

# Cultural Restoration Participatory Learning Process on Tha Poetry to Promote Environmental Sustainability Conservation of Ethnic Students, Chiang Mai Province

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## Abstract

This research aims to: 1) Synthesize knowledge regarding environmental management through the cultural introduction to Tha Poetry by the indigenous Pga K'nyau people in Chiang Mai province; 2) Develop a manual for the cultural restoration participatory learning process to promote environmental sustainability conservation of ethnic students in Chiang Mai province; and 3) Study the satisfaction towards the manual for the cultural restoration participatory learning process to promote environmental sustainability conservation of ethnic students in Chiang Mai province. This research is a Participatory Action Research (PAR) study. The samples used in the research consist of 1) a knowledge-providing group on Tha poetry, comprising 5 local Pga K'nyau scholars; 2) a manual assessment group consisting of 5 Pga K'nyau environmental knowledge experts; and 3) a trial group for the learning process, comprising 30 Pga K'nyau ethnic student teachers. The tools used in the research include 1) unstructured interviews; 2) a manual quality assessment form for Tha poetry of Pga K'nyau to promote environmental conservation; and 3) a satisfaction questionnaire. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis, and the quantitative data were analyzed by finding the mean and standard deviation. The research found that:

1) The synthesis of knowledge concerning environmental management through the cultural introduction on Tha Poetry among the indigenous Pga K'nyau people in Chiang Mai province revealed that Tha serves as a poetic introduction reflecting the life and existence of the Pga K'nyau. "Tha" holds significance for everyone, acting as a medium for transmitting knowledge and wisdom. It is a poetic introduction that melds life, experiences, teachings, and memories from the older generation, being recited in every ceremony from weddings, pre-marital counseling, gender role socialization, New Year celebrations, guest receptions, blessings requests, illnesses, to funerals. The content of Tha thus encapsulates the relationships between individuals, between humans and nature, and between humans and supernatural forces. The Pga K'nyau people emphasize environmental conservation, believing that nature has local deities who protect and look after the area. Furthermore, there's a tradition of transmitting knowledge through Tha Poetry for environmental conservation to achieve sustainability. This document has been created to revive the knowledge embedded in the cultural introduction of Tha, a heritage of wisdom passed down through generations, for the training and education of descendants, delving deeply into the conservation of natural resources and the environment. This ensures that individuals studying this will gain understanding from the teachings of the Pga K'nyau community. Currently, the practice of reciting Tha Poetry has been diminished, necessitating adaptation and conservation to preserve Tha in the culture of the Pga K'nyau people.

2) The development of a manual for the cultural restoration participatory learning process on Tha Poetry to promote environmental sustainability conservation of ethnic students in Chiang Mai province revealed that the manual comprises the meaning of Tha, Tha poetry sections for promoting environmental conservation through synthesis, and activity sheets for learning Tha poetry to promote the environmental sustainability conservation. The manual has a highly appropriate learning standard level. 3) The study on satisfaction towards the manual for the cultural restoration participatory learning process on Tha Poetry to promote environmental sustainability conservation of ethnic students in Chiang Mai province found that the majority of the students expressed

satisfaction towards the manual, indicating that it is clear and highly beneficial for learning, rating it from high to the highest level.

**Keywords:** cultural restoration participatory learning process, Tha poetry, environmental sustainability conservation, ethnic students

## 1. Introduction

Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 25 (2017), Article 81, stipulates that the state must organize education and training, and support private sectors in conducting education and training to foster knowledge coupled with moral values. It mandates the establishment of laws regarding national education, the amendment of education to align with economic and societal changes, the promotion of accurate political and governance awareness in a democratic regime under the monarch's auspices, the support for arts, sciences, and various field research. It also expedites the development of science and technology for national development, improves teacher professionalism, and promotes local wisdom, arts, and national culture (Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. (2017), Article 81).

National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and its amendment (Second Edition) B.E. 2545 (2002), Article 7, specify that the learning process should aim to instill correct consciousness regarding politics and governance within a democratic regime under the monarchy's auspices. It should nurture, uphold, and promote rights, duties, freedom, legal respect, equality, and human dignity, fostering pride in Thai identity, awareness of preserving the nation's collective benefits and national interests. It should also encourage religion, national arts and culture, sports, local wisdom, Thai wisdom, and universal knowledge, as well as the conservation of natural resources and the environment. Moreover, it should develop occupational competency, self-reliance, creative and innovative thinking, a thirst for knowledge, and continuous self-learning (National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and its amendment (Second Edition) B.E. 2545 (2002)).

Adjusting to environmental conditions, cultural ecology refers to the method of studying the stipulations or cultural standards, which are the outcomes of adapting to environmental conditions (in various human societies). Cultural ecology differs from Social Ecology, as it seeks to find standards to explain the origins of certain cultural characteristics and patterns present in each environment, rather than seeking general principles applicable to all cultures and environments. A crucial concept in this regard is the "Cultural Core," which refers to "a group of characteristics or cultural patterns most closely related to activities for sustenance and economic management." This focuses on how material culture (technical systems used or technological tools) is employed differently and leads to different social management in varying environmental conditions, as each environment may assist or limit the use of these technical systems (Julian H. Steward, 1972). Culture is not inherent in humans from birth and is not something that can be genetically transmitted, such as actions, speech, writing, dressing, and various etiquettes. These behaviors require learning to be performed. The ability of humans to learn culture is because humans can communicate and understand each other using the most significant symbol, language, both spoken and written. However, if humans are separated from other humans and are not taught, they cannot perform various tasks. Therefore, when a child lacks the complete characteristics of being human, it is because they have not learned culture. Hence, culture is a learned behavior.

The poetry of teachings through language is deemed a unique cultural characteristic that effectively reflects the ethnicity and prosperity of humans. The essence of moral values within each community inherently necessitates the integration of teachings. Expressions through introductory language are societal creations meant for learning, entertainment, or utilization in ceremonies. "Kariang" is a common term used to denote a specific ethnic group residing densely in the northern and western regions of Thailand. "Kariang" translates to "indigenous," with one subgroup self-identifying as "Pga K' Nyau," meaning "people." The Pga K' Nyau are an enduring ethnic group with a diverse amalgamation of cultural traditions. Among this ethnic group, there exists a "Tha Poetry" or simply referred to as "Tha," serving as a reflective narrative of the life and existence of Pga K' Nyau. "Tha" holds significance for everyone, acting as a conduit for transferring knowledge and wisdom. It's an introductory verse that molds life, experiences, and teachings, derived from the memories of the older generations, conveyed through every ceremony ranging from weddings, marriage counseling, gender mingling, New Year celebrations, guest receptions, blessings, illnesses, to funerals. The content of Tha thus represents the relationships among people, people with nature, and people with supernatural powers (Kamphonkul, 1997).

Currently, many communities are seeing a decline in the number of young individuals who carry on the tradition of performing Tha Poetry, as the youth are more inclined towards modern music than the traditional performances. Consequently, older and elderly individuals step in to perform during significant events. However, at times, the continuity of Tha Poetry performance is disrupted due to health issues. Additionally, the change in

beliefs and religion in some communities has impacted the tradition of performing introductory verses. The introduction of new religions, coupled with the promotion of formal education systems, has led to a significant number of youth entering formal education. There's an increased migration for work to urban areas, diminishing the importance and role of Tha Poetry performances. Moreover, individuals who have converted to new beliefs no longer partake in traditional ceremonies. The new generation of Pga K' Nyau youth, who had the opportunity to pursue higher education and earn degrees from various universities, now hold different perspectives compared to the older generation, leading to the assimilation of external cultures into their own communities. Furthermore, the arrival of public infrastructure including access to various forms of media like television, satellite dishes, and the internet, has brought about cultural changes.

Currently, there has been a significant increase in the number of Pga K' Nyau youth studying in urban areas, coupled with the assimilation of mainstream culture into their lives, leading to a neglect or abandonment of their ancestral culture. This has resulted in the fading of Tha Poetry from the community. While the centralized education system has modernized the youth and introduced them to the mainstream culture outlined in the curriculum, it has simultaneously contributed to the erosion of the Pga K' Nyau ethnic culture. The changing times further accelerate the loss of cultural heritage among the ethnic group.

The Pga K' Nyau people hold a belief in "Kwan," signifying a total of 37 Kwans. This fundamental belief pertains to "life," encompassing both the body and the mind. What safeguards life are these "Kwans," which consist of 5 residing within oneself and 32 within various animals. These animals are categorized into four types: winged animals, aquatic animals, terrestrial animals, and amphibious animals. This teaching instructs individuals to cherish their Kwans without causing harm, embodying a worldly wisdom in conserving natural resources and the environment for sustainable coexistence with society. By integrating this belief system into managing natural resources and the environment, and embedding it within the teachings of Tha Poetry, individuals are enlightened on conservation, ensuring its continuance into the future.

The researcher is interested in studying the cultural restoration participatory learning process on Tha Poetry to promote environmental sustainability conservation. With the devaluation of Tha Poetry recitations, there arises a need for adaptation and conservation to perpetuate Tha Poetry within the culture of the Pga K' Nyau people. Hence, the researcher delves into the cultural significance of Tha Poetry among the Pga K' Nyau, and notably, the researcher themselves belong to the Pga K' Nyau ethnicity, seeking to unearth conservation and adaptation avenues. By integrating Tha Poetry in environmental sustainability conservation, it fosters a consciousness for conserving natural resources, rejuvenating Tha Poetry back into the society of Pga K' Nyau. This endeavor significantly contributes to the creation of knowledge, by incorporating this knowledge into a participatory social studies teaching and learning process, utilized in this research instance.

## **2. Method**

### **Step 1 The research model**

This research is a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, involving the collection and analysis of data obtained from document analysis, interviews, and data from evaluation forms. The study results are presented in a Descriptive Analysis format, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data to synthesize and describe the findings.

### **Step 2 Populations and samples**

The population used in this study consists of 3 main target groups: 1) The group providing knowledge on Tha Poetry comprises local Pga K'nyau scholars. 2) The group evaluating the learning process manual comprises Pga K'nyau environmental knowledge experts 3) The group testing the learning process comprises ethnic Pga K'nyau student teachers. The researcher selected samples to facilitate data collection and to obtain data from the samples. In total, there are 40 individuals included in the research sample, consisting of:

- 1) 5 local Pga K'nyau scholars selected through Purposive Sampling.
- 2) 5 Pagakayor environmental knowledge experts selected through Purposive Sampling.
- 3) In light of constrained human resources, the study employed Purposive Sampling to select 30 student teachers from the ethnic Pga K'nyau community.

### **Step 3 Tools used in research**

Tools used to gather data include:

- 1) Unstructured interviews on the topic of cultural restoration for Tha Poetry to promote environmental conservation.
- 2) A quality assessment form for the learning process manual.
- 3) A questionnaire to gauge satisfaction towards the learning process manual.

#### **Step 4 Data collection**

- 1) Documentary Study: This involves collecting data from documents, books, and journals, both theoretical and research-related, to support the analysis of the study topics.
- 2) Creating experimental equipments by having 5 experts, 3 Karen Network for Culture and Environment and 2 Social Studies teachers evaluating the experimental equipments.
- 3) Design and Development: This is a quantitative data collection method, focusing on designing and developing approaches for community-based history learning to enhance digital citizenship among senior high school students in the area of educational innovation. Following this, there's a quality and suitability assessment of the developed approaches conducted through expert evaluations in the field of learning management. The tool utilized for this is a suitability assessment form for the learning management approaches.
- 4) The researcher analyzed the data by using statistical tools to find the mean and standard deviation
- 5) Coordinate with community scholars and related parties to know the objectives of the study.
- 6) Collect field data on the context of Tha Poetry to promote environmental conservation.
- 7) Create a manual to promote environmental conservation by expanding the contents of the each chapter to enable learners to concretize concept which is abstract through practical exercises for greater understanding. Furthermore, appropriate media should be carefully selected in line with the learning content which include pictures and symbols, images, pictures, audio, and video.
- 8) Situational Analysis: This is a qualitative data collection method, which synthesizes documents and related research, and includes interviews with professors and teachers. The tool used here is unstructured interviews on the topic of community history learning management to promote digital citizenship among senior high school students in the area of educational innovation.

#### **Step 5 Data analysis**

- 1) Qualitative Data: The researcher analyzes the data according to the study objectives using an interpretation method derived from document analysis and interviews to summarize the points based on data groups and analyze the relationships among the data.
- 2) Quantitative Data: The researcher utilizes the data obtained from the assessment forms and analyzes it using appropriate statistical software. This analysis is conducted using descriptive statistics.

### **3. Results**

For the research at this time, the research team has classified the data obtained from the study and presented the research results according to the determined objectives. The study results can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Synthesis of environmental management knowledge through the cultural on Tha poetry of the Pga K'nyau ethnic group in Chiang Mai province revealed that Tha is a narration reflecting the history and existence of the Pga K'nyau. "Tha" holds significance for everyone's life, serving as a conduit of knowledge and wisdom. It melds life experiences, teachings, and memories from older generations, conveyed through various rituals like weddings, pre-marital counseling, gender role acknowledgment, New Year celebrations, guest receptions, blessing requests, illnesses, and funerals. Tha poetry hence underscores the relationships among individuals, nature, and supernatural powers. The Pga K'nyau prioritize natural resource conservation, believing in local deities as protectors. Furthermore, there's a tradition of passing down knowledge through Tha poetry to promote environmental sustainability. This document is an endeavor to revive the knowledge encapsulated in Tha poetry, a legacy of profound wisdom passed down through ages, for educating the young generation, delving particularly into natural resource and environmental conservation. It aims to foster understanding of the Pga K'nyau ancestors' teachings among learners. Presently, the practice of Tha poetry is diminishing, necessitating adaptations and conservation efforts to sustain Tha poetry within the Pga K'nyau cultural fabric.
- 2) The development manual of the cultural restoration participatory learning process on Tha Poetry to promote environmental sustainability conservation of ethnic students in Chiang Mai province revealed that the manual comprises the meanings of Tha, Tha poetry for promoting environmental conservation by synthesis, and activity

sheets for learning Tha poetry to foster enduring environmental conservation. The manual has achieved a high level of learning standards across all criteria and scored an overall high standard level (average=2.96).

3) The study on satisfaction towards the manual of the cultural restoration participatory learning process on Tha Poetry to promote environmental sustainability conservation of ethnic students in Chiang Mai province discovered that most students expressed satisfaction towards the manual, finding it clear and beneficial for learning, rating it at a high to very high level with an average score out of 5 of 4.42; scholars have not only acquired practical skills and knowledge but can also impart them to others, applying these abilities and insights in their future scholarly pursuits.

#### **4. Discussion**

1) The synthesis of environmental management knowledge through the cultural on Tha Poetry of the ethnic Pga K'nyau group in Chiang Mai province showed that the restoration of Tha Poetry cultural practices to promote environmental conservation of ethnic students in Chiang Mai province, who are native Pga K'nyau, involved fieldwork with 10 local Pga K'nyau scholars. The study, analysis, synthesis, and content compilation were conducted to create a Tha Poetry manual to promote environmental conservation, which served as the data source. The content was divided into five Tha Poetry lessons. Each lesson focused on the management, conservation, and appreciation of the environment that individuals utilize in their daily lives. The content from the Tha Poetry was expanded and translated from the Pga K'nyau language to Thai to provide a comprehensive learning experience from abstract to concrete concepts. Interactive exercises were integrated into the manual to enhance understanding. Additionally, appropriate learning media were selected for each content, such as images and symbols. Once the manual was created, it was presented to advisory committees and experts for appropriateness review, modifications based on feedback, and then assessed by five experts on the manual's suitability. This aligns with the conservation principle of preservation, which means smartly maintaining resources to maximize benefits (Charoensin, 2005). Natural resources refer to naturally occurring elements or self-occurring entities that humans utilize for benefits. All natural resources are crucial for human survival. The conservation of natural resources (Kapsalap, 2006).

2) The development the manual of the cultural restoration participatory learning process on Tha poetry to promote environmental sustainability conservation of ethnic students, Chiang Mai province revealed that the evaluation of the manual's appropriateness by three qualified evaluators yielded positive feedback. The manual was found to have high standards of learning in every standard, and overall, it was rated as highly suitable with an average score of 2.96. This corresponds with the findings of Mangkhang (2022) that participatory learning is effective in personal development, attitudes, and skill enhancement through synthesis and analysis, leading to a foundational structure of participatory learning (Inphrom & Yantasiri, 2007). The balance of nature in an ecosystem is associated with existing natural resources, conservation of natural resources, and the rotation of resources like water and forests. A good rotation ensures the sustainability of each natural resource. However, some resources may become extinct when exhausted. Currently, the demand for natural resources has increased, and overutilization of these resources, such as forests and wildlife, could lead to depletion. Hence, resource utilization should adhere to the principle of economization for maximum benefit, collective advantage, and long-term use.

3) The study on the satisfaction levels of the manual regarding the cultural restoration participatory learning process on Tha poetry to promote environmental sustainability conservation of ethnic students, Chiang Mai province revealed that most students found the manual to be clear and beneficial for learning, rating it highly - from 'high' to 'very high'. The average score was notably high at 4.42 out of a full score of 5. This aligns with the insights of Mangkhang (2018) that social studies encompass experiences concerning the relationships between humans, society, and the natural environment. The teaching of social studies involves utilizing a curriculum, which may vary, and can be categorized into two groups: those who agree and those who disagree (Daengna, al.et. 2022). The evaluation by the learners, who are the direct recipients and beneficiaries of the media, is crucial. Thus, providing an opportunity for learners to evaluate the media helps garner insights for refining the media to better suit the learners. The evaluation by learners should be conducted immediately after using the media, focusing solely on the media without taking the teaching methods of the instructors into account. However, there may be some challenges with evaluations by learners as they may lack sufficient experience. Instructors should clarify the criteria or evaluation topics to the learners to ensure a clear understanding before proceeding with the evaluation.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Nowadays, there is an increasing number of Pga K'nyau youth groups who have come to study in the city.

together with accepting culture from the central part of life causes forgetfulness. Abandoning the culture of their ancestors, Lamnamtha has disappeared from society. Although the centralized education system makes the youth group of students more modern. Learn about the central cultural system specified in the curriculum. But at the same time, it is also destroying the culture of the Pga K'nyau ethnic group. Times have changed and ethnic cultures have begun to disappear. The researcher therefore studied the Lam Nam Tha culture of Saoppakakenyau. To find conservation methods and guidelines for application. By leading the chapter on environmental conservation to create awareness of conserving natural resources along with restoring the Namtha River to return to the society of the Pga K'nyau people. and creating knowledge that will be of great value.

## **6. Suggestions from the Research**

### *6.1 Suggestions for Implementing Research Results*

1. It serves as a guideline for developing a manual of Tha Poetry for the Pga K'nyau to promote environmental conservation, which is intriguing. It helps in the restoration of knowledge that has begun to fade, bringing it back to the community.
2. It serves as a conservation and adaptation guideline by incorporating Tha Poetry in environmental conservation to foster awareness in conserving natural resources, coupled with the restoration to bring Tha Poetry back into the Pga K'nyau community, and creating valuable knowledge significantly.
3. This knowledge can be integrated into the Pga K' Nyau community's curriculum, enhancing their local education in the long run.

### *6.2 Suggestions for Next Research*

1. It is advisable to study the management and transfer of knowledge to other organizations beyond educational institutions to instill a positive awareness in conserving natural resources and the environment.
2. Research and development of contemporary innovations, such as ICT media and electronic manuals, should be pursued to align with the current era's circumstances.
3. It's recommended to analyze literary worlds in poetry or instructional sections of core education that have similarities, to be integrated into the manual, to provide learners with diverse perspectives or ideas.

## **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## **Informed consent**

Obtained.

## **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

## **Provenance and peer review**

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## **Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

## **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

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