

Research Proposal Development

How Traditional Art Forms are Being Preserved in Diaspora Communities

By : Abirami Baskaran

Title

How Traditional Art Forms are Being Preserved in Diaspora Communities

Introduction

Tradition has always been a key importance of one's identity , whether visual,musical or performative expression,it provides meaningful insights into the communal values shared by people.Diaspora communities are composed of individuals who leave their homeland to settle in a new country,navigating the process of adapting to its social norms,cultural values and way of life.However globalisation and migration have shifted how these forms are practiced and preserved,particularly with diaspora communities.Migrants often occupy a dual space,balancing adaptation to a host culture with the preservation of inherited traditions , which often maintained in fragmented or altered contexts.

As Luann Good Gingrich(2014)illustrates in her study Preserving Cultural Heritage in the Context of Migratory Livelihoods shows Mennonite migrants in Canada.Their lifestyle is complex in maintaining their religious and cultural practices as a means of survival and continuity.Similarly,Naben Ruthnum's Curry: Eating, Reading, and Race (2012) examines how cultural cohesion such as cuisine and literature become marker of authenticity and belonging within South Asian diasporas.

Giuliano and Nunn(2023) highlight that the determination of cultural practices is strongly influenced by intergenerational environmental stability.Populations whose ancestors experienced stable environments tend to maintain traditions more persistently,whereas those from unstable environments are more open minded to change.Applying these insights to diaspora communities suggests that historical and intergenerational factors may shape how traditional art forms are preserved,adapted or transformed in new cultural settings.

Problem Statement

There is limited research on how traditional art forms specifically evolve,adapt or continue in new cultural settings despite increased attention to diaspora identity.Particularly considering intergenerational and historical influences change the perspective of viewing culture.Understanding these processes is crucial to strengthen heritage in multicultural societies.

Rationale: The research highlights how art has become a form of resilience, resistance and progression for migrant groups, which offer insights into cultural preservation strategies that guide both policy and intercultural engagement.

Objectives

- To explore the motivations and methods behind preserving traditional art forms in diaspora settings.
- To analyse the relationship between identity, migration and artistic fundamentals towards tradition.
- Examines how generational differences impact the adaptation and continuity of cultural practices.
- To identify barriers and opportunities for sustaining heritage arts in multicultural societies.

Research Question

1. How are traditional art forms being preserved, adapted or transformed within diaspora communities?
2. How do intergenerational dynamics influence the transmission and adaptation of traditional art forms within diaspora communities?

Literature review

Gingrich (2014) examines how Mennonite migrants try to preserve their cultural and religious heritage while adapting to economic and social realities in Canada. She talks about the concept of the "double bind of inheritance", where migrants try to pass on traditional practices while facing pressures of assimilation. This is similar to the experience of diaspora artists, who work to preserve traditional art forms in new and unfamiliar places.

Ruthnum (2012) talks about how cultural authenticity is often manipulated in western depictions of immigrants' identity. His metaphor of "curry" represents how cultural symbols become both a means of expression and a site of stereotyping, showing that reservation can also involve negotiation and reinterpretation.

Levitt and Glick Schiller(2004) discuss transnational social fields spaces where migrants maintain simultaneous connections to their homelands and host societies.Gingrich's ethnographic finding add depth by demonstrating how preservation of culture is both social and emotional process rooted in intergenerational transmission

Giuliano and Nunn(2023)provide a macro level perspective on cultural persistence and change.Their study shows that intergenerational environmental stability strongly influences how much societies value tradition.Populations whose ancestors experienced stable environments tend to maintain traditions more persistently,whereas those from unstable environments are more receptive to change.This framework suggests that preservation of traditional art forms in diaspora communities may also depend on historical and intergenerational factors,in addition to the social and economic dynamics of the host society.

Gap Identified

While most of the studies address identity,adaptation and negotiation of authenticity , and Giuliano and nunn(2023) provide a predictive framework for cultural persistence,there remains limited research examining how traditional art forms as dynamic,living cultural practices function specifically as a mode of preservation within diaspora life.

Methodology

Research Design : Qualitative

Target population

Members of diaspora communities who practice or support traditional art forms(dance,crafts,music,oral storytelling,e.g),with particular attention to multiple generations within families or communities

Sampling Method

Sampling of 10-15 participants from diverse cultural backgrounds(e.g,South Asian,Pacific,Latin American),including both elderly and young community members to adhere to intergenerational perspectives

Data collection

Interviews with artists, community elders and cultural organisers to explore intergenerational transmission, motivations and practices.

Observation at multicultural events, meeting diasporic community people in real life and understanding their perspective of considering tradition into their daily values.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis identifying repeated concepts such as identity, authenticity, adaptation, continuity and intergenerational influence. By analysing the historical and ancestral cultural legacies in shaping present practices could be unlocked and integrated into the future study of how cultural values have changed or shaped in the due course of the period.

Ethical consideration

Before starting with collecting data and analysing the values, the main consideration of the researcher should be cultural sensitivity in interpretation. The participant will be prior acknowledge about consent and voluntary participation. Need to respect cultural protocols and intellectual property. All the collected data should be shown as a proof of transparency gaining the trust of the participants and commencing to confidentiality.

Expected Outcomes

Traditional art forms in diaspora communities will be showcased as adaptive, dynamic and resilient "living archives", reflecting both change and maintenance of the tradition.

Intergenerational transmission will be a key factor in sustaining cultural practices, in which younger generations mostly blend traditional forms with hybrid expressions influenced by the host culture.

As highlighted by Giuliano and Nunn (2023), the historical and ancestral environmental factors may help explain variations in the transformation of cultural practices across communities.

Significance

Research: Contributes to cross cultural and migration studies by linking art preservation with identity, historical determination and intergenerational transmission of cultural co existence in today's world

Policy: Is made to inform cultural sustainability initiatives and multicultural arts, enhancing support systems for both olden traditions and youth led innovations in diaspora communities.

Practice: Provide guidance for educators, community leaders and custodians on promoting multi generational engagement in the arts and environment that follows traditional practices while encouraging creative adaptation.

Conclusion

This study expects to explore how traditional art forms are preserved, transformed and adapted within diaspora communities, with attention to both intergenerational age and historical cultural influences. By examining the methods, motivation and challenges faced by migrants in maintaining heritage and fitting into the host country the research illustrates how preservation of art and culture bridges the void between intergenerational perception, identity and historical factors. Integrating insights from Gingrich (2014), Ruthnum (2012), Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004), and Giuliano and Nunn (2023), the study covers that cultural preservation is shaped by social, economic and historical factors, as well as generational transmission. The expected findings will contribute to cultural studies and migration by highlighting resilience and adaptability of traditional art forms in multicultural contexts.

Reference

- Gingrich, L. G. (2013). Preserving cultural heritage in the context of migratory livelihoods. *International Migration*, 52(3), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12066>
- Giuliano, P., & Nunn, N. (2017). *Understanding cultural persistence and change*.
- Levitt, P., & Schiller, N. G. (2004). Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society1. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1002-1039.
- Canagarajah, S., & Silberstein, S. (2012). Diaspora Identities and Language. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 11(2), 81–84.
- Ruthnum, N. (2012). Curry: Eating, reading, and race. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 33(1), 15–28.