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COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING CENTER FOR FOLK SPORTS WISDOM AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The present participatory action research documented the process of developing a community-based learning center for the transmission of folk sports wisdom as a foundation for sustainable cultural tourism in Thailand. It was carried out in Taphong Subdistrict, Rayong Province, Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor. Folk sport as living heritage was leveraged as a tool to bridge the social gap between elders, children, and community leaders. Participants in this study included 15 senior folk sport experts, 18 children 7–9 years of age, and eight community leaders. Six folk sports were co-designed and implemented in five stages: preparation, brainstorming, team building, knowledge transfer, and dissemination. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, focus groups, field observation, training manuals, and skill assessment forms, and were analyzed using qualitative content analysis and descriptive statistics. Results showed that intergenerational learning around folk sport enhanced social cohesion, increased children's engagement with local heritage, and improved their participation in community events. Co-created coaching manuals and structured practice sessions provided a practical framework for the systematic transmission of folk sport skills, rules, and cultural meanings. The establishment of a community-based learning center re-purposed an underused Elderly School as a permanent venue for folk sport practice, cultural demonstration, and community-based tourism. This study presents a replicable model for weaving folk sports wisdom, education, and local economic development and provides policy-relevant recommendations for government agencies, schools, and local institutions that aim to safeguard folk sport and foster sustainable cultural tourism in aging communities.

KEYWORDS: Intangible Heritage, Intergenerational Learning, Social Capital, Human Capital, Cultural Sustainability, Community Participation, Participatory Action Research, Aging Society, Cultural Innovation, Eastern Economic Corridor.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thailand is currently facing a pivotal phase in its demographic transition, presenting a complex, twofold challenge that profoundly and directly impacts the social and cultural development across the nation. On one hand, the country is rapidly advancing toward becoming an increasingly super-aged society, with current estimates projecting that 28% of its citizens will be over the age of 60 by the year 2030 (World Health Organization, 2023). This seismic demographic shift is bound to have far-reaching ramifications for human resource development, social welfare, and intergenerational equity. On the other hand, with the influences of both modernization and urbanization, a wide range of ICH, particularly embodied living heritage such as traditional folk sports, are under significant threat as human activities and values change. Once a vibrant cornerstone of local culture and social interaction, these games have fallen victim to the rapid shift in interests among young and older generations, resulting in a precipitous decline in their popularity (Chaleoyphet *et al.*, 2001; Ukrit, 2012). The concerns for both issues are addressed in tandem within Thailand's national policy blueprint, the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). As the Kingdom's primary growth engine and a flagship industrial policy hub, the EEC is at the forefront of its modernization strategy, putting it at the center of efforts to navigate this cultural and demographic conundrum. Nevertheless, although the emerging generation's diminished interest in these games is certainly a critical issue, it is also important to consider the potential implications of the digital divide, a term describing a "structural inequality" between the digital "haves" and the "have-nots" (van Deursen & Helsper, 2015, p. 316). The digital divide can be exacerbated among older adults because in addition to issues in access, it can also be compounded by obstacles in the subdomains of digital literacy and skills, digital capacity and efficacy, age-related bias in the built environment and design, and lack of technology knowledge (Hunsaker & Hargittai, 2018). Therefore, the divide between older adults and digital society can often result in their feelings of isolation and exclusion from society (Miao *et al.*, *in press*). Ironically, the same forces that draw the young into the digital cloud of a globalized culture largely leave the elders disconnected from these networks. This can be described as a technological digital divide between the young and the old, which is also a political, cultural, and social phenomenon: It can hasten the loss of ICH by segregating the generations into self-

referencing social spheres with minimal cross-generational points of contact. As younger generations embrace digitally mediated experiences of the world, the elders as human vessels of locally grounded heritage increasingly remain behind, making traditional face-to-face forms of transmission more challenging. Thus, the situation calls for the effort not just to cope with an aging population or the preservation of ICH artifacts, but to strategically integrate cultural regeneration into the region's development models against the backdrop of accelerated digital modernity.

In this context, this study proposes that community-driven, intergenerational learning efforts focused on the body-based practices such as folk sports can meaningfully shift the paradigm of the elderly from that of dependent "burden" to an active agent of human capital building and cultural regeneration. The Taphong learning center model, thus, offers a much-needed counter-narrative to technology-led solutions to which the real digital divide (or digital modernity more broadly) has been largely oblivious. In this light, the face-to-face modality of human encounter on which the body-based efforts are founded is where such community-led initiatives based on embodied learning can demonstrate the value in promoting trust, empathy, and social capital. Moreover, such efforts are intrinsically capable of not only preserving living heritage but also of buttressing the social capital which in turn provides the very basis for sustainable local development.

In addition, the models can have high social capital values and also spawn a culturally authentic, community-owned, forms of tourism development which can serve as an effective antidote to purely economically calibrated development in the EEC, a key strategic area. As the identification of local traditional folk sports such as Mai Daor/Mai Heum (Stick Hitting) and Pheum Lhum/E Lhum (Hole Making) in this effort as intergenerational bridging points (Julvanichpong *et al.*, 2021) works toward addressing the key objectives directly tied to Thailand's National Strategy for Human Resource Development and Enhancement (2018–2037) (National Economic and Social Development Council, 2018), they, by nature of their inclusive character and focus on all generations, have become viable forms of sustainable development. In this light, this paper is expected to make the following contributions. First, it operationalizes an evidence-based model of intergenerational knowledge transmission in a PAR framework and provides a procedural case reference of building a community-

based learning center. Second, it demonstrates the deployment of social capital and human capital theory in explaining the value of preserving ICH in community empowerment terms, moving the argument beyond simply descriptive and documentation toward more analytical and interpretive. Third, it documents a timely critical case study in a setting that has received far less scholarly attention than it merits, one of which can serve to provide concrete, problem-driven, analytical, and theoretical inputs for policy development, planners, and the development industry more broadly when and if they choose to reflect on the meaning and challenges of negotiating economic modernity against the backdrop of cultural sustainability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Problem Focus and Conceptual Overview

The conceptual review of this paper tackles the issue of older adults as a conveyor of local knowledge through community-based learning in folk sports. As Thailand anticipates becoming a super-aged society in the next decade, the research reviewed for this project shows that bridging community learning between the folk sports arena and society at large touches the three cornerstones of cultural sustainability, human capital, and community-based tourism. While reviewing a number of theories and concepts, including classical and contemporary perspectives on human capital, sociocultural learning, and social capital, the paper does not escape the underlying digital debate and conversations about embodied heritage.

2.2. Aging Society and Human Capital Development

As the country is set to shift into super-aged society in 2035 (United Nations, 2019), the old age of the nation presents to the government the two-faces challenge of the silver-haired generation to its national development. As such, the recently endorsed National Strategy for Human Resource Development and Enhancement (2018–2037) has been striving to shift the perspective of this population from dependency to those who still are capable of contributing to the society (NESDC, 2018). This alternative to the old-age of society is also the guiding framework that WHO has been championing for the world through its Active Ageing Framework in three pillars of participation, health, and security (World Health Organization, 2023). Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) as used in this study serve as the conceptual lens to see older adults as stockholders of both intellectual and cultural wealth that their next generations could draw benefit from through the way older adults pass down their

generationally-enriched skill sets, experiential wisdom, and embodied-based knowledge (Knodel et al., 2013; Putnam, 2000). In the setting of folk sports, this intergenerational transfer of knowledge also puts the magnifying glass to how much this community provides an opportunity for the elders to invest the local, embodied-based knowledge for the younger to both cultivate cultural pride and competence.

2.3. Folk Sports as Embodied Intangible Heritage

Folk sports (Mai Daor/Mai Heum (Stick Hitting), Pheum Lhum (Hole Making)) are a part of Thailand's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). These games encourage exercise, cooperation, and morality, and are both leisure and learning (Leh-Mongkol et al., 2006). Urbanization and the popularity of video games have dramatically decreased participation (Chaleoyphet et al., 2001; Ukrit, 2012). The Taphong Folk Sports Learning Center reactivates these activities as living heritage that must be done, not just documented. This reorientation operationalizes UNESCO's (2003) mandate to protect ICH by encouraging active engagement. By situating folk sports as embodied pedagogy, this study also shows cultural knowledge to be both cognitive and physical, and learned by doing, observing, and participating together.

2.4. Intergenerational Learning and Sociocultural Theory

Learning is the process of a person understanding the meaning and purpose of society and culture (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) states that learning is a social process guided by More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs), assisted by cultural tools, and taking place in the ZPD. Taphong's coaches, as MKOs, help the children learn the rules, techniques, and the meaning behind the games in the children's ZPD. This learning is embodied, being transmitted through movement, imitation, and play. It thus stands in sharp contrast to the mechanistic learning from texts and lectures; and through participating in these activities, the children learn respect, cooperation, and persistence. Participation also benefits the community's relationships and reinforces intergenerational respect, which is an important factor in community resilience (Sajjasophon, 2019; Ueangchokchai, 2020). There has been previous research about intergenerational learning in terms of cultural heritage and environmental education in Thailand, but few had made explicit connection to folk sports and described folk sports as intergenerational learning. This study differs in that it explicitly examined folk sports as a form of

learning and as a means of heritage transmission.

2.5. Community-Based Tourism and Social Capital Formation

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged as a strategy for sustainable local development that focuses on local community's cultural authenticity and equitable sharing of benefits (Anukul et al., 2017; Polsiri et al., 2017). Folk sports as an activity within the CBT can improve tourists' experiences while at the same time providing opportunities to strengthen local identity. However, many past studies have conceptualized cultural heritage as something to be preserved and displayed, rather than something that is formed through an ongoing process. Social Capital Theory (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000) can be applied to show that folk sports can be used to create both bonding capital (social ties within a community) as well as bridging capital (ties that can connect a community to outside networks). Folk sports activities when performed as part of CBT can not only serve as a tourist attraction but can also lead to strengthening of trust, cooperation, and participation within the community.

2.6. Digital Innovation, Embodied Knowledge, and Aging

Digital innovation has become a key strategy for cultural preservation. With the COVID-19 pandemic, cultural organizations and institutions worldwide were forced to suddenly digitize their content and activities (Samaroudi et al., 2020; Abd Hamid, 2023). New technologies, including Extended Reality (XR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR) have provided new opportunities for the documentation, presentation, and learning of cultural heritage, from virtual museums and virtual tourism to interactive and game-based learning (Bekele et al., 2018; Srdanović et al., 2024).

Recent studies have found that immersive XR can enhance engagement, learning motivation, and overall experience in virtual museums. In particular, mixed reality platforms have been shown to have high usability and user satisfaction, particularly when combined with gamified learning (Huang et al., 2023; Srdanović et al., 2024). This is because these technologies allow users to engage with cultural objects and narratives in realistic, meaningful ways that may be impossible during a real visit. This is key to opening up access to younger and remote audiences (Samaroudi et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2023).

In addition, the use of 3D scanning, digital twins, and digital storytelling can further enrich experience and understanding of both tangible and intangible

heritage (Bekele et al., 2018; Yan, 2025). However, digital technology has not automatically resulted in equitable access or meaningful experiences for all users (Buragohain et al., 2024; Abd Hamid, 2023).

Motion sensors and VR are promising ways to integrate technology and cultural heritage because they can simulate senses and create immersive, interactive experiences that foster engagement and a deeper relationship to heritage. Motion sensors can track movements and gestures, which can be used to control or interact with virtual content (Lian & Xie, 2024; Bekele et al., 2018). However, this technology is no substitute for embodied practice and participation in the real world. This includes how cultural heritage is preserved: the most appropriate methods of preservation must be determined on a case-by-case basis and involve a combination of digital archiving and in-person interaction (Lian & Xie, 2024; Srdanović et al., 2024). This can also be an important way to bridge the digital divide, particularly for older adults, by providing opportunities for intergenerational learning and participation both online and offline (Dibeltulo et al., 2019; Sylaiou et al., 2025). Indeed, from an ageing studies perspective, this kind of participation is precisely what is needed to support active ageing and lifelong learning, enabling older adults to contribute and benefit from cultural heritage in the digital age (Sylaiou et al., 2025; Dibeltulo et al., 2019).

2.7. Theoretical Framework

A three-framework virtuous circle of sustainable community development is applied to explain and understand the multilayered phenomena involved in the Taphong Folk Sports Learning Center: (1) Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) to view elders' cultural knowledge as a productive capital that helps them to generate personal and social benefits; (2) Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) to view intergenerational knowledge transfer as a socially mediated learning process in community settings; and (3) Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1988) to view community trust and cooperation as a necessity for maintaining the collective action of culture. The study shows that cultural participation, through folk sports, serves to build up human, social, and cultural capital.

2.8. Positioning Embodied Heritage in the Digital Age: A Critical Perspective

Embodied knowledge and digital mediation coexist in a complex interplay of potential and tension. While digital tools offer opportunities to preserve, visualize, and share traditional games with

wider audiences, there is also a risk of over-digitization, which can detach knowledge from its physical and social context. Too much focus on digitization can lead to the freezing and virtualization of living knowledge, turning dynamic practices into static representations (Havemann et al., 2008; UNESCO, 2003). This work, thus, advocates for a critical embodied stance, insisting that sustainable preservation relies on the active performance and communal transmission of cultural knowledge. In the Taphong model, digital tools are positioned as supportive complements to, not replacements for, lived practice. By weaving physical participation and digital documentation into its fabric, the learning center fosters an environment that celebrates both tradition and innovation.

2.9. Research Gaps and Contributions

The gaps in current literature that this review found are the following

(1) An underemphasized population of older adults as embodied cultural mentors in digital heritage conversations. (2) Underutilized examination of folk sports as an embodied mechanism for multigenerational learning, social capital formation, and sustainable tourism. (3) Paucity of an empirical study that resides in Thailand’s Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), a location that showcases the tension between economic modernization and cultural sustainability. This study aims to contribute a model of embodied, community-based heritage learning as a multi-generation bridge to build human capital and social capital while also striking a balance of modernization and sustainability.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design: The PAR Cycle in Action

The present study was conducted using a PAR approach, which is a community-driven type of

research intended for the exploration and addressing of community-level issues. PAR was chosen because of its participatory nature, which was well suited to the project goal of helping local folk sports regain their status as a living culture through intergenerational learning. The research was carried out in five PAR cycles, each of which included the following five steps: (1) Community Preparation: earning community leaders and members’ trust, assessing their level of preparedness, and identifying shared needs and interests; (2) Planning: conducting a brainstorming session with local leaders and members to determine folk sports to be preserved and outline the Taphong Folk Sports Learning Center’s activities and organizational structure; (3) Action: training older adults to become folk sports coaches and pairing them with young learners; (4) Observation: collecting learning process data (e.g., through interviews, focus group discussions, and field notes) and analyzing results; and (5) Reflection: sharing and reflecting on findings with community members and reporting lessons to key stakeholders.

3.2. Participants and Setting

The participants were residents of Taphong Subdistrict, Mueang District, Rayong Province. This semi-rural community had a strong agricultural and natural resource economy and was just beginning to explore and develop community-based tourism. The project was supported by the Elderly School of Taphong, which provided a physical space and institutional platform for project activities. Homogeneous purposive sampling (Patton, 2002; Suthewasinnon & Pasunon, 2016) was used to select participants who had the cultural familiarity and first-hand experience with local folk sports. The participants included 41 members from three groups (Table 1).

Table 1: Participant Demographics.

Participant Group	N	Gender (Male/Female)	Average Age (Years)	SD
Elderly Coaches	15	8 (53.33%) / 7 (46.67%)	66.40	2.32
Youth Learners	18	8 (44.44%) / 10 (55.56%)	7.73	0.70
Community Leaders	8	Not Specified	-	-

Inclusion criteria

- Elderly: 60 years old or older, in good physical and mental health, with experience in folk sports, and willing to actively participate in all aspects of the project.
- Youth: 7-9 years old, students of local primary schools, with the consent and interest of their

- parents or guardians in traditional games.
- Community leaders: Local individuals engaged in governance, education, or community affairs with knowledge and experience in traditional culture or folk sports. Although this small, context-specific sample provided an in-depth qualitative understanding of

intergenerational learning, it limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the Taphong community. The results are contextually rich but not statistically generalizable.

3.3. Research Instruments

To maintain methodological integrity and cultural relevancy, five primary instruments were designed and validated by five external experts from sports science, cultural studies, and qualitative research fields. The validation process resulted in high content validity indices (IOC = 1.00) and an average suitability rating (4.72–5.00 on a 5-point scale).

1. Interview and Focus Group Discussion Guides

Created to gather in-depth perspectives of participants regarding folk sport transmission and intergenerational learning. 8–10 semi-structured open-ended questions were provided and organized into four major thematic areas including

- Cultural transmission and heritage preservation,
- Learning and teaching experiences between generations,
- Difficulties in maintaining folk sports in a modernized society, and
- Reflections on community identity, well-being, and tourism potentials.

2. Folk Sport Training Manual

Co-constructed with senior coaches to record six major traditional games which are Mai Daor/Mai

Heum (Stick Hitting), Pheum Lhum (Hole Making), Throwing Coins, Mak Keb (Seed Collecting), Kam Dak, and Tee Taek (Snake Throwing). The information included for each sport covered history, playing methods, rules, safety guidelines, and photographs.

3. Training Schedule

A four-level rubric (0 = needs improvement; 1 = fair; 2 = passable; 3 = excellent) assessing learners' understanding of rules, basic skills, scoring accuracy, and equipment set-up.

4. Folk Sport Skill Assessment Form

A four-level rubric (0 = needs improvement, 1 = fair, 2 = passable, 3 = excellent) assessing learners' understanding of rules, basic skills, scoring accuracy, and equipment setup.

5. Reflection and Evaluation Forms

Implemented at the end of each training session to gather participants' feedback and the expert's evaluation in terms of teaching effectiveness and engagement.

Collectively, these instruments were used to document the learning process, provide a summative evaluation of training, and analyze the community's involvement in cultural revitalization.

3.4. Data Collection Process

PAR implementation and data collection process took place in eight months, through six interdependent phases as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Data Collection Process in the PAR Cycle.

Process Stage	Description	Duration
1. Initial Coordination	Obtained permissions and aligned project goals with local government and school representatives.	1 week
2. Community Preparation	Conducted meetings with local leaders and families to raise awareness and recruit participants.	1 month
3. Brainstorming	Facilitated participatory sessions to select folk sports and design instructional materials.	2 weeks
4. Coach Recruitment	Identified and trained elderly folk sport experts; produced manuals and video materials.	1 month
5. Knowledge Transmission	Youth learners trained under elderly supervision following manual guidelines.	1 month
6. Training & Dissemination	Organized folk-sport practices and exhibitions open to the public.	6 months

Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, field observations, and performance assessments.

The sessions were held in Thai and audio-recorded with the participants' consent. The researchers took field notes and reflexive journals

during and after the sessions.

3.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis process blended both qualitative and quantitative methods, with the goal of triangulating the findings and ensuring an

adequate understanding of the intergenerational learning through folk sports in terms of its cultural revitalization and community development contributions.

The qualitative data (interview and focus group transcripts) were analysed thematically following the six-phase procedure developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Specifically, after an in-depth familiarization with the data by repeatedly reading the transcripts, we generated initial codes and tagged significant statements and ideas in the text. Then, we searched for and reviewed potential themes that seemed to capture key meanings or experiences. After that, we defined and named the themes by clearly delineating their analytical scope. Finally, we produced the analytical narrative by drawing on theoretical interpretation and members' comments and feedback. This analytical procedure, elaborated by Nowell et al. (2017), is designed to make the process as transparent and replicable as possible.

In terms of trustworthiness, the first coding and analysis were independently carried out by two coders, and then researcher triangulation meetings were held to reach an agreement on the final themes and categories. Member checking was also employed by inviting participants to review the summarized findings and confirm their accuracy and authenticity. These measures were taken to ensure that the researcher's personal biases did not affect the identification and naming of the final themes, and the participants' voices were truly and authentically represented in the data.

The quantitative data (information collected with the Folk Sport Skill Assessment Form) were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) to capture patterns of learners' progress. For better interpretability, 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for the mean values were calculated in order to have an estimate of the variation and precision in the average improvement. Although we did not use inferential statistical tests (ANOVA or t-tests) to compare group means due to the small sample size and exploratory nature of the study, the analyses of the differences in means between six folk sports are still an evidence-based and useful way to interpret learners' performance improvement and to check for variability.

3.6. Ensuring Rigor and Mitigating Bias

The mixed-methods design incorporated several strategies to address trustworthiness and prevent potential biases. First, data triangulation was employed by comparing and cross-validating findings from the four data sources: interviews, focus

groups, observations, and skill indicators (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005). Second, research triangulation was conducted by having multiple researchers independently analyze the data, followed by consensus meetings to ensure agreement on interpretations. Third, we used member checking (Maxwell, 2010) by returning summaries of the initial interpretations to community participants so they could verify whether these accounts accurately reflected their views and experiences. Fourth, the research team practiced reflexivity, keeping journals to note assumptions, key decisions, and ways their presence might shape data collection and interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Finally, we maintained an explicit audit trail, including field notes, coding records, and meeting minutes. Together, these procedures strengthened the study's reliability, confirmability, and credibility.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

The study upholds ethical considerations of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, as outlined in the Belmont Report. Ethical approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Burapha University (IRB No. IRB2-035/2566). Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. All data were securely stored, and participants were assured that their information would be used solely for academic purposes.

3.8. Summary

The mixed-methods Participatory Action Research design effectively integrated quantitative indicators of skill development and qualitative insights from intergenerational collaboration.

While the findings are contextually rich but not statistically generalizable due to the small, localized sample, the research offers a solid empirical foundation for understanding community-led cultural revitalization.

The emphasis on participatory engagement, intergenerational learning, and embodied heritage in community education demonstrates how collaborative, context-driven research methods can lead to both knowledge creation and sustainable social transformation.

4. RESULTS

4.1. As the Data Was Analyzed, It Emerged That There Were Two Groups In Tambon Ta Phong

1. Elderly Trainers Group: The group had 15 members, of which 8 were males (53.33%) and 7 females (46.67%). The average age was 66.40, and the standard deviation was 2.32 years.

2. New Generation Student Group: The group had

18 participants, 8 males (44.44%), and 10 females (55.56%). The average age was 7.73, with a standard deviation of 0.70. After finding out the results of the folk sports skills of the students who were members of the new generation of traditional wisdom transmission teams, they were assessed in six types of folk sports, with three students in each type of folk sport. The mean indicated that the average proficiency levels of folk sports were different. The mean score of "Throwing Coins" was 2.13, so it was

at a moderate level. The rest of the folk sports, such as "Pheum Lhum/E Lhum (Hole Making)," "Mak Keb (Collecting Seeds)," "Kam Dak," "Mai Daor/Mai Heum (Stick Hitting)," and "Tee Taek (Strike and Break)," had means greater than 2.67, and they were all at a good level. The top scores were from "Pheum Lhum," "Kam Dak," and "Tee Taek," each of which had the best score at 2.80.

4.2. Focus Group Analysis

Table 3: A Summary of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) Meetings and Activities Aimed at Preserving Folk Sports in Tambon Ta Phong.

Topic	Description
1. Brainstorming Meeting for Community Preparedness	Focused on the strategic readiness of Tambon Ta Phong, using the Elderly School and local resources for developing community tourism and preserving folk sports. The meeting highlighted opportunities for the elderly to become coaches and disseminate activities.
2. Meeting to Create a Team of Elderly Folk Sport Coaches	Aimed at promoting folk sports during festivals like Songkran and temple fairs. Sports such as stick propelling and hoop rolling were selected for demonstration. Collaboration between the elderly and youth and preparation for teaching and practice were emphasized.
3. Summary of the Meeting on the Transmission of Activities	Focused on developing cooperation between the elderly and students to preserve folk sports. Elderly coaches successfully passed down their skills to the youth, building their confidence and shifting focus from mobile games to physical activities.
4. Meeting to Evaluate the Folk Sport Skills of the New Generation	Coaches evaluated students' progress in folk sports through observation, skill assessments, and feedback. The results were documented to refine training programs and ensure the effective transmission of folk sports knowledge to future generations.

1. Brainstorming Meeting for Community Preparedness

This meeting focused on the community's strategic readiness to promote tourism and preserve folk sports. It used the Elderly School and emphasized creating opportunities for the elderly to become coaches. Plans for systematic dissemination and expansion of activities were discussed.

2. Meeting to Create a Team of Elderly Folk Sports Coaches

The meeting aimed at promoting folk sports during community festivals, focusing on collaboration between the elderly and youth. It involved selecting specific sports such as Mai Daor/Mai Heum (Stick Hitting), Pheum Lhum/E Lhum (Hole Making), Throwing Coins, Mak Keb (Collecting Seeds), Kam Dak (Hitting with Hand), and Tee Taek (Strike and Break) for demonstrations. Seminars were organized to teach these folk sports in schools and the community, with preparations for locations, materials, attire, rituals, and practice sessions.

3. Transmission of Activities

This meeting centered on the cooperation between the elderly and students. Elderly coaches successfully transferred folk sports knowledge,

boosting students' confidence and shifting their interest from mobile games to physical, outdoor activities.

4. Evaluation of Folk Sports Skills

The meeting highlighted the collaboration and teamwork of elderly coaches, focusing on four key steps. First, coaches observed students' development at each station, assessing their interest, participation, and responses in various folk sports. They then discussed students' skills in sports such as Tee Taek and Throwing Coins, noting specific abilities observed in their movements and responses. Feedback was provided, with coaches noting that while some students improved quickly, others required additional support. Finally, the coaches documented the students' progress to create a database for refining future training programs, ensuring continuous improvement in folk sports education.

4.3. Analysis of Folk Sports Skill Evaluation for Students as the New Generation of Cultural Heritage Transmitters

Evaluating students' folk sports skills to form a team for transmitting local sports wisdom is critical for revitalizing and conserving Indigenous culture through sports.

Table 4: Evaluation of Folk Sports Skills for Students as the New Generation of Transmitting Cultural

Heritage.

Aspect of Evaluation	Description
Purpose of Evaluation	To form a team to transmit local sports wisdom, revitalize and conserve indigenous culture through folk sports.
Sports Evaluated	Mai Daor/Mai Heum (Stick Hitting), Pheum Lhum/E Lhum (Hole Making), Throwing Coins, Mak Keb (Collecting Seeds), Kam Dak, Tee Taek (Strike & Break).
Criteria for Evaluation	Students are assessed on multiple dimensions, including understanding rules, equipment preparation, playing skills, and scoring in each folk sport.
Key Focus Areas	- Ability to play the sport effectively - Knowledge of the rules - Proper preparation and handling of equipment
Outcomes of Evaluation	The assessment identifies students' strengths and areas for improvement, leading to customized teaching and practice plans.
Impact on Teaching Methods	Based on the results, coaches refine and adjust their methods to focus on skills needing additional support and enhance understanding of rules and gameplay.
Long-Term Benefits	Encouraging young people to actively participate in cultural preservation and contribute to maintaining traditions by facilitating the sustainable transfer of knowledge about traditional sports.

This evaluation was conducted to assess the skills of students in various traditional folk sports to select a team for transmitting local sports wisdom. The evaluation criteria include the rules of the game, equipment preparation, playing skills, and scoring. Folk sports such as Mai Daor/Mai Heum (Stick Hitting), Pheum Lhum/E Lhum (Hole Making), Throwing Coins, Mak Keb (Collecting Seeds), Kam Dak, and Tee Taek (Strike & Break) were evaluated using specific criteria based on the required skills for each sport. The results of the evaluation indicate the strengths and areas for improvement in the students' skills. The coach can then personalize teaching and

practice plans to further develop the students' abilities. The evaluation also helps in fine-tuning training programs to ensure that students understand the rules and proper techniques in detail. In this way, it aims to provide a sustainable transmission of folk sports knowledge. The younger generation can play an active role in preserving and maintaining the cultural traditions with their responsibilities. Folk sports can serve as educational and learning tools for the younger generation.

4.4. Dissemination of Folk Sports in the Ta Phong Community

Table 5: The Dissemination of Folk Sports in the Ta Phong Community.

Dissemination Method	Description
1. Community-Based Folk Sports Performances	Elderly coaches showcase folk sports such as Mai Daor, Pheum Lhum, Throwing Coins, Mak Keb, Kam Dak, and Tee Taek. Local school volunteers (18) assist in the coaching and dissemination efforts. Performances are held in schools and at key community events like Elder's Day and the Songkran Festival, engaging youth and tourists.
2. Establishment of a Folk Sports Wisdom Learning Center	The Elderly School of Ta Phong serves as a center for educating and training the community and youth in folk sports. The outcomes of these activities are presented to the provincial cultural agency and at academic events hosted by the provincial administrative organization. Ethical camps are also organized to promote values and student well-being.
Goals of Dissemination	- Revitalizing and promoting the learning of folk sports - Preserving cultural heritage through active youth involvement
Key Community Events for Dissemination	Elder's Day, Songkran Festival, School-based performances
Impact on Youth and Cultural Preservation	It enables the youth to preserve traditional culture and customs, deepen their connection to their cultural heritage, and enhance their knowledge and skills in folk sports.

The Ta Phong commune has two methods to promote folk sports to the public. The first one is by holding Community-Based Folk Sports

Performances where elderly coaches present folk sports, including Mai Daor, Pheum Lhum, Throwing Coins, Mak Keb, Kam Dak, Tee Taek and so on, to

communities on occasions like Elder's Day, Festival, Songkran Festival with the cooperation of 18 school volunteers. Tourists and youths were invited to participate in folk sports to facilitate dissemination and transmission. The second one is by establishing Folk Sports Wisdom Learning Center at Elderly School of Ta Phong. The function is to support knowledge and training of folk sports for young people and community members. The results will be submitted to the cultural agency of the province and presented in academic conferences organized by the provincial administration. In addition, it is necessary to organize the ethical camp with the purpose of propagation of values and promoting students' health.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this participatory action research support the argument that community-based exercise embedded in local culture can simultaneously promote cultural preservation, community participation, and sustainable tourism. The study also demonstrates how collaboration between elders, youth, and local leaders can translate abstract policies on active ageing and cultural sustainability into concrete practices. The discussion below is organized around the main objectives of the study.

1. The development of community-based tourism is a way of developing tourism at Ta Phong, a district of Rayong Province, through the folk sports cultural learning center. This center will also be the basis for developing a better understanding of the strength of sustainable tourism in the community and provides new ideas that will add value to the community culture and natural environment. The center was able to efficiently use the available resources of the location to turn the Elderly School in Ta Phong into a folk sports learning center to exchange local culture and attract tourists to experience and learn about local culture. This allowed the wisdom of older people who know a lot about folk sports to pass down knowledge and experience to the young generation while it also created an interesting cultural tourist attraction to attract visitors and to promote local tourism as well as to exchange with different cultures. However, Thai traditional children's games are not taught in primary school, and it has also experienced a lack of teaching materials and teachers' ability in the content, which will cause these kinds of games to not exist in the community. The problem becomes larger because of there is no material of these traditional children's games to refer from in the history book or it may be

written in the obsolete language that students can no longer understand. In order to make these Indigenous games preserved, the research can provide a point of view of how agencies should take roles in documenting them for using in education and modernizing the way of showing it for example on CDs or printing and making a book. The study has shown that the conclusions of Leh-Mongkol *et al.* (2006) support the need for systematic preservation activities in order to sustain folk sports.

2. Promoting the transmission of folk sport culture: Folk sport transmission is the transfer of knowledge and expertise to the younger generation from elders to the child in order to preserve and continue Thai culture. Ta Phong has formed teams of elderly folk sport coaches and has helped to transfer knowledge and experience to the community's children, as well as create an opportunity for learning and fun together. As a result, folk sports knowledge will be passed down to the next generation, and Thai cultural heritage will be protected. Thongtamleung *et al.* (2018) claim that Southern Thai children's folk games should be preserved and developed. Chaleoyphet *et al.* (2001) reported that folk games, such as folk singing boats passed down from parents to children, are beginning to decline or vanish in the new age. Factors include a reduction in school space due to the proliferation of buildings and structures and a lack of promotion through various media. Ukrit (2012) also reported that children's play has been transformed as a result of toy marketing and television programs. Community administrative organizations play an important role in preserving folk games because they consistently provide venues for playing folk games on important days, and they will be active in society. This can maintain local customs and culture in each place and create community bonds via enjoyable games and activities. As a result, this aligns with policy-level ideas to integrate local culture into educational objectives, especially for physical education and Thai language teachers to deal with the characteristics of each locality's knowledge and environment.

3. Development of folk sport learning center: The development of the Folk Sport Learning Center in Ta Phong has resulted in the area's centers being livelier and more interesting in order to teach traditional sports while also arranging events such as Elderly Day and the Songkran Festival to motivate participation and socialization (Anukul *et al.*, 2017). This research discovers problems with keeping play wisdom and implies that the sustainability and preservation of local wisdom in each region must start with the construction of educational policies

and teaching methods that place an emphasis on local traditional games (Thongtamleung et al., 2018). In addition, it recommends that the Minister of Education's policies on integrating traditional play into the curriculum be put into practice, as well as public relations work, the construction of a local community learning center (Ariyarat, 2014). This research also aids in improving the management of the Learning Center by adhering to the criteria of the Department of Local Administration (2013). The Department of Local Administration (2013) also provided indicators to ensure that the center functions to its full potential and to the community, including that the center has a Cultural and Local Wisdom Display Room. It is a learning space that presents local wisdom, culture, art, local customs, and knowledge about community culture. A Community Activity Area can also be designed to give a space and a lively ambiance for activities.

4 Evaluating folk sport skills: The assessment of folk sport skills among students responsible for imparting and preserving traditional wisdom revealed their varying abilities. For instance, the Coin Tossing's showed an excellent understanding of the game's rules ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.00$). However, the students' skills in explaining and performing the core skills varied ($M = 2.67$ and 2.33 , $SD = 0.577$), indicating a need for supportive guidance. The Hole Game, Tree, also demonstrated a consistent understanding of the rules and hands-on practice among the students ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.00$). Nevertheless, the skill of preparing equipment in the Hole Game showed variability among the students, with a mean of 2.00 , suggesting the need for supportive guidance. Collecting Seeds and Trap Setting also revealed a good understanding of the game rules. However, skills in performing core skills varied among the students, indicating a need for further development and support. Paddle Hitting exhibited good and consistent understanding in the rules and explanation of the hitting method ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.00$). However, the skills of core hitting and understanding the scoring system showed variability among students ($M = 1.67$ and 2.67 , $SD = 1.155$ and 0.577), suggesting the need for further training and guidance. In summary, the assessment of students' folk sport skills shows their competence in understanding and explaining the rules of the games. However, their ability to practice and perform the core skills and scoring system requires supportive training and guidance. This study can help in the conservation and development of Northern Thai children's traditional play wisdom that leads to the sustainable and vibrant cultural play

in society (Thongtamleung et al., 2018).

5. Assessment of Folk Sport Skills: The result of the assessment of folk sport skills among students assigned the responsibility to preserve and continue passing the traditional wisdom revealed different capabilities within the same group. For example, the group's average score is 2.13 , which is in a level that needs to acquire a better understanding of the rules and supportive training (Ukrit, 2012). The assessment showed a higher average level of 2.80 for students' comprehension of the game rules, which requires less explanation of the knowledge involved. The difference in the students' abilities in skills such as Trap Setting, Stalk Cutting, and Paddle Hitting revealed the need for supportive training to reduce the variations between students (Ariyarat, 2014). The findings stress the necessity to include the teaching and learning of traditional sports in the educational system to conserve and transmit the important cultural heritage to the future generations. This should be in the form of creating study documents and manuals that children can independently read and study at home (Chakkaew & Saeliew, 2015) for the sustainable transfer of folk sport knowledge to future generations.

5.1. New Insights and Original Contributions to the Literature

This study offers several major and original contributions that go beyond previous literature on related subjects in cultural heritage preservation, intergenerational learning, and social innovation. These contributions can be summarized as follows:

1. Integration of Theories into a Practicable PAR Model This study advances beyond previous work that mainly documents traditional play (Leh-Mongkol et al., 2006; Ukrit, 2012) or discusses cultural preservation (Chaleoyphet et al., 2001; Thongtamleung et al., 2018) by synthesizing three theories: Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000) into an integrated, executable PAR model. This model illustrates how folk sports can contribute to human capital development, intergenerational learning, and community social capital. This integrative approach effectively repositions cultural preservation from static archival documentation to an educational and economic development strategy.

2. Repositioning of the Elderly as Active Human Capital Developers Contrary to the traditional positioning of the elderly as passive recipients of care or mere culture bearers, this study shows through empirical evidence that elderly community members

can be active educators and human capital developers. The findings highlight that an aging community can significantly contribute to youth education, local identity building, and the community's economic sustainability. This contribution directly responds to Thailand's demographic transition and the global aging issue, providing a new perspective that aging communities in other contexts could replicate.

3. Framing Folk Sports as Holistic Tools for Social Innovation Although previous studies have acknowledged the cultural value of traditional games, this research is the first to methodically illustrate how folk sports can be reframed as holistic tools for social innovation that encompass education, tourism, and community development. The institutionalization of the Folk Sports Wisdom Learning Center also provides an innovative model that can bridge cultural heritage with community-based tourism, a particularly critical issue in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) of Thailand, where rapid industrialization is increasingly endangering cultural continuity.

4. Bridging of Digital and Physical Divide Although the study focuses on embodied, face-to-face learning, which may be contrasted to recent literature on digital heritage preservation (UNESCO, 2003), the research proves that embodied, face-to-face learning is still needed for the transmission of tacit cultural knowledge. The findings of the study also offer a basis for future digital-physical hybrid methods to document and preserve cultural heritage, offering a bridge for the digital divide among elderly communities while also maintaining the uniqueness of embodied knowledge transmission.

5. Scalable and Replicable Framework The PAR model documented in this study also provides a methodologically rigorous and contextually adaptable framework for implementation in other communities in Thailand or in ASEAN contexts who share similar needs for cultural preservation in the face of rapid modernization. Documenting the entire cycle of implementation, from community preparation, skill assessment and documentation, to learner training, and transmission of knowledge to the public and local schools, provides useful insights and reference for policymakers and practitioners.

In combination, the above contributions advance new scholarship by proving that cultural heritage preservation can be a comprehensive developmental intervention. The action research model introduced in this study demonstrates that with sufficient institutional arrangement, cultural sustainability can also be meaningfully integrated with human capital

development, intergenerational learning, productive aging, and economic development through community-based tourism. These linkages mark a considerable departure from prior research that has tended to separate these areas. The present research, therefore, opens new research opportunities in combining cultural sustainability with human capital development and social innovation in the context of community-based tourism, particularly in rapidly changing demographics and economies.

6. CONCLUSION

This participatory action research demonstrates that folk sports can serve as powerful catalysts for sustainable community development when integrated through a well-structured intergenerational learning model. By establishing the Taphong Folk Sports Wisdom Learning Center and training elderly community members as cultural educators, this study has achieved three critical outcomes: (1) repositioning older adults as active human capital developers rather than passive culture bearers; (2) creating a sustainable mechanism for authentic cultural transmission that enhances youth education and community identity; and (3) developing a replicable model linking cultural heritage preservation with community-based tourism in Thailand's rapidly modernizing Eastern Economic Corridor.

The PAR model successfully bridges theoretical frameworks—Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000)—with practical community-driven implementation. However, sustainability requires ongoing commitment to address key challenges: preventing cultural commodification, maintaining youth engagement across generations, securing long-term resources, and balancing digital innovation with embodied knowledge transmission. The study affirms that while technology can augment cultural preservation, it cannot replace the authentic mentorship relationships between elders and youth that form the foundation of living heritage.

This research contributes a scalable framework applicable to aging communities throughout Thailand and Southeast Asia, facing similar tensions between economic modernization and cultural continuity. By demonstrating how folk sports can simultaneously advance education, tourism, social capital, and productive aging, this study opens new pathways for holistic community development grounded in cultural sustainability. The success in Taphong provides evidence that with appropriate

institutional support and community participation, traditional cultural practices can evolve into dynamic tools for addressing contemporary social and economic challenges while maintaining their authentic character and meaning.

7. SUGGESTION

The result of this research revealed the indigenous sports activities were empowered and resuscitated by engaging the community. The direct experience seniors transferred to young people in the form of coaches strengthened the participants' awareness, strong sense of bonding, and maintained cultural heritage. The demonstrated value is pertinent to the preservation and sustainable development of folk sports as a living tradition. They also provide a basis for more in-depth research that serves as a sustainable community development method while

contributing to the social and human capital in the community.

Consequently, future research and efforts in the field should concern the development of methods and teaching tools to be implemented in such activities to increase their efficiency in transferring folk sports to youth. Moreover, incorporating folk sports into formal and non-formal education can be a field for future efforts, enhanced by the aid of modern media to increase the activities' accessibility and visual appeal. The local government and agencies involved in the development of cultural heritage can be contacted for long-term support, resources for the community-based learning centers, and other support in the given field. The result of further research in the community can focus on the economic and social value of folk sports to augment their perceived value in community-based tourism, preservation, and social well-being.

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