined to use games to reduce stress.

It is possible that favorite online game playing allows "venting" aggression. Our empirical study presented in this paper clearly indicates that playing games is interpreted differently by individuals. This implies that gaming activity needs to be specified in order to understand its actual meaning for players. The present study on human aggression provides insights from therapeutic catharsis as a first step towards understanding mental health in a game context.

Regarding self-construal, this study yields useful insights for understanding mental health as an important aspect depending on players' level of independent and interdependent self-construal. We found that independent self-construal decreased the levels of players' aggression, while interdependent self-construal increased the levels of players' aggression. In studying the individual characteristics of self-construal, it should be noted that individuals with high independent self-construal tend to have more unique own principles and beliefs. Thus, we can reason that these individuals played more freely than players with interdependent self-construal because of the mastery of controls. Mastery of controls indeed plays an important role in satisfying psychological desires as it allows acting upon one's resolution. Therefore, players with higher independent self-construal could be more affected by venting aggression, which indicates therapeutic or healing power.

According to social interdependence theory, the achievement of each individual's goals is affected by thoughts and behaviors of others (Deutsch, 1949, 1962; Johnson, 1970; Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Players with higher interdependent self-construal are easily affected by social norms and others. Thus, they believe that social roles and relationships are more important than their own principles and values. This tendency could block their free playing, and as a result, a higher level of interdependent self-construal increased aggression in these players. Indeed, playing online games requires ample social cooperation, whereby individuals with interdependent self-construal encounter a number of interpersonal situations. This could drive players with interdependent self-construal into a state of being emotionally repressed as a consequence of their tendencies.

With regard to players' depression and loneliness, there is evidence from aggression-reducing studies

to support these results. Previous studies addressed depression as a risk factor for aggression (Barsade, 2002; Dutton & Karakanta, 2013; Kovacs & Beck, 1977). Interestingly, our results indicate that depression can reduce aggression through gaming activity. In other words, players with a higher level of depression may alter their depressed mood to a more positive mood via game playing with the result that aggression is reduced.

According to the social compensation hypothesis, the media are more beneficial to very lonely or introverted individuals. Under this hypothesis, Internet-based media permit concealing one's identity and reduce the introvert's fear of rejection. Thus, it is possible that this compensatory strategy satisfies the needs of lonely players, thereby decreasing both feelings of loneliness and aggression by playing games. Taken together, both depression and loneliness could be affected by venting aggression. It seems likely that blowing off steam via game playing triggers a chain reaction for players suffering from depression and loneliness. Depression and loneliness are vulnerable conditions, which are known to cause considerable emotional suffering and which have social as well as psychological consequences (Andrews and Henderson 2000). The current results suggest that individuals play games to satisfy certain needs for altering their depressed mood or avoiding social isolation, eventually generating mood repair and mood management.

Furthermore, in that therapeutic catharsis seeking moderates depression and loneliness, it could be extended to the area of game therapy. Not only the most severely affected patients need psychotherapy but also the general public, because contemporary society is inundated with stressful events at school, in the company, and so forth. These pressures cause people to experience psychological discomfort while creating increased expectations and desires. The characteristics of various games seem to especially converge on drama therapy, which is an active, experiential approach to facilitating change through storyline, projective play, and performance. Performers are invited to rehearse desired behaviors and perform the changes they wish to happen in the real world (Johnson 1991; Laurel 2013). There are many similarities between game properties and the drama therapy approach, since games can affect communication challenges, choices, and desired opportunities in various ways for the players (Lee, Jeong, and Kim). Thus, to maximize the potential of games for promoting mental health, gaming developers or researchers need to collaborate with drama therapists.

Our research aimed to improve upon some of the limitations of the aforementioned study. First, our sample was obtained through simple random sampling and included the general game population from adolescence to old age, whereas the previous study only focused on a small age group such as adolescents or university students. Second, we studied preferences on the basis of different types of games, compared to a single type of games (e.g., violent games).

In closing, we need to mention possible limitations of the current study and provide suggestions for future studies. First, the data were collected only from South Korean players. Future studies should gather data from additional countries. Second, we used a survey and relied on self-report measures, which limits the generalizability of our results. Future studies should thus be carried out using other methods such as longitudinal designs and experimental settings with controlled conditions. Finally, future studies should be carried out to compare the relationships of various other factors that could affect aggression.

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# INTEGRATION OF THE CREATIVE DRAMA METHOD INTO DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

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## ABSTRACT

Creative drama method which is one of the teaching strategies used in different lectures is being used widely for different disciplines in recent years. Creative drama can be defined as using improvisations including role playing based on theatre techniques and using the method with a group taking students' background into consideration. It includes three stages, preparation, improvisation and assessment. The aim of the study is both to determine the opinions of pre-service teachers related to the use of creative drama in the lecture and to assess the previous studies carried out in science education. In this study, creative drama is used as a teaching method in science and language classrooms. The sample of the study includes 60 students, who are pre-service science and language teachers attending to drama lecture. The research type of this study is qualitative in nature. Both interviews and document analysis were used in the study. The data collection instruments of the study was interview form. Differences in the applications of creative drama in science and language classes were also discussed. The results of the study demonstrated that creative drama is an effective alternative teaching strategy in both science and language classes. Teacher candidates stated that they learned by doing. They also said that they will use creative drama in their classroom when they become teachers. They are also willing to get education based on creative drama. They stated that they enjoyed participating in the activities with their friends and they feel to know themselves better during improvisations.

# **VIEWS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ABOUT THE PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM IN THE CONTEXT OF A THIRD-GRADE COURSE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Philosophy for Children, also called P4C, is an approach towards learning which guide children in their understanding of various philosophical concepts such as truth, fairness among the others which are relevant to their daily life. It was developed in the 1970s by Matthew Lipman and have been practiced in some educational programs of several countries. This program targets all students attending pre-school institutions through high schools. The program tries to improve children's skills including critical thinking and reflective thinking. It may be practiced with a design based on a story book. Then students are asked to answer several questions from abstract ones to concrete ones. The process may begin with such questions as "Have you ever experienced an unfair event?" and may finish like others such as "What is unfairness?". In the process several learning activities such as justification of students, positions, and discussing whether or not they are agree with their friends' views can be used in addition to the discussion of views, comparisons, relating the views one another, categorization of views and asking questions. During these activities teachers do not intervene and do not regard the views of students as correct or incorrect. Instead, they ask students questions to encourage them to think about about the topics at hand. The participants of the study were 97 third-grade primary students and five classroom teachers. The implementation lasted for 28 hours. Learning activities were designed based on the book *Sandwolf* written by Asa Lind. The classroom teachers participated in a seminar on the methods used in Philosophy for Children program and they were given a course outline to be used in the course. At the end of the implementation semi-structured interviews were made with five classroom teachers and twenty students from each class where the program had been used about their views concerning the program. Interviews with classroom teachers lasted for 25 minutes, and those with students lasted for 15 minutes. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The transcribed interview data were transfered into the computer. The data were examined through content analysis. The data obtained through content analysis were supported with written activities by the students and were presented in the framework of the informal observations by the author. The findings suggest that students liked philosophy, tried to think in an abstract way, provided justifications for their positions, reflected upon their thinking process and were respectful for others' views. The classroom teachers reported that this program should be used at early levels of education and that it facilitated to eliminate negative views about philosophy. Therefore, it is safe to argue that this program can be used to improve children's

critical thinking skills and their awareness about democracy and that philosophy for children should be school from pre-school education.

# QUALITY OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN QATAR IN COMPARISON OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL OUTCOMES

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## ABSTRACT

Education is regarded the most important and fundamental pillar for sustainable development and its associated goals such as economic growth, social development and civic politics. In 2001, Qatar recognized that its education system was not producing high quality outcomes in terms of academic achievement, college attendance, and success in the labor market. For this reason, a new educational reform was enacted, Education for a New Era (EFNE), giving primary emphasis on student centered pedagogy and developing learning environments where students could engage in challenging experiences that promote deep conceptual learning and critical thinking. Since then, substantial investments are made in human capital, and the implementation of the reform has drastically changed the educational landscape from many aspects. However, the change was highly slow and many concerns occurred about the challenges and disadvantages of the new reform, having direct or indirect effect on the stakeholders and the community as a whole.

In this study, the quality of the education system in Qatar is examined considering the results of the standardized international tests and the local examinations, as well as the national reports on education. Regarding the international tests, currently Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) are two widely used international assessments for measuring the quality of education systems and the impact of educational reforms. So far, Qatar participated at TIMSS in 2007 and 2011, and PISA in 2006, 2009, and 2012. In all of these tests, Qatar ranked close to the bottom regarding mathematics, science, and reading literacy. Next, regarding the local examinations, since 2004, Qatar Comprehensive Educational Assessment (QCEA) tests have been administered to students from grade 4 to 11. Particularly, students' scale scores are converted to five performance levels attached to 3 categories as below standards (levels 1 to 3), approaches standards (level 4), and meet standards (level 5). The results of QCEA also show that a large portion of students in Qatar are not able to meet the curriculum standards at all content areas for most of the grade levels.

Regarding the national reports, since 2006 four Human Development Reports (HDR) were published with three year intervals. Particularly, the first HDR attributed the shortage in science graduates mainly to the nature of curriculum and instructional teaching methods of science subjects at schools. In the second HDR, it was clearly stated the quality of education in Qatar is not up to international standards, especially with Qatari boys markedly lagging in mathematics and science. The third HDR pointed out that many students,

especially boys, drop out of school after completing their basic education. There is a very low enrolment in tertiary education, and even the ones that enroll in universities often participate in foundation courses to catch up on topics that they have not covered. In addition, some university graduates are ill-prepared to participate in the labor force as their qualifications are in low demand. Lastly, the fourth HDR underlined the fact Qatar ranks globally the highest on the GNI per Capita Index, and tops the list of countries with the highest share of foreign population, where Qataris accounts only for 12%. Due to this high foreign population, student population also increases and affects teacher-student ratios and class-student ratios. So, despite the huge investments, more demands are put on the education system, influencing the quality of education.

Briefly, the educational results reveal that the quality of education system in Qatar is far from delivering a modern world-class education level, and Qatar has a long way to go for fully meeting its educational goals for improving students' success and providing quality education, especially regarding mathematics and science learning. At this point, it is important to note that education reform is essential when students do not achieve the goals of education. Yet, there is no such thing as a successful reform or a successful education system in isolation. Its content has to match with its participants, and change happens best when it is implemented effectively by the principals, teachers, and students on a daily basis. Here, teachers are the focal point in the success of education reform, because without their acceptance of, involvement in, and degree of ownership of reform, no change can take place, and all the change initiatives will be remaining on paper. In Qatar, most of the research studies confirm the lack of teacher qualification as one of the important factors influencing the proper implementation of the reform movement. More than 30% of the teachers in Qatar do not have a formal qualification in teaching, and majority of them are expatriates mostly from other Arab countries. Yet, for a reform to have a successful impact on education, it is essential that teachers receive adequate education and training, and develop beliefs and dispositions that are consistent with current educational reform.

# **PRE-SERVICE SCIENCE TEACHERS' AND PRE-SERVICE CLASSROOM TEACHERS' LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Serious global environmental problems have been experienced due to the hazardous activity of human beings. Environmental ethics is required for solving such problems. Because environmental ethics govern the positive behavior of people towards the nature through ethical norms. It makes people informed about the potential damages of technology on the nature. The purpose of this study is to determine the pre-service science teachers' and pre-service classroom teachers' level of awareness of environmental ethics. The research will be conducted with the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade pre-service science teachers and pre-service classroom teachers studying in a state university during 2015-2016 school year spring term. As the data collection tool of the current study, "Environmental Ethics Awareness Scale" will be used.

Findings regarding the personal details of the participants will be analyzed with percentile and frequency statistics. In the analysis of data, t-test and ANOVA will be used.

**Keywords:** pre-service teachers, environmental ethics, education

# **RELATION AMONG ACTORS IN AGRARIAN CONFLICT: CASE STUDY ASYMMETRICAL RELATION BETWEEN THE STATE AND LOCAL PEOPLE, IRON SAND MINING CONFLICT IN URUT SEWU, KEBUMEN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

For the last couple of years, agrarian conflicts had intensified in many areas in Indonesia. Agrarian conflicts have been involving the people with corporations/capital; political conflicts which involve relation between the state and investors. These agrarian conflicts were caused by the shifting in the utilization of agricultural land onto something else, for example mining land. The reason for the shifting is to increase income from mining sector that have been proven to outdid the income from agrarian sector. The increase of income from mining sector compared to agrarian sector are not paralleled with the interest of local people whose agrarian land were being taken, work force being siphoned, and land being damaged. This is the case in many areas in Indonesia, one of which is in Urut Sewu, Kebumen. This paper will take up relation between actors involved in agrarian conflicts in Urut Sewu, Kebumen. In this particular case, two main actors being involved are the state (in this case district government (*pemerintah kabupaten*) and the National Army of Indonesia (TNI)) and local people (in this case including local farmers). Furthermore, this paper will discuss the relation and involvement of investors with one main actor that made this particular agrarian case even more complex. To examine this ecological conflict, we will use *actor approach* to give a comprehensive elaboration regarding the political phenomenon based on environment that happens a lot in third world countries. Based on the research that we have done, the discrepancy of relation between the state and the local people have caused economic marginalization and a rather weak grassroots politics. The marginalization that the people have been experiencing can be viewed as a matter of injustice and therefore the oppressed local people have been fighting back in the means of protests and demonstrations. However, the retaliation had been successfully muffled by the state with repressive and divisive means.

**Keywords:** Ecological Conflict, Power Relation, Actor Approach

# COMBATING INCREASING OPERATING COSTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

Sustainability is the most frequently emphasized issue in the hospitality industry in the recent time. This is because of the excruciating effects of a combination of trends such as high cost of capital, emergence of new market niche, customers' demand for quality service delivery, government policies and increasing operating costs. Of these, high operating costs seem to exert more persistent force on the hotelier's drive to achieve profitability that guarantees success. This paper examines the biting effect of ever increasing operating costs in the hotel industry in Nigeria in the face of general fall in occupancies. Hotel operators and managers are expected to keep abreast with the nature of these costs and develop customized model that helps combat them.

**KEYWORDS:** Hotel, operating costs, falling occupancies, sustainability

# USING OPEN DATA FOR OVERCOMING TRAFFIC CONGESTION PROBLEMS IN URBAN AREAS

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## ABSTRACT

Transportation issues increase as the number of vehicles on the road steadily increases. Most important problems are often related to urban areas and occur when transport systems, for certain reasons, cannot meet urban mobility's requirements.

Some of them are recent such as environmental impacts, whereas congestion problems date back to Ancient Rome. Congestion comes in two major forms. On the one hand, the recurrent congestions, which are the result of factors that cause regular demand surges on the transportation system. On the other, the ones caused by random events which are unexpected and unplanned, also known as non-recurrent congestion. There are a few measures that can help mitigate its consequences to some extent, such as the ramp metering or the HOV lanes. However, most of times non-recurring congestion cannot be overcome with these methods.

With the advent of Open Data, the transportation industry has a prime opportunity to benefit from data governments and other public bodies publish. In fact, according to a report released by The World Bank, the transportation sector holds the biggest potential for Open Data projects, as it generates an increasing volume of information of high public demand.

In this article we introduce Open Data as the key in solving congestion problems, especially the non-recurring ones caused by events like roadwork, traffic collisions or unusual weather conditions (e.g. heavy rains, snowstorms, etc.).

For that purpose, we identify some Open Data sets that, even though they do not affect traffic directly, have been proved to have a big influence on it. With these datasets, not only is the prediction of some the aforementioned unplanned incidents achieved, but also the minimization of their aftermath. We also point out the synergy of different datasets that, when combining with each other, generate a bigger value than separately.

# **A field study THE IMPACT OF DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Information plays a major role in any organization. The value of information depends on its application and use. The success of an organization largely depends on the quality of the information that it generates. The data and information is used as raw material for decision making, Decision Support Systems (DSS) designed to assist managers to choose one of the many alternative solutions to a problem, The aim of this paper is to highlight the role of decision support systems (DSS) in the organization's performance through two variables are the share of market and profit. The study found that there is a direct effect of the decision support systems on the performance of the organization, the study recommended the need to expand the use of decision support system (DSS) for the importance of data and information provided by private and it is based on internal and external to an environmental organization.

***Index Terms*** : decision support systems, performance, Profitability, market share.

**A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
IN HONG KONG  
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**ABSTRACT**

In recent years, the role of school principals in providing leadership, and the impact of that leadership in promoting teacher professional development for building school capacity has attracted increasing attention worldwide. The study described in this paper explores the practices of leadership for promoting school-based teacher professional development through a case study of a preschool in Hong Kong, the Special Administrative Region of China. The case study examines leadership and school-based teacher professional development. Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. The research participants were the management team and teachers from the case study school. The findings of the study indicate that direction setting, communication and collaboration were associated with the practice of leadership for promoting school-based teacher professional development. We argue that teacher participation in decision making is an important factor influencing the practice of leadership and its impact on school-based teacher professional development. There are implications for developing a critical awareness of the constraints that limit the extent to which school-based teacher professional development can be empowering in the hierarchical school structure in a Chinese educational context.

**Keywords:** Early childhood education, leadership, teacher development, school-based professional development, China

# **E-COMMERCE INDIA: CHALLENGES AND INNOVATION IN THE CHANGING MARKET SCENARIO**

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*TRACK- E-commerce*

## **ABSTRACT**

E-Commerce refers to the transaction of goods, services, information or funds over an electronic network between businesses, consumers or both. Since the advent of Jeff Bezos' Amazon in 1995, the e-commerce industry has grown at an unprecedented rate. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that a rapidly growing market like India has witnessed a steep rise in popularity in the sector. The growth of the industry has direct implications for growth in the country's GDP, not to mention the potential for inter-sectoral synergy and augmented levels of consumption and standard of living. This paper attempts to study the Indian e-commerce industry and its rapid growth trajectory under the framework of the global market scenario. This study critically analyses the e-commerce ecosystem in India for established ventures as well as start-ups to determine the challenges faced by the firms and innovations as specific growth drivers. Most importantly, this paper attempts to provide a future roadmap for the Indian e-commerce industry in the evolving market scenario.

**Key Words:** E-commerce, start-ups, innovations, growth challenges, future market scenario.

# ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF A FARM ANIMAL WELFARE PROGRAM IN BURSA-TURKEY

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## ABSTRACT

The paper aimed to present the value of a farm animal welfare (FAW) program that is not compulsory in South Marmara Region of Turkey. It is based on the face-to-face survey results administered in rural areas of Bursa City. The study measures the willingness to accept of producers for changing FAW levels in regards to sheep and goat husbandry. Contingent valuation technique is employed in the statistical analysis. Three different FAW levels were identified for valuation as "base" level, "better" level, and the "best" level. The best level was the most stringent FAW program. The current study suggests a protocol with WTA(P) nomenclature to resolve complexity issues in FAW studies by investigating producers rather than consumers. FAW programs' value were calculated as 130.3 million United States Dollars (USD) for base scenario. The figures were 166.2 million USD/Year and 175 million USD/Year for "better" and "best" FAW conditions, respectively. The results show that FAW programs have strong public opinion and non-market value.

**Key words:** farm animal welfare, contingent valuation, non-market valuation

## INTRODUCYION

Farm animal welfare (FAW) is an important phenomenon in Turkey in the way of membership of the European Union (EU). In 1997, it was agreed that animal welfare considerations become annexed to the Treaty of Rome through a Protocol on Animal Welfare. A year later, EU Council Directive 98/58 was enacted for the protection of animals for farming purposes, and set minimum common standards. From that date, weak FAW sensitivity in the Europe has begun to rise. In 2003, an EU Regulation established a principle that "farmers who do not comply with certain requirements in the areas of public, animal and plant health, environment and animal welfare are subject to reductions of or exclusion from direct support. This cross compliance system forms an integral part of Community support under direct payments". This legislation concerned both of farmers and processors at the food industry as well as consumers. The farmers who think that the industry can be damaged by strict legislations while the processors and distributors on the other side are worried about economic loss. In 2009, a regulation concluded the debates on FAW by suggesting that the Member States should be allowed to use up to 10 % of their national ceilings for the single payment scheme for granting specific support in clearly defined cases. Such support should allow Member States to address environmental and animal welfare issues.

Turkey is not a member state, but it tries to follow EU regulations. Consequently, it is not compulsory to provide FAW in Turkey. In this study, an approach of producers to prospective FAW programs by using non-market valuation method was employed. Results are candidate to support FAW programs in Turkey although some critiques were possible.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The negative externality issue occurs in poor animal welfare conditions as well, and they must be internalized appropriately (Gürlük and Rehber, 2008). Several surveys support this phenomenon. In fact, there has been increasing demand for higher animal welfare standards beyond the minimum standards set by regulations such as the EU's (Barcellos et al. 2013; Bennett and Blaney, 2003).

The research area is the Bursa province of Turkey. Even though the Bursa Province has a 11.4 percent share of the sheep and goat numbers in Turkey. Regional statistics were used in order to determine development levels, and then 294 farmers were interviewed by using the face-to-face survey method. The face-to-face survey format has an advantage in developing countries where such work is not widespread. Yet, valuable researches are more and more increasing (Soltani, et al. 2012). The survey for this study consists of three sections. Socio-economic questions in the first section put forward the demographic structure of respondents. Farm structure and knowledge of FAW programs were investigated in the second section. In the last section, respondents answered the willingness to accept question according to changing FAW levels. EU criteria and scientific criteria for ovine animal welfare were simultaneously considered in the FAW scenarios. (Bartussek et al. , 2000; Sorensen et al. , 2001). Three different FAW levels were identified for valuation: "Base" level, "better" level and the "best" level. The base level indicates current farm level in terms of animal welfare conditions. Better and best scenarios were created by making more stringent the FAW levels. Respondents were asked to state their WTA payments for shifting FAW levels.

The current paper contributes to existing literature by combining environmental attitudes/behaviors and FAW level preferences through certain components of the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) scale. The NEP scale consists of several items previously developed by Dunlap and Van Liere (1978). Liu et al. (2010) measured the environmental attitudes of stakeholders on protected areas in China while Bonaiuto et al. (2002) emphasized the importance of 'values' within the NEP scale. In the NEP scale, the question format is a typical five-level Likert scale starting from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree answers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Statistical model was tested using various test methods, and the results are as following table 1. The likelihood ratio chi-squared of-1219.86 with a p-value of 0.000 indicates that the model as a whole is statistically significant. Hosmer-Lemeshow (H-M) is a statistical test for goodness of fit for logistic regression models. H-M value of current Research is 19.15, and lower than critique  $\chi^2$  value. Kendall's Tau coefficient ( $\tau$ ) is a statistic, which have values between -1 and +1, used to measure the association between two measured quantities.  $\tau$ -value of current research is 0.30 indicates that there is a relationship between dependent and explanatory variables. Goodman and Kruskal's gamma coefficient ( $\gamma$ ), which have values between -1 and +1, is a measure of rank correlation, but it measures the strength of association of the cross tabulated data when both variables are measured at the ordinal level.  $\gamma$ -value of current research is 0.60 indicates existence of association.

Table 1. Statistical model results

Variable	Parameter estimate	Standard error	Pr>chi
Intercept	0.4340	1.7178	0.8026
Bid <sup>1</sup>	-4.4e-5	4.7e-6	0.0000
Income <sup>2</sup>	-0.6e-5	2.1e-6	0.0004
Age <sup>3</sup>	0.0034	9.12e-4	0.0000
Coop_member <sup>4</sup>	0.0335	0.30549	0.2758
Hholder_gender <sup>5</sup>	-0.1408	0.0269	0.0000
Sacrifice <sup>6</sup>	-0.0389	7.75e-3	0.0000
Education <sup>7</sup>	0.0510	2.11e-2	0.0160
Development <sup>8</sup>	-0.0270	0.191	0.1586
NEP_scale <sup>9</sup>	-0.0014	3.29e-2	0.8886
FAW-II <sup>10</sup>	-0.0060	1.793e-3	0.0000
FAW-III	-0.0130	1.797e-3	0.0000

Log-Likelihood= -1219.86

Hosmer-Lemeshow=19.15

Kendall's Tau= 0.30

Goodman-Kruskal Gamma= 0.60

<sup>1</sup> Bid is the presented bid amount through payment card

<sup>2</sup> Income is the monetary income of producer. It is expected to be more sensitive for high FAW levels.

<sup>3</sup> Age is the respondent's age and expected to be positive. Older producers' WTA(P) for shifting FAW levels may higher than that of younger producers.

<sup>4</sup> Coop\_member is membership situation to a cooperative apart from existence membership to Union of Cattle and Sheep Husbandry of Bursa. 1: yes 0: No

<sup>5</sup> Hholder\_gender is gender of householder 1:Male 0:Female

<sup>6</sup> Sacrifice is a question that it investigates if respondent is ready to endure any sacrifice so that farm animals experience better welfare circumstances 1: Yes 0: No

<sup>7</sup> Education is the levels which are primary school graduation:1 secondary graduation:2 and higher:3

<sup>8</sup> Development is development level of location that survey administered. 1: Developed region 0: Less developed region

<sup>9</sup> Nep\_scale is a scale measuring environmental sensitivity of related individual. The expected sign is puzzle because it was not tested in former farm animal welfare valuation studies.

<sup>10</sup> FAW is farm animal welfare program introduced to respondent. Of three FAW levels, FAW-I is the most stringent level

To find out the effects of statistically significant model parameters on the FAW levels, the median value of other variables was multiplied by their coefficients and then a constant was added to total value. The reason for using median value is to reduce the impact of greater and lower values above central tendency. Related model's expected value was calculated in this fashion, and presented as following Table 2. Thus, 1204.5 USD/year, 1142 USD/Year and 894.5 USD/Year was estimated for FAW-I, FAWII and FAW-III, respectively. The number of goats and sheep in the survey area, Bursa, was calculated to be an average of 132 head per farm. If this number is associated with FAW values it is calculated per head as 9TL/Year, 8.6 USD/year, and 6.7 USD/Year. The values lead us to remarkable results. It is known that the number of sheep and goats is 38.5 million head in Turkey. If half of this figure is assumed to be in bad animal welfare conditions, which is worse than the base level investigated in the current paper, non-use benefits of bringing them to at least the base level would be approximately 130.3 million USD/Year with a possible FAW program that can be implemented. Figures would be 166.2 million USD/Year and 175 million USD/Year for "better" and the "best" FAW conditions, respectively. If 80 percent of goat and sheep numbers in Turkey is assumed to be in bad conditions, that accounts for 30.8 million head. If so, the non-use benefits of bringing them to at least the base level would be approximately 208.5 million USD/Year while it would be 266 million USD/Year and 280 million USD/Year for "better" level and the "best" level, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2. FAW program's non-use benefits in Turkey

FAW levels	Percentage of total number of goats and sheep which are under worse conditions than base level investigated in current study	
	50%	80%
Base level	130,3*	208.5
Better level	166.2	266
The best level	175.0	280

\*Aggregate WTA(P) in million USD /Year

## CONCLUSIONS

FAW programs are not considered to be luxury issues for developing countries such as Turkey. However, it is also one of great complexity, and if changes in the regulations governing animal production methods are to be made, those changes should take full account of the implications for producers, consumers, and society in general. The farming industry should not interpret the interest in animal welfare as a threat to its livelihood. The appropriate animal welfare policy for society will be

identified only when all the interested parties become fully aware of the consequences of their actions. In the near future, foreign trade will be depending on good animal welfare conditions in the world. Hence firms have some advantages in advance if they provide good animal welfare conditions. The analysis tests 'panel estimators' in stated preference data in a FAW pricing study by using the payment card question format. Probit panels are employed to measure individual effects on FAW levels by considering producers' willingness to accept a scenario FAW program during a year. The results supply important insights to policy makers. For instance, farm revenue is a significant parameter. The farms that approach medium-sized enterprises and have the advantage of economies of scale result in differences among FAW levels. However, the FAW concept is able to be treated as a valuable input for larger enterprises who want to create their own brands. In addition, the phenomenon of experienced farmers who spend many years in their profession are more sensitive on FAW issues points out that agricultural extension programs should be for younger farmers.

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# OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF FILM-INDUCED TOURISM IN THAILAND: A CASE OF THE ALEXANDER THE GREAT PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

Film-induced tourism has been successful in many countries, particularly *Lord of the Rings* tour in New Zealand or *Daejanggeum* tour in South Korea where these films are produced. Perceiving the success of others, the Thai government, with an intention to generate positive economic impacts in the poorest region of Thailand, initiates the first man-made attraction namely the *Alexander the Great* project to draw tourists to a place. This study investigates opportunities and challenges of such project by applying the value chain approach. The findings indicate more constraints than opportunities, resulted in low recognition, low number of visitors, and low tourism revenue. These results might contribute to a precautionary note to related parties to properly plan and manage film-induced tourism in Thailand for the sake of regional tourism development.

**Keywords:** Alexander the Great, film-induced tourism, Thailand

## INTRODUCTION

Thailand has been referred to as a success story in tourism development and marketing since 1997 [27, 25], evidenced by an increasing number of tourists and tourism revenue. Regarding tourism economic impacts, the Thai government has used tourism as an instrument to stimulate regional economic development. Presently, tourism has been put at a heart of development, as a part of the national agenda (National Tourism Development Plan 2012–2016). Considering its wide range of tourist attractions in any region of Thailand where the South occupies beautiful beaches, the North comprises of scenic mountainous area and ethnic groups, the Central has a large green plain of rice, and the Northeast has fascinating cultural and archaeological sites which are the blend of Thai, Lao, and Khmer cultures. However, regional tourism development in the South, the North, and the central is successful in terms of a large number of visitors, while that in the Northeast lags behind others and has been the least visited area in the country, resulted in lower tourism income in relation to other regions [11]. For this reason, the Thai government looks for new opportunities to promote tourism in the Northeast and one of the opportunities is supporting film-induced tourism through a man-made attraction called *the Alexander the Great* project. This is because both natural and cultural landscapes in Thailand had been selected to be international film locations; for example, the province of Phang-Nga for “*James Bond 007 – the Man with the Golden Gun and Tomorrow Never Dies*” and the province of Krabi for “*The Beach*” [41, 18, 9]. Through the released international film, the Thai government can benefit from the film which is used as a marketing channel to promote such a film location as a tourist destination, as evidenced by successful films such as *Lord of the Ring* in New Zealand, *Crocodile Dundee* in Australia, *Daejanggeum* in South Korea, and *Notting Hill* in Britain. These films attract visitors to the screened location [26, 6, 19, 15].

Complementing to regional tourism promotion in the Northeast, an initiative of film location tourist attraction was established by the Department of Tourism (DOT), through the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, as a new form of tourism development with an expectation of distributing tourism income directly to the locals in surrounding areas. The main objective of this paper is to evaluate opportunities and threats of film-induced tourism in Thailand by looking from the extent to which the process of using a film location as an initial venue can cause it to develop, in order to provide income generation in the area, using the case of the Alexander the Great project as an exemplar. The subsidiary objectives enabling the delivery of the main objective of the paper are:

- to outline the Alexander the Great project which is the first man-made attraction established by the Thai government to promote film-induced tourism;
- to explore competitive advantage of the Alexander the Great project by applying the value chain approach to assess its competitive advantage<sup>1</sup>, upon which opportunities and threats of film-induced tourism are based.

The organization of the paper is as follows: we begin with the concept of film-induced tourism, followed by the recognition of the value of film in tourism product placement in other countries and the value chain approach as well as its application. Next, a brief discussion of methodology is outlined. Then, the case of the Alexander the Great project together with the results of the study is presented, and finally, conclusion is illustrated.

## LITERATURE AND THEORY

### Film-induced tourism

Film-induced tourism, interchangeably known as film tourism or movie tourism, is broadly defined as tourist activity stimulated by viewing a film location on-screen, or by the viewing of a moving image encompassing film, television, video, DVD, Blu-Ray, and other digital media [12, 6, 8]. From demand and supply perspectives, according to Connell (2012), the scope of film tourism can be divided into 10 types as follow:

- visits to “real film shooting” locations presented in a specific film production;
- visits to “substitute” locations, in other words, studio sets;
- visits to specific film/TV theme parks and attraction (e.g. *Daejangeum* Theme Park);
- visits to themed attractions with a film theme (e.g. DisneyWorld or Universal Studios);
- visits to locations where film is taking place;
- visits to a location marketed through film connection (e.g. Braveheart Country);
- participation in organized tour of film locations (e.g. Lord of the Rings, New Zealand);
- participation in organized tours of film celebrity homes/haunts (e.g. Beverly Hills);
- visits to film festivals (e.g. Cannes);
- visits to destinations for film premiers and award ceremonies.

### Successful cases of film-induced tourism

It is likely that the success of films benefits film locations, and hence the successful promotion of tourist destinations, evidenced by the greater number of tourist arrivals to such destinations. That is, film is a sort of powerful travel stimulus that influences the tourist decision making process to visit a destination [10, 7], because the film generates images, memories, associations and emotional attachments to the particular place [35]. Thereby, the film enhances the destination image which is an essential part of destination marketing strategy [5], and this eventually results in increasing visitor numbers and thus positive economic impacts to the specific region. Hudson and Ritchie (2006a) illustrate the impact of film in drawing tourists to film locations as shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
Impact of films on visitor numbers at designated locations

Film	Location	Impact of visitor number
Braveheart	Wallace Monument, Scotland	300% increase a year after release
Captain Corelli’s Mandolin	Cephalonia, Greece	50% increase
Field of Dreams	Iowa, USA	35,000 visits in 1991 and steady increase every year
Four Wedding and a funeral	The Crown Hotel, Amersham, England	Fully booked for at least 3 years
Harry Potter	Various locations in UK	Increase of 50% or more in all filmed locations
Mission Impossible 2	National Park, Sydney	200% increase in 2000
Notting Hill	Kenwood House, England	10% increase in one month

<sup>1</sup> This study has defined the competitive advantage as the effort to gain a profitable and sustainable position above the average of other destinations within which it operates.

Pride and Prejudice	Lyme Park, England	150% increase
Sense and Sensibility	Saltram House, England	39% increase
The Beach	Thailand	22% increase in youth market in 2000
Troy	Canakkale, Turkey	73% increase

Source: Hudson and Ritchie, 2006a

Several successful cases of tourism destination through strongly associated marketing initiatives from film locations are noted in the global context, for instances, the UK, USA, Australia, Korea, and New Zealand. According to O'Connor, et al. (2008), in the UK, many screened locations from films like *Harry Potter (2001)*, *The Da Vinci Code (2006)*, *Pride and Prejudice (2003)*, *Notting Hill (1999)*, *The Full Monty (1997)*, and *Braveheart (1995)* have attracted international tourists, a trend confirmed by a study of Japanese tourists' increasing interest in visiting the UK [13]. These filming locations featured in the UK have launched the VisitBritain marketing campaign since the 1990s [6]. Likewise, the USA had the 2004 Visit American Alliance inbound TV in which *Sex and the City* was one of the biggest hit TV shows that drew tourists to visit New York [33]. Besides, popular films like *Gone with the Wind*, *Forrest Gump*, *Twilight*, *Spiderman*, *Wall Street and Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Field of Dreams* have influenced tourism flow to featured destinations in USA [2], while in Australia *Crocodile Dundee*, *Crocodile Dundee II*, *Mad Max*, *Babe*, and *The Man from Snowy River* are successful films that have widened Australia's recognition at the world level as a tourist destination. The same is true, in South Korea where *Daejanggeum*, a popular TV series, entices Asian tourists particularly Thai, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese to visit its Theme Park [15]. Kim, et al. (2009) indicate the impact of film production on *Winter Sonata* that stimulates regional tourism within Asia countries to experience the filming site in Korea (see also Shim, 2007 for the rise of Korean Wave in Asia). The recent outstanding film location that benefits both profile and reinforcement of destination image is the case of New Zealand where the country's natural landscapes have been the backdrop of renowned films such as the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Last Samurai*, *Whale Rider*, *the Piano*, and *Perfect Strangers* [6, 19, 34]. It is noted that the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy has become the best practice example on how the New Zealand government strategically incorporates film into tourism marketing strategies to brand New Zealand destinations which provide positive benefits for New Zealand tourism [22, 23, 26]. All of these cases define certain characteristics of so-called "film tourism" or "film-induced tourism" [6].

To some extent, film-induced tourism turns out to be a niche activity connected with a few specific destinations associated with films or themes related to film. When looked at from a marketing strategy point of view, film can be a helpful instrument in which Destination Management Organizations (DMOs<sup>2</sup>) at national, regional, and local levels make less known destinations to be known ones. It perhaps helps to change destination images because it shapes viewers' perception of places (e.g. film landscapes), film experiences (e.g. memories associated with actors, events, theme, storylines, and setting), feelings, emotion, and attitudes toward destinations [35, 13]. Based on destination image perception, people are more interested to visit a particular place, as argued by Kim and Richardson (2003) who find two groups' different perceived destination images of features in Vienna which influence interest to travel to the city; ones who had seen a film tend to be more interested in the city rather ones who had not. Therefore, the power of film in portraying the destination image may be a crucial factor that induces a marketing campaign, and later destination branding to achieve competitive advantage of a destination.

#### The value chain approach

The value chain, developed in the 1980s by Porter, is one of the well-known competitive strategy approaches in the business study [31, 32]. It is used to examine the development of competitive advantage of a firm because it emphasizes the proper coordination between activities within and outside a firm or an organization to create value for clients. According to Porter (1990: 40-41), the ultimate value, termed 'margin', of the value chain is determined by the number of clients willing to buy the end

<sup>2</sup> DMOs are organizations at any level which are responsible for the marketing of an identifiable destination. This therefore excludes separate government departments responsible for planning and policy (Pike, 2004: 14).

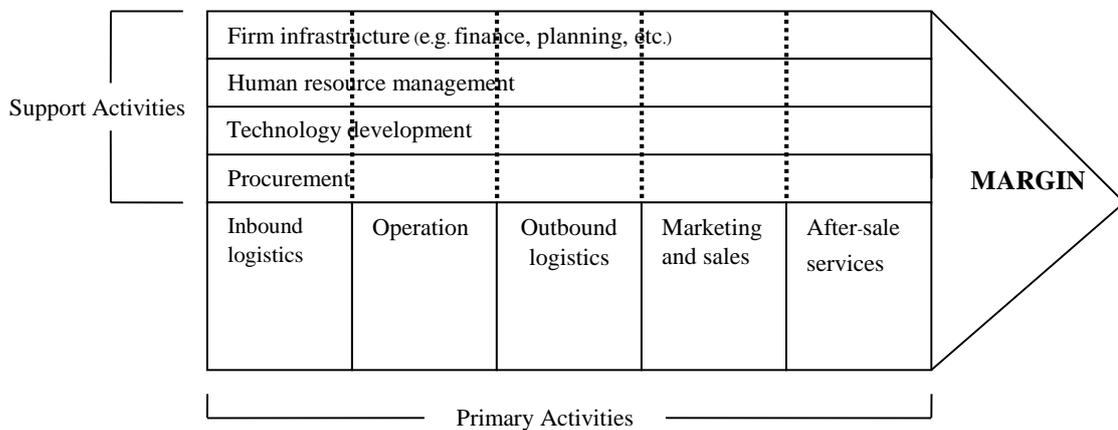
products. The margin refers to a profit which ensues in the event that total value exceeds the collective cost of performing activities. Therefore, the arrangement of the value chain is a possible source of competitive advantage at the firm level. The value chain (Figure 1) is divided into two types: primary activities and support activities.

*Primary activities* involve the ongoing production, marketing, and delivery of products or services that deliver value directed to clients.

*Support activities* embrace the firm's infrastructure (e.g. finance and management), human resource management, technology development, and procurement.

Both types of activities are closely related because primary activities employ all support activities to generate value; for example, both production and marketing units utilize purchased materials, human resources, technology, finance, and general management. Every activity in a firm that interacts with another affects the productivity and cost of each part as well as the whole. To gain competitive advantage, Porter (1990) suggests that, a firm must optimize trade-offs in performing different activities by increasing coordination. For example, in the hotel sector good coordination between the housekeeping unit and the procurement unit allows on-time delivery of cleaning supplies that can reduce inventory costs.

Figure 1  
The Value Chain (Porter, 1985)



Although the model does not have its root in tourism, it could be appropriately applicable to tourism which can be regarded as a chain of activities arranged systematically and strategically to create economic value. Why? Because tourism's nature is both competitive and cooperative. At the destination level, it is a competitive nature, competing with other destinations to entice visitors, but at the same time, it needs cooperation between relevant parties taking part. Therefore, an application of the value chain is rather appropriate to develop tourism in a region to deliver high-quality tourism experience to the market, eventually creating economic competitive advantage.

The application of the value chain in film-induced tourism

The study is based on the author's assumption that the prospect for competitive advantage of the Alexander the Great project is contributing to regional tourism development and hence income generation for locals, implying opportunities or the other ways around, threats. Therefore, to assess to what extent this initiated development process works, the value chain framework will be used to examine the current state of the project on economic competitive advantage. To use it, we need to operationalize it from the theoretical concept into practical indicators in the specific context of the case study (Table 2).

Table 2

## Operationalisation of the value chain model in assessing regional tourism development

The value chain	Objective of the theoretical content	Practical indicator
<i>1. Primary activities</i>	Checking whether the attraction creates experience values for tourists through performing these activities	
1.1 Inbound logistics	Inbound logistics concern efficient incoming material and storage	The extent to which props or items of the exhibitions are delivered efficiently
1.2 Operations	Operations concern ongoing production	To what extent the exhibition is presented professionally, the maintenance system of physical evidences, service quality of staff acting as tour guides in the park, narratives and storytelling matters
1. 3 Outbound logistics	Outbound logistics concern warehousing and delivery	The availability and quality of parking lots, a local souvenir shop, good quality food and drink shops, and other tourism facilities
1. 4 Marketing and sales	Marketing and sales concern sale forces, promotion, advertisement	The presence of marketing activities, and marketing research to stimulate repurchase of tourists
Customer services	Customer services concern sales services of the product	after- The availability of tourism inquiry services, feedback response or quick response to tourists' requests
<i>2. Support activities</i>	Looking into whether these activities support primary activities	The presence of supporting practices to enhance qualities of primary activities for creating tourist experience values
2. 1 Firm infrastructure	Firm structure concerns management, information system, accounting system	Management, information system, and accounting system to support decision making process of administration level
2.2 Human resource management	Human resource management concern human resource planning, recruitment and selection, human resource development, performance appraisal, job promotion, and compensation and benefits	The presence of human resource planning, recruitment and selection, human resource development, performance appraisal, job promotion, and compensation and benefits for staff in the park
2. 3 Technology development	Examining whether 1) there are technological resources available, and 2) there is investment in technology development by firms to help in upgrading product/service quality	The presence of market research to help DMO in upgrading tourism quality
2.4 Procurement	Checking whether the procurement is efficient to lower supply costs	The extent to which procurement of DMO is systematic and efficient

Source: author

## METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the indicator system, primary data were obtained at the destination level through in-depth interviews with the key stakeholders from the local authorities, focus group, and observations. As Beeton (2000: 129) argues, there is no, one, suitable research method for a board-ranged field of film-induced tourism. This study thus applied various research methods in conjunction with each other to comprehensively understand the development process phenomenon of film-induced tourism initiative. In gathering data, the qualitative research was employed during September – November 2015 to gain deeper insight into how the local government manages the transferred resources from DOT efficiently and effectively. In a certain sense, it was a one – year performance evaluation of the project operation. In-depth interviews with key local authorities including 1) the Thachang mayor acting as a director of the Alexander the Great project and 2) a head officer of Thachang municipality who acts as the manager of the project were conducted to understand how the local government manages the project in order to achieve sustainable tourism development. Questions, for example, on how local authorities positioned and dealt with the project to enhance regional economic development, were asked. The interviews which lasted at least two hours were recorded and transcribed to enable local authorities to examine their internal validity.

A focus group with five staff of the project to ensure the accuracy of information and the external validity of the work through questions related to their views on the way the project has been operated. Observation were made in order to confirm the findings of data from conversations with both types of respondents. In doing so, the author asked for permission from the Thachang mayor to see how the operating process in the project was routinely undertaken. Sometimes informal conversations with a manager and staff took place. Results from the observation, either formal or informal, were recorded in fieldwork notes. It is noted that the research had actually observed informally how the park has been developing since it has not yet been opened.

A case: the Alexander the Great project

Occupying various types of natural and cultural tourism resources in every part of Thailand, the Thai government, through the DOT ignited the idea of promoting new attractions through film-induced tourism. To do so, in the first place the government allowed an international filmmaking business to employ a certain location as a backdrop of a film, and then went a step further by developing such a film location as a new tourist attraction to stimulate tourism flows. In the post-modern context, the way in which the Thai government links international films to film location tourist attractions which creates demand for ‘new’ destinations is what Urry and Larsen (2011: 116) term the “mediated gaze.” This is because film has been accepted as media culture [6].

Regarding such initiatives, an international film that is perceived successful will be considered to be put on board for the development of a film location tourist attraction. “*James Bond 007: the Man with the Golden Gun*” and “*Alexander the Great*” are the Hollywood films that meet the criteria of DOT because both films gain high recognition worldwide that can help Thailand in achieving its regional tourism development goal. Then, DOT started an establishment of the first two man-made attractions in late 2013. While the film location tourist attraction for James Bond 007 had been built in Phang Nga province – located in the southern part of Thailand, that of Alexander the Great had been constructed in Ubon Ratchathani province – located in the Northeast region (Figure 2). Afterwards, both man-made attraction sites were handed over to the local government to manage. Both attractions had a grand opening ceremony on the same day, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014, by the Minister of Tourism and Sport through live satellite broadcast. However, after the inauguration, the James Bond 007 project was opened temporarily for only a specific group of travelers who formally informed the DMO responsible in advance, whereas the Alexander the Great project proceeds.

The ‘Alexander the Great’ film was one of the major, ancient Hollywood epic films during 2000 - 2004, directed by Oliver Stone - a well-known Oscar-garlanded director. It was released in 2004 and earned \$167.3 million worldwide in theaters [4]. The film comprises beautiful sets and costumes as well as famous actors like Colin Farrell and Angelina Jolie and has the ingredient of thrilling battle scenes with a cast of characters from the ancient world. One of the film locations is Pha-Taem National Park, represented as Beas River of India where Alexander the Great's troops mutinied, refusing to engage in further battles because they wanted to go back home after being away for eight years. Beas River, also known as the Hyphasis to the Ancient Greeks, was the eastern-most border of Alexander the Great's

expedition in 326 BC. It is probable that the geographical scene of Beas River is perceived similar to Pha-Taem National Park, Thailand's eastern-most area with the Mekong River as the shared border between Thailand and Laos PDR (Figure 3). This, together with the support of the Thai government for the international filmmaking location, might be reasons why Oliver Stone selected Pha-Taem National Park to be his film-shoot location.

Figure 2  
Map of Thailand, the Isan region, and Ubon Ratchathani



Figure 3  
Film location at Pha-Taem National Park



( Source: [http://thailandonfilm.blogspot.com/2013/03/alexander-2004\\_29.html](http://thailandonfilm.blogspot.com/2013/03/alexander-2004_29.html), accessed on 12 February, 2016)

Nevertheless, because of the limitations of imposed by National Park regulations, the film location tourist

attraction project of "*Alexander the Great*" was not been built in Pha-Taem National Park, but at a site on the national highway 231 next to Moon River, in Thachang sub-district, Sawangveerawong district which the DOT considered appropriate and more easily accessible. The new tourist attraction, created by DOT with its construction budget of 61 million baht (approximately US\$1.8m) on 6 rai (about 2.4 acres) area, features a park of movie sets (either props or items) akin to those in the film, informative and entertaining exhibitions on Alexander the Great, special effects through a 4D mini-theatre to enhance visitors' experience of the battle scene, as well as an exhibition on the history of international film shoots in Thailand [21]. It should be noted that the Thai actor, Bin Bunluerit, played the part, in

the film, of King Porus who fought against Alexander the Great. For that reason, the park includes a statue of King Porus riding on an elephant battling against King Alexander riding a horse. After the grand opening, the project gained popularity with both the public and the media because of its perceived novelty and uniqueness in terms of innovative and modern cultural tourism products, especially a site for shooting foreign film. As a new tourist attraction in Ubon Ratchathani, together with the (very) modest entrance fee of 20 baht for adults and 10 baht for children, it has drawn a large number of visitors to visit. The local government, the Thachang municipality in particular, has taken the opportunity to promote local products made by local communities nearby by encouraging local people to sell their products, both agriculture and handicraft souvenirs, in the attraction area. This has resulted in positive economic impacts for locals. At the same time local people are proud that their area is being known by others as part of a world-class filmmaking site even though this is not really so! The consequences of the regional tourism development initiative seem impressive as Sasisupa Sungvaribud, film business promotion adviser to the DOT, said

*"Apart from sustainable tourism and education, another aim of this project is to spark inspiration in the visitors... the young visitors not only get to learn about one of the greatest men in world history and understand many aspects of filmmaking, but also feel proud to know that Thailand appears in such a world-class production and that Thai people played various roles in its creation."* [21]

The Alexander the Great project is, however, just in the inception stage of regional tourism development in which tourists are keen to see and experience new things. There is still a long way to go before the project can be deemed a sustainably competitive regional tourism development. In other words, it is challenging for the local government, acting as DMO, to achieve success benefiting from the attraction, and so generating income for the locals. This implies the test of the effectiveness and efficiency with which the local government deploys its transferred resources to lead to tourism growth that contributes to competitive advantage creation in the tourism marketplace, is yet to be fully determined.

## RESULTS

The results of applying the value chain are presented as follows:

### Primary activities

*Inbound logistics:* Inbound logistics concern efficient arrival of materials or items of the exhibition in the park. However, inbound logistics of the Alexander the Great project are inefficient because the local government has no name list of suppliers in hand. It is the fact that items in the exhibitions such as ancient weapons (e.g. swords and guns), Greek custom dresses, figures of Greek troopers, Greek kitchen wares, the throne chair of Alexander the Great, etc. were all purpose-made and were prehandled by DOT. Nevertheless, these exhibition items have already been handed over from DOT to the local government. One example that reflects inefficient inbound logistics in the park is the way in which the local government responded to dealing with damaged exhibition items which were broken by Russian tourists grabbing Greek weapons to play with companions during May 2015. After being informed of the damage to property, the local government requested that the DOT deal with the maintenance process, indicating its dependent character. As for the tourists who damaged the exhibition items, instead of notifying and continuing the litigation process against the tourists, the local government discharged them without asking for any acceptance of responsibility and then closed the park for a month for repair of the damaged properties. During the park's closure, the local government did not formally notify tourists of the reason why the park was temporarily closed. This then resulted in misunderstanding by tourists that the attraction was permanently closed and the number of tourists decreased sharply.

*Operation:* The project crucially needs professional operation in delivering impressive experiences to tourists because tourists value experience, which is what they in fact buy. Like DisneyWorld park where tourists want to experience DisneyWorld themes, tourists come to the Alexander the Great park to experience a Greek theme. However, all operations in delivering experience values to tourists are likely to be unprofessional because all presentations, except for the physical objects, hardly correspond to that Greek theme but rather to the local lifestyle of the Northeast of Thailand. That is to say, starting from the entrance gate, local Thai songs and sometimes folk music are played loudly over the park. Stepping on further to the exhibition halls, staff appear in casual dress with no uniform, have standard megaphones in their hands, greet tourists with spontaneously unstructured conversations, and sometimes even have dialect talks with tourists. In addition, based on our observations, staff work unprofessionally and inactively. For example, tourists come before the park opens, but instead of

welcoming and paying attention to tourists, tour guide staff play football in front of the exhibition hall while waiting for the park to be open. In the same vein, ticketing staff were observed just playing with mobile phones rather than enthusiastically serving tourists. Also, with no concern for the unattractive view seen by tourists, cleaning staff leave behind cleaning tools (e.g. brushes and garbage bins) in the main exhibition hall and a technician did the same, leaving electric wires untidily on the trees. Whether or not these unprofessional actions by staff were done intentionally or unintentionally, they are degrading the tourist experience.

Further, tour guide staff have not been trained to be tourist guides in terms of skills and knowledge. Rather than presenting thorough details of the Alexander the Great story to enhance tourists' experiences and knowledge of Greek culture, tour guide staff do their work by facilitating tourists through leading the way to another hall, suggesting what to do during watching 4D-mini theatre, and switching on and off of the theatre system. This is because the storytelling of Alexander the Great which should be the most important part on creating unique experience values is ignored since the narrative on Alexander the Great and Greek culture have not been transcribed into narrative scripts for tour guides. Based on the interview results, the operational staff and some management staff have never watched the film, Alexander the Great, in any form and nor studied the history of Alexander the Great. It is, therefore, not surprising that why they cannot deliver an interesting experience to tourists through any form of presentation. As a result, tourists' experience value is not created even though they are embraced by the environment of Greek culture and phrases such as "*there is nothing at Alexander the Great Park*" are regularly heard from tourists. Consequently, they spend only half an hour at the park before leaving for other destinations, resulting in the high possibility of spending less in the region.

As for the maintenance system, there is no "Do and Don't" sign to announce a proper manner for tourists but there are "Do Not Touch" signs available next to physical objects shown on shelves. However, those signs are only in Thai and this might be a reason why Russian tourists cause damage of the exhibition items because they cannot read and understand Thai. At the same time, all staff has low skills in English communication which makes it difficult for them to communicate with foreign tourists.

*Outbound logistics:* Outbound logistics are investigated here in terms of the quality and quantity of tourism facilities (e.g. parking spaces, local souvenir shops, and food and drink services) in the park. The findings confirm that facilities at the park need improvement. To begin with the parking area, the local government had no plan where it should be located as between the outside and the inside of the park area and how it should be managed. Tourists are unsure where to park their cars because there are no signposts indicating the parking area, so that they choose to park as close as possible to the exhibition halls to shorten their distance to the exhibition entry, leading to disorganized parking, which spoils the theme of the park. It seems that the local government has no clue how to manage the park by keeping "staged authenticity" [20] of Greek society to attract tourists. It is, or should be, the fact that tourists can sense the Greek theme of the park from the moment they arrive, even at the parking area, which would create their first, hopefully positive, impression.

Next, the available local souvenir shop in the park had been designed and constructed to fit the Greek theme. However, the shop was left deserted with no seller, due to the decreased number of tourists which has been discouraging local people from earning a living there. The same is true for food and drink shops in the park where sellers cannot make a profit and then leave their shops empty. Nevertheless, there is one soft drink shop available but its opening each day is rather unreliable. This makes the situation even worse when tourists are not able to quench their thirst with cold or hot drinks. Then, word of mouth amongst the tourists builds negativity and hence creates a problem for the local government.

It might be strange that there are no souvenir and food and drink sellers at the park, which the DOT and the local government had intended to use as a means to generate income for local people living around there. It is a fact that in the beginning the local government encouraged local people to sell their products in the shop without any expense charge. Realizing costs to bear, against income derived from a very low entrance fee, the local government is starting to look for ways to cover the costs. One of the solutions was negotiating with the sellers to charge them a 'pitch' fee. The negotiation process started at the end of January 2015 and the result of negotiation was that the sellers have been required to pay 10 – 30 baht daily, depending on the size of their shops, and to share the electricity cost previously borne by the local government. This has caused dissatisfaction amongst the sellers because they have low negotiation power and at the same time their benefits diminish because of the fluctuation of tourist

flows. When the park was closed in May 2015 for maintenance reasons, all of them readily made the decision to leave the park. To this situation, a management staff says:

*“... they (villagers) always claim that they are part of this land (the park) but they are not. They only think to make profit for themselves, without thinking to share any expense with the government. To me, I think there are still a lot of people who want to sell their stuffs here...”*

It is observed that part of the reason why the local sellers choose to earn their living at other places is the lack of local participation in the development process, leading to low cooperation among stakeholders in the region. Additionally, the bureaucratic administrative style of the local government remains typical of Thai society.

*Marketing and sales:* Marketing and sales here are examined as to whether there are the presence of marketing activities and marketing research to stimulate repurchase of tourists. It is found that there appears traditional marketing activities such as public relations through online media (e.g. the FaceBook page of Thachang municipality and of Alexander the Great project itself) and non-online media (e.g. television, radio, Up Ubun magazine, and a billboard), taking into account that these media channels are made by chance. These marketing activities are implemented inactively because, based on the interview results, the local government focuses on students in Ubon Ratchathani and provinces nearby as the main target market. This is perceived as not only passive marketing and sales practices but also short-term strategic thinking that will bring about low competitive advantage in long-term competition with other destinations. These marketing activities are unlikely to suit the promotion of film-induced tourism for which experiential marketing is more suitable. Further, marketing research to stimulate repeat attendance by students and other types of tourists and to develop the image of the park has not yet been considered.

*Customer services:* There is a small part of customer services, seen in the form of a ticket-ordering service in advance available only for tour groups, which rather limits itself from marketing channels' development. Besides, although a customer inquiry service is available, it is unsystematic, with most of the practices likely to be ad hoc rather than well planned and organized. The same is true for quick response to tourists' requests (e.g. first aid) that need improvement to be more systematic.

#### Supporting activities

*Firm infrastructure:* The findings confirm the presence of management, an information system, and an accounting system in the project and all of them are simple practices which are based on a bureaucratic administrative style. For example, level of command in the local government defines level of authority both in the organization itself and in the park. Having public administrative style as a guideline, management staff delegated from the local government operate and manage the park in a 'preventive' or negative way, taking into account the government rules and regulations. This bureaucratic restriction prevents the park from being innovative through entrepreneurial business management. Some examples can be seen from the accounting system in which a simple operating income and operating expenditure account is applied. However, for the theme park they also need a capital monies ledger to separately identify the direct and indirect costs of the park. A profit and loss statement is done, based upon request of the mayor. Most of the time, management staff "feel" performance of the park (loss or profit) from financial liquidity; if there is cash in hand, it is perceived profit (or revenue exceeds expense). As such, accrued revenue and accrued expense, or even pro-forma financial statements, are not taken into account. In sum, all practices including the decision making process, accounting system, information system, and general management are daily based, with no longer-term planning.

*Human resource management:* At the park's opening, there were 15 staff there who had originally worked for the local government, but later some of them were asked to work at the municipality. Presently (February 2016), there are a total of 8 staff including: 5 tour guides; 1 technician; 1 ticketing staff; and 1 manager. Since all are employed by the local government, they get a salary based on the government sector standard. Working in the park is a special mission to which they are assigned; that is, working during 9.00 – 17.00 hour daily in both weekday and weekend and thus extra work should be referred to extra income as well. However, because of the yearly budget rigidity, they recently received no any extra money from the local government. When extra work is not equal to extra pay, staff have low motivation to work and this becomes the reason why they work passively. Other than these staff, the local government temporarily hires 2 security guards and 1 housekeeper who are villagers to work in the park as well. These villagers are paid daily, based on the minimum wage rate (300 baht a day). It seems that the local government has ad hoc human resource management rather than strategic

focused HRM, because there is no process of manpower planning, recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal, nor benefits.

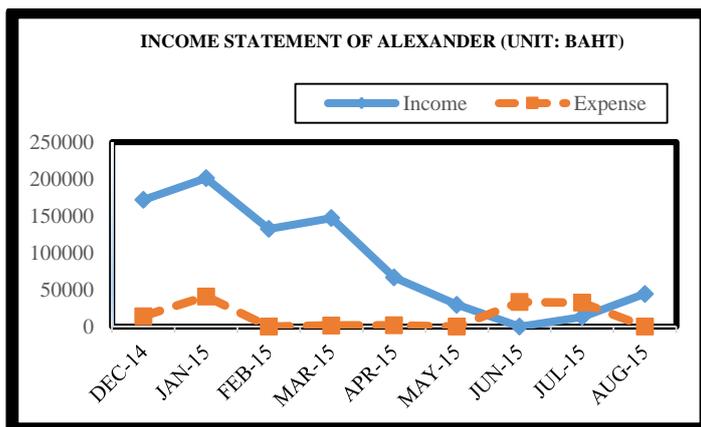
*Technology development:* Basic technological devices such as telephone and internet are used in operating the park, but there is no technology development and any research to develop service quality and market.

*Procurement:* Efficient procurement here concerns the extent to which suppliers supply efficient, early, rapid and cost-effective inputs to the park because the park is similar (in conception) to a business firm. However, the local government purchases office supplies, fertilizers, etc. from contracted local shops which have been suppliers to the local government for a long term. The procurement is thus based on connection rather than cost effectiveness.

*Margin evaluation*

According to Porter (1990: 40-41), competitive advantage of a park depends on the extent to which primary activities coordinate with supporting activities that create tourist values and thus the park margin. However, based on our findings both primary and supporting activities are performed inefficiently with an improvised value-creating process management. As a consequences, the performance of the park is seen from sharp decreased income but increased costs (Figure 4), taking into account that the expenses in the first 4/5 months were virtually nil because the local government got the initial operating budget from DOT.

Figure 4  
Income/expenditure profile of the Alexander the Great project



(Source: The information is based on the local government account)

**CONCLUSION**

By using Porter's value chain model (1985) as a strategic tool to assess the competitive advantage of the Alexander the Great project in Ubon Ratchathani, it appears that the overall competitive advantage of the park is rather low. Tourism experience values are not being effectively created in the organization, resulting in decreased tourism revenues. This affects unsustainability of not only the park itself but also regional tourism development. Based upon the analytical results derived from the value chain approach, it is clearly indicated that there are threats rather than opportunities for film-induced tourism in Thailand. These threats come from two underlying causes: the bureaucratic administrative perspective of the DOT and unprofessional business practices of the Thachang municipality. The former describes a “top-down administrative approach”, seen from the resource transferring process from the central government to the local government. The latter illustrates the local government’s bureaucratic administrative style that shapes all business practices to be rather unprofessional, passive, and unproductive. When both primary activities and support activities are guided by a bureaucratic management style, instead of an entrepreneurial management perspective, resulting in no strategic business plan and thus the implementation of an improvised value-creating process. Primary activities and support activities are not well linked, so that unique experience value is difficult to create. In this case, it is obvious that the statement “*There is nothing at Alexander the Great Park*” indicates a negative image of the park. This

finally affects the destination image and makes it difficult to achieve either competitive advantage for the entity itself or the goal of wider regional development because sustainability of the region's tourism is based, at least in part, on sustainability of the Alexander the Great project.

Thus far we have a rather negative conclusion whereby a film-induced tourism project in Ubon Ratchathani has palpably failed to deliver on a number of fronts, with managerial, operational, marketing and even design conception shortfalls. This leaves open the question as to whether the project could have succeeded given some or all of the following: better initial design, creation of a decent strategic plan, effective operational planning and efficient delivery of the thus better envisaged project. The answer is surely that had these issues been addressed a competitive project, capable of supporting regional tourism in the province of Ubon Ratchathani, could have been possible. We therefore would like to deliver our analytical results as a precautionary message to related parties to consider changing the administrative attitude from a bureaucratic perspective to an entrepreneurial perspective of managing film-induced tourism in Thailand.

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