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Cultural Heritage Awareness among students of Pondicherry University: a Study

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1. Introduction

Awareness is repeatedly demarcated as having understanding or knowledge of one's contiguous environs (Tuan, 2001), however, Murphy & Zajonc (1993) stressed that awareness is prejudiced and shaped intellectually by experience and environment. It has received significant consideration in the perspective of education, place, emotions and social relations, with an overpowering understanding that individuals have a different level of awareness with regard to places, people and events in the development of individual cognitive awareness.Cultural heritage can be best defined as the passing of cultural values (Srivastava, 2015;Shimray & Ramaiah, 2017),traditional knowledge(Vecco, 2010)such as festivals, rituals, beliefs systems, costumes, arts, etc.to the next generation in an explicit and tacit forms(Jokilehto, 2005). Cultural heritage awareness (hereafter referred as CHA) is a vital element in the promotion and protection of any cultural heritage. Therefore, awareness of cultural heritage must be consideredas an important element (Shankar & Swamy, 2013;Ramaiah & Wah, 2006).

2. Purpose of the Study

A good number of studies found in previous research particularly on cultural heritage discourse on the issues related to lack of research on cultural heritage (Nyaupane & Timothy, 2010)acculturation, globalization, privatization, individualization and rootlessness (Dümcke & Gnedovsky, 2013; Mazzanti, 2002; Ruijgrok, 2006; Srivastava, 2015). Studies looked into various issues related to the context of cultural heritage awareness (Shankar & Swamy, 2013; Srivastava, 2015) to what extent the students are aware about their cultural heritage (Wang, Zhang, Han, & Liang, 2017; Ramaiah & Wah, 2006). There is a need that cultural roots awareness has to be made aware to the students in particular and to all public in general to carry forward the rich culture(Wang, Zhang, Han, & Liang, 2017; Srivastava, 2015; Shankar &Swamy, 2013). Srivastava (2015) conducted a study to know the awareness about cultural heritage among the teachers at university level. Campaign on cultural heritage awareness is related to theoretical studies only. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine the level of cultural heritage awareness among students using control variables i.e. gender, age, subject backgrounds and region.

3. Review of Literature

There has been collective discourse in the field of cultural heritage across the world on local engagement and its connection in understanding cultural heritage(Mydland & Grahn, 2012). It is found a good amount of published literature commonly concentrated on the definition of cultural heritage alone(Vecco, 2010), definition and concept of cultural heritage(Jokilehto, 2005), safeguarding cultural heritage (Shankar & Swamy, 2013), cultural heritage economic values(Ruijgrok, 2006), cultural heritage as economic good towards its analysis and assesment (Mazzanti, 2002; Mazzanti, 2003), and management of cultural heritage (Taylor, 2004).Many researchers also studied the social and economic value of cultural heritage (Dümcke & Gnedovsky, 2013) andthe social value of cultural heritage (Dümcke & Gnedovsky, 2013).

Shankar & Swamy (2013)indicated that it is imperative to intensify the awareness of cultural heritage among the younger generation. CHA is one of the operational ways of providing the esteem of public to the cultural heritage.Srivastava (2015) pointed out that the younger generation should be imparted with cultural values. However, studies on the awareness of cultural heritage are inadequate. Due to the above mentioned reasons there is an urgency and immediate need to conduct a study on the awareness of the cultural heritage among the students that too university level. Srivastava (2015) found that gender plays a significant role in cultural heritage awareness and female teachers are more aware compared to male teachers. Awareness is a significant element in safeguarding of cultural heritage. The presentstudyfocusedon the awareness of university students' on cultural heritage. The variables studied in this study were taken from the previous related studies published in the literature.Therefore, we proposed the following hypotheses:

     H1a.Males and females differ in their awareness on culture.
     H1b. Students from different age groups differ in their awareness on culture.
     H1c. Students from different subject backgrounds differ in their awareness on culture.
     H1d. Students from different regions differ in their awareness on culture.
     H2a. Males and females differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge.
     H2b. Students from different age groups differ in acquiring their cultural heritage
          knowledge.
     H2c. Students from different subject backgrounds differ in acquiring their cultural
          heritage knowledge.
     H2d. Students from different regions differ in acquiring their cultural heritage
          knowledge.
     H3a. Males and females differ in promoting their cultural heritage awareness.
     H3b. Students from different age groups differ in promoting theircultural heritage
          awareness.
     H3c. Students from different subject backgrounds differ in promoting their cultural
     heritage awareness.
     H3d. Students from different regions differ in promoting their cultural heritage
          awareness.

4. Research Method

The survey method and questionnaire tool were used for collecting data. An online survey questionnaire was designed using Google form for data collection from the respondents.

4.1 Sample

The study sample consists of graduatestudents from Pondicherry University. A total of 201 respondents participated in this study (*table 1*). Of the total, 105 (52.2%) are males and 96 (47.8%) are females, more than one third (36.3%) of the respondents belong to 23-25 years age group, about one fourth (24.4%) of them are in between 20-22 years, 23.9% are in between 26-28 years and one-tenth (10.9%)of them are in between 29-31 years of age. Considering the respondents' subject background, half of the respondents (51.7%) are from social science, over a third (35.3%) of them comes from science, and 12.9% of them are from arts and humanities. Of the total, 30.3% of the respondents come from southern part of India, 28.4% of themcome from

northeast region, 24.9% of them come from western part of India, 10.4% of them come from Eastern part of Indian, and 6% of them come fromnorthern part of India. Pondicherry University consists of diverse combination of students community comes from all over India, thus the respondents belong to all regions of the country. Since most of the people in the northeast region belong to tribal including the researchers, this region is included along with other four major regions.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Measure	*Items*	*Frequency*	*(%)*
Gender	Male	105	52.2
	Female	96	47.8
Age group (*in years*)	20-22	49	24.4
	23-25	73	36.3
	26-28	48	23.9
	29-31	22	10.9
	Above 31	9	4.5
Subject Background	Science	71	35.3
	Arts & Humanities	26	12.9
	Social Science	104	51.7
Region	North	12	6.0
	East	21	10.4
	Northeast	57	28.4
	West	50	24.9
	South	61	30.3

4.2 Data Collection Instrument

A closed-ended online questionnaire was designed using Google form.The questionnaire comprising of 5 parts: the first part deals with demographic data, second part on the 'awareness on culture',third part covers 'methods of creating CHA among the students', fourth section covers 'reasons to promote CHA', and fifth section covers 'role of educational institutions in promoting CHA'. Out of these parts,2-5 were measured using a 5-pointLikert scale. A pilot study of 15 questionnaires was conducted to find out(Isaac & Michael, 1995) the problems in questionnaire and also add suggestionsfrom the respondents in final questionnaire before data collection process.

4.3 Data Treatment

For the analysis of data, statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used. Frequencies and percentage analysis was carried out for demographic variables (table 1) of the participants.Independent Samples *t*-test and ANOVA tests were executed to test the framed hypotheses as these two tests are more suitable to compare two means (*t*-test)and means ofmore than two groups i.e. ANOVA(Kothari, 2004).Cronbach's alpha test is used for the construct and found to be in an acceptable range (*table 2*) that isabove 0.70 (Gaur & Gaur, 2009; Vaus, 2001).

Table 2: Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the 18statements

Sl. No	Statements	N	Cronbach's alphavalue
1	I am aware about my festivals	201	0.778
2	I am aware about my food habits	201	
3	I am aware about my religion	201	
4	I am aware about my way of life	201	
5	I am aware about my traditions	201	
6	I am aware about my lifestyle	201	
7	I am aware about my language	201	
8	I am aware about my customs	201	
9	Learning through workshops	201	0.817
10	Learning through seminars	201	
11	Learning through conferences	201	
12	To preserve legacy from the past	201	0.895
13	To pass on the legacy to the future generation	201	
14	To protect the history and the story	201	
15	Preservation of culture	201	0.896
16	Transmission of culture	201	
17	Development of culture	201	
18	Continuity of culture	201	

5 Data Analysis

5.1 Awareness on Culture

Questions about the awareness on cultural heritage were asked to the respondents to examine their level of awareness based on the first eight statementsgiven in *table 2*. As shown in *table 3*, two fifths (40.8%) of the respondents rated that they are aware about 'festivals' and also indicated that they have considerable amount of knowledge to full knowledge, another two fifths (41.3%) of them indicated that they have considerable amount of knowledge to full knowledge regarding awareness on 'food habits', less than half (47.8%) of them indicated that they have considerable amount of knowledge to full knowledgewith regardsto the awareness about 'religion', half (50.8%) of themindicated as considerable amount of knowledge to full knowledge with regard to the awareness about their 'way of life', 39.8% indicated as considerable amount of knowledge to full knowledge concerning to the awareness about 'traditions', 45.8% of them indicated as considerable amount of knowledge to full knowledge with regard to their 'lifestyle', 55.3% of themindicated as considerable amount of knowledge to full knowledge concerning to 'language', and 39.3% of them indicated as considerable amount of knowledge to full knowledge regarding to the awareness about 'customs'. It is also found that awareness about their language has the highest mean score (3.6020) and awareness about festivals has the lowest mean score (3.1045). Overall, it is found that student's awareness level on their cultural heritage is above average. Therefore, effort should be made to improve theirawareness about our rich culture among the university students.It is also found that considerable percentages of student's do not have knowledge and some of them have only basic knowledge on their cultural heritage. Out of those eight statement *(table 3)*, considerable percentage of students have no knowledge or basic knowledge on festivals (40.8%), religion (28.9%), traditions (29.4%) and customs (31.9%). Society and Indian government should look into this as serious problem with younger generation and provide adequate awareness about their cultural heritage.

Table 3: Awareness on cultural heritage

Statement	*NK (%)	B (%)	A (%)	CAK (%)	FK (%)	Mean	SD
I am aware about festivals	8.0	32.8	18.4	22.4	18.4	3.1045	1.26650
I am aware about food habits	6.0	18.9	33.8	23.4	17.9	3.2836	1.14201
I am aware about religion	4.0	24.9	23.4	23.9	23.9	3.3881	1.20775
I am aware about way of life	2.5	18.4	28.4	28.9	21.9	3.4925	1.10054
I am aware about traditions	3.0	26.4	30.8	25.9	13.9	3.2139	1.07657
I am aware about lifestyle	2.5	19.4	32.3	29.9	15.9	3.3731	1.04646
I am aware about language	3.0	15.9	25.9	28.4	26.9	3.6020	1.13172
I am aware about customs	8.0	23.9	28.9	27.4	11.9	3.1144	1.14098

*NK=No knowledge, B-Basic, A-Average, CAK-Considerable amount of knowledge, FK-Full knowledge

5.2 Methods of creating CHA among the students

The views and suggestions of these respondents were examined on what could be the best ways to impart the cultural heritage awareness among university students out of different methods suggested. Some of the tool to examine the various methods of creating CHA among the students includes 'learning through workshops', 'learning through seminars', and 'learning through conferences'. These results indicate that two-thirds (67.2%) of them wanted to learn about their culture through workshops and indicated as *agree to strongly agree*, more than half (58.2%) of them wanted to learn through seminars and indicated as *agree to strongly agree*, and 59.7% of them indicated as *agree to strongly* agree to learn their culture through conferences. It was discovered that 'learning through workshops' have the highest mean score 3.7662, 'learning through seminars' (mean score = 3.5920) and 'learning through seminars' have the lowest mean score 3.5174 as the lowest score (*table4*). Overall, these results indicate that these students want to learn about their culture through interactive modes with their elders and peers. Festivals, family functions are the occasions to meet many people and learn about their culture and heritage.

Table 4: Methods of creating CHA among the students

Statement	*SD (%)	D (%)	UD (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	SD
Learning through workshops	5.0	9.0	18.9	38.8	28.4	3.7662	1.10908
Learning through seminars	7.0	9.5	25.4	41.3	16.9	3.5174	1.09588
Learning through conferences	7.5	8.5	24.4	36.8	22.9	3.5920	1.15010

*SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, UD=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

5.3 Reasons to promote CHA

Table 5 shows these students' are considerable interest in promoting CHA. Students promote their cultural heritage awareness to 'preserve legacy from the past' thus indicated as *very important to extremely important* (64.1%), two third (66.6%) of them indicated as *very important to extremely important* to promote CHA by the way of 'passing the legacy to the future generations', and 71.7% of them indicated as *very important to extremely important* stating that CHA is required to promote and 'protect the history and oral stories'. Results from this study

indicates that these students have the highest mean score of4.0547 related to 'to protect the history and the oral stories', mean score of 3.8458 is related to 'pass on the legacy to the future generations' and finally the mean score of 3.7413 is connected to 'preserve legacy from the past'. Overall, most of the students are havingsome concern about the promotion of cultural heritage awarenessamongthe university students.

Table 5: Reasons to promote CHA

Statement	*NI (%)	SI (%)	MI (%)	VI (%)	EI (%)	Mean	SD
Preserve legacy from the past	4.5	12.4	18.9	32.8	31.3	3.7413	1.15876
Passingon the legacy to the future generation	4.5	9.5	19.4	30.3	36.3	3.8458	1.14939
Protect the history and oral stories	2.5	10.0	15.9	22.9	48.8	4.0547	1.12783

*NI=Not important, SI=Slightly important, MI=Moderately important, VI=Very important, EI=Extremely important

5.4 Role of educational institutions in promoting CHA

Students were asked to give their opinion on educational institution's role in promoting CHA (*table 6*). Based on the literature, four optionsi.e. 'preservation of culture', 'transmission of culture', 'development of culture', 'continuity of culture' weretaken to examine the role that an educational institution can playin promoting CHA.Two thirds (67.2%) of the respondents opted as *agree*to *strongly agree* that an educational institution can play a vital role in the preservation of a culture. Less than two thirds (61.7%) rated as *agree* to *strongly agree* concerning to the transmission of culture to next generation, 67.7% of themindicated as*agree* to *strongly agree* regardingto the development of culture i.e. CHA and 66.7% of them rated as *agree* to *strongly agree* that educational institutionscouldhelpin the continuity of culture. From these results, it is found that an educational institution can play an important role in promoting the 'continuity of culture' with highest mean score (3.7960), 'development of culture' has mean score of 3.7811, 'preservation of culture' has mean score of 3.7512 and 'transmission of culture' has mean score of 3.6368. These findings revealed that educational institutions can play a big role in promoting the culture of our nation.

Table 6: Students opinion on therole of educational institutions in promoting CHA

Roles	*SD (%)	D (%)	UD (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	SD
Preservation of culture	5.5	8.5	18.9	39.8	27.4	3.7512	1.11257
Transmission of culture	4.5	8.0	25.9	42.8	18.9	3.6368	1.02100
Development of culture (CHA)	4.0	7.5	20.9	41.8	25.9	3.7811	1.04012
Continuity of culture	4.0	5.5	23.9	40.3	26.4	3.7960	1.02136

*SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, UD=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

6. Testing of Hypotheses

The study shows that demographic variables have an influence on cultural heritage awareness development (Wang, Zhang, Han, & Liang, 2017;Ingram, 2017). Using these demographic

variables, a*t*-test was carried out to examine the stated hypotheses i.e. H1a, H2a and H3a.To validate these hypotheses, an Independent Samples *t*-test wascarried out to examine the significant difference between gender and awareness on culture (H1a), methods of creating cultural heritage awareness (H2a) and reasons to promote CHA (H3a) as shown in *table 7*. The*t*-test results indicate that there is no significant difference between gender and awareness on culture (t-value = -.445, p-value = 0.657), methods of creating cultural heritage awareness (t-value = -1.627, p-value = 0.105) and reasons to promote CHA (t-value = -1.065, p-value = 0.288).

The ANOVA test (*table 7*) was carried out to examine the stated hypotheses (H1b, H1c, H1d, H2b, H2c, H2d, H3b, H3c, H3d) to determine the significant difference using control variables i.e.age group, subject background and regionbetween awareness on culture, methods of creating cultural heritage awareness and reasons to promote CHA. These results shows a significant difference (H2d) in acquiring cultural heritage knowledge from different regions (F-value = 6.144, p-value = 0.001), but differed in promoting cultural heritage awareness(H3c) from different subject backgrounds (F-value = 5.365, p-value = 0.005) and alsodiffered in promoting cultural heritage awareness(H3d) from different regions (F-value = 7.004, p-value = 0.001). These results indicated that the methods of creating cultural heritage awareness and reasons to promote CHA are directly related to region and subject backgrounds.

Table 7: *t*-test and ANOVA test results related to methods of creating CHA among the students

Variables	Hypotheses	*t* or F-value	P-*value*
Gender	Males and females differ in their awareness on culture (H1a)	-0.445	0.657
Age group	Students from different age groups differ in their awareness on culture(H1b)	0.735	0.569
Subject Background	Students from different subject backgrounds differ in their awareness on culture(H1c)	0.295	0.745
Region	Students from different regions differ in their awareness on culture(H1d)	0.353	0.842
Gender	Males and females differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge (H2a)	-1.627	0.105
Age group	Students from different age groups differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge (H2b)	0.636	0.637
Subject Background	Students from different subject backgrounds differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge (H2c)	2.384	0.095
Region	Students from different regions differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge (H2d)	6.144	0.001*
t-test and ANOVA test results related to reasons to promote CHA			
Gender	Males and females differ in promoting their cultural heritage awareness (H3a)	-1.065	0.288
Age group	Students from different age groups differ in promoting their cultural heritage awareness (H3b)	1.523	0.197
Subject Background	Students from different subject backgrounds differ in promoting their cultural heritage awareness (H3c)	5.365	0.005*
Region	Students from different regions differ in promoting their	7.004	0.001*

| | cultural heritage awareness (H3d) | | |

7. Conclusion

The present study examined the demographic dissimilarities in creating cultural heritage awareness among the university students. The results revealed that over half(55.3%) of the respondents indicated as*considerable amount of knowledge* to *full knowledge*with regards to the 'language' as highest. It is also found that awareness about language have the highest mean score of3.6020 and awareness about festivals has the lowest mean score of 3.1045 on the awareness of culture. The study shows that two-thirds (67.2%) of the respondents learn about culture through workshopssoindicated *as agree* to *strongly agree*, followed by 58.2% of them learning through seminars and indicated as*agree* to *strongly agree*, and 59.7% of them indicated as *agree* to *strongly agree* considering learning their culture through conferences. 'Learning through workshops' has the highest mean score (3.7662) on methods of learning cultural heritage. Thus,workshops are one of the prominent outreach modes to make the students aware about their cultural heritage (Shankar & Swamy, 2013).

About two-thirds (64.1%) of the respondents indicated that they promote cultural heritage awareness to 'preserve legacy from the past' thusindicated as*very important* to *extremelyimportant*, two thirds (66.6%) of them indicated as*very important to extremely important* that they promote CHA to 'pass the legacy to the future generations' and 71.7% of them indicated as*very important to extremely important* stating that CHA is required to promote and to 'protect the history including oral stories' whichhas the highest mean score of 4.0547. According to them educational institutions could play prominent roles in promoting and preserving of the culture, thus two thirds (67.2%) of the respondents indicated as*agree* to *strongly agree.* Less than two thirds (61.7%) of them indicated as *agree* to *strongly agree*concerning to the transmission of culture, 67.7% of them indicated as*agree* to *strongly agree* regardingtothedevelopment of culture, and a same percentage (66.7%) of them indicated as*agree* to *strongly agree* that educational institutions could also promote on the continuity of culture, thus itsmean scoreis highest (3.7960). Overall, the findings revealed that students want to have a platform where they could raise their concerns and have a meaningful discussion while learning about their culture and heritage.

Table 8:*t*-test and ANOVA test results

Sl. No.	Hypothesis	Test Results
H1a	Males and females differ in their awareness on culture	Rejected
H1b	Students from different age groups differ in their awareness on culture	Rejected
H1c	Students from different subject backgrounds differ in their awareness on culture	Rejected
H1d	Students from different regions differ in their awareness on culture	Rejected
H2a	Males and females differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge	Rejected
H2b	Students from different age groups differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge	Rejected
H2c	Students from different subject backgrounds differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge	Rejected

H2d	Students from different regions differ in acquiring their cultural heritage knowledge	Accepted
H3a	Males and females differ in promoting their cultural heritage awareness	Rejected
H3b	Students from different age groups differ in promoting their cultural heritage awareness	Rejected
H3c	Students from different subject backgrounds differ in promoting their cultural heritage awareness	Accepted
H3d	Students from different regions differ in promoting their cultural heritage awareness	Accepted

Therefore, this study accepted the above three hypotheses i.e. H2d, H3c and H3d and rejected nine hypotheses i.e. H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d, H2a, H2b, H2c, H3a and H3b as listed in *table 8*. From *t*-test analysis (H1a, H2a and H3a), the results indicated that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their awareness on culture, acquiring cultural knowledge and promoting cultural heritage awareness. This shows that awareness on culture, acquiring cultural heritage knowledge and promoting cultural heritage awareness are independent of being gender variable. This result also supports the earlier study on the awareness of national symbol, history and religion, performing arts and visual arts (Srivastava, 2015). Whereas, the ANOVA test results reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between students from different regions and different subject backgrounds (H2d, H3c and H3d). This result indicates that acquiring cultural heritage knowledge and promoting CHA are affected by their regions and subject backgrounds. Furthermore, the ANOVA test result reveals that there is no significant difference between students from a different age groups in their awareness on culture, acquiring cultural heritage knowledge and promoting CHA (H1b, H2b and H3b), different regions have no significant difference in their awareness on culture (H1d), also different subject backgrounds have no significant difference in their awareness on culture, acquiring cultural heritage knowledge (H1c and H2c). This clearly shows that acquiring cultural heritage knowledge and promoting CHA are independent of different age groups and from different subject backgrounds. It is right time that UGC should introduce a component on cultural heritage studies at university level education so that would fill-up the gaps created with the influence of Western countries on young Indians. Ministry of Culture should take lead and conduct this kind of studies and promote cultural heritage awareness among students in all states in the country.

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