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FOREWORD

I am pleased to put into the hands of readers Volume-7; Issue-3: 2025 (May-June 2025) of **"Journal of Humanities and Education Development (JHED) (ISSN: 2581-8651)",** an international journal which publishes peer reviewed quality research papers on a wide variety of topics related to, Humanities and Education development. Looking to the keen interest shown by the authors and readers, the editorial board has decided to release print issue also, journal issue will be available in various library also in print and online version. This will motivate authors for quick publication of their research papers. Even with these changes our objective remains the same, that is, to encourage young researchers and academicians to think innovatively and share their research findings with others for the betterment of mankind. This journal has DOI (Digital Object Identifier) also, this will improve citation of research papers.

I thank all the authors of the research papers for contributing their scholarly articles. Despite many challenges, the entire editorial board has worked tirelessly and helped me to bring out this issue of the journal well in time. They all deserve my heartfelt thanks.

Finally, I hope the readers will make good use of this valuable research material and continue to contribute their research finding for publication in this journal. Constructive comments and suggestions from our readers are welcome for further improvement of the quality and usefulness of the journal.

With warm regards.

Dr. Manoj Kumar
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Journal of Humanities and Education Development (JHED)

Strategies for Improving Student Achievement in Mathematics in Grade 10 Board Examinations

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Abstract— *This study looked into the reasons behind the poor mathematics performance i Grade 10 students in one of the Higher Secondary Schools in Dagana, Bhutan, and considers practical ways to raise their academic standing. The study used a qualitative research methodology, gathering data through group discussions involving four mathematics teachers and one-on-one interview with two mathematics teachers' interviews, two classroom observations. It also involved two focused group with 15 students in each group. The results showed that the main issues influencing students' performance were a lack of student engagement, a dependence on conventional lecture-based teaching techniques, restricted access to learning materials, and little parental participation. Students prefer visual aids, real-world applications, and collaborative learning, on the other hand, teachers recognized the importance of interactive teaching strategies. The study suggests improving teaching strategies, using technology, providing more learning materials, and encouraging teacher-student-parent cooperation in light of these findings. The study emphasized how crucial a student-centered approach is to making mathematics more interesting and useful, which will ultimately boost students' self-esteem, ability to solve problems, and success in board exams.*

Keywords— ***Mathematics, Student Engagement, Student-Teacher Interaction, Qualitative, Board Examinations.***

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the core subjects that is essential to students' academic and career success is mathematics. However, many Grade 10 students in one of the higher secondary schools in Dagana find it difficult to achieve the required levels in mathematics, especially when it comes to board examinations. There is still a large discrepancy between their actual efforts and the intended results in spite of numerous interventions. This study seeks to identify the primary causes of this problem and apply focused strategies to improve students' confidence, mathematical proficiency, and general academic achievement. This study intends to enhance student performance and promote a more positive learning environment in mathematics by tackling important issues such inadequate teaching strategies, a lack of practice, and a lack of learning materials.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study highlights a persistent issue of Grade 10 students consistently underperforming in academics, particularly in mathematics, in one of the higher secondary schools in Dagana, Bhutan. Despite various measures implemented to enhance academic achievement, a significant gap remains between expected and actual performance levels. Many students score poorly in mathematics during board exams, negatively impacting their overall academic standing and limiting their opportunities for higher education. The challenges of mathematics education in Bhutan arise from various interrelated factors. The curriculum from fourth to 12th grade is described as vast, fragmented, and developmentally inappropriate, which hinders effective student engagement and understanding. It is also seen as laborious and prescriptive, limiting teachers' flexibility to adapt lessons to their students' needs (Dorji & Tshering, 2020). Additionally, gaps in teacher training and insufficient educational resources exacerbate these challenges (Dorji & Tshering, 2020).

Addressing these challenges is crucial to improving students' mathematical competency and fostering greater interest in the subject. The studies also recommend addressing the challenges due to the rising concern over low achievement levels in mathematics, which adversely affect students' future academic and career opportunities (Dorji et al., 2021). Similarly, a comparative study on mathematics education in Bhutan and Japan revealed a deficiency in resources such as modern infrastructure, trained educators, and teaching materials, which affects the overall quality of education (Dorji & Ishii, 2022). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the root causes of this underperformance and propose targeted interventions to enhance students' academic success in mathematics.

III. OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the main issues causing Grade 10 students to perform poorly in mathematics.
2. To put into practice and assess successful teaching techniques that enhance students' understanding and problem-solving skills.
3. To evaluate how specific interventions affect students' performance in mathematics.
4. To create a conducive learning environment that encourages student engagement.
5. To provide practical recommendations for long-term enhancement of mathematical performance.

IV. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

What techniques and approaches can help improve students' mathematics performance in board examinations?

Sub Questions

1. How is the learning of mathematics enhanced by interactive teaching methods?
2. How might consistent practice improve mathematical performance?
3. How might self-assurance and motivation increase student involvement?
4. How do technology and educational materials affect test scores?

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Students' Study Habits for Performance in Board Examinations

Developing efficient study habits is essential to achieving the best possible results on board exams. Studies confirm that retrieval practice and spaced repetition, two active learning strategies, work much better than passive ones. Compared to merely rereading, Dunlosky et al. (2013) assert that self-testing, in which students actively recollect material, improves long-term retention and understanding. Similarly, spaced repetition – reviewing content at progressively longer intervals – improves memory consolidation and decreases forgetting (Cepeda et al., 2006).

Effective study habits require setting clear goals, keeping track of progress, and employing self-reflection to enhance learning processes, as highlighted by Zimmerman's (2002) work on self-regulation. Students in these cognitive practices are more adept at time management and problem-solving.

In addition, Cavanagh (2019) points out that while some students find structured study programs beneficial, others may find more adaptable, individualized techniques to be more successful. This variety highlights the necessity for flexible study methods that take into account each student's unique demands and learning preferences.

5.2 Practices for Effective Study and Performance

Improving a student's success on board exams requires effective study techniques. Increased long-term retention can be achieved by retrieval practice, in which pupils frequently recollect knowledge. Retrieval practice helps students remember material better during exams and helps them retain their knowledge, as noted by Roediger and Butler (2011).

Another important strategy is to practice exams. Practice exams enable students to become comfortable with exam formats and reinforce learning through repeated retrieval, as shown by Pyc and Rawson (2009). This strategy helps to improve performance and lessen exam anxiety. It is also helpful to encourage students to elaborate on why something is true, a strategy known as "elaborative interrogation." According to Wade et al. (1999), this strategy improves memory retention and fosters deeper understanding. Brewster and Fager (2000) also stress the significance of creating a comfortable study environment. Calm, well-organized areas improve concentration and productivity, and incorporating technology, like educational applications, can result in dynamic, captivating learning opportunities (Johnson et al., 2016).

However, the review identifies several challenges in Bhutan's STEM education, including socioeconomic disparities that restrict access to quality education in rural areas, resource shortages, and an overemphasis on test scores that leads to rote memorization. Additionally, the reliance on traditional, authoritarian teaching methods stifles student engagement and learning. These issues highlight the need for reforms and professional development to improve STEM education quality in Bhutan (Wangmo, 2024).A misalignment between the curriculum and classroom processes hinders effective

learning, and students who struggle with English perform worse overall (Dorji & Ishii, 2022).

VI. CHALLENGES INHABITED AMONGST THE STUDENTS

There exist multiple obstacles that students must overcome to achieve well on board exams. Exam anxiety is a major problem that can affect cognitive processes and lower test performance. Zeidner (1998) discusses a number of studies that show poor exam scores are linked to high levels of test anxiety, indicating that anxiety management strategies may help.

Moreover, students' attitudes and perceptions towards mathematics significantly impact their performance, with positive perceptions fostering greater engagement and effort in learning the subject (Dorji et al., 2021). There are also the extra hurdles of time management and good study abilities. According to Zimmerman (2000).

6.1 Support Mechanisms to Enhance Academic Performance

Support mechanisms are essential for improving students' performance in board exams. A teacher's ability to provide students with formative assessment and tailored feedback greatly enhances their performance. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), children perform better when they receive regular, constructive feedback that enables them to see their areas of strength and growth. Peer study groups provide cooperative learning opportunities that enhance comprehension and retention (Boud et al., 2001).

Support on both an emotional and psychological dimension is crucial. According to Conley (2008), students' performance can be improved by participating in stress management and resilience programs, which can help them manage the stresses of board exams. Student performance can be greatly enhanced by offering a supportive atmosphere that incorporates counseling and stress-reduction strategies.

VII. RESEARCH INTERVENTIONS

The study used a set of targeted interventions to improve student performance in mathematics. These interventions include:

7.1 Interactive Teaching Methods

Active learning approaches (e.g., collaboration, peer tutoring, inquiry-based learning) were discussed with the goal of shifting from lecture-based instructional methods toward student-centered learning.

7.2 *Regular* Practice *and Problem-Solving Sessions*

A systematic program of practice activities taking account of previous board examination questions as well as real-life problem-solving scenarios were implemented. Weekly math drills and revision exercises were undertaken to reinforce learning methods.

7.3 Confidence-*Building and Motivational Strategies*

Motivational classes, goal setting and positive reinforcement methods are used to address the student's lack of confidence in mathematics. Teachers provide positive feedback and celebrate a student's little academic progress.

7.4 Use of Technology and Supplementary Learning Resources

Computerized Mathematical Software Online Tutorials and Digital Learning Computerized visual aids (graphs, simulations and video lesson) were used to boost the theoretical content, adding visual, contextual information.

VIII. METHODOLOGY

8.1 Research Design

Using a classroom action research (CAR) methodology, this study looked into practical methods and approaches for raising Grade 10 students' board exam scores in mathematics. Action research is preferred because it enables real-world classroom reflection, ongoing evaluation, and practical interventions. The study employed a cycle of preparation, action, observation, and reflection to put strategies into practice and assess how they affect the learning outcomes of students.

8.2 Sample and Sampling

The study was conducted at one of the higher secondary schools in Dagana, Bhutan. The participants include 30 Grade 10 students who have demonstrated consistent difficulties in mathematics. The sample comprises students with varying levels of proficiency to assess how different interventions affect different learning abilities. Additionally, two mathematics teachers and one school administrator were included to provide insights into instructional strategies, curriculum effectiveness, and administrative support.

IX. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

To collect thorough data, a qualitative method was used. The following instruments were employed to gather data:

9.1 Classroom Observation

Students' participation, engagement, and reaction to the strategies used are evaluated by routine observations.

Teaching strategies, student relationships, and approaches to problem-solving are the main topics of the observations.

9.2 Interview

Students were interviewed in a semi-structured manner to get their opinions on how well various strategies work. These resources help in comprehending the viewpoints, self-assurance, and difficulties that kids have when learning mathematics.

9.3 Teacher Interview and Focused Group Discussion

Mathematics Teachers teaching in grade 10 were interviewed one-on-one in order to learn more about their experiences using various teaching methods. Moreover, Teachers' teaching mathematics in other grades were also called for focused group discussion to aid in improving the treatments by drawing on their combined knowledge and experiences.

X. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Strict adherence to ethical guidelines was maintained to guarantee both the participants' welfare and the validity of the study. Teachers and students were fully told about the goal of the study before giving their informed consent. Anonymizing participant names and safely preserving all data to preserve their privacy helped to ensure confidentiality. Since participation was completely voluntary, neither teachers nor students would be penalized for dropping out at any time.

XI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has several limitations even though it has shown that the intervention have an impact on students' mathematics learning. The results may not apply to other classes because the study was limited to class 10 students at one of the southern region's higher secondary schools in Bhutan. Since the study is limited to a single academic term, a long-term evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness is not feasible. External elements unrelated to the subject, such as parental support, psychological motivation, and numerical background, may have an impact on students' performance.

XII. ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure methodical intervention and data collection, the study followed to a planned implementation timeframe. Writing the research proposal, which took place between June 1, 2024, and August 10, 2024, involved reviewing research articles, speaking with experts, and conducting an initial literature appraisal. On August 10, 2024, the proposal was submitted to the Dzongkhag HR for approval; on August 15, 2024, further, it was sent to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoEDS). From September 15, 2024, to November 30, 2024, data was gathered with the use of defined methodology, relevant software, and expert consultations. Following this, data analysis was conducted using the proper analytical techniques from December 1, 2024, to January 30, 2025. Following a particular format and style, the research paper was written between February 1, 2025, and February 27, 2025, and then submitted for peer review. From March 1, 2025, to March 15, 2025, necessary changes were made in response to reviewers' feedback.

XIII. DATA ANALYSIS

Using a qualitative data analysis methodology, this study triangulated data through group discussions, teacher and student interviews, and classroom observations. The study ensured a thorough understanding of the elements influencing students' performance in mathematics and found practical approaches for improvement by cross-analyzing these data sources. The findings revealed a number of recurrent issues regarding *resource availability*, *teaching methods*, *learning challenges*, and *student engagement.*

13.1 Resource Availability

This study found that inadequate access to additional learning resources was a persistent problem. Teachers stated that many classrooms lacked digital learning tools, manipulatives, and visual aids. They noted that most lessons relied heavily on textbooks because resources such as projectors, interactive software, and workbooks were unavailable. Some teachers emphasized that if they had access to visual aids and technology, they could make lessons more engaging and effective for students.

Similarly, student interviews revealed that many students depended entirely on their textbooks, as no additional practice materials were available. Some students expressed frustration over the lack of extra worksheets and learning tools, while others mentioned that they struggled with unreliable internet access when trying to use online resources. During group discussions, students agreed that having access to additional printed worksheets, visual aids, and videos on math topics would significantly improve their learning. They suggested that setting up a digital learning center or improving the school library with more math-related resources would provide better opportunities for practice. These findings suggest that improving resource availability through technology integration and supplementary materials could enhance students' mathematical comprehension and performance.

13.2TEACHING METHODS

Observations in the classroom showed that traditional lecture-based teaching remained the dominant method of instruction. Most lessons followed a teacher-centered approach, where instructors explained concepts, solved problems on the board, and assigned exercises. While this method was sometimes effective, it limited student engagement and opportunities for active learning. There were few chances for students to explore concepts independently, participate in discussions, or engage in practical exercises.

Teacher interviews confirmed this reliance on board and textbook-based instruction. Teachers acknowledged that they primarily explained concepts while students took notes, leaving little room for exploration or discussion. Some stated that they wanted to use interactive teaching strategies such as inquiry-based learning and group problem-solving but lacked the necessary training and resources. Others mentioned that technology-based solutions could improve instruction but emphasized that schools needed better access to tools like projectors, educational software, and digital platforms.

Students also expressed their preferences during group discussions. They indicated that simply listening to lectures and copying from the board made it difficult to understand mathematical concepts. Many felt that real-life examples, step-by-step explanations, and visual aids such as diagrams and videos would make lessons more engaging. Others suggested that working in small groups or discussing problems together would help them understand concepts better instead of relying solely on teacher explanations. These findings highlight the need for a more student-centered teaching approach that fosters conceptual understanding and active participation through interactive strategies and technology-based learning tools.

13.3LEARNING CHALLENGES

The study found that inconsistent practice was a significant challenge affecting student performance. Classroom observations showed that rather than understanding mathematical concepts, many students relied on rote memorization. When asked to explain formulas, students often struggled to articulate their purpose and simply repeated them without comprehension. Teachers noted that this made it difficult for students to apply formulas to different types of problems, as they focused more on memorization than on understanding underlying concepts.

Teacher interviews further revealed that students rarely engaged in problem-solving activities outside of the classroom. Educators pointed out that many students only practiced math when given specific homework assignments, and even then, they often copied from their peers rather than attempting to solve problems independently. Some teachers observed that students in hostels had dedicated study hours but did not always use them for mathematics, instead choosing to focus on subjects they found easier.

Student interviews indicated that many students wanted to improve in mathematics but lacked guidance on how to practice effectively. Some admitted that they only worked through textbook problems and wished for additional worksheets or structured exercises to reinforce their understanding. Others mentioned that household responsibilities made it difficult to dedicate enough time to practice math. These findings suggest that providing structured practice materials, guided study sessions, and opportunities for independent problem-solving could help students develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

13.4STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Classroom observations revealed a low level of student participation in math lessons, with many students reluctant to contribute, especially when solving problems on the board. Only a few actively answered questions, while most remained silent. Teachers mentioned that students hesitated to speak up due to fear of making mistakes in front of their peers. They also pointed out that a lack of confidence in explaining their reasoning often led to passive learning.

Student interviews further confirmed that many students perceived mathematics as difficult and stressful, with some admitting that they felt anxious during tests because they struggled to understand certain concepts. Others said that while they enjoyed some topics, they lost confidence when they encountered more challenging problems. Group discussions revealed that many students preferred staying quiet rather than risking embarrassment by giving an incorrect answer. Some students explained that they avoided participating in class to prevent making mistakes in front of others. These findings highlight the need for a supportive learning environment that builds student confidence and encourages active participation in mathematics.

XIV. DISCUSSION ON THE KEY FINDINGS

According to this study the use of traditional teaching methods, a lack of resources, low student engagement, little parental involvement, and bad study habits are some of the main causes of students poor mathematics performance,

14.1 Traditional Teaching Methods and Student Engagement

The prevalence of lecture-based teaching in math classes, as this study found, limited opportunities for active learning and student participation. The aforementioned finding aligns with Wangmo's (2024) claim that Bhutanese classrooms' dependence on conventional, teacher-centered approaches restricts students' engagement and understanding of concepts. Students are not encouraged to investigate mathematical concepts on their own, which makes the lack of inquiry-based learning and group problem-solving even worse. Elaborative interrogation and problem-based learning are two examples of interactive teaching strategies that have been shown to dramatically improve student involvement and comprehension (Wade et al., 1999). Roediger and Butler (2011) also highlight the value of retrieval practice, which might be incorporated into classes to enhance long-term memory and lessen the need for rote memorization.

14.2 LIMITED access to Learning Resources

According to the study, a large number of students only used textbooks, having little to no access to additional learning resources including technology-based resources, practice worksheets, or visual aids. This supports the findings of Brewster and Fager (2000), who stress the importance of a well-equipped learning environment, including digital tools and organized study materials, in enhancing students' focus and academic achievement. Additionally, Johnson et al. (2016) contend that using interactive learning platforms and other educational technologies improves student engagement and gives them access to a wider variety of learning opportunities. According to Wangmo (2024), the lack of these resources in Bhutanese schools still makes it difficult to teach mathematics effectively.

14.3 ANXIETY during tests and a lack of confidence

This study brought to light a number of important issues, including students anxiousness before tests, lack of confidence, and fear of mathematics. Many students said they had trouble understanding abstract ideas and would rather be quiet in class than take the chance of making a mistake. This is consistent with Zeidner's (1998) research, which showed that elevated test anxiety impairs cognitive functions and results in poorer academic achievement. According to Dorji et al. (2021), students' attitudes and views of mathematics also affect how engaged and motivated they are to learn the subject. Students' confidence in mathematics can be greatly increased by addressing these psychological obstacles with stress management techniques and positive reinforcement (Conley, 2008).

14.4 External Support and Parental Involvement

The study found that students receive little academic help outside of the classroom, and parents are not very involved in mathematical instruction. This result is consistent with that of Dorji and Ishii (2022), who found that low student performance in Bhutanese schools was caused by a misalignment between home support and classroom instruction. Additionally, McCormick and McCormick (2001) point out that academic difficulties are more common among students who have low self-efficacy and little external motivation. According Boud et al. (2001), offering structured academic support through peer study groups and tutoring programs could help close this gap and enhance student performance.

14.5 Study Habits and Academic Performance

Another significant problem identified in this study was the lack of regular practice among students. In order to understand mathematical topics, many students resort to rote memorization, which was made worse by a dearth of opportunities for guided practice. Active learning techniques like retrieval practice and spaced repetition have been shown to dramatically improve retention and understanding (Dunlosky et al., 2013; Cepeda et al., 2006). Furthermore, practice tests allow students to become accustomed to test forms and reinforce learning by repeated retrieval, which may lessen students' difficulties with mathematics, according to Pyc and Rawson (2009). In Bhutanese schools, putting these research-based tactics into practice could boost student achievement and reduce their dependency on memory.

14.6 Overcoming These Challenges

A number of interventions need to be taken into consideration in order to enhance mathematics instruction and student performance. According to research, technology-based learning, individualized learning plans, and well-structured revision programs can improve student outcomes (Lamb & Ritchie, 2014; Chen et al., 2015). Additionally, Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) stress the need of individualized academic support, which guarantees that students get the direction they require to overcome learning challenges. According to Zimmerman (2002), students can improve their study habits and time management abilities by being encouraged to use self-regulation and metacognitive techniques.

Overall, the study's findings are consistent with previous studies on successful teaching strategies and the difficulties math students face. Better learning outcomes and higher board test scores can result from addressing these problems using interactive teaching strategies, more readily available resources, psychological support, and organized academic interventions.

XV. RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPROVEMENT

Using interactive teaching strategies like inquiry-based learning and collaborative problem-solving is crucial to raising mathematical (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). These techniques should be taught to teachers, and visual aids should be used to help students understand. Students can improve their retention of knowledge by developing better study habits through retrieval practice and spaced repetition (Dunlosky et al., 2013). Independent learning will be supported by addressing resource constraints by offering additional technology and printed materials, as well as peer study groups and tutoring programs (Boud et al., 2001). Improved academic achievement will also result from encouraging self-reflection, controlling exam anxiety, involving parents, and enhancing the bonds between teachers and students (Dorji & Ishii, 2022). These strategies can help students learn in a more supportive environment.

XVI. CONCLUSION

This approach gives an organized structure for methodically investigating and addressing the mathematical difficulties encountered by Grade 10 students. The study intends to create workable, evidence-based solutions to raise student accomplishment on board exams by combining a variety of data collection techniques, focused interventions, and in-depth qualitative analysis. The results will help teachers improve their methods and give kids a better education, which will increase their confidence and proficiency in mathematics.

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Asylum Seeking and Institutional Discrimination in Melatu Uche Okorie's *This Hostel Life*

Mahi. S

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Abstract— *During the Celtic Tiger (1990-2010), Ireland became a prominent destination for migrants and asylum seekers. The post Troubles economic boom also witnessed a dark phase when the Irish natives became intolerant towards other ethnic groups as they believed Ireland's pride, their quintessential homogenous culture, was threatened by the outsiders. The Citizenship Referendum of 2004 and other similar government initiatives lead to the politicization of refugee status and discrimination of asylum seekers. Melatu Uche Okorie's This Hostel Life (2018) throws light on the most inhumane of any such policies adopted by the Irish government, namely the Direct Provision Disposal (DPD) system. This paper will analyze and critically reflect on Okorie's treatment of the everyday life and the tacit layers of institutional marginalization that the asylum seekers experience at the DPD centers across Ireland.*

Keywords— ***direct provision disposal, asylum seekers, institutional racism, refugee literature***

Since its implementation in April 2000, the Direct Provision Disposal (DPD) system is managed by the government of Ireland for the social welfare of migrants seeking international protection. These DPD centres are various communal residences like repurposed former hotels, hostels, camps etc., that are often supervised by private bodies on behalf of the government, and are infamous for being overcrowded, for poor and unhygienic living conditions, for isolated locations resulting in limited socio-cultural integration and other injustices that invited the criticism from national international human rights activists, alike. Introduced as a temporary emergency solution for boarding asylum seekers while their applications were processed, it soon became a system for systematic incarceration of the refugees. Though, the White Paper to End Direct Provision was undertaken by the Irish government in February, 2021 as response to the international outcry, the policy only proved to re-establish the state's control by rearticulating a new system that morphed the practices of the existing system by limiting financial and spatial support to the applicants.

Melatu Uche Okorie's short story, *This Hostel Life* (2018), can rightly be justified as an 'authentic' representation of the undeniable lived experiences of the asylum seekers inhabiting various DPD centers across Ireland. Melatu herself was a resident at a DPD center for almost eight years, and her writing was a copping up mechanism against her precarious existence as an asylum seeker in Ireland. *This Hostel Life* deals with the plight of the asylum seekers in the direct provision disposal system of Ireland and unveils the multiple layers of socio-cultural prejudices that the asylum seekers, especially black African ethnicities face in contemporary Ireland. This essay will elaborate how Melatu's writing emerges as a powerful indictment against the 'othering' of the precarious migrant identity that is marginalized in the mainstream narratives. It delineates an immigrant's lived experience from a Nigerian point-of-view in a race conscious Irish society and is set in the backdrop of a direct provision disposal center. The story further emphasizes the physical and psychological challenges that an asylum seeker should go through at the hands of system that objectifies them through constant surveillance. The story also exposes Irelands' conscious and subconscious racial prejudice against refugees, especially black ethnic minorities.

At the very outset of her story, Melatu graphically illustrates the 'chaos' at a Direct Provision centre on a Monday morning when the asylum seekers are queuing up for their weekly ration. This symbolic act can be rightly interpreted as a political ploy by the writer to map and cement the feelings of powerlessness and frustration experienced by an asylum seeker who is denied any agency by a system that strips away their basic human rights. The narrator of the story, who is the mouthpiece of the writer, observes through her window to deliberate on the over-crowded centre and to reiterate "the place is also full" (Okorie 2018). In the usage

of the Nigerian-Pidgin English as the medium of communication between the women at the centre, and in the depiction of the crude realities of the DPD centre, Melatu's work is a modernist approach towards the hitherto prejudiced depiction of the African subjectivity by giving a voice to the otherwise voiceless asylum seekers. Her deconstructive standpoint is evident in the following description of Ngozi, a senior Nigerian immigrant and a tyrant figure among the women at the centre.

> "Ngozi voice match her size. She is a big woman and her voice is big and sound like man voice. She like to call everybody 'Crazy' and I have hear some Nigerias complain behind her back dat their name is not 'Crazy,' and their Mama is not call them 'Crazy' and dey will tell her dat the very next time she try to call them 'Crazy'. Me I don't mind that she call me 'Crazy', I must tell you. But you know all dis Nigerias, dey like to fight all the time." (Okorie 2018)

Opposed to the mainstream delineation of African subjectivity as the uncanny 'other', Okorie's description of Ngozi offers a 'towering' individuality. Ngozi is described as "big", have a "manly" voice and like to call everyone "crazy". Ngozi is vocal, doesn't shy away from calling others names and always stand up for what she justifies as right. She is not a 'silent' black refugee but a rather 'loud' character who is always vocal of her frustration, and thus becomes an idol for all the suppressed voices at the DPD center. On the contrary, the men in Melatu's work are "idle", are "silent" and are largely absent. The oppressive management of the state funded DPD system and the resultant paranoia among the residents is epitomised in the novel when Okorie's story ends with Ngozi demanding honey as it was excluded from her provision deliberately and her 'loud' voice being disregarded by the man at the ration counter. Okorie exhorts how being 'silent' is not the actual problem but being 'silenced' or ignored by the state is the real reason behind the precarious existence of an asylum seeker in Ireland. Melatu goes on to portray the true colours of the mandatory DPD (Direct Provision Disposal) system custom –made for the migrants who are seeking asylum in Ireland. In Melatu's opinion, the DPD is like a woman in an "abusive relationship". In this enforced dependency, she finds the nature of this abuse acutely "homogenous". This institutional "abuse" that an asylum seeker face at the hands of the Irish government is in the curtailing of the dispersal of basic amenities like food and toiletries.

> "In my last hostel, dey give you provision any day, but it's gonna be one month since you collect last. So if you get toilet paper today, it's gonna be one month before you get another. Dat is why me I happy when dey give me every week for here, but now, me I don feel happy again. Dis direct provision business is all the same, you see, because even if you collect provision for every week or you collect for every month, it is still somebody dat is give you the provision. Nothing is better than when you decide something for yourself." (Okorie 2018)

The anomaly in the DPD system is discernable in the above lines by the narrator Beverlee. Besides, the author employs the character of Mummy Dayo as her mouthpiece to shed light into the racist notions inside the centre. After seeing the new white guard at the centre, she scorns in a "sad voice",

> "'I speak to am. He from one of those fake *oyinbo* country. Meee, I don't really like all those people! They racist pass Irish!' She look for where the man is stand holing something for his hand and hiss… Those Moslems, me I suspect dem too much o. I no follow dem do anything.' 'Eastern Europeans dem all be fake *oyinbo*…'Irish people too dey cold. Whisper, whisper, all the time." (Okorie 2018)

This 'othering' of all the whites and non- blacks such as Muslims in the centre is due to Dayo's internalisation of racism and racial prejudice against black people. Further to address the monotony and stagnation in the hostels, Melatu structures the entire chapter progressing through the dialogues of women waiting up for their turn at the provision disposal counter. This approach results in a structural subversion when she employs *pidgin* as the conversational language. The entire chapter progresses through *pidgin* and thus challenges the mainstream depiction of African languages and dialects. Talking about her employment and politicisation of the language used, Melatu states in her "Author Note" to her book,

> "I told the story from the point of view of a Congolese woman for whom I created a language, a mixture of Nigerian pidgin English and some American slang words which she speaks in a strong Kinsala accent. The idea was born from my observation of how the different nationalities in the direct provision hostel were reconstructing language in order to communicate with one another. The Nigerian pidgin English (albeit with all kinds of variation) became one of the most commonly spoken, which is not surprising as Nigerians made up the highest number of residents." (Okorie 2018)

A sociolinguistic perspective of Melatu's work reveals that she has politically re-constructed the pidgin

English to reiterate the multilingual characteristic of the DPD centres across Ireland. Through her deliberate act of pidginisation, Melatu subverts the hegemony of English. The resultant 'new' language which is modern and has characteristics of all major dialects of English, is employed as the primary language of the entire story. Her deliberate attempt underlines the marginality of the speaker, yet, subverts this marginality too. According to Swigart, the mixing and usage of a vernacular language with a European language highlights the speaker as "educated" and he/she enjoys "relatively high socio-economic status". Furthermore, the speaker is indicted as someone who "values both their indigenous identity and their new international status"(179) Thus the pidginisation in the text elevates the writer's /narrator's socio-economic status.

As the immigrants are contained in a cloistered space and their only entertainment is watching television, the dialogues are centred on the various European and Irish programs telecasted. Melatu has weaved the African cultural custom of storytelling into her narrative. The importance of storytelling for nurturing female bonding and thereby building a 'community' cannot be overlooked. It is interesting to note the immigrants' leitmotif of storytelling are reality tv series like *Big Brother* and *Real Housewives* as those are the only programs running in the Irish channels. Many women cannot even perceive the programs in English and all of them interpret the episodes differently. This results in creating a comic element in the story. Concering the same, Melatu acknowledges in her "Author's Note" that "I loved the fact that I was writing things that my friends could read. Every movie I watched and every soap opera on television became a story prompt" (Okorie 2018). This proves that even her own enterprise of storytelling has sprung from the mundaneness of the hostel system.

In summation, Melatu's depiction of asylum seekers subvert the Irish stereotypical portrayal of the refugees and throws light into the tacit layers of persistent institutionalised racism and structural discrimination of a non-native. Melatu's work successfully emerges as a frame narrative on transcultural sensibilities and is the first 'black' experience from a black perspective published by *Skein Press*, aiming for an inclusive Irish publishing landscape by giving voice to "communities traditionally underrepresented" in Ireland (About). It should not be just read within the lens of 'marginality' or for its spatial marginality in the Irish literary scenario that the text is immensely critical of.

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Environmental Issues Arising from Urbanization: A Study on the Ecological Consequences of Rapid Urban Growth

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Abstract— *Urbanization has become a hallmark of modern development, characterized by the expansion of cities and the migration of populations from rural to urban areas. While this transformation fosters economic growth, innovation, and improved living standards, it also brings with it a range of environmental challenges that threaten the sustainability of urban ecosystems. This paper examines the multifaceted environmental issues arising from rapid urban growth, focusing on the degradation of air and water quality, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, soil contamination, and the intensification of the urban heat island effect. Through a comparative analysis of urban centres in both developed and developing nations, this study highlights how unplanned and poorly managed urbanization exacerbates ecological stress. It draws on data from satellite magery, environmental reports, and scholarly literature to understand the extent and nature of environmental degradation in rapidly urbanizing areas. The findings reveal that while some cities have implemented effective sustainable development strategies, many continue to struggle with pollution, resource depletion, and inadequate waste management due to insufficient infrastructure and regulatory oversight. This research underscores the urgent need for integrated urban planning policies that prioritize environmental sustainability alongside economic development. Key recommendations include the incorporation of green infrastructure, stricter environmental regulations, public transportation development, and increased community participation in urban governance. By identifying both the causes and consequences of urbanization-induced environmental issues, this paper aims to contribute to a broader understanding of how urban planning can be reimagined to mitigate ecological harm and promote resilient, sustainable cities for the future.*

Keywords— ***Urbanization, Environmental Degradation, Ecological Impact, Pollution, Biodiversity Loss, Sustainable Development, Urban Planning.***

I. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization, the process by which an increasing proportion of a population lives in urban areas, is one of the most significant and rapid transformations shaping the modern world. Over the past century, cities have emerged as engines of economic growth, innovation, and cultural development. According to the United Nations (2018), more than half of the global population currently resides in urban areas, a figure expected to rise to nearly 68% by 2050. This mass movement towards urban centres has been driven by a combination of factors including industrialization, employment opportunities, improved infrastructure, and access to education and healthcare.

However, while urbanization brings undeniable socio-economic benefits, it also introduces profound environmental challenges that threaten the sustainability and health of ecosystems. The rapid and often unplanned expansion of urban areas results in increased land consumption, deforestation, and loss of agricultural and natural lands. As cities grow, they generate high levels of pollution, including emissions from vehicles and industries, untreated sewage, and solid waste, which contribute to the degradation of air and water quality. Urban expansion also leads to the destruction of natural habitats, endangering biodiversity and altering ecological balances.

One of the most visible consequences of urbanization is the phenomenon known as the **urban heat island effect**, where built-up areas experience significantly higher temperatures than surrounding rural regions due to the concentration of concrete, asphalt, and lack of vegetation. Moreover, urban

areas are increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts such as flooding, heatwaves, and water scarcity, partly due to the pressure urban growth places on natural resources and environmental systems.

In many rapidly urbanizing countries, especially in the Global South, urban growth outpaces the development of basic infrastructure and governance mechanisms. This results in informal settlements, inadequate waste disposal systems, overburdened water supplies, and deteriorating public health. Environmental concerns are often sidelined in the face of economic priorities, leading to unsustainable development patterns that exacerbate long-term ecological damage.

Given these pressing concerns, this paper seeks to explore the **environmental issues arising from urbanization**, with a specific focus on its **ecological consequences**. By examining both the negative environmental impacts and the policies and practices that can mitigate these effects, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on sustainable urban development. Case studies from both developed and developing nations will be used to illustrate the global nature of the problem, while also acknowledging the socio-economic and political contexts that influence environmental outcomes.

Ultimately, this research underscores the urgent need for a balanced approach to urban planning—one that promotes growth and modernization without compromising the environment. By identifying key challenges and proposing strategic solutions, the study aims to serve as a resource for urban planners, policymakers, environmentalists, and researchers working towards creating livable, resilient, and ecologically responsible urban spaces.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Urbanization has been a central topic in environmental studies for decades due to its profound and far-reaching impacts on ecosystems. Scholars across disciplines have explored how the rapid and often unregulated expansion of urban areas contributes to environmental degradation, including air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity, and depletion of natural resources. This literature review synthesizes existing research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ecological consequences of urban growth, and to identify gaps that this study seeks to address.

Urbanization and Environmental Degradation

Numerous studies have linked urbanization to a wide array of environmental issues. Seto, Güneralp, and Hutyra (2012) conducted a global forecast of urban expansion and its ecological impacts, concluding that urban growth leads to significant losses in biodiversity and carbon storage due to land-use changes. Their research highlighted that by 2030, urban land cover is expected to triple, particularly affecting tropical forests and wetlands.

Similarly, Grimm et al. (2008) emphasized the disruption of natural biogeochemical cycles due to urban expansion. They argued that urbanization alters the flow of energy, materials, and organisms within ecosystems, resulting in decreased air and water quality and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Their findings underscore the need to consider ecological systems as integral to urban planning.

Air and Water Pollution in Urban Areas

Air and water pollution are among the most immediate environmental consequences of urban growth. According to Kumar and Foster (2009), vehicular emissions, industrial activities, and construction work are the primary sources of air pollution in urban centres. Prolonged exposure to pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, and particulate matter leads to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, posing a major public health risk.

In terms of water pollution, the World Bank (2013) reported that untreated sewage, industrial effluents, and stormwater runoff contribute to the contamination of freshwater bodies in many rapidly urbanizing regions. The situation is exacerbated in cities where infrastructure development lags behind population growth, resulting in inadequate sewage treatment and waste disposal systems.

Loss of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Urbanization frequently results in habitat fragmentation and the destruction of natural ecosystems. According to McKinney (2006), cities are major drivers of species extinction and biotic homogenization, replacing diverse native species with a limited number of generalist species. This loss of biodiversity not only threatens ecological balance but also reduces the provision of ecosystem services such as pollination, water purification, and climate regulation.

Furthermore, Alberti (2005) introduced the concept of urban ecological resilience, arguing that biodiversity plays a critical role in maintaining the stability and adaptability of urban ecosystems. Her research supports the inclusion of green spaces and ecological corridors in urban design to sustain biodiversity within cities.

Urban Heat Island Effect and Climate Change

The urban heat island (UHI) effect has been extensively studied in the context of environmental consequences of urbanization. Oke (1982) first identified the phenomenon, where urban areas experience higher temperatures than surrounding rural zones due to heat retention in buildings and pavements. More recent studies, such as those by Rizwan, Dennis, and Liu (2008), confirm that UHI

exacerbates energy consumption, increases air pollution, and contributes to climate change.

Moreover, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2014) noted that urban areas are both contributors to and victims of climate change. The concentration of population and infrastructure makes cities highly vulnerable to climate-induced risks such as heatwaves, flooding, and water shortages.

Sustainable Urban Development and Policy Responses

Recognizing the environmental threats posed by urbanization, many scholars have turned their attention to sustainable urban development. Newman and Kenworthy (2015) advocate for compact cities, transit-oriented development, and green infrastructure as key solutions to mitigate urban ecological impacts. Similarly, UN-Habitat (2020) emphasizes inclusive and environmentally sustainable urbanization as essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The reviewed literature provides a robust foundation for understanding the ecological consequences of rapid urbanization. While existing research has extensively documented the negative environmental impacts of urban growth, there is still a need for interdisciplinary studies that integrate scientific, social, and policy perspectives. This paper contributes to the ongoing conversation by analysing the environmental issues of urbanization through comparative case studies and offering practical recommendations for sustainable urban development.

Objectives:

The primary aim of this study is to explore the intricate relationship between urbanization and environmental degradation, with a specific focus on the ecological consequences resulting from rapid urban expansion. As cities continue to grow to accommodate increasing populations and economic activities, understanding the environmental costs of such growth becomes crucial for informed policymaking and sustainable urban planning. The objectives of this research are outlined in detail below:

To Identify and Analyse the Major Environmental Issues Arising from Urbanization

This objective involves a comprehensive examination of the environmental problems linked to urban development, such as:

- Air pollution caused by increased vehicular traffic and industrial emissions.
- Water pollution resulting from improper waste disposal and untreated sewage.
- Soil degradation and contamination due to land-use change and construction activities.
- Deforestation and the shrinking of green spaces to make way for urban infrastructure.
- The accumulation of solid waste and its improper management in urban areas.

To Investigate the Ecological Impact of Rapid Urban Growth on Biodiversity and Natural Ecosystems

This component of the study focuses on how urban expansion leads to:

- The fragmentation and destruction of habitats.
- Loss of flora and fauna species.
- Disruption of ecological corridors and natural cycles (e.g., hydrological and nutrient cycles).
- Reduced ecosystem services such as pollination, climate regulation, and natural water filtration.

To Examine the Role of Urbanization in Climate Change and the Urban Heat Island Effect

An essential objective is to explore how urban environments contribute to global and regional climate change through:

- The generation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from energy use, transport, and industry.
- Changes in land surface temperatures due to the replacement of vegetation with concrete.
- Increased energy demand for cooling in densely built environments.

To Evaluate the Effectiveness of Current Policies and Practices in Mitigating Environmental Issues in Urban Areas

This objective involves a critical assessment of:

- Urban environmental regulations and planning strategies at local, national, and global levels.
- Green infrastructure initiatives such as green roofs, urban forests, and sustainable drainage systems.
- Public transportation and renewable energy adoption in reducing environmental footprints.
- Community participation and governance in urban environmental management.

To Propose Sustainable Urban Planning and Development Strategies that Minimize Ecological Damage

Based on the findings and analysis, the study aims to offer actionable recommendations that:

- Promote environmentally sensitive urban design.
- Encourage the integration of natural elements in city planning.

- Support smart growth principles to balance development and conservation.
- Strengthen institutional capacities for environmental governance in urban areas.

By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of how urbanization impacts the environment and how cities can grow in harmony with ecological systems, ensuring a livable and sustainable future for coming generations.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach. Secondary data was collected from peer-reviewed journals, UN reports, and government publications to understand global trends in urbanization and its environmental impact. Comparative case studies of urban centres such as Delhi (India), Beijing (China), and New York (USA) were analysed to illustrate the variance in environmental outcomes. Additionally, GIS mapping and satellite data were used to assess land-use changes and their ecological consequences. Qualitative data was supplemented by interviews with urban planners and environmental scientists.

Analysis and Findings:

The analysis presented in this study is based on a synthesis of secondary data collected from peer-reviewed journals, global environmental reports (e.g., UN-Habitat, World Bank), satellite imagery, and case studies from rapidly urbanizing cities. The findings are categorized according to key environmental dimensions impacted by urbanization: air quality, water resources, biodiversity, climate, and waste management.

Air Pollution and Declining Air Quality

One of the most immediate and visible effects of urbanization is the deterioration of air quality. The analysis of data from cities such as **Delhi**, **Beijing**, and **Mexico City** shows that:

- Rapid urban growth has led to an exponential rise in private vehicles and industrial activity, both of which are major contributors to **particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10)**, **nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)**, and **carbon monoxide (CO)** emissions.
- Inadequate public transport systems force residents to rely on personal vehicles, exacerbating emissions.
- Urban construction and the lack of green cover further contribute to dust pollution and reduced air quality.
- Studies reveal a strong correlation between urban density and increased rates of respiratory illnesses among urban populations, especially in low-income communities.

Water Pollution and Resource Stress

Urbanization also significantly affects water availability and quality. Analysis from case studies of **Mumbai**, **Jakarta**, and **Nairobi** indicate:

- In many cities, **wastewater is discharged into rivers and lakes without treatment**, leading to eutrophication and the spread of waterborne diseases.
- Groundwater depletion is a growing issue, with over-extraction driven by increasing urban demand.
- Impervious surfaces such as concrete roads reduce groundwater recharge, contributing to water stress.
- Urban runoff during monsoon or rainy seasons often contains **industrial effluents, oil residues, and solid waste**, polluting natural water bodies.

Biodiversity Loss and Habitat Fragmentation

The conversion of natural landscapes into urban land has critical implications for biodiversity. Findings from satellite imagery and ecological surveys in cities like **São Paulo** and **Kuala Lumpur** reveal:

- Massive deforestation to accommodate urban infrastructure has resulted in **habitat loss**, leading to the local extinction of plant and animal species.
- Urban sprawl has fragmented ecosystems, reducing species migration and reproduction, thereby weakening ecological resilience.
- Green patches in cities are often isolated, poorly maintained, or replaced by manicured parks that do not support native biodiversity.
- Wetlands, often considered wastelands in the urban planning context, are among the most affected ecosystems.

Urban Heat Island (UHI) Effect and Microclimatic Changes

The UHI effect has emerged as a severe microclimatic impact of urbanization. Analysis of temperature patterns in cities like **Tokyo**, **Cairo**, and **Los Angeles** shows that:

- Urban centres exhibit **temperature differences of 3–7°C** compared to surrounding rural areas due to high surface reflectivity and reduced vegetation.
- UHI not only increases energy consumption (especially for cooling) but also intensifies heat

stress, especially among vulnerable populations like the elderly and urban poor.

- The absence of tree cover, water bodies, and green roofs amplifies temperature retention, leading to **greater reliance on fossil-fuel-based cooling systems**, creating a feedback loop that worsens climate change.

Waste Generation and Management Challenges

Urban areas generate a disproportionate share of the world's waste. Case studies from **Lagos**, **Dhaka**, and **New York City** reveal:

- Rapid population growth in cities outpaces the development of waste management infrastructure.
- In many developing cities, **less than 60% of waste is collected**, and only a fraction is processed or recycled.
- Open dumping and incineration contribute to air and soil pollution and pose health hazards.
- Informal sectors, though often neglected in policy frameworks, play a significant role in waste sorting and recycling.

Socioeconomic Disparities in Environmental Exposure

The environmental impact of urbanization is **not evenly distributed**. The analysis shows:

- Marginalized communities often reside near industrial zones, landfills, or polluted water bodies, exposing them to higher environmental health risks.
- These communities typically lack access to clean drinking water, green spaces, and proper waste disposal systems.
- Environmental injustice is evident in zoning policies and urban development models that prioritize commercial interests over ecological and human health.

Summary of Key Findings

Environmental Area	Key Findings
Air Quality	Increased emissions from vehicles and industry; health impacts rising
Water Resources	Contamination and depletion of water sources; inadequate wastewater treatment
Biodiversity	Habitat loss and ecosystem fragmentation due to urban expansion
Climate & UHI	Elevated urban temperatures; increased energy use and heat stress
Waste Management	Inefficient systems; growing informal recycling sector
Environmental Equity	Low-income groups bear the brunt of environmental degradation

The findings clearly demonstrate that unplanned and rapid urbanization, while driving economic development, leads to serious ecological consequences that threaten sustainability and public health. These outcomes highlight the urgent need for integrated urban-environmental policy frameworks, the implementation of green infrastructure, and greater stakeholder participation to ensure a balance between development and environmental conservation.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Urbanization is an inevitable and often beneficial process, contributing significantly to economic development, technological innovation, and improved standards of living. However, as this study has demonstrated, when urban growth occurs rapidly and without sufficient planning or regulation, it can lead to severe and often irreversible environmental consequences. This research has explored the multifaceted ecological impacts of rapid urbanization, including air and water pollution, biodiversity loss, climate alteration, and the degradation of urban ecosystems.

The analysis reveals that urban areas, particularly in developing regions, are experiencing unprecedented growth rates that far outpace the development of adequate infrastructure and environmental safeguards. The resulting consequences—poor air quality, contaminated water sources, diminished green spaces, excessive waste generation, and rising temperatures due to the urban heat island effect—pose serious risks not only to the environment but also to human health and urban liveability.

One of the most concerning findings is the disproportionate burden borne by marginalized and low-income communities, who often reside in environmentally degraded areas with limited access to basic services and protections. This points to a pressing need for an environmental justice perspective in urban planning, where the voices and needs of vulnerable populations are integrated into development decisions.

At the same time, the study highlights that many of these challenges are not insurmountable. Successful initiatives from cities around the world—ranging from green roofs and

urban forests to sustainable public transportation systems and waste-to-energy programs—demonstrate that it is possible to reconcile urban growth with environmental sustainability. However, these efforts must be part of a broader, integrated urban planning framework supported by strong political will, public awareness, community involvement, and adequate funding.

Key to addressing these issues is the adoption of sustainable urban development principles, which emphasize ecological balance, resource efficiency, and inclusivity. Policymakers, urban planners, environmentalists, and civil society must work together to prioritize long-term ecological health over short-term economic gain.

In conclusion, the ecological consequences of rapid urban growth serve as a critical reminder that urbanization must be guided by thoughtful, forward-looking strategies that balance development with environmental preservation. Without such an approach, the very cities that promise opportunity and progress may become centres of pollution, inequality, and ecological collapse. Thus, the future of sustainable cities lies in recognizing the environment not as an obstacle to growth, but as its essential foundation.

Limitations of the Study:

- The study is limited by its reliance on secondary data and may not capture real-time environmental changes.
- Geographic scope is limited to select case studies and may not represent all urban regions.
- Interviews were limited in number due to accessibility issues, potentially narrowing perspectives.

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Epistemic Injustice in the Digital Age: Social Media, Silencing, and the Politics of Credibility

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Abstract

This article explores the evolving contours of epistemic injustice in the digital age, with particular focus on the role of social media in both perpetuating and challenging these injustices. Drawing on Miranda Fricker's foundational concepts of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, the paper examines how algorithmic structures, influencer cultures, and digital hierarchies affect the credibility and interpretability of marginalized voices. It interrogates the mechanisms by which epistemic authority is constructed online and highlights how marginalized groups—such as Dalits, women, and indigenous communities—are often discredited, silenced, or rendered unintelligible in mainstream digital discourse. At the same time, the paper explores the emergence of epistemic counter publics that resist these dominant narratives and reclaim space for alternative ways of knowing. The study concludes by calling for a critical epistemic ethics of the digital public sphere—one that ensures inclusivity, interpretive justice, and equitable knowledge production in our increasingly networked societies.

***Keywords*— Knowledge, Digital, Dominant, Connectivity, Interpretive**

I. INTRODUCTION

In an era defined by digital connectivity, social media platforms have become the new battlegrounds for knowledge production, dissemination, and validation. While these platforms promise democratized access to information and offer previously unheard voices a chance to speak, they simultaneously reinforce and amplify systemic epistemic injustices. The concept of epistemic injustice, first articulated by Miranda Fricker, refers to the wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower. It encompasses testimonial injustice, where a speaker's word is given less credibility due to prejudice, and hermeneutical injustice, where marginalized groups are deprived of the interpretive resources necessary to make sense of their experiences. In the context of social media, these injustices take on new, technologically mediated forms. The credibility of voices is often determined not by the strength of reason or evidence, but by algorithms, popularity metrics, and audience biases. Epistemic silencing occurs both subtly and overtly—through trolling, de-platforming, and algorithmic invisibility. At the same time, dominant frameworks often fail to account for the lived realities of oppressed communities, resulting in hermeneutical marginalization. The lack of adequate interpretive tools to understand digital forms of oppression—such as cyberbullying, doxxing, or algorithmic discrimination—further exacerbates the issue. However, the digital sphere is not only a site of epistemic exclusion but also of resistance and rearticulation. The rise of counter publics—like Dalit Twitter, feminist blogs, and indigenous TikTok channels—has enabled marginalized communities to develop and share alternative epistemologies. These spaces offer interpretive frameworks that challenge the epistemic authority of dominant discourses and assert the legitimacy of suppressed knowledge systems. This article aims to critically examine how epistemic injustice operates in the age of social media, interrogate the digital mechanisms that reproduce it, and highlight the forms of resistance that emerge in response. In doing so, it calls for an epistemic ethics appropriate to the digital public sphere—one that foregrounds inclusivity, credibility equity, and the protection of diverse knowledge systems in a rapidly evolving information ecosystem.

Indian Philosophy:

Indian philosophy is marked by a distinctive set of concerns, methods, and insights that set it apart from Western traditions. Indian thinkers posed original questions, such as those relating to the *origin (utpatti)* and *apprehension (jñapti)* of *truth (prāmāṇya)*—problems that Western philosophy largely did not address. While less focused on distinctions like analytic vs. synthetic judgments or contingent vs. necessary truths, Indian philosophy offered nuanced explorations of consciousness, knowledge, and liberation. The foundations of Indian philosophical thought are found in the Vedic hymns, composed around the 2nd millennium BCE. These are the earliest textual reflections on the human mind's engagement with divinity and myth, leading to profound cosmological and spiritual conceptions. Following the Vedas, the Upanishads—speculative philosophical texts—introduced one of the earliest ideas of a universal, all-pervading spiritual reality. They laid the groundwork for monism: the belief in the essential unity of matter and spirit. The Upanishads also posed significant questions about nature, life, consciousness, the human body, ethics, and social philosophy. These concerns continued into the classical systems of Indian philosophy known as the *darśanas*. These orthodox schools explored, often in great depth:

- The nature of the individual self (*jīva*) and its finitude,
- The relationship between body, mind, and self (ātman),
- The sources and kinds of valid knowledge (*pramāṇas*),
- The origin and nature of truth,
- The types of entities that can be said to exist,
- The debate between realism and idealism,
- The question of whether universals or relations are more fundamental.

A core concern running through much of Indian philosophy is the idea of moksha—*liberation* or *release*. This concept deals with the nature of human bondage, the possibility of freedom, and the various philosophical and practical paths to liberation—whether through knowledge (*jñāna*), action (*karma*), or devotion (*bhakti*).

Definition of Philosophy:

The word *philosophy* comes from two Greek words: *philo* (love) and *sophia* (wisdom). Hence, philosophy literally means "love of wisdom." As rational beings, humans possess an innate desire to understand themselves and the world around them. Philosophy is an expression of this intellectual pursuit. It reflects our natural urge to comprehend the universe and our place within it. One cannot live without some form of philosophical framework; the real choice lies between a well-formed worldview and a flawed one.

Origin of Philosophy:

According to Aristotle, philosophy begins in wonder. Early humans were awestruck and confused by natural phenomena such as rain, storms, and celestial bodies. These experiences led them to ponder life, death, and the forces governing the universe. Initially, humans tried to explain these through magic—assuming nature was controlled by human-like powers. Over time, magic evolved into science (as natural causes were sought), religion (as supernatural agents were believed in), and philosophy (as attempts to understand the whole reality through reasoning).

Subject Matter of Philosophy:

Philosophy aims to construct a rational worldview. Unlike individual sciences, which study specific aspects of reality—mathematics studies numbers, physics studies energy and matter, psychology examines mental processes, etc.—philosophy attempts to synthesize insights from all these disciplines to form a comprehensive understanding of the universe. It explores fundamental concepts like time, space, mind, life, and matter, and investigates their interrelationships. It also addresses the nature of reality, the existence of God, the purpose of life, and the connection between the universe and the human soul. At its core, philosophy is the art of systematic and logical thinking about all aspects of reality.

Philosophical Problems:

The foundational questions of philosophy remain largely consistent across Eastern and Western traditions. These questions are broad and universal in scope, unlike scientific problems which often arise from specific contexts. Some classic philosophical problems include:

- What is knowledge?
- What is the nature of the world?
- Is there a creator or God?
- Who am I?
- What is the goal of life?
- Why should one live?
- What is the purpose of existence?

Major Branches of Philosophy:

Epistemology – This is the philosophical study of knowledge. It examines the nature, scope, and limits of knowledge, as well as concepts such as truth, belief, and

justification. It questions how we know what we know and distinguishes between valid and invalid knowledge.

Metaphysics – Concerned with the nature of reality, metaphysics explores fundamental questions such as: What is existence? Is there a God? What is the relationship between mind and matter? It deals with the self, the cosmos, and the divine, and includes subfields like ontology (the study of being), theology, cosmology, and the philosophy of self.

Axiology – This branch focuses on the study of values. It includes:

- **Ethics**, which examines moral values and the nature of right and wrong;
- **Aesthetics**, which studies beauty, art, and taste;
- **Logic**, which investigates principles of correct reasoning, including types of propositions, inference, hypotheses, and definitions.

The Development and Scope of Epistemology:

Although philosophical problems can be classified in various ways, the most effective and widely accepted division of philosophy is into ontology (metaphysics), epistemology, and axiology (including ethics and aesthetics). Among these, epistemology—the study of knowledge—stands as one of the central branches. However, the terminology associated with epistemology is relatively modern. In the 17th and 18th centuries, no specific term existed for this field. Philosophers addressed epistemological issues in key works such as Descartes' *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Berkeley's *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Leibniz's *New Essays on Human Understanding*, and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant referred to some of his epistemological reflections as "transcendental aesthetic," based on the Greek word *aisthesis*, meaning sensory cognition. However, he also helped shape the modern use of "aesthetics" as the philosophy of beauty. Earlier still, Alexander Baumgarten introduced the term *gnoseologia* (1769), and in German philosophy, terms like *Erkenntnistheorie* (theory of knowledge), *Erkenntnislehre*, and *Theorie der Erkenntnis* gained traction in the 19th century. James Frederick Ferrier was the first to introduce the English term *epistemology* in *Institutes of Metaphysics* (1854). Other names for this field included *Wissenschaftslehre* (Fichte, Bolzano), *Wissenschaftstheorie* (Eugen Dühring), *criteriology*, and *noetics*—the latter two used mainly by Neo-Thomists. Despite this variety, *epistemology* and *Erkenntnistheorie* have become the most widely used terms today. The variation in terminology reflects differing conceptions of what epistemology encompasses. In its broader sense, epistemology includes all inquiries related to knowledge and cognition—spanning psychology, sociology, logic, history, and even metaphysics. In a narrower or more precise sense, it focuses specifically on the sources, nature, validity, and limits of knowledge, aiming to understand what knowledge is, how it is acquired, and how it can be justified. Typical questions in epistemology include: *What is knowledge?* Is knowledge derived from the senses or from reason? Can we achieve certainty? What is truth? Are there boundaries beyond which knowledge is impossible? While it's challenging to draw a strict line between the broader and narrower interpretations of epistemology, these classical questions represent a consistent and identifiable tradition throughout the history of philosophical inquiry.

II. EARLY EPISTEMOLOGY: FROM PRE-SOCRATICS TO PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

The first Ionian philosophers were primarily concerned with metaphysics and cosmology, but early epistemological ideas emerged in thinkers like Heraclitus (on the limits of sense perception), the Pythagoreans (on direct cognition), and the Eleatics (Parmenides on the identity of thinking and being). The development of deductive reasoning, especially by the Pythagoreans and Eleatics, laid foundational ground for epistemology. Empedocles and Anaxagoras further contributed to the understanding of sense cognition and reason (nous). Democritus introduced a form of critical realism, distinguishing primary and secondary qualities. The Sophists, especially Protagoras, offered relativistic and sceptical views, while Socrates emphasized the role of universal concepts in knowledge.

Plato's Epistemology:

Plato built upon Socratic ideas and proposed a sharp distinction between *knowledge (episteme)* and *opinion (doxa)*. Knowledge, for him, is a justified true belief grounded in the realm of eternal, unchanging *Forms*, which are accessible only through reason, not senses. Sensory experience leads only to opinion, which is uncertain and changeable. Plato divided knowledge into two types: *noesis* (intuitive, highest form) and *dianoia* (discursive, mathematical reasoning). He proposed the theory of recollection (anamnesis), arguing that the immortal soul recalls knowledge from its prior existence in the realm of Forms. His famous "Allegory of the Cave" illustrates the contrast between the world of senses and the higher world of Forms. Plato's rationalism had both methodological (a priorism) and genetic (nativism) aspects. However, his strict definition of knowledge raised enduring problems in

epistemology, particularly around the exclusion of opinion as a form of knowledge and the ambiguity of defining knowledge strictly as justified true belief.

Aristotle's Epistemology:

Aristotle, Plato's student, rejected both apriorism and nativism. He offered an empirical theory of knowledge grounded in sense perception (*a posteriori* knowledge). For Aristotle, knowledge starts with sensory experience and is refined through abstraction by reason, allowing us to grasp general principles from particular instances. He retained Plato's term *episteme* but redefined its basis: Forms exist within substances, not in a separate realm. Knowledge arises from the interaction between passive perception and the active intellect. Scientific knowledge, for Aristotle, is built through syllogistic reasoning from self-evident principles—forming the basis of a deductive system of science, which influenced scientific methodology for nearly 2,000 years. Despite, later criticisms of his system, especially during the Middle Ages, Aristotle's contributions to logic, scientific method, and the theory of truth were foundational in shaping Western epistemology.

Digital Hermeneutics and Epistemic Inequality:

The digital age, and more specifically the rise of social media platforms, has dramatically transformed the way knowledge is produced, shared, validated, and consumed. While this democratization of information dissemination has led to unprecedented access and participation, it has also amplified deep-seated epistemic injustices. These injustices are not only persistent in new digital contexts but are often exacerbated by the very mechanisms of social media. Drawing on the concept of *epistemic injustice* introduced by Miranda Fricker, we can critically explore two major forms—testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice—within today's media-saturated landscape.

Testimonial Injustice: Silencing in the Algorithmic Public Sphere

Testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker's credibility is unjustly deflated due to prejudice. On social media, this manifests in multiple ways:

- **Marginalized voices are algorithmically devalued**: The algorithms that govern visibility on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) often prioritize content that aligns with popular opinion or generates high engagement. Marginalized individuals—Dalits, women, queer communities, and ethnic minorities—are frequently overlooked, their content buried under more mainstream narratives.
- **Prejudice-driven discrediting**: Even when these voices are heard, they are often met with suspicion or outright dismissal, particularly in comment sections or viral discourse. For example, when Black women or Dalit activists speak out against systemic oppression, they are often accused of overreacting, being emotional, or even lying—classic markers of testimonial injustice.
- **Epistemic trolling**: Deliberate undermining of someone's knowledge claims through mocking, baiting, or malicious questioning (e.g., "Where's your source?" even when one is provided) serves to delegitimize those challenging dominant narratives.

Hermeneutical Injustice: The Crisis of Meaning in Networked Cultures

Hermeneutical injustice occurs when people lack the interpretive tools to make sense of their social experiences due to structural gaps in collective understanding. Social media platforms often intensify this injustice:

- **New experiences, old frameworks**: Many online phenomena—cyberbullying, doxxing, cancel culture, online misogyny—are poorly understood by legal and philosophical frameworks rooted in pre-digital realities. Victims often struggle to articulate their suffering in accepted epistemic terms.
- **Language deficits in marginalized epistemologies**: Indigenous, subaltern, and queer worldviews often do not find representation in the dominant digital lexicon. For instance, Adivasi epistemologies or Bahujan spiritual philosophies are often collapsed under generic labels like "folk" or "myth" that diminish their philosophical depth. The public sphere lacks adequate hermeneutical resources to engage with these perspectives on their own terms.
- **Misinformation and epistemic chaos**: The overproduction of information online—much of it contradictory or deliberately false—has created an environment in which truth becomes contested, and meaningful interpretation itself is undermined. This leads to what some scholars call "epistemic nihilism"—a condition where no knowledge claim seems reliable, further marginalizing those already excluded from knowledge production.

III. DIGITAL EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY AND THE RISE OF THE INFLUENCER-EXPERT

One paradox of the social media age is the decline of traditional epistemic authorities (scientists, journalists, scholars) and the rise of "influencer-experts." While this

shift may seem democratizing, it often entrenches new forms of epistemic injustice:

- **The illusion of equivalence**: In the horizontal structure of platforms, an anti-vaccine influencer's tweet may appear side-by-side with an epidemiologist's. The result is epistemic flattening—where every voice seems equally valid regardless of training, context, or expertise.
- **Gatekeeping via virality**: Instead of meritocratic or peer-reviewed validation, credibility is increasingly established via likes, retweets, and followers. This encourages performance over substance and leads to the marginalization of rigorous, nuanced knowledge.

Counter publics and the Resistance to Epistemic Injustice:

Despite these challenges, social media also enables resistance to epistemic injustice:

- **Epistemic counter publics**—Dalit Twitter, feminist Instagram pages, indigenous TikTok creators—have emerged as critical spaces of collective meaning-making, where silenced voices rearticulate their experiences and reclaim narrative control.
- **New hermeneutics**: Hashtags like #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, or #DalitLivesMatter have created shared interpretive frameworks for understanding systemic violence, trauma, and resistance. These become tools to overcome hermeneutical gaps in mainstream discourse.
- **Collaborative knowledge production**: Platforms like YouTube and podcasts have allowed for long-form, in-depth content that can challenge superficial narratives and offer counter-epistemologies outside academic gatekeeping.

Toward an Epistemic Ethics of the Digital:

The epistemic landscape of the social media age is shaped by both unprecedented opportunity and significant danger. While digital platforms have the potential to redress historical epistemic injustices by amplifying marginalized voices and promoting epistemic diversity, they also risk perpetuating silencing mechanisms through algorithmic bias, digital populism, and the exploitative structures of platform capitalism. Addressing these challenges demands a critical rethinking of our digital ethics. This includes holding technology companies accountable for the amplification of prejudice and the suppression of dissent, investing in digital epistemic education to empower users to recognize bias, assess credibility, and value epistemic pluralism, and developing inclusive hermeneutic frameworks that make space for diverse ways of knowing and being. Only through such multidimensional interventions can the digital public sphere evolve toward a more just epistemic environment—one in which all voices are not only heard but also respected and meaningfully engaged in the collective human pursuit of truth.

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A Qualitative Study on the Identity Construction of Pre-service English Teachers

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Abstract

This study explores pre-service English teachers' identity construction via Wenger's CoP model. Four postgraduate students with diverse undergraduate majors and over three months of teaching internship were interviewed. Findings reveal that identity is shaped by engagement in teaching (prior experiences, courses, internships) and imagining alternatives (good teacher criteria, career visions). Participants note theory-practice conflicts, with internships revealing gaps between ideals and exam-focused realities. Their "good teacher" concepts stress competence and ethics. The study highlights the need for integrated theory-practice training and further research on dynamic identity transition.

***Keywords*—Community of Practice, Identity construction, Pre-service teachers.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher identity construction has long been a focal point in educational research, as it shapes not only educators' professional commitment but also their instructional practices (Trent, 2010). For pre-service English teachers, this process is particularly complex, involving the negotiation of roles between student and educator, the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical experience, and the alignment of personal values with educational contexts (Vallente & Mael, 2020).

Within the framework of Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice (CoP) theory, identity is constructed through dynamic interactions in social communities, where engagement, imagination, and alignment foster a sense of belonging. This theory provides a valuable lens to explore how pre-service teachers develop their professional identities amid the transition from academic settings to classroom practice. However, existing studies have predominantly focused on in-service teachers, leaving gaps in understanding the unique challenges faced by pre-service English teachers—such as reconciling pedagogical ideals with exam-oriented realities and adapting to diverse student needs (Wang, 2020).

Based on these, the research aims to investigate the following two questions within the Wenger's theoretical framework discussed in this section:

(1) What are the factors affecting the identity construction of pre-service English teachers?

(2) What are the pre-service English teachers' experiences of teacher identity construction.

II. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Patton (1990) once pointed out that the selection of research participants according to the purpose of research can provide the largest amount of information for research questions. This study selected 4 participants who are all second-grade postgraduate students. The four participants were selected for three reasons: Firstly, they are all full-time postgraduate students that we can easily connect with them. Secondly, they have interned in junior or senior high school for at least 3 months, which suits this study well. Thirdly, they have different majors when they were

undergraduate, which maybe an important factor influencing their identity construction.

III. METHOD

The interview is a method for the study to obtain comprehensive information about research participants. Based on the analysis of interviews, the interviewer can know the interviewees' psychological activities and their teaching behaviors. And then the factors affecting their identity construction can be explored. The interviewees' answers were recorded on tape with their consents . In order to have a data file, the tape-recordings are transcribed.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis was a gradually evolving process in which the dataset, theoretical framework, coded categories and research questions were repeatedly evaluated, re-evaluated and reformulated. The data was reviewed until themes and patterns that potentially answered the research questions emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Based on Wenger's CoP model, after coding and re-coding the interviews, the study adopts two modes of belonging——Engagement with learning to teach and Imaging alternatives, which are as crucial elements in shaping one's identity.

V. FINDINGS

5.1 Engagement with learning to teach

Wenger (1998) suggests that engagement in practice involves investing in what is being done and in relationships with other members of the community. With adopting this theoretical framework and analyzing the interviews, the study finds that there are mainly three factors affecting the pre-service teachers' identity construction in this category, including previous experiences (Previous educational experiences as well as previous part-time or internship experiences), courses learnt during the postgraduate study along with the current internship experiences.

5.1.1 Previous experiences

(1) Previous educational experiences.

The four interviewees have different majors when they are undergraduate, during the interview, they point out that the choice of major at the end of high school has a great impact on the choice of career in life. The following extract from one interviewee is representative:

> For my undergraduate study, I wasn't a normal education major but studied within the broader English discipline. Now I'm pursuing a Master of Education in English Teaching in our university. I didn't systematically study English teaching courses during my undergraduate years.（Interviewee A ）

Interviewee A didn't major in normal education during her undergraduate period, but she wants to pursue a Master of Education in English Teaching, to systematically learn English teaching courses.

(2) Previous part-time or internship experiences

Three interviewees say their previous part-time or internship experiences play a positive role in identity construction while one says it's less helpful. For example,

> After graduating from university, I worked as a full-time teacher in an educational institution for a year. Except for lesson planning, there was little pressure, but I felt it didn't significantly improve my teaching abilities. Their expected teaching focused solely on score improvement—completely different from the core competencies and English learning activity concepts taught in university. Therefore, apart from reinforcing English knowledge points daily, the experience did little to enhance basic teaching skills or professional capabilities. (Interviewee D)

This interviewee thinks that her part-time job experience does not help much to improve her basic teaching skills and teaching abilities.

5.1.2 Courses learnt during the postgraduate study.

The four participants all major in English Teaching during the postgraduate study. After learning the courses, one interviewee thinks that some courses are helpful in becoming an English teacher such as Test and Assessment courses and UbD (Understanding by Design).

> Interviewee B : I think Ms. Li's Test and Assessment course was helpful. She asked us to share teaching designs and guided us on revisions. At the end of the course, we designed cloze tests, which was an interesting activity—swapping roles with teachers. As students, we used to find teachers' difficult questions frustrating, but as teachers, we aimed to challenge students while covering key knowledge points. Mr. Wu's course on UbD was particularly useful for lesson planning.

Another interviewee feels the conflict between theory and practice. when she is in a real classroom, she needs to make adjustments to the class, and she feels there are many special situations which need more practical experience. The interviewee's description is exemplified in the following excerpt:

> Interviewee D : In the university, we practiced teaching without real students (mock teaching) and

lesson planning. Although we had clear theoretical frameworks for lesson structures, real classrooms required improvisation. Student dynamics varied—some high-achieving classes were inactive, while others with lower scores were lively. Such special cases demanded more practical experience than theory could provide.

While there's another interviewee figures out that what she has learnt is like a coin having two sides which can both be helpful and be obstructive.

> Interviewee A : It's a conflict between theory and practice, ideal and reality. Theories like "Big Ideas" do help—for example, designing unit-based teaching on themes like "Space Exploration," expanding from vocabulary to texts and back. But conflicts arise because classroom theories assume students master all content, while real teaching must prioritize exam-oriented needs. When teaching Lin Qiaozhi, we aimed to emphasize her virtues, but students preferred traditional, exam-focused methods. This reflects a clash between ideal core competencies (language, cultural awareness, etc.) and practical exam priorities.

5.1.3 Current internship experiences.

Even though the four interviewees are different from their current internship experiences, they all consider the conflict between the theoretical knowledge and practice. Besides, an interviewee has enhanced her reflection ability through the internship. This could be illustrated by the extract from A :

> Teaching my first listening-speaking class was unforgettable. Despite theoretical knowledge, designing and delivering the lesson revealed practical challenges—like time management. A 40-minute class felt much shorter than expected, requiring content cuts. I overestimated students' comprehension of listening materials, which needed extra repetitions. Feedback from supervising teachers was invaluable, and the friendly office culture enhanced my experience. (Interviewee A)

From the above fragment, we can see that the interviewee A has a good relationship with her colleagues and she can learn more from the practice.

5. 2 Imaging alternatives

The participants are found to employ imagination in the process of identity construction. According to the research, there are mainly four aspects: participants' views on the criteria of "a good teacher", the reasons for the criteria of "a good teacher", imagination of being what kind of teacher, and thoughts of giving up being a teacher.

5.2.1 Views on the criteria of "a good teacher"

Broadly speaking, the four interviewees think that "a good teacher" should have professional competence such as teaching ability, problem solving ability; have moral qualities like emphasis on teacher ethics; form personal styles; keep learning and apply in practice. The following extracts represent their views:

> Interviewee B: First, responsibility: managing student-parent relationships and committing to students. Second, patience: treating all students equally, though I struggle with patience during disciplinary issues. Third, handling emergencies: observing experienced teachers' calm problem-solving. Lastly, teaching competence: postgraduate courses on instructional design significantly aided this.
>
> Interviewee D : I think an important quality for good teachers is the ability to ground theoretical knowledge in practice. We need to apply what we've learned by adapting it to real-world contexts. This involves not only understanding students as much as possible and grasping exam trends, but also continuously updating our teaching skills and approaches. That's the standard I aspire to achieve to become a competent teacher.

The above fragments show that the interviewee B thinks "a good teacher" should be responsible and patient. Besides, he or she can cope with something emergency. What's more, interviewee D stresses that the pedagogical ability is the most needed.

5.2.2 Reasons for the criteria of "a good teacher"

There are various reasons for the criteria of "a good teacher", but to conclude the interview, the formation of the criteria mainly come from their internships, own experience as a student and theoretical knowledge.

The following fragment shows that the interviewee A has such criteria of "a good teacher" mainly because she learns them from the textbooks and her own internship.

> The standards stem from both theory and practice. Theoretical knowledge—like educational theories in English Pedagogy—laid the foundation, while practical experiences (past teachers and current supervisors) shaped real-world understanding. Ethical conduct, equal treatment, and student-centered thinking emerged from this blend. (Interviewee A)

5.2.3 Imagination of being what kind of teacher

Interviewees have different opinions on imagination of being what kind of teacher in the future. Their views are extracted as follows:

> Interviewee A: I aspire to be a good teacher, though practical challenges may alter this. I intend to prioritize students' academic performance and learning capabilities, but career realities might dampen initial enthusiasm. Despite uncertainties, I strive to maintain passion— as the saying goes, "May love never fade."
>
> Interviewee C: After entering a public school, I will integrate the theoretical knowledge with teaching practice, continuously refine my teaching methods, and improve instructional designs. Meanwhile, I plan to engage in academic educational research, publish papers, and undertake appropriate research projects. In daily studies, I will enhance learning efficiency, set clear goals, and avoid imposing excessive pressure on students or myself. I am confident to become a qualified English teacher.

Interviewee A wants to be a strict teacher and try her best to become a good teacher in her mind. Interviewee C feels like being an educator-type teacher so that neither the students nor herself should be too stressed out.

5.2.4 Thoughts of giving up being a teacher

Three interviewees sometimes want to give up being a teacher but would stick to it. However, one interviewer doesn't have the thoughts of not becoming a teacher at all:

> Due to heavy workloads in public schools—grading papers, preparing teaching competitions, and managing non-teaching tasks (e.g., parent communication, dormitory checks for homeroom teachers). The stress of balancing theory-practice gaps and academic pressures occasionally makes me question the career. However, focusing solely on teaching (non-homeroom) alleviates these concerns.(Interviewee C)

We can note that the interviewee C sometimes has the thoughts of giving up being a teacher because she feels stressed and she finds that she is busy in many things.

However, interviewee B doesn't have the thoughts of not being a teacher, and she still has a certain amount of anticipation for being a teacher. We can see from the following extract:

> Though career burnout is inevitable, self-adjustment is key. With limited teaching experience during the internship, I still feel fresh and optimistic about the profession.(Interviewee B)

VI. CONCLUSION

The study aims to discuss the pre-service teachers' identity construction, and tries to find out (1) What are the factors affecting the identity construction of pre-service English teachers? (2) What are the pre-service English teachers' experiences of teacher identity construction? Through the research, for the engagement with learning to teach, we can find that the factors affecting the construction of teachers' identity are complex. They are influenced by internal and external factors such as the family, society and the individual. This aligns with Trent (2010), who argues that teacher identity is shaped by dynamic interactions between personal histories and professional contexts, highlighting the role of practical engagement in identity formation.

In addition, in the process of identity construction, the pre-service teachers' subjective initiatives are fully reflected. One will stick to be a teacher if he or she has a strong personal conviction. As to the imaging alternatives, pre-service teachers' identity as a teacher is changing: the majority of them are hesitant about whether they would be committed to becoming a teacher in the future. Howie et al. (2007) note that pre-service teachers' identity formation involves negotiating multiple role expectations.

Overall, this study confirms that pre-service English teachers' identity construction is a socially situated process (Wenger, 1998), influenced by both structural factors (e.g., teacher education programs) and subjective initiative (e.g., reflective practice). As Wang (2020) observes in related research on pre-service teachers, sustained support for bridging theory and practice is crucial for fostering stable professional identities.

VII. IMPLICATIONS

Identity is constructed in practice and context. In order to promote pre-service English language teachers' enthusiasm for education and positive identity construction, based on the findings of the study, the study has the following implications:

Firstly, provide more internship opportunities. There is a need to provide more internship opportunities for pre-service teachers, to strengthen the integration of theory and practice in pre-service education duration, and to reduce the gap between theory and practice during pre-service teachers' internships

Secondly, give subjective initiatives into full play . Educational practice serves as a critical transitional phase for pre-service teachers as they move from their pre-service training to actual teaching positions. The degree of their satisfaction with their educational practice directly influences their understanding of and identification with the teaching profession (Ren Yongcan et al., 2023). Pre-service teachers need to enhance their subjective initiatives, take the initiative to explore and learn, enrich their experience and knowledge in the field of educational

practice, enhance their self-reflective ability, and continue to promote the transformation of the "real self" into the "ideal self".

Thirdly, further research. In the research, the pre-service teachers' identity construction is changing with different thoughts, so it's necessary to focus on the dynamic process of identity construction, conduct longitudinal studies to track the identity changes of pre-service teachers from enrollment to post-employment, and conduct in-depth analysis of the influencing factors at each stage. In addition, exploring how to utilize modern educational technologies, such as online teaching platforms and virtual simulation teaching, to facilitate the identity construction of pre-service teachers is also a direction worthy of attention.

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