

IELA
SEMESTER 1 2024

**INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP IN AUSTRALIA**



Education Research Journal



INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN AUSTRALIA

A key priority of the Professional Teachers' Council NSW Strategic Plan and vision for Education in NSW is to enhance the teaching profession through the generation of increased respect for classroom teachers in the general community. This includes raising the personal and professional esteem of classroom teachers through recognition and the rewarding of excellence.

It is our firm belief that classroom teachers are, and should be recognised as, leaders in educational discourse. Consequently, the Directors of the Professional Teachers' Council NSW are excited to announce the foundation of the Institute for Educational Leadership in Australia (IELA) which will foster, recognise and reward excellence in classroom practice.

The Professional Teachers Council, IELA Annual Awards.

The Professional Teachers Council NSW Annual Awards recognise the outstanding contribution teachers undertake through their professional teaching associations. Contributions that are voluntary, requiring significant commitment of time supporting the many members of individual associations. These PTC NSW member awards provide a valuable and highly recognised celebration of the significant role professional teacher associations fill in NSW education and the individuals that make it all happen.

All PTC NSW member associations are encouraged to annually acknowledge the significant commitment of associations and publicly thank the individuals for their often 'unsung' invaluable commitment!

Award categories include, the prestigious Outstanding Professional Service Awards (OPSA) as an acknowledgment of excellence in the profession: The Outstanding Beginning Teacher Award (OBTA) recognises the outstanding professional contribution by an individual committee member (of a Professional Teachers' Association) with five or less years teaching experience in education in NSW: Association Service Award recognising the valuable contribution of paid staff of an association.

In addition, the work of an individual PTC NSW member association can be recognised via the highly prestigious and coveted Association of the Year Award, presented by the NSW Minister of Education. All PTC NSW member associations are encouraged to apply for this significant award.

These important annual awards publicly acknowledge and value the outstanding professional contribution to education made by teachers through the network of Professional Teaching Associations across all sectors and systems of NSW.

For application forms and award criteria please [CLICK HERE](#)



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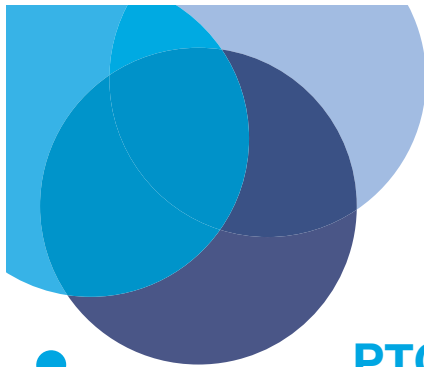
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COME TOGETHER

PTC NSW EDUCATE CONFERENCE

8th August 2024

Come Together - Educate will explore contemporary issues in education NSW and beyond. Speakers will be invited to provide some blue-sky thinking in education across pedagogy, technologies and contemporary education research and theories.

Afternoon sessions will provide opportunities for PTC NSW member associations to showcase their respective associations through a variety of thought-provoking workshops. Workshops could be cross-disciplinary, encouraging collaboration among professional teacher associations in NSW who significantly enhance the educational experience for both educators and students. Highlight the resources, professional development opportunities, and networking advantages that come with being a member of your association.

Come Together - Educate provides a unique platform where PTC NSW member associations can come together at the one conference and share their respective KLA expertise, resources and value to members while at the same time broadening reach to new potential members.

Here are some ideas to promote membership, cross-association collaboration, and widen the reach of professional teacher associations in NSW.

- Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development
- Networking and Community Building
- Interactive Panels
- Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives
- Social Media Campaigns

Call for Papers

We are calling for papers for presentations and workshops from interested PTC NSW member associations. Please click [HERE](#) to register your interest.

PTC NSW is offering this unique opportunity to all PTC NSW member associations to consider participating in the Come Together series and we look forward to your expressions of interest and involvement across 2024! For more details visit www.ptc.nsw.edu.au.



ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR NONE

“What barriers exist within the mainstream feminist movement, and broader Australian society, that inhibit address of Aboriginal women’s issues?”

Grace Cleave, Cherrybrook Technology High School

ABSTRACT

This research project explores the barriers which exist within the mainstream feminist movement, and across broader Australian society, which inhibit the process of addressing Aboriginal women’s issues. Grace Cleave delivers primary and secondary research insights into intersectionality in the feminist movement and the extent to which this remains exclusionary of the Indigenous feminist voice. Her processes of deconstructing ethnocentrism within feminism was conducted through multiple questionnaires, interviews, content analysis of news articles and personal reflection on the author’s identity as a non-Indigenous feminist. The principles of ethical research were applied as outlined by the AIATSIS code of ethics and a wide range of secondary sources are applied from such great writers as Dr Larissa Behrendt and Bell Hooks. Grace’s aims to answer the question of whether media representations and education isolate Aboriginal women from mainstream feminism, and the extent to which this supports a pre-existing privileging of white women’s voices.

Introduction

Despite being socialised into an actively feminist and multicultural society, the constant evolution of the feminist movement into intersectionality remains exclusionary of the Indigenous feminist voice. Further, education and media promotion of these perspectives is limited, generating a cycle of misinformation and ignorance. Hence, despite ongoing engagement with feminist discourse and intellectual conversation, as well as education on the ideology, I found that the Indigenous subject is not adequately advocated for. However, through discussion with Indigenous peoples and accumulation of the general public’s perception of Aboriginal issues, it has become increasingly clear that differentiation of culturally specific issues has not occurred, leading to a prominent ignorance of Indigenous experiences. Through deconstructing ethnocentrism within the feminist movement, I seek to develop a new perspective on Australia’s feminist ideology and my place within it. Interest in this topic has led me to question: *“What barriers exist within the mainstream feminist movement, and broader Australian society, that inhibit address of Aboriginal women’s issues?”*



^Image: Emma MacNeill, Instagram @charliwanti

This will be achieved through utilisation of four main research methodologies. To protect participant identity, anonymity of those who have been involved in my interviews will be used, as well as acquiring permission prior to the inclusion of any information or statements within my project. Further, when engaging with Indigenous peoples and communities, it is essential to recognise cultural considerations, whilst maintaining sensitivity to socio-political oppression, and acknowledgment of intrinsic cultural differences. Central pillars of ethical research as outlined by the AIATSIS code of ethics are Indigenous leadership, self-determination, consideration of research impact and value and researcher accountability, all of which were integrated into my interviews. Further, use of two questionnaires enabled me to collate responses from a wide sample of varied ages and cultural backgrounds, allowing an assessment of public perception of the diversity within Australian feminism, as well as general societal understanding of Indigenous feminist concerns. Through content analysis of news articles from various media outlets, I investigate perpetuated portrayals of Indigenous women and the presence of the Aboriginal feminist voice within media. Finally, personal reflection allows for investigation of how my identity as a non-Indigenous feminist, who has undergone specific study of Aboriginal issues, fits into dominant narratives of public knowledge on these issues.

Inherently my PIP integrates a cross-cultural exploration, as I seek to investigate the Indigenous experience and disparities between mainstream perspectives of feminist values and Aboriginal women's issues. Hence engagement with Indigenous feminist thought offers enrichment to my understanding of feminism broadly, nuances of intersectionality specific to Aboriginal women and critical evaluation of my role as a contemporary, non-Indigenous youth feminist.

My PIP will ultimately enrich my understandings of contemporary Australian feminism, forcing me to challenge my perceptions on the needs and aspirations of feminist ideology, generated from a Western culture. I will develop a more socially aware perspective of cultural tensions within the feminist movement, by highlighting incompatibilities of present feminist ideology with the disregarded Aboriginal perspective, ultimately hoping to uplift Indigenous feminist voices.

Log

Since the beginning of developing my PIP, my interest in supporting marginalised voices within Australian feminism has remained the focus of my research. Initially, my central topic sought to elucidate the barriers of women of colour within mainstream feminism. However, without a specific and focused cross-cultural component that ultimately inhibited development of an achievable area of research, I utilised the unique perspective of my first interviewee, an Indigenous teenager to narrow my scope. Her experiences highlighted elements of feminism that I was oblivious to, inciting me to investigate my initial topic through the lens of Aboriginal women. Hence, I settled on the topic: ***“What barriers exist within the mainstream feminist movement, and broader Australian society, that inhibit address of Aboriginal women’s issues?”***

After completing interviews, questionnaire surveying and secondary research relating to my initial topic, I found that most collated information could be transferred across to my narrowed area of investigation, however large parts of the interviews were no longer relevant. Additionally I constructed a new questionnaire to gather data applicable to my altered topic, hence my second questionnaire was more useful, subverting some of my expectations, whilst offering new avenues through which to take my PIP. In my interviews, I was aware that social prejudice, intersectionality, and colonisation would factor into my topic of investigation, thus I maintained sensitivity to handle these issues appropriately. I didn't directly ask about or discuss these topics, allowing my interviewees choice to explore these issues if they were comfortable. Further, I emphasised to my participants that answering questions was completely anonymous and optional, seeking to prioritise Indigenous self-determination and leadership in the research process. When completing my research, I understood the importance of expressing different perspectives to present a holistic view of my topic. Hence, my interviewees consisted of both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous individuals of various ages and ethnic backgrounds to best reflect Australian and feminist multiculturalism. I also utilised content analysis to

support primary research finding, and generalisations of the dichotomy between media and societal perceptions. Throughout the process, I integrated personal reflection to reflect upon my position as someone educated in Indigenous issues, as well as reassessing my role as an intersectional Australian feminist to be more inclusive of the Aboriginal female perspective.

Further, I experienced difficulty in both secondary and primary research due to my topic's nuance. In obtaining academic papers, few were written by Indigenous women; it was mostly non-Indigenous women reporting on the issue. Furthermore, in finding interviewees, I received some responses from Aboriginal women expressing disinterest in being involved due to exhaustion from projects that do not accurately represent the Indigenous voice. Hence, I encountered issues in determining the Indigenous perspective, however, these experiences forced me to recognise my own position as a non-Indigenous person similarly writing on the Aboriginal experience. Thus, I sought to ensure my PIP was an accurate reflection of community experiences by adhering to ethical research and having my work checked by my interviewees to avoid misconstruing their words.

Ultimately, I feel my piece is an authentic representation of the Indigenous feminist experience, revealing more nuanced concerns within the Australian feminist ideology. Hence, my PIP can be utilised to increase public knowledge of Aboriginal feminist issues and subsequently remedy media misrepresentation. Further, this project challenged both my research skills and my perception of Australian society with regards to the positions of Indigenous women within prominent ideologies.

Central Material

The feminist movement within the Western world has remained focused on the White middle class experience, however the emergence of Aboriginal feminism questions the nature of the mainstream feminist movement, elucidating limitations of Western perspectives of Indigeneity. In the development of Aboriginal feminism, misunderstanding in Australian mainstream knowledge of Indigeneity is elucidated. Indigenous feminist goals are revealed by prominent Indigenous feminist Gearon Jihan, who maintains that “colonisation, white supremacy, and capitalism need patriarchy to work”¹, writing regarding the prominent concerns of the Indigenous feminist subject in accordance with understanding of white feminism. Hence, the mainstream white feminist movement exposes that a degree of tolerance towards feminism exists and supports a model in which women's rights are achieved within the constraints of existing institutions that Interviewee A identifies “were designed with white people in mind and with female oppression in mind”². This is coherent with Beck's observation of White Feminist intention “not to alter the systems that oppress women — patriarchy, capitalism, imperialism — but to succeed within them”². However, these issues remain lesser represented within mainstream feminist understanding, as 47.1% of questionnaire participants identified that Jihan's perspective did ‘reflect(ed) (their) understanding of Indigenous issues’ to a limited extent, seen in figure 1³. Furthermore, contemporary issues faced by Aboriginal women in daily society include “Loss of culture, intergenerational trauma, everyday racism and social issues”⁵. Specifically, with regards to the issue of Intergenerational trauma Indigenous people cite a misunderstanding of its contemporary importance, maintaining a view to ““just get over it” and failure to understand the ongoing impact to families”⁶. Hence, core issues of Aboriginal feminism remain ignored by the dominant social consciousness, resulting in an “ignorance and indifference to Aboriginal people in general”⁴ identified by Interviewee D. Ultimately, mainstream feminism is unable to address intersectional needs due to a lack of social recognition of Indigenous feminism and specific needs of Aboriginal women.

1 Gearon, J. “Indigenous Feminism Is Our Culture” in Stanford Social Innovation Review , 11 February 2021, Accessed 19 December 2022 https://ssir.org/articles/entry/indigenous_feminism_is_our_culture 2 Primary Research Method - Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 5

2 Beck, K. “Koa Beck on Dismantling the Persistence of White Feminism.” NBC News, interview by M. Solis, 9 Jan. 2021, Accessed 17 December 2022, www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/koa-beck-dismantling-persistence-white-feminism-n1253555.

3 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 2: Indigenous Feminism, 6/6/2023 5 Primary Research Method - Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 8 6 Ibid

4 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 2

To what extent does this quote reflect your understanding of Indigenous issues?

51 responses

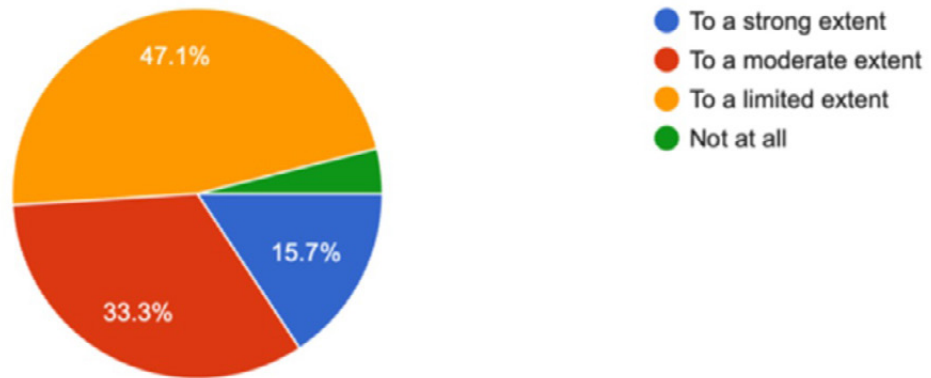


Figure 1

The prevalence of a feminist ‘sisterhood’ establishes a foundation to Australian feminism that is inherently exclusionary of Indigenous experiences, inhibiting the movement from truly achieving empowerment. Application of Tarjfel’s theory of social exclusion elucidates that mainstream feminism categorises an ‘in group’ distinguished purely by binary gender, identifying feminists through the outdated ‘common’ thread of womanhood. However, this division of feminist focus disregards nuance through maintenance of a ‘colour-blindness’; a disregard for individual differences in race, as intersectional feminist academics uphold that “embedded in the idea of “woman” are the normative values of white, bourgeois cisheteronormativity”⁵. Furthermore, in attempts to define the movement through a universal womanhood, concerns of Indigenous women remain displaced, as Interviewee A reflects that “our goals are the same, but (white feminists) don’t respect that we have different values

To what extent do you believe feminism is a unified movement?

45 responses

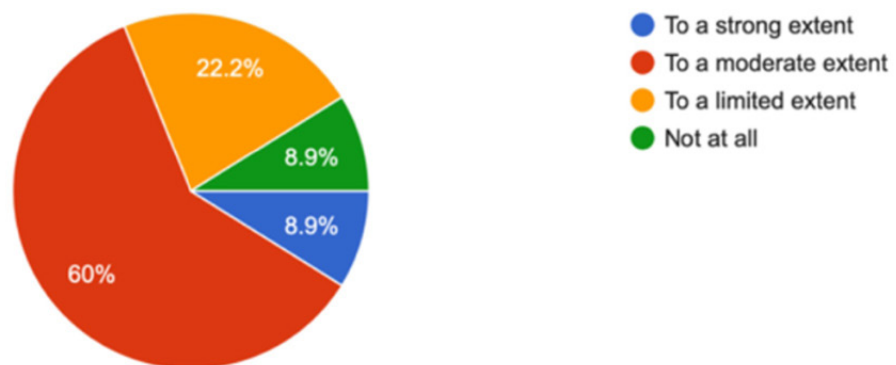


Figure 2

⁵ Christoffersen A., Emejulu, A. ‘Diversity Within: The Problems with “Intersectional” White Feminism in Practice’, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 2022; <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxac044> Accessed 19 April 2022 9 Primary Research Method- Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 2

and come from different places in our lives”⁹. Thus, social identification within the feminist collective on this basis is inherently impossible for Indigenous feminists, requiring them to hierarchise their identity, a notion that Interviewee A finds indistinguishable; “I am Indigenous, and I am a woman”⁶. Further, 2/3 of questionnaire participants expressed observance of a moderate degree of unification within Australian feminism, illustrated in figure 2⁷, thus elucidating the incompatibility of the movement with a social identification exclusionary of cultural and identity nuances. Further, during the process of social comparison, internal conflict arises within the ideology, as a “blanket approach to female oppression” is ignorant of nuanced female experiences, thus the movement cannot target ‘points of intersection’⁸ in the oppression of Aboriginal women.

The establishment of this feminist ‘sisterhood’ is hence alienating to Indigenous women, presenting a Eurocentric perception of womanhood that is inherently exclusionary. Therefore, unique Aboriginal experiences become assimilated into grander narratives of feminist concerns, thus a perpetuated ignorance remains intrinsic to the movement as “Indigenous people have so many things going on, that feminism just can’t get their full attention”⁹. Furthermore, “intersectionality emerges from a feminist context where “woman” is always already constructed as white”¹⁰, preventing Indigenous feminists from engaging in social comparison to further personal and social identity. Further, this notion elucidates the functioning of the ideology as a movement developed for White women, that women of colour are assimilated into without structural changes to the movement. Hamad cites the “white damsel” archetype, founded in notions of “racial purity, Christian morality ... and financial dependence on men”¹¹ that is used within the process of social identification as inherently oppositional to acceptance of diverse feminist collectives. Further, The American Psychological Association’s study *Black Women Often Ignored by Social Justice Movements*, identified that majority of participants’ perceptions of a “typical woman” were more reflective of the average white woman than a typical Black woman¹². Thus, Aileen Moreton-Robinson maintains that “Whiteness is so pervasive as an invisible norm that race, as difference, still belongs only to women who are not white in Australian feminism”¹³, perpetuating the historically prevalent notion of racial ‘otherness’ and White Supremacy in establishing a white identity as the default. Social consequence of a mainstream Australian feminism that doesn’t “concern itself with that part of it (racial experiences)”¹⁴ is a movement that ultimately “only seeks to empower women who do not face racial disadvantage, so Aboriginal women get left behind”¹⁵. However, when asked to define a ‘typical’ feminist, a questionnaire respondent stated that it is “problematic to try - all women are not the same, their circumstances differ massively, as do their beliefs and their values”¹⁶ suggesting the impossibility of assimilating all feminists into one ideological identity. Further Hamad exposes the reality, that “there is no sisterhood”¹⁷ as white supremacist philosophies “set White Womanhood apart from the rest”¹⁸, thus internally within the movement, racial politics, and gender issues “feel very separate”¹⁹. Ultimately, the internal tensions of the movement are rooted in the opposition to a unified ‘sisterhood’.

6 Ibid, Question 1

7 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 1: Diversity in Feminism, 29/4/2023

8 Christoffersen A., Emejulu, A. ‘Diversity Within: The Problems with “Intersectional” White Feminism in Practice’, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 2022; <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxac044> Accessed 19 April 2023

9 Primary Research Method - Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 8

10 Christoffersen A., Emejulu, A. ‘Diversity Within: The Problems with “Intersectional” White Feminism in Practice’, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 2022 Accessed 19 April 2023

11 Hamad, R. *White Tears/Brown Scars : How White Feminism Betrays Women of Color*. 2019. Catapult, 2019. p. 96 Accessed 17 December 2022

12 Coles, S. M. ‘Black Women Often Ignored by Social Justice Movements’ in American Psychological Association. July 13, 2020, Accessed 24 May 2023, <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/07/black-women-social-justice>

13 Moreton-Robinson A., *Talkin’ Up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism*, University of Queensland Press, 2002, p. 475 Accessed 19 March 2023

14 Primary Research Method - Interviewee C, 6/5/2023, Question 6

15 Primary Research Method - Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 4

16 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 1: Diversity in Feminism, 29/4/2023

17 Hamad, R. *White Tears/Brown Scars : How White Feminism Betrays Women of Color*. 2019. Catapult, 2019. p. 137 Accessed 17 December 2022

18 Hamad, Op. cit, P. 160

19 Primary Research Method - Interviewee C, 6/5/2023, Question 4

that implements a homogenised outlook on patriarchy, ignorant of the myriad of unique, culturally grounded feminist ideologies presently emerging.

As mainstream feminism is historically informed and subsequently developed in reflection of gendered notions of Western culture, intrinsic incompatibilities with Aboriginal communities' understanding of functional gender prevent Indigenous women from involvement and application of the ideology. Bronwyn Fredicks identifies an acculturation within notions of gender roles, that are "imported from non-Indigenous societies and applied over and over to Aboriginal women"²⁰. However, this notion is relatively alien to the general public, illustrated in figure 3, as 31.4% of participants expressed a limited amount of knowledge regarding this issue²¹. Interviewee A identifies the significance of maintaining cultural gender roles, expressing that "some roles are specific to women"²⁶, in accordance with Indigenous communities' ideas of men's and women's business, that must remain gender exclusive to ensure sacrality. Thus, she elucidates that "in white society, it is that women have to be the same as men"²², contrasting aspirations of Indigenous Feminism. Aboriginal communities instead seek for both genders "to be able to equally flourish with the same opportunity"²³ in a continuation of traditionalist attitudes towards gendered expectations that empower community functioning and cultural maintenance. Further, Laura Hall reflects that following the popularisation of mainstream feminism within Australia, 'the culture had been, to a degree "feminised"²⁴, seeking female empowerment through reinvention of gendered expectations, hence fears of a similar outcome incite rejection to the imposition of Western feminism upon Indigenous communities. Hence, the presence of traditional gender roles within culture shape specific goals within feminism in opposition to Westernised ideals, due to culturally relativist interpretations of gender. This opposes established aspirations of mainstream feminist thought, as 88.3% of participants noted that dismantling gendered roles in regard to domesticity and work is vital to achieving feminist goals (dismantling to a moderate-strong extent), seen in figure 4²⁵. Therefore, Indigenous feminism exists in direct opposition to the mainstream branches that remain the most societally understood and supported.

To what extent does this quote reflect your understanding of Indigenous issues and cultures?
51 responses

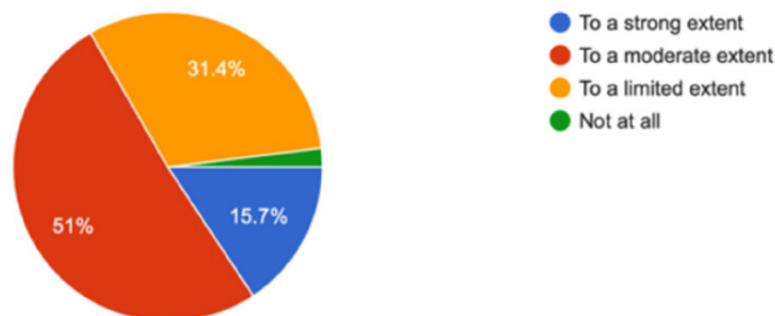


Figure 3

20 Fredericks, B. 'Reempowering Ourselves: Australian Aboriginal Women.' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 35, no. 3, Mar. 2010, pp. 546, <https://doi.org/10.1086/648511>. Accessed 13 March 2023
 21 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 2: Indigenous Feminism, 6/6/2023 ²⁶ Primary Research Method- Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 5
 22 Ibid
 23 Ibid
 24 Hall, L. 'Feminism in Flux: Indigenous Rights Activism and the Evolution of Feminism in New South Wales 1930-1960', *University of Sydney*, Sydney, 2006 p. 13 Accessed 7 July 2023
 25 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 2: Indigenous Feminism, 6/6/2023

To what extent do you believe gendered roles (in work, domestic roles etc.) must be dismantled to achieve feminist goals?

51 responses

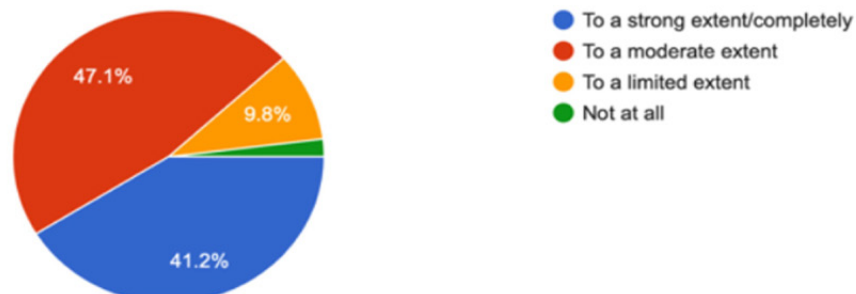


Figure 4

Aboriginal and mainstream Australian feminism observe discordant attitudes regarding the position of men within the ideological progression towards women's rights, acting as another structural element denying cultural nuance, elucidated through case study of the Northern Territory Intervention Act (2007). Global notions of feminism functions on preliminary understanding that "women have been a footnote in [a] male-defined system"²⁶, built upon male-established and perpetuated notions of patriarchy. Whilst this remains true of Aboriginal women existing within a contemporary Australian society, gendered politics within Indigenous communities evolve from a differing cultural context, as "traditional Aboriginal culture is actually matriarchal, and Aboriginal men understand this"³², functioning to re-establish traditional gendered structures alongside Indigenous women. Hence, rather than the mainstream's pursuit of gender equality, Indigenous feminists focus more on the achievement of gender harmony²⁷. However, contemporary attempts to Westernise Indigenous culture seek for a critique of Aboriginal men in reflection of models of mainstream Australian feminism, that is "not supposed to be palatable to men; it is supposed to be threatening"²⁸. This is apparent through case study of the growing prominence of domestic violence and child sexual abuse cases, as Aboriginal women are 45 times more likely to be a victim of domestic violence than their white equivalents²⁹. However, the general public reflects an element of limited understanding of the prevalence of domestic violence as 4 questionnaire respondents out of 33 identified the violence as a "prominent issues facing Indigenous women"³⁰. Hence, Darumbul woman and journalist Amy McQuire observes that general public awareness of this issue peaked around the release of child sexual abuse cases on the ABC Lateline Program by Nanette Rogers, the non-Indigenous Northern Territory Crown Prosecutor, despite continued advocacy by Indigenous men and women³¹. Hence, this elucidates the unique systems of kinship and community foundational to Indigenous society, ensure that "Aboriginal women are politically aligned with Aboriginal men"³². These systems of allyship are elucidated through understanding of the practical application of intersectional theory, as even within Australia's patriarchal society, Aboriginal men remain

26 Grey, S. 'Decolonising Feminism: Aboriginal Women and the Global 'Sisterhood''. Enweyin: The Way We Speak, vol. 3, 2004, works.bepress.com/samgrey/13/. P. 9 Accessed 19 April 2023

32 Primary Research Method - Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 5
 27 Grey, S. 'Decolonising Feminism: Aboriginal Women and the Global 'Sisterhood''. Enweyin: The Way We Speak, vol. 3, 2004, works.bepress.com/samgrey/13/. P. 13 Accessed 19 April 2023

28 Hu, Nian. 'Beware the Male Feminist' in The Harvard Crimson. March 23, 2017, accessed 28 June 2023 <https://www.thecrimson.com/column/femme-fatale/article/2017/3/23/hu-beware-male-feminist/>

29 Korff, J. 'Domestic and family violence', in Creative Spirits. 16 May 2022 Accessed 28 June 2023. <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/domestic-and-family-violence>

30 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 2: Indigenous Feminism, 6/6/2023

31 McQuire, A. 'All Feminists Are Created Equal, But Some Are More Equal Than Others' in *The New Matilda*. March 5, 2015. Accessed 17 April 2023. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/03/05/all-feminists-are-created-equal-some-are-more-equal-others/>

32 Behrendt, Dr L. 'Aboriginal Women and the White Lies of the Feminist Movement: Implications for Rights Discourse.' 27 *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, Vol. 1, August 1993. Accessed 17 April 2023

disempowered, hence “black women seek to raise the life chances of the whole group”³³. Perhaps, this is in acceptance of the need to dismantle racial inequalities, and the subsequent hierarchies within feminism that exclude Aboriginal women on the basis of their Indigeneity, prior to addressing issues of womanhood. Furthermore, Interviewee A cites a distinctive difference between Indigenous specific feminist spaces and the mainstream, which respectively focus on the “divisions between men and women”³⁴. This is hence evidenced through the NT Intervention, that effected 4x higher rates of self-harm and attempted suicide³⁵, as well as social repercussion as “Aboriginal men (were) demonised as paedophiles and abusers”⁴² as the “outcome of white feminists (and subsequent governments) ignoring the voices of Aboriginal women”³⁶. Thus, the Australian mainstream’s feminist attitudes act as a threat to the “strong cultural and political ties between Aboriginal people of both sexes”³⁷ through attempts to assimilate Indigenous women into pre-existing Westernised ideologies. Ultimately, differences within the execution and enforcement of mainstream and Indigenous feminism remain most prominent within diverging perceptions of the male role in within the movement.

Through the continued emphasis on the white middle-class experience, Indigenous feminist subjects enshrouded and engaged with traditional culture have been reactively established to further distance diverse feminists from irrelevancy within the mainstream movement. As an ideology of constant change, new feminism waves are emerging in revolutionary response to the perpetuation of White Feminism, justified by Karl Marx’s conflict theory³⁸. The resistance to change exhibited by the dominant power of White Feminism reflects the institutionally supported voice and resources granted to white women as the racial ‘ruling class’ that continues to “benefit economically from the dispossession of Aboriginal women”³⁹. Further, Max Weber’s tripart factors in stratification – wealth, power, and prestige – are hence enabled by Indigenous oppression, establishing an eternalised social hierarchy structural to Feminism. This is now threatened by the fight for recognition of Intersectionality, which would require “a platform and resources for Indigenous women”⁴⁰. Hence, the mainstream movement remains predominantly reflective of the issues prevalent to white women. Interviewee A thus identifies a degree of hesitancy in taking on the feminist label, stating “I really like to define myself as an Indigenous feminist”⁴⁸, thus illustrating a disconnect with mainstream feminism as it has “not been all encapsulating of cultural values”⁴¹. Thus, ongoing efforts by Indigenous feminists to establish a new, diversified equilibrium serves as a means of decolonising the feminist movement to address issues of racialized sexism more effectively, as “attempts to engage with feminism (results in) further oppression and marginalization of Aboriginal women”⁴². Prominent Indigenous feminist Paola Bella affirms that this stratification makes “being heard in white women’s spaces can be risky and problematic”⁴³. These emerging ontologies are increasing reflective of Australia’s hybrid society through self-realised social differentiation, exemplified in the distinctive “differen(ce) when you engage in an Indigenous space versus a white space” due to

33 Huggins, J. “Black Women and Women’s Liberation” in *Hecate* vol. 13, no. 1, 1987. Accessed 28 June 2023. p. 79

34 Primary Research Method- Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 6

35 McQuire, A. ‘All Feminists Are Created Equal, But Some Are More Equal Than Others’ in *The New Matilda*. March 5, 2015. Accessed 17 April 2023. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/03/05/all-feminists-are-created-equal-some-are-more-equal-others/> 42 Ibid.

36 Morton, R. “White feminists’ blame colonisation for indigenous domestic violence’ in *The Australian*. July 19, 2018. Accessed 26 June 2023. <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/white-feminists-blame-colonisation-for-indigenous-domestic-violence/newsstory/ad1d8f3c44b069b347f5e9ad054885d4>

37 Behrendt, Dr L. ‘Aboriginal Women and the White Lies of the Feminist Movement: Implications for Rights Discourse.’ *27 Australian Feminist Law Journal*, Vol. 1, August 1993. Accessed 17 April 2023

38 Hayes, A., ‘Conflict Theory Definition, Founder, Examples.’ Investopedia. June 22, 2022. Accessed 9 May 2023. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/conflict-theory.asp>

39 McQuire, A. ‘All Feminists Are Created Equal, But Some Are More Equal Than Others’ in *The New Matilda*. March 5, 2015. Accessed 17 April 2023. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/03/05/all-feminists-are-created-equal-some-are-more-equal-others/>

40 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 1: Diversity in Feminism, 29/4/2023 ⁴⁸ Primary Research Method- Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 1

41 Ibid.

42 Fredericks, B. ‘Reempowering Ourselves: Australian Aboriginal Women.’ *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 35, no. 3, Mar. 2010, pp. 547. Accessed 13 March 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1086/648511>.

43 Vrajlal, A. ‘Indigenous Females Talk ‘White Feminist Movement’ And If Women of Colour Have Been Excluded Throughout History’ in *Huffpost*. March 6, 2020. Accessed 9 January 2023. https://www.huffpost.com/archive/au/entry/blak-matriarchies-indigenous-internationalwomens-day_au_5e608b86c5b62d548c9d329c

the “cultural emphasis”⁴⁴. Thus, forums of Indigenous- specific feminism empower means through which recognition of opposed goals due to cultural differences is supported, as “a foundation of shared cultural knowledge increases confidence in our identities, especially working against the mainstream”⁵³. Therefore, the development of revolutionary change away from a dichotomic perspective of the gendered experience due to cultural shift is undergoing within Australian society, inciting further conflict with resistant traditional white supremacist feminist thought and related institutions. Hence, new wave feminists solidify their self-identification within emerging smaller cultural subjects in reaction to inherent conflict with mainstream feminism.

Fixation on the white upper-class experience within the feminist movement has incited responsive secondary subjects founded in cultural knowledge, that incites tensions between diverse feminists in the pursuit of social recognition against mainstream ignorance. As institutional advantages prioritise the white female experience, a competition for recognition amongst feminist cultural subjects emerges, evidenced by Interviewee A’s experiences within feminist spaces that “exclude a lot of Indigenous voices from feminism”⁵⁴ due to misunderstandings of the Indigenous identity; with her rejection specifically coming from other Women of Colour. Further, Interviewee A cites “a struggle to be heard over the social norm”⁵⁵, illuminating that the foundational focus on the White experience has caused internal “competition” within the movement as marginalised groups simultaneously attempt to overcome the mainstream invisibility of intersectional issues. Thus, existence within the broader feminist ideology in which “all women of colour seem to be grouped together”⁵⁶ forces these cultural sub-movements into a perceived hierarchy of oppression, as “Division is often coded to skin colour”⁵⁷. Hence, this explains Interviewee A’s experiences of “being denied her Indigeneity”⁵⁸ in online spaces, due to ignorance of cultural nuances. Her identity as a “light skinned”⁵⁹ Indigenous person incites questioning of her classification as a woman of colour by non-Indigenous and non-white individuals, as “the shade of your skin colour (is) an indicator of your “credibility” as an Aboriginal person”⁴⁵. She notes it is “disheartening to see on social media”⁴⁶, thus encouraging a disengagement with the movement, due to notions of exclusion. This can be attributed to the perception that “limited opportunities to get involved”⁴⁷ within feminism exist, hence inciting self-imposed differentiation to obtain these positions. Furthermore, Interviewee C perceives that public feminists are “speaking out as a non-white Australian first, feminist second”⁴⁸, illustrating that a forced focus on racial politics diminishes ethnic feminists from successfully advocating for gender equality. This notion is corroborated by prominent Indigenous feminist academic Paola Bella, who notes that her feminist identity “means being an Aboriginal woman first”⁴⁹, hence she is socially differentiated from other feminist voices in positions of discourse as “gender, then, is presumed to be of secondary significance”⁵⁰. Hence, Indigenous youth are socialised into complex relations of their racial and gendered identity, denied their Aboriginality through perceptions of being “not blak enough”⁵¹ whilst concurrently being solely recognised for the Indigeneity, inhibiting the “self-identification (needed) to be involved”⁵². This is corroborated by Indigenous activists, who maintain the difficulty in feeling “secure when you’re constantly being questioned about who you are “legitimacy” and “authenticity” as a First Nations person”⁵³. Ultimately, imposition of racial politics empowered by mainstream society’s

44 Primary Research Method- Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 5

45 Dodson, S. ‘Too white, too black, or not black enough? This is not a question for others to decide’ in Indigenous X, 13 Jun 2017. Accessed 18 May 2023. <https://indigenoux.com.au/shannan-dodson-too-white-too-black-or-not-black-enough-this-is-not-a-question-forothers-to-decide/>

46 Ibid.

47 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 8

48 Primary Research Method- Interviewee C, 6/5/2023, Question 7

49 Vrajlal, A. ‘Indigenous Females Talk ‘White Feminist Movement’ And If Women of Colour Have Been Excluded Throughout History’ in Huffpost. March 6, 2020. Accessed 9 January 2023. https://www.huffpost.com/archive/au/entry/blak-matriarchies-indigenous-internationalwomens-day_au_5e608b86c5b62d548c9d329c

50 Pettman J. ‘Gendered knowledges: Aboriginal women and the politics of feminism’ *Journal of Australian Studies*. 18 May 2009. Accessed 17 April 2023. P. 121 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443059209387122>

51 Primary Research Method- Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 9

52 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 3

53 Dodson, S. ‘Too white, too black, or not black enough? This is not a question for others to decide’ in Indigenous X, 13 Jun 2017. Accessed 18 May 2023. <https://indigenoux.com.au/shannan-dodson-too-white-too-black-or-not-black-enough-this-is-not-a-question-forothers-to-decide/>

perpetuated Anglicised norms and implicit limits on the vocality of Women of Colour disempowers Indigenous feminists through inciting conflict within the intersectional movement.

The two-fold perpetuation of white women as the ‘face’ of feminism and the inauthentic representations of Indigenous communities incites distance from the movement, enabled through media. As an institution of extreme influence and prominence within 21st century society, media acts as a medium for expression of culture and to alert the general public of significant issues. This is corroborated by questionnaire responses, as 60.8% and 19.6% of respondents affirmed that their ‘knowledge of socio-political issues of Aboriginal peoples (is) dependent on media’ to a moderate and strong extent respectively, illustrated in figure 5.⁵⁴ Hence, as “mainstream media is often understood as a reflection of national identity”⁵⁵, it serves a means to enable self-identification and socialisation into dominant narratives and views of a society. Thus, common questionnaire responses identified descriptors such as “white woman”, and “middle-upper class”⁵⁶ in defining the average feminist, thereby “send(ing) a message that First Nations people come second to the white majority”⁵⁷. Further, in the evolution of the emerging cultural subsects, a resistance to change within mainstream feminism is evidenced, empowered by representation, as Interviewee B expresses that “there hasn’t been any specific movement, where I can say this race of women has been specifically represented”⁵⁸. This is thus evidenced through content analysis of 50 articles by the ABC, all published within the last year; 28 wrote specifically on issues facing white women, issues in predominately Anglo-Saxon countries or white academics, 22 reflected issues of all non-Anglo-Saxon countries, non-white women, or academics⁵⁹. Of the 22 reflecting issues on non-white women, only 1 article explored issues facing Indigenous women⁶⁰. Hence, emerging, smaller cultural subsects are not amplified by women occupying privileged positions, a notion that disproportionately impacts Indigenous women. thus Australian feminism remains dominated by homogenous narratives. Furthermore, Interviewee B

To what extent is your knowledge of socio-political issues of Aboriginal peoples dependant on media?

51 responses

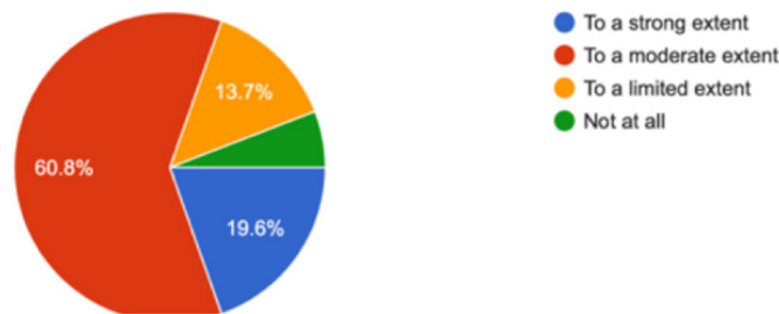


Figure 5

forothers-to-decide/

54 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 2: Indigenous Feminism, 6/6/2023

55 Kennedy, T. ‘Media inclusion of Indigenous peoples is increasing but there is still room for improvement’; in The Conversation, 6 December 2021, accessed 18 July 2023 <https://theconversation.com/media-inclusion-of-indigenous-peoples-is-increasing-but-there-is-stillroom-for-improvement-172130>

56 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 1: Diversity in Feminism, 29/4/2023

57 Kennedy, T. ‘Media inclusion of Indigenous peoples is increasing but there is still room for improvement’ in The Conversation, 6 December 2021, accessed 18 July 2023 <https://theconversation.com/media-inclusion-of-indigenous-peoples-is-increasing-but-there-is-stillroom-for-improvement-172130>

58 Primary Research Method- Interviewee B, 1/5/2023, Question 7

59 Primary Research Method- Content Analysis ‘Articles about feminism that reflect different racial groups’ 19/7/2023

60 Ibid

notes that “minorities are lost”⁶¹ in feminism’s broad approach to representation, continuing to adhere to the “blockade of what society accepts feminism to be”⁷⁷. Therefore, a questionnaire respondent described the typical Australian feminist as a figure “not limited as much by race but white feminists usually get more attention and a larger platform”⁶², recognising that despite the presence of Indigenous feminists, journalists, and academics, they are not offered the same social support and amplification by prominent media outlets, and subsequently are not as accurately and broadly represented. This is evidenced through further content analysis, as from 50 articles published within the past year by prevalent news outlet specifically regarding the issues of Indigenous women, *the ABC*, 35 were written by non-Aboriginal journalists, 3 had no identifiable author, and 12 has a minimum of 1 Aboriginal author⁶³. Hence, Interviewee D reflects that “Aboriginal women do participate in social movements”⁶⁴, emphasising the “degree (to which) their Aboriginality is recognised”⁶⁵ as a cause for reduced presence and authority within the ideology, subsequently resulting in a “lack of desire to engage with the movement; some don’t even know (the Aboriginal feminist subject) is out there”⁶⁶. Ultimately, the prominence of media maintains its role as a dominant force in enabling identification within feminism, thus misrepresentation inhibits expression of the Indigenous voice, even in spaces where it does exist.

In supporting Indigenous representation, enacted change can only be achieved through Indigenous led education, and active work of non-Indigenous peoples to correct internal biases or misconceptions enforced by media. Research conducted through collaborative efforts between, University of Technology Sydney, Cultural and Indigenous Research Australia, Deakin University and All Together Now found that of 288 opinion pieces from mainstream news outlets and television networks regarding Aboriginal communities, 155 were deemed inclusive based on a criteria of linguistic defiance of racial stereotypes, condemnation of racism, and amplification of Indigenous voices.⁶⁷ Hence, a positive future direction is evidenced, as media representation is increasing. However, attempts to amplify minority voices through representation can result in a positive “absence of negative stereotypes, but exclu(sion of) Indigenous authors, perspectives, historical and cultural contexts, and voices”⁶⁸. Hence, if individuals of other cultural groups fail to ensure accurate communication, as Interviewee B questions “when a woman is not ready to speak because of a certain cultural block, we can actually speak for that woman?”⁸⁵. Thus, Interviewee C identifies that within social movements, it is “important for it to be more diverse in the people that are leading it”⁶⁹ to ensure authenticity in depiction of specific issues. Therefore, in enacting change within feminism to better support Indigenous voices, it is evident greater education and empowerment of Indigenous voices is required. Interviewee D thus emphasises the importance of empowering Indigenous voices to express the “black version NOT white”⁷⁰ through “self-determined, sovereign representation”⁷¹. Hence, Indigenous women require empowered access to the “tools, knowledge and ability to confidently represent themselves”⁷², rather than reliance upon non-Indigenous authors to

61 Primary Research Method- Interviewee B, 1/5/2023, Question 11 ⁷⁷ Ibid

62 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 1: Diversity in Feminism, 29/4/2023

63 Primary Research method – Quantitative Content Analysis 1: ‘Articles about Indigenous women written by Indigenous or Non-Indigenous journalists’, 6/7/23

64 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 6

65 Ibid

66 Ibid

67 Paradies, Y., Thomas, A. ‘Included, but still marginalised: Indigenous voices still missing in media stories on Indigenous affairs’ in *The Conversation*, 1 July 2021, accessed 14 May 2023 <https://theconversation.com/included-but-still-marginalised-indigenous-voices-stillmissing-in-media-stories-on-indigenous-affairs-163426>

68 Paradies, Y., Thomas, A. ‘Included, but still marginalised: Indigenous voices still missing in media stories on Indigenous affairs’ in *The Conversation*, 1 July 2021, accessed 14 May 2023 <https://theconversation.com/included-but-still-marginalised-indigenous-voices-stillmissing-in-media-stories-on-indigenous-affairs-163426> 85 Primary Research Method- Interviewee B, 1/5/2023, Question 9

69 Primary Research Method - Interviewee C, 6/5/2023, Question 6

70 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 8

71 Vrajlal, A. ‘Indigenous Females Talk ‘White Feminist Movement’ And If Women of Colour Have Been Excluded Throughout History’ in *Huffpost*. March 6, 2020. Accessed 9 January 2023. https://www.huffpost.com/archive/au/entry/blak-matriarchies-indigenous-internationalwomens-day_au_5e608b86c5b62d548c9d329c

72 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 2

present their lived experience truthfully, as “Aboriginal Studies courses are still largely ... taught by non-Aboriginal people.”⁷³ This remains true of my experiences, within courses of Aboriginal studies, as despite involvement of Indigenous peoples within the course, it was predominantly taught by a non-Indigenous person. Interviewee D affirms that “educating non-indigenous people on our history and current issues”⁷⁴ is vital to correcting media misrepresentation, however the onus then falls upon Indigenous women to clarify misconception of issues against dominant narratives perpetuated by the media, working against pre-conceived stereotypes. Aboriginal feminist critic Jackie Huggins identifies that Indigenous women are entered into positions in which they must “help non-indigenous women unlearn their racism”⁷⁵, a notion that is unappealing to some Indigenous women. Thus, it is important for non-Indigenous people to actively seek out Indigenous made and written educational resources and news outlets. However, only 22.2% of questionnaire respondents cited diversifying feminist representation as a key factor in ensuring internal equality within feminism, illustrated in figure 693, reflective of ongoing requirements for social change in public perception of Indigenous issues. Ultimately, whilst change is occurring within media representation, to ensure empowerment of Indigenous women and their issues, non-Indigenous Australians must work to correct misconceptions spread by ‘white-washed’ media and education.

Of the following issues, which do you believe are the most important in improving equality within the feminist movement? Select TWO.

45 responses

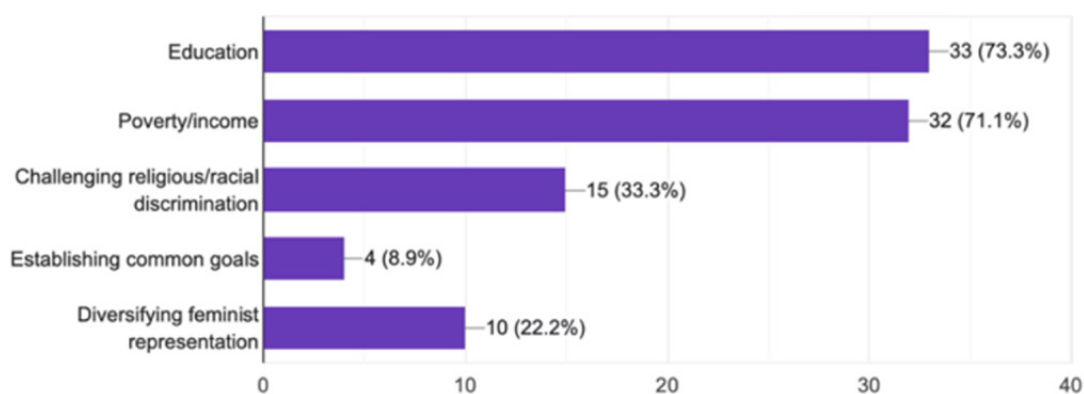


Figure 6

Despite existence within a racially diverse context, Australian feminism remains exclusionary of traditional Indigenous Australians and their lived experiences, hence inciting disconnect with Aboriginal youth. Thus, the institutional legitimisation of ethnic privilege within Australian feminist spaces⁷⁶ inhibits Aboriginal women from engagement with these spaces and identification with subsequent feminist labels. Resistance to change within the feminist movement from previous waves and the socially advantageous privilege of the White Female voice inhibits genuine representation, subsequently inciting disconnection with youth. Interviewee A reflects that she “doesn’t necessarily seek out feminist conversationalist spaces”⁹⁵, as “especially for young women, to be engaged in something you have to see yourself in it”⁹⁶. She notes that for her, the “most prominent voice for Indigenous people within the Feminism movement would be Stan grant, who is a male”⁹⁷.

73 Pettman J. ‘Gendered knowledges: Aboriginal women and the politics of feminism’ *Journal of Australian Studies*. 18 May 2009. Accessed 17 April 2023. P. 121 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443059209387122>

74 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 7

75 Huggins, J. “Black Women and Women’s Liberation” in *Hecate* vol. 13, no. 1, 1987. Accessed 28 June 2023. p. 79 ⁹³ Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 1: Diversity in Feminism, 29/4/2023

76 Wilson, T. J. “Feminism and Institutionalized Racism: Inclusion and Exclusion at an Australian Feminist Refuge.” *Feminist Review*, no. 52, 1996 Accessed 5 April 2023., pp. 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1395769>. ⁹⁵ Primary Research Method- Interviewee A, 3/5/2023, Question 4 ⁹⁶ Ibid. Question 7 ⁹⁷ Ibid.

Therefore, despite existence of a recognised Indigenous figure, Aboriginal women remain inhibited from a reclamation of their voice, an issue largely eradicated within other culturally derived feminist subsects. Hence, as female Muslim and African American feminist academics have become more prominent, such as Yasmin Abdel Magied and Audre Lorde, I have found that despite intensive study of the ideology and engagement with Indigenous issues, no promotionally equivalent figure of specific feminist vocality exists for Aboriginal women. This perspective is further supported by questionnaire results, as 59.3% of participants failed to identify any prominent Indigenous Feminist activists, illustrated in figure 7⁷⁷. Thus, Interviewee A’s observation that “there’s only one Indigenous woman in the senate for the Northern territory- that’s just poor representation”⁷⁸, elucidates the need for diversification within macro level institutions of government and media to encourage empowerment. Furthermore, inadequate societal representation incites alienation of young women of colour with the perspective of “why should (they) support something if (they) don’t see (themselves) in it?”⁷⁹ despite a developed recognition of the present issue of gender equality in their lives, due to the necessity of “a level of comfortableness in one’s own skin to be comfortable enough to be actively involved”⁸⁰. A perpetuated whitewashed image consequently ensures that “Aboriginal women have concluded that feminism is largely for and about white women”⁸¹, subsequently encouraging exclusion from the movement, preventing inter-racial feminist discussion as they are “not prepared to talk with their white ‘sisters’ about gender relations”¹⁰³. This is especially important within youth culture, as “Indigenous youth are our future; our route to change”⁸², thus continuity of the Aboriginal feminist movement requires greater amplification of Indigenous Australian feminist voices to empower youth identification. Likewise, this incites disconnect with non-Indigenous youth, including myself, who despite feminist interest and identity, are unable to assist in advocacy due to inaccessibility of the Indigenous perspective and subsequent unwilful ignorance. Ultimately, Aboriginal Feminism is impeded by a disengagement of young Indigenous women with the ideology incited by poor representation.

Can you identify any prominent Indigenous Feminist voices/activists?

51 responses

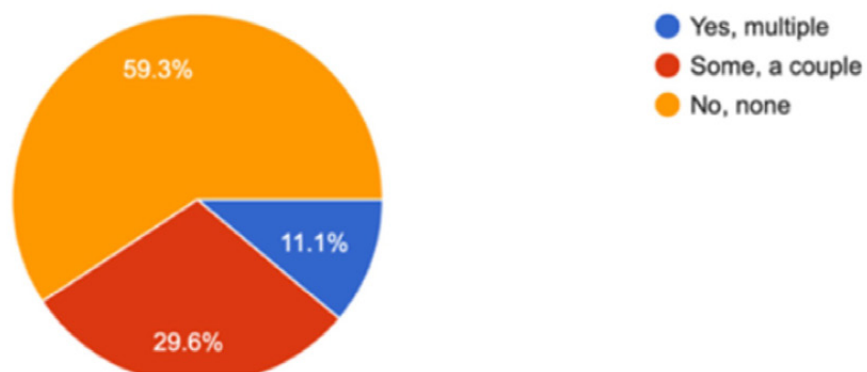


Figure 7

77 Primary Research Method – Questionnaire 2: Indigenous Feminism, 6/6/2023

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid, Question 8

80 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 3

81 Pettman J. 'Gendered knowledges: Aboriginal women and the politics of feminism' *Journal of Australian Studies*. 18 May 2009. Accessed 17 April 2023. P. 121 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443059209387122> 103 Loc. Cit.

82 Primary Research Method- Interviewee D, 13/6/2023, Question 9

Conclusion

Media and educational misrepresentation have cultivated widespread misconceptions of Indigenous women's issues, whilst limited opportunities for Aboriginal feminists voices to be empowered by mainstream feminism continues to foster inter-cultural disconnection and subsequent social exclusion. Hence, emerging cultural subsects remain relegated due to societal continuity of the established feminist mainstream, perpetuated through inherent racial structures and the presentation of white women as the 'face' and authorial figures of feminism. These barriers hence prevent Aboriginal women's desire to enter and access to the feminist domain.

In the process of completing this piece, I have found my preliminary understanding of the nature of both the Australian feminist movement and the lived experiences of Aboriginal women has been severely altered in insightful and valuable ways. Prior to undertaking this research, I found myself one of the masses who had not deeply considered the interplay of Aboriginality and the Feminist movement. As someone with a proud feminist and Australian identity, my experiences investigating the barriers to Aboriginal women's inclusion within mainstream feminism has highlighted the necessity of ideological, media and educational change, and how even my background of feminist engagement and completion of Indigenous education is not enough, challenging my misconception of Feminism having all the answers.

My PIP sought to investigate my hypothesis, *"Media representations and education isolate Aboriginal Women from mainstream feminism, supporting the pre-existing privileging of white women's voices"*. This was proven to a great extent throughout my research, due to the mainstream's ignorance of cultural constructions of gender. However, this thesis remains ignorant of future directions of change as the Aboriginal feminist subsect continues to emerge, and the growing presence of Indigenous journalism.

Various evidence was collected through qualitative and quantitative methods of research. An expansion of the sample size of my questionnaire to respondents from a greater diversity of political leanings, genders and locations around Australia would assist in addressing current bias within my questionnaires in regard to these areas, to better reflect broader Australian society rather than my meso-level environment. Additionally, engagement with a broader range of Indigenous interviewees would further reduce locational bias, as both my Aboriginal interviewees were from the same area within Sydney and thus may not be representative of the diversity of all Indigenous communities.

Having undertaken my P.I.P., my newly developed recognition of the inherent incompatibilities and nuances of Aboriginal feminism has assisted me in becoming better equipped to engage with inter-racial feminist discussion to create spaces for Indigenous feminist voices, whilst establishing a more critical lens in media discernment. I believe that my active assessment of the implicit discrimination inbuilt into the contemporary Australian Feminist movement and the lack of authentic media and educational diversity will lead me to use my natural privilege as a non-Indigenous woman to better advocate for Aboriginal feminist concerns through supporting their self-determination and cultural values. Furthermore, this piece has ultimately revealed my incomplete knowledge of Aboriginal concerns and does not reflect the full extent of Indigenous cultural nuances, inspiring me to continue to engage with Indigenous women's writings and perspectives to be a better feminist and ally to Australia's first people.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Interviewee A:

Interviewee A is a Gen Z Aboriginal woman who has lived in Sydney her entire life; she is a self-identified Indigenous feminist. Having previously discussed politicalised topics with her, I chose to interview her as I knew the significance of feminism in her identity as well as her deep connection to her Aboriginality. From my discussion with her, she revealed the developed and identification of women of colour within smaller cultural subsects, providing further areas of investigation and research questions for my PIP. Her experiences assisted in addressing continuity and change within the movement through her observations of emerging changes towards greater inclusivity. Further, her perspective on representation, especially as a young feminist, and her disengagement supported my hypothesis and assisted in the development of my argument. Specifically, she elucidated the human impact of limited representation on Indigenous youth, and inability to self-identify within the movement due to a lack of prominent feminist voices. Finally, her personal experiences of exclusion from feminism by other women of colour again provided a new research area for my PIP, encouraging an exploration of the ways in which a focus on the White woman's voice incites internal competition. Thus, this incited further investigation into the perpetuated structural racial hierarchy within the feminist movement due to the exclusivity of feminist opportunities for women of colour. Therefore, this interview was invaluable in the development of my PIP by providing a unique perspective and new avenues of research, further provoking my narrowing of my PIP topic to specifically focalise on Indigenous feminism by allowing me to engage with a cultural experience to which I was unknowingly ignorant.

Interview Conducted: 3rd May 2023

Interviewee B:

Interviewee B is a Pakistani-Australian immigrant from Generation X, who has lived in both countries for a significant portion of her life. Despite not being an Aboriginal woman, or engaging with Indigenous feminist spaces, her understanding on representation and position as a non-white and non-Indigenous figure provided a further nuanced perspective and assisted in better representing all facets of Australian society. Further, she was chosen to interview as an individual prominently involved in the mainstream feminist movement and some subsects. Whilst this interview was conducted prior to the limiting of my topic to specifically focus on Indigenous feminism, and hence some elements of this interview were not applicable to my adjusted question. However, I found that some observations remained relevant, as she assisted in identifying the function and development of cultural barriers, due to her feminist engagement. Hence, she revealed how Western feminism speaks for women of colour rather than amplifying their own voices, leading to inaccurate advocacy for these women's issues. Therefore, the insights from this interview were beneficial to my PIP, specifically identifying specific counter-cultural elements of the feminist movement.

Interview Conducted: 1st May 2023

Interviewee C:

Interviewee C is a first-generation Polish-Australian immigrant from Generation X, who has lived in Australia for most of her life. Unlike other interviewees, her identity as a moderate feminist and subsequently more removed perspective provided insight into more everyday experiences with the contemporary feminism movement. This interview hence allowed deeper investigation into the general public perception of Indigenous women and political issues, building upon notions explored within my Questionnaires. Specifically, her commentary that Indigenous feminists are often separated into their varied identities, being seen primarily by their race rather than their female identity, was a particularly valuable insight that I used to develop further research questions, and functioned in conjunction with responses from Interviewee A. From this interview, she revealed the segregation

of racial issues within the feminist movement, leading me to develop further research questions into what tensions and structures within the ideology, and socially through media, empower this.

Interview Conducted: 6th May 2023

Interviewee D:

Interviewee D is an Aboriginal woman from Generation X, who has lived in Sydney her whole life. Despite minimal engagement with Indigenous or Non-Indigenous feminist spaces, she was able to elucidate contemporary issues facing Indigenous women as well as commenting upon the importance of Indigenous voices in instigating social change. However, I chose to interview her as a figure of a different generation to that of my first Indigenous interviewee, hence she was able to further reflect upon the societal experiences of Aboriginal women. Further, she works in initiating community health and social justice programs within Sydney, and thus has an in depth understanding of community needs to instigate change within political areas, and the broader issues affecting Indigenous women. Further, she offered insight into the reality of life within Australian society as an Aboriginal woman, and the interrelationship of unique Indigenous culture with feminist beliefs. She revealed dominant views perpetuated within media that diminish Aboriginal voices, and consequences on her community. Ultimately, this interview assisted in the evolution of my PIP through enabling integration of Indigenous perspectives, specifically allowing reflection on the attitudes of mainstream Australian society that contribute to feelings of exclusion of Aboriginal women. Further, this interview assisted in developing cross cultural elements of my PIP, allowing integration of a different cultural outlook and knowledge, that of Indigenous women. However, this interview was conducted through email correspondence, therefore posing limitations to data as further information garnered from non-verbal cues were not accessible. Further, this may have impacted the detail of provided answers, as the interviewee could not easily ask for further clarification of questions or elaborate on given answers.

Interview Conducted: 13th June 2023

Questionnaire 1: Diversity in Feminism

My first questionnaire sought to analyse feelings of inclusion and acceptance within the contemporary feminist movement, and public appreciation of internalised prejudice within the ideology as well as identification with the feminist movement. I garnered responses from 51 respondents of varied ethnicities, predominately women from the 15-17 and 40-59 age brackets, introducing some age and strong gender bias. Results of this questionnaire challenged some of my pre-conceived notions of inclusivity within the feminism movement, as most respondents identified White Feminism's prominence and impact within Australia, which I was not expecting. Furthermore, this questionnaire assisted in establishing a general basis for my research with regards to unification and inclusion within the feminist movement from a non-Indigenous perspective. This questionnaire assisted in developing my PIP by revealing the 'White Middle-Class woman' as the image of a typical Australian feminist, leading me to question issues of representation and who acts as the 'face' of feminism to the general public. However, validity of the data may have been impacted by limited understanding of feminism, despite attempts to minimise miscommunication through contextualising concepts including white feminism and Indigenous feminism through academic quotes. Whilst this questionnaire's usefulness was limited by adjusting of my question to focus specifically on Indigenous feminism, many ideas and statistics remained relevant to my new question, albeit from a broader perspective.

Questionnaire Published: 29th April 2023

Questionnaire 2: Indigenous Feminism

My second questionnaire focused on issues of Indigenous feminism, specifically the general public's knowledge of Aboriginal feminist concerns, perception of an Indigenous feminist and the success of institutions of media and government in providing education to the general public. Hence through this questionnaire, I ultimately sought to discover if the inclusivity of feminism is limited by the lack of knowledge of Aboriginal culture and cultural roles of women. By utilising responses of this questionnaire

in comparison with issues identified in interviews with Indigenous women, I was successfully able to elucidate disconnect between general Australian society's knowledge and the Aboriginal reality. Further, this questionnaire assisted in the development of my PIP by highlighting disparity between mainstream and nonmainstream feminist values, supporting my research into pressures leading to the emergence of cultural subsects and the incompatibility of mainstream feminism with Aboriginal feminism due to specific spiritual and cultural nuances. Similarly to my first questionnaire, the 45 respondents of this questionnaire had an age bias for the 15-17 (73.7%) and 40-69 (12.1%) age brackets, however a greater representation of genders was observed, as 67.8% of respondents were female, 26.1% were male and 6.1% identified as 'other'. From this questionnaire, I concluded that broader Australian society remains dependent on media for information on Indigenous culture, as well as limited knowledge of Aboriginal issues and feminism by the general public.

Questionnaire Published: 6th June 2023

Both my questionnaires were approved by my teacher prior to publishing, and garnered anonymous responses via usage of social media.

Quantitative Content Analysis 1: 'Articles about Indigenous women written by Indigenous or Non-Indigenous journalists'

My content analysis was an assessment of the amount of articles depicting Indigenous women that were written by Aboriginal women, published within the past year by the prominent news outlet, ABC news. This news site was chosen as it is a highly accessible and reputable news source within Australia, that hence has significant influence upon social perceptions of these issues. From 50 articles published within the past year, 35 were written by non-Indigenous journalists, 3 had no identifiable author, and 12 had at least 1 Indigenous contributor. Whilst these findings do not necessarily prove that Indigenous issues are misrepresented within media, it does reflect that Aboriginal women have not yet been supported in reclaiming their voices by major media companies, as well as illustrating that Indigenous women's issues are predominately articulated and presented to the general public from a non-Aboriginal perspective. To complete this content analysis, I searched articles using the key words 'Indigenous women', then quantitatively assessed how many were written by an Indigenous journalist or non-Indigenous journalist through research into the author. There is a potential margin of error, as not all journalists had their racial background within their information about them, in which case I classified them under 'author not identified'. Therefore, this content analysis was useful in developing my argument illustrating the limited expression of the Indigenous voice and perspective perpetuated by privileging of the non-Indigenous experience and 'white-washed' politics. Thus, this content analysis assisted in my assessment of the portrayal of Indigeneity within the mainstream and limitations to Aboriginal women's expression of prominent community issues. Content analysis was used in conjunction with the findings of my interviewees to expose contemporary issues within media, representation, and vocalisation of the Indigenous worldview.

Content Analysis completed: 6th July 2023

Quantitative Content Analysis 2: 'Articles about feminism that reflect different racial groups'

My second content analysis was an investigation of the number of articles published by the prominent news agency ABC, that addressed different racial groups in journalism of feminist concerns. Of the 50 most recent articles published, 28 wrote on issues concerning white women, women within Anglo-Saxon countries or white academics, 21 wrote on issues concerning non-white women (either women of colour broadly, feminism broadly or a specific ethnicity). Of the 22 regarding non-white women, only 1 addressed Indigenous women. Furthermore, I narrowed my scope to the 50 most recent articles to garner the most recent data and reflection of the current state of media, with all 50 articles being published within the last year. Data of this content analysis was gathered by searching the key word "feminism", establishing my criteria (interview of an academic from a specific ethnic group, concerning an Anglo-Saxon country, or specifically concerning the history or achievements

of a specific woman, then researching that woman's ethnicity), then applying it to the 50 most recent articles. This content analysis assisted the development of my PIP by allowing me to understand the media's privileging of the white experience, and how even within the relegation of women of colour, Indigenous Australian women remain further unrepresented.

Content analysis completed: 19th July 2023

A limitation of my content analysis is that both only investigated one media outlet due to time constraints, and thus could be outliers, however I completed further secondary research on the statistics of the broad Australian media to try to eliminate this.

Secondary Sources

Academic Papers

Behrendt, Dr L. 'Aboriginal Women and the White Lies of the Feminist Movement: Implications for Rights Discourse'. 27 *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, Vol. 1, August 1993. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13200968.1993.11077108> Accessed 17 April 2023

Dr Behrendt is a prominent figure within the movement, who, whilst not receiving the same support and advocacy in the public mainstream as figures of equivalent status within other cultural subsects, influenced the notions explored by other Indigenous women and academics. Further, this contributed to the reliability of this source, as Behrendt is an authority within her respective subsect, and as an Indigenous academic, comments not only upon her experience, but "knowledge passed on to me from Aboriginal women and my people."¹ Thus, her writing explores the political alliance between Aboriginal women and men, assisting in the development of my PIP by leading me to explore how the nature of gender relations within Aboriginal communities manifests in political advocacy and protest. Further, I was inspired to compare this understanding to debate of men's place in feminism within the mainstream, concluding this existed as another cultural incompatibility and consequent misunderstanding between the two movements, as Behrendt's writing was supported by experiences of Interviewee A. This article further highlighted to me the inherent interconnectedness of racial and gendered issues for Aboriginal women. Whilst the relevance of this source could be impacted by its age, more modern sources, including Amy McQuire's piece for *The New Matilda*, highlight the continued presence of Behrendt's observations and concerns within the 21st century through exploration of the same themes and issues identified by Behrendt. Hence, this source was vital in understanding Aboriginal feminist academia, and the nuances of Indigenous subsects, whilst highlighting how Indigenous women's issues remain unaddressed across time through comparison to newer articles.

Christoffersen A., Emejulu, A. 'Diversity Within: The Problems with "Intersectional" White Feminism in Practice', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 29 December 2022; <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxac044> Accessed 19 April 2023

Christoffersen and Emejulu's article was highly useful in developing an understanding of the foundational context for Indigenous exclusion through investigation of how womanhood is defined within feminism. This source revealed that the idea of a 'woman' perpetuated by mainstream feminism is a cis-het, middle class white woman; affirmed by my questionnaire respondents. Hence, this source assisted in my PIP development by causing me to question the modes that perpetuate this image – specifically the role of the media. Validity of this source is confirmed as it has been published by a reputable publisher, the Oxford Academic. Furthermore, Christoffersen is a post-doctoral fellow affiliated with the University of

¹ Behrendt, Dr L. 'Aboriginal Women and the White Lies of the Feminist Movement: Implications for Rights Discourse'. 27 *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, Vol. 1, August 1993. Accessed 17 April 2023

Edinburgh specialised in Sociology, whilst Emejulu is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick, with a specific focus on inequalities facing Women of colour in western societies. Further, the relevancy of this source is supported due to recency of publishing in late 2022, hence concerns identified by the authors have a high degree of relevancy within current society. Whilst this source does not specifically investigate the experiences of Aboriginal women, rather looking at the broad conflict between mainstream 'white' feminism and women of colour, I found concepts explored remained relevant to my PIP, and were affirmed by primary research and other secondary sources.

Fredericks, B. 'Reempowering Ourselves: Australian Aboriginal Women.' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 35, no. 3, Mar. 2010, pp. 546–550, <https://doi.org/10.1086/648511>. Accessed 13 March 2023

Within this source, Fredricks evaluates the impact of colonisation upon contemporary views of Indigenous women, specifically identifying how this impacts the Australian feminist movement. Hence, she identifies required actions to combat this, including self-determination and Indigenous leadership, assisting in developing my PIP by allowing me to use these recommendations to see how they have not been achieved within media and the acceptance of Indigenous women in feminism. This piece further highlights the need for cultural subjects as the Indigenous women continue to be oppressed within mainstream feminist structures. Therefore, this piece allowed me to identify specific necessary changes within these structures in conjunction with primary research responses. Reliability of this source is ensured through Fredrick's position within the Indigenous Studies Research Network and academic role at the Queensland University of Technology, as well as publication of her writing within a reputable journal, The University of Chicago Press. The relevancy of this text may be impacted to a degree by age, as the piece was published in 2010.

Grey, S. 'Decolonising Feminism: Aboriginal Women and the Global 'Sisterhood'. *Enweyin: The Way We Speak*, vol. 3, 2004, P. 9 – 15 Accessed 19 April 2023

In this source, Grey assesses the presentation of feminism as a universal ideology that addresses concerns of all women, establishing an implicit criteria of womanhood that centralises around whiteness. Hence, in developing my PIP, this source was invaluable in introducing the concept of the feminist 'sisterhood'; the broad definition of womanhood by White Feminists that is ignorant of differing nuanced female experiences. This assisted in understanding social exclusion of Aboriginal women within the ideology through Grey's focus on "Disharmonies and Contradictions"² specific to Aboriginal women, incited by this sisterhood, as well as the reactive development of cultural subjects of feminism, that seek to remedy this notion through specific focus on the Indigenous experience. Hence, this source was highly influential in developing the argument carried throughout my PIP. Thus, knowledge of this concept and feminist academic theory further contributed to my understanding of the need for diverse representations of feminism, and the amplification of Indigenous feminist voices through media. This source is highly reliable as the author is a directorate specialised in political science and affiliated with the University of Victoria, and the piece is university published. Furthermore, the theory of sisterhood explored in Grey's piece has been validated through use in other feminist academic writings. However, this relevancy of this source is impacted by age, being written within a context where media and representation were emerging concepts less understood and recognised by the public as they are today.

2 Grey, S. 'Decolonising Feminism: Aboriginal Women and the Global 'Sisterhood'. *Enweyin: The Way We Speak*, vol. 3, 2004, works.bepress.com/samgrey/13/. P. 9 – 13 Accessed 19 April 2023

Hall, L. 'Feminism in Flux: Indigenous Rights Activism and the Evolution of Feminism in New South Wales 1930-1960', *University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006 p. 13* Accessed 7 July 2023

Hall's work provided further understanding of the historical evolution of feminism within Australia, exploring both the cultural impact of the mainstream and Aboriginal specific movements. Her specific observation of cultural change following the emergence of mainstream feminism, noting societal change in gender expectations and roles, led me to question how this has, or could, impact Indigenous communities, within which gender roles exist not as oppressive structures, but mechanisms for cultural connection and community functioning. As a primarily historical piece, relevancy was not impacted by the piece's age, however usefulness was impacted as it did not cover changes to feminism and evolution of Indigenous subjects within the past two decades. Furthermore, reliability is assured as Hall's piece was University published and peer reviewed.

Hamad, R. *White Tears/Brown Scars : How White Feminism Betrays Women of Color*. 2019. Catapult, 2019. P. 96-160 Accessed 17 December 2022

Hamad's piece is a cultural and historical critique of the enforcement of white feminism, assisting in my understanding the practical application and consequences of enforcing the feminist sisterhood established by others' sources. Furthermore, Hamad expands upon the white-washed image of feminism, that contributes to woman of colour, and Indigenous women's, distance from and avoidance of the feminist ideology. Hamad is a Lebanese Syrian woman, and thus cannot reflect the Indigenous experience from first-hand knowledge, thus reducing reliability. Despite her book seeking to explore the oppressive nature of white feminism across various countries, a focus on Western, and specific reference to Australian, contexts provided useful perspectives on the social impact of an Anglicised feminist ideology. Further, her writing is highly relevant due to recency, despite a broad focus on various nonwhite cultures and countries that limits usefulness to my specific exploration of Australian Aboriginal women.

Hooks, B. 'Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women.' *Feminist Review*, no. 23, 1986, pp. 125–38. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1394725> Accessed 19 April 2023.

Bell Hooks' piece dismantles the white-feminist logic that is used to justify the perpetuated feminist sisterhood, offering insight to the racial tensions inherent to this structure, and persistently disadvantage women of colour. The usefulness of this source is limited by a broad focus on general experiences of women of colour within the feminist movement, rather than the specificities of Aboriginal experience. However, this source assisted in expanding and developing my analysis of the feminist sisterhood, enabling understanding of its construction and inherent opposition to progression of intersectionality. Hook's piece is further limited in terms of relevancy, as it was written in 1986, and does not focus on the specific concerns of my focus question. However, it is a reliable source, as it is published in the *Feminist Review*, and the author was a Distinguished Professor in Residence at Berea College and prominent black American academic and figure, specialised in analysis and writings about race, feminism, and class issues.

Huggins, J. "Black Women and Women's Liberation" in *Hecate* vol. 13, no. 1, 1987. Accessed 28 June 2023. p. 79

Huggins' article assists in proving mainstream feminism's inconsideration and, in some cases, opposition to the empowerment of Aboriginal women, through analysis of how feminism primarily seeks for advancement for white women rather than women generally. This article further proved how Aboriginal men support the achievement of Aboriginal women's rights and vice versa due to alliance in racial issues, in contrast to mainstream notions of feminism independent of male involvement. Hence, despite impacted relevancy due to publication in 1987, this piece provides a historical basis to understanding of Indigenous men's significance in the liberation of Aboriginal women. Furthermore, the reliability of Huggins' writing is affirmed in publication within *Hecate*, a reputable journal focused on women's liberation. Huggins is further an authority on this subject as a prominent Indigenous Australian historian and academic.

Moreton-Robinson A., *Talkin' Up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism*, University of Queensland Press, 2002, p. 475 Accessed 19 March 2023

Within her book, Moreton-Robinson investigates the historical prevalence of whiteness within Australian feminism and the interrelationship of colonial ideology within the movement, suggesting that Australian feminism's approach to patriarchy is rooted in the white Australian experience. Thus, she elucidates how Indigenous engagement with the movement subjects them to further discrimination, a notion useful to my PIP in identifying barriers to Indigenous involvement and notions of cultural disconnect regarding perspectives on gender equality. Ultimately, Moreton-Robinson's contrasting of how Indigenous women are represented by mainstream feminism with the manner in which they self-represent further seeks to emphasise the discourse between public perceptions of Aboriginal women's issues and the lived reality. This source is highly reliable as Moreton-Robinson is an Indigenous woman, academic and activist, as well as being a Professor of Indigenous Studies with Queensland University of Technology and the Director of the National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network.

Pettman J. 'Gendered knowledges: Aboriginal women and the politics of feminism' *Journal of Australian Studies*. 18 May 2009. P. 121 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443059209387122> Accessed 17 April 2023.

Pettman's academic article investigates intersections and practical relationships between gender and race in relation to Indigenous women's involvement in feminism. Her analysis concludes that Indigenous feminists' racial identity is emphasised more than their identity as women, corroborating and explaining observations made by my interviewees with regards to Aboriginal women in media and their presentation to the general public. This hence incited further investigation into this media phenomena, and media perception of Indigenous women and their issues. This source is highly reliable as it has been published in the *Journal of Australian Studies*, and Pettman is a lecturer in feminism and International relations within the Australian National University in the Department of Political Science.

Wilson, T. J. "Feminism and Institutionalized Racism: Inclusion and Exclusion at an Australian Feminist Refuge." *Feminist Review*, no. 52, 1996, pp. 1–26. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1395769>. Accessed 5 April 2023.

In this source, Wilson explores interrelationships of women of colour and white women within the feminist movement, specifically investigating colonialism's prevalence and exclusion of Indigenous voices. This source is highly reliable as it was published in an Academic journal by an academic and professional publication company. Further, whilst relevancy was slightly limited as it was from 1996, the paper still supports my hypothesis and contains relevant information. Whilst this article was not written by an Indigenous Australian woman, the author is a Black Australian woman, whose perspective enabled comparison between the experiences of Aboriginal women and other women of colour at the micro level within feminist spaces. Furthermore, her engagement with community consultation and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives through direct quotation helps to increase validity, however, it does not achieve the same degree of authenticity as a piece written by an Aboriginal author.

Zavella, P. "Women of Color." *Feminist Anthropology*, Oct. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1002/fea2.12103> Accessed 17 December 2022

This source investigates the identity and classification of women of colour, and the function and application of the term within social activism. This article assisted in my understanding of the broad classification of non-white women together within feminism, prompting connection of this notion to the establishment of the feminist sisterhood. However, usefulness of Zavella's piece to my investigation is limited by a broad focus that does not directly and explicitly link back to Indigenous Australian women. The relevancy of this source is increased by recency, published in 2022, and is hence highly reflective of the contemporary social state. Furthermore, this source's reliability is affirmed by Zavella's position as a professor at the University of California, and work as an anthropologist.

Non-Academic Papers

Beck, K. “Koa Beck on Dismantling the Persistence of White Feminism.” *NBC News*, interview by M. Solis, 9 Jan. 2021, Accessed 17 December 2022, www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/koa-beck-dismantling-persistence-white-feminismn1253555.

This journal article and related interview assisted greatly in the development of my PIP, offering preliminary understanding of the presence of white feminism. This interview and journal piece developed my PIP by offering a foundational definition of White feminism as well as modern characteristics of the movement. Specifically, I found the ideology’s central notion of succeeding within oppressive institutions rather than dismantling them to be significant in understanding the detriment of white feminism to address of social issues affecting women of colour, and an example of resistance to the change posed by intersectionality. This source is highly reliable as a direct interview transcript, and the speaker, Koa Beck is a feminist academic expert. However, the piece focuses on white feminism in broad Western society and impact on all women of colour, rather than just Indigenous Australian women. Furthermore, reliability and relevancy is increased by the article’s recency, published in 2021, hence it is an accurate reflection of contemporary social concerns.

Clarke, A. ‘Covering black deaths in Australia led me to a breakdown, but that’s the position this country puts Aboriginal journalists in’ in *ABC News*, 1 July 2020, accessed 18 July 2023 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-28/covering-black-deaths-in-australialed-me-to-a-breakdown/12390416>

This source was highly useful in the development of my PIP, specifically my investigation of the position of Indigenous journalists within mainstream media. Clarke’s writing assisted in my analysis of how even when Aboriginal people do exist within media outlets and journalist and advocacy positions, they are limited by social ignorance and disregard of Indigenous voices, encouraging journalists to step away from involvement within media. Whilst this piece is limited as it is from the perspective of a male journalist, and does not specifically address feminism and feminist advocacy, its focus on the struggles of Indigenous peoples in expressing Indigenous culture and Aboriginal social issues within mainstream media broadly, remains useful in understanding barriers faced by Aboriginal journalists. The author of this source is highly reliable as an Indigenous journalist working within various Australian news outlets. Further, this source is recent, being published in 2020, and within a reputable and prominent media outlet, *ABC News*.

Coleman C. “Not quite Blak enough: “The people who think I am too white to be Aboriginal are all white” in *The Guardian*, 8 November 2021. Accessed 18 May 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/nov/08/not-quite-blak-enough-thepeople-who-think-i-am-too-white-to-be-aboriginal-are-all-white-claire-g-coleman-liesdamned-lies>

Coleman’s article assesses the impact of exclusion of ‘mixed race’ or ‘white passing’ Indigenous women upon personal identity. Hence, this article assisted in the development of my PIP by furthering notions explored by Interviewee A, highlighting exclusion of Indigenous women based on not being perceived as “blak” enough. Coleman expands upon these ideas, explaining how this incites feelings of exclusion and loss of identity, being disregarded from both non-Indigenous and Indigenous groups. Hence, her assessment of the impact of these experiences upon self-identification with her indigeneity and subsequent self-involvement within Indigenous activity and activism. The relevancy of this source is affirmed by recency by being published in 2021, whilst Coleman’s position as an esteemed author and Indigenous woman, specialised in the disparities between non-Indigenous and Indigenous societies increases reliability. Reliability is further supported by publication in a prominent news outlet, *The Guardian*.

Conger, C. “Why Feminists Are Still Debating Race.” *www.refinery29.com*, 6 Sept. 2015, Accessed 9 January 2023. www.refinery29.com/en-us/2015/09/93557/erica-jong-roxanegay-white-feminism

This article illustrates conflict, as an example of disconnect between and false perceptions held by some feminists regarding the inclusion of women of colour into mainstream feminism, through assessing debate between third-wave intersectional feminist Roxanne Gay and second wave feminist Erica Jong, who is a white woman. Jong’s statements reflect how white women often speak for women of colour, inviting miscommunication of their issues and taking opportunities for vocalisation away from women of colour. Further, they reveal how mainstream feminism has a warped perception of acceptance of intersectionality and the extent of issues faced by women of colour. Whilst I ultimately discarded this case study for an analysis of an issue more closely related to Indigenous women’s experiences, this article nonetheless assisted in understanding prominent conflicts between Indigenous and mainstream feminist movements. However, this source ultimately still contributed to my PIP, assisting in highlighting the perspective of women of colour that racism is not something they must fix, but that white allies and feminists must, a notion explored in statements from my interviewees and other articles written by Indigenous women. As a relatively recent article, this source maintains a high degree of relevancy, whilst interspersed statements by Jong and Gay substantiate claims made within the article to avoid assumptions. Further, as a news article there is potential that this conflict and debate between the two feminists may have been dramatized or be biased towards one side.

Dodson, S. ‘Too white, too black, or not black enough? This is not a question for others to decide’ in *Indigenous X*, 13 Jun 2017. Accessed 18 May 2023. <https://indigenoux.com.au/shannan-dodson-too-white-too-black-or-not-black-enoughthis-is-not-a-question-for-others-to-decide/>

This source was greatly influential in the development of my PIP, as Dodson’s assessment of personal identity as a mixed Indigenous woman explored internal tensions within feminism. Within Dodson’s experiences, she maintains exclusion from spaces for women of colour and movements for Aboriginal liberation due to perception as not being ‘Indigenous’ enough. Hence, this source assisted in my analysis of the fragmentation within feminism, that serves as a barrier to Indigenous involvement. Further, Dodson deeply assesses the impact of this upon her cultural identification and confidence within her Indigenous identity, which I utilised to explain ideas presented by my Indigenous interviewees. Furthermore, this source is highly reliable as Dodson is an esteemed Indigenous activist, whilst the piece’s publication within a prominent Indigenous outlet, *Indigenous X*, further increases reliability and validity.

Dzah, M., and L. Cavendish. “Crossroads and Burning Houses – Why Feminism Cannot Be Colour-Blind.” *www.sociology.cam.ac.uk*, University of Cambridge, 9 Oct. 2020, Accessed 23 February 2023 www.sociology.cam.ac.uk/blog/colour-blind-feminism.

This article investigates the notion of ‘colour blind feminism’ as a barrier to true intersectionality through disregard of specific cultural issues. By relating these observations with the notion of the feminist sisterhood, I was able to understand the limitations of an ideology based around this model, and the importance of recognising cultural nuances to encourage true inclusion and empowerment of Indigenous women. This article is further highly reliable, published by the University of Cambridge blog and validated through peer review. Furthermore, this article is highly relevant due to recency, being published in 2020, however relevancy is impacted by a focus on the experiences of black women, not Indigenous Australian women specifically. Hence, claims of this article required verification by writings of Aboriginal women on this topic prior to inclusion within my PIP.

Gearon, J. “Indigenous Feminism Is Our Culture” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review* , 11 February 2021, Accessed 19 December 2022 https://ssir.org/articles/entry/indigenous_feminism_is_our_culture

This article explores the functioning and understanding of feminism within Indigenous communities, the difficulties in presenting feminism to Indigenous women to encourage engagement. Furthermore, this piece highlighted the extent to which Indigenous women reject mainstream feminism, and associate ‘feminism’ with the societally perpetuated Anglicised feminism. This source further explained the role of colonisation within the oppression and Indigenous women, both historically and contemporarily. Gearon is an American Indigenous woman, writer and activist, specialised in Indigenous feminism and the rights of Indigenous peoples, and hence is a reliable source, but limited as she cannot authentically speak on the specific experiences of Aboriginal Australian women. This piece was published in 2021, and is hence relevant due to recency, however, refers to Indigenous women generally, rather than being specific to Indigenous Australian women, and thus in using this source, I ensured ideas brought up were supported by writings of Aboriginal Australian women prior to inclusion within my PIP.

Hayes, A., ‘Conflict Theory Definition, Founder, Examples’ *Investopedia*. June 22, 2022. Accessed 9 May 2023. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/conflict-theory.asp>

This source assisted in developing and finalising my understanding of conflict theory for application within my PIP. I applied conflict theory in understanding the implicit racial hierarchy within feminism that inhibits Indigenous women from accessing the same opportunities as non-Indigenous counterparts. Furthermore, the theory was used to explain the ongoing oppression of Indigenous women within the movement due to white women’s ongoing economic benefits from their disempowerment. Thus, Aboriginal women have reactively developed cultural subsects to challenge the existing movement and allow expression of the cultural self, as these movements are intrinsically connected to and reflective of unique Indigenous understanding and issues.

Kennedy, T. ‘Media inclusion of Indigenous peoples is increasing but there is still room for improvement’; in *The Conversation*, 6 December 2021, accessed 18 July 2023 <https://theconversation.com/media-inclusion-of-indigenous-peoples-is-increasing-but-thereis-still-room-for-improvement-172130>

This source contributed greatly to my understanding of the media as a socialising factor and information source, specifically within the context of presenting Indigeneity both the broad Australian public and to other Aboriginal people. Kennedy elucidates how accurate media portrayals encourages connection to culture for the Aboriginal people who engage with it, and the perceptions of Indigeneity generated with non-Indigenous society, and the social impacts of both of these occurrences. Thus, Kennedy’s writing influenced my piece, by inciting the importance of the media within contemporary Australian society, and the impact of misrepresentation within Australian society. Further, this piece explores both undergoing changes and necessary future changes, assisting in providing a balanced view of past, present, and future changes within media. Further, the author of this piece is an Aboriginal man and, in December 2022, was commenced as Pro-Vice Chancellor (Indigenous) at Monash University, hence his perspective is highly reliable. This source was also published in 2021, and by the reputable media outlet *The Conversation*, and is thus highly reliable and relevant.

McQuire, A. ‘All Feminists Are Created Equal, But Some Are More Equal Than Others’ in *The New Matilda*. March 5, 2015. Accessed 17 April 2023. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/03/05/all-feminists-are-created-equal-some-are-moreequal-others/>

This piece substantiated Interviewee A’s perspective regarding the disparity within mainstream and Indigenous feminist subjects regarding the role of men within the movement. McQuire suggests that the mainstream Australian movement seeks to remove men, a notion ultimately incompatible with Indigenous understanding of gender, thus assisting the development of my PIP by explaining some of the specific cultural barriers that prevent Indigenous women from engaging with feminism. Furthermore, this led me to explore how these barriers incite development of cultural subjects, within which these nuances can be fully realised. Furthermore, this source was highly beneficial by offering specific examples of the Northern Territory Act (2009) to illustrate the detriment of an ideology functioning off of this model. Hence, this inspired investigation of this event and impacts of non-Indigenous feminists denying Aboriginal men voice in the issues impacting Indigenous women based on non-Indigenous understanding of gender within feminism. Further, this source is relatively recent ensuring relevancy, McQuire writes from her experiences as an Aboriginal woman who has engaged with feminism, hence increasing reliability, despite *The New Matilda*’s lack of prominence as a relatively minor news outlet.

Morton, R. “White feminists’ blame colonisation for indigenous domestic violence’ in *The Australian*. July 19, 2018. Accessed 26 June 2023. <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/white-feminists-blame-colonisation-forindigenous-domestic-violence/news-story/ad1d8f3c44b069b347f5e9ad054885d4>

Similarly to McQuire’s article, this source contributed to my case study of misrepresentation of Indigenous women’s issues regarding domestic violence. This source is highly relevant due to recency being published within the past 5 years (2018), and thus ensures accuracy and modern relevance in my case study. Furthermore, Morton’s piece assisted in my analysis of the detriment of white women speaking on the behalf of Indigenous women, resulting in miscommunication of Aboriginal issues to the general public. Within this piece, Morton expresses frustration in White feminists’ presentation of high domestic violence rates within Indigenous communities, resulting in Indigenous voices being diminished due to public support and greater acceptance of the perspectives of white women. Further, the piece is written by prominent feminist academic, hence increasing reliability, and is published in a prominent and reputable Australian newspaper.

Nand, A. “Why Feminism in Australia Continues to Fail Women of Colour.” *POPSUGAR Australia*, 2 Dec. 2021, Accessed 9 January 2023. www.popsugar.com.au/living/feminismaustralia

This source contributed minimally to my PIP, as *POPSUGAR* is not a highly reputable news outlet, hence reducing reliability, whilst the author is not a journalist nor feminist academic but is a social activist through social media. Thus I utilised this source primarily to gain understanding of the human impact of feminism that excludes women of colour and the lack of support from white woman in her social media activism. From this source, I further sought to investigate if some of Nand’s experiences were corroborated by my interviewees, which they were, hence improving validity. Furthermore, reference to Rudy Hamad’s White Tears/Brown Scars incited further investigation of the resource, which subsequently offered new avenues for investigation within my PIP. Further, this source investigated broad barriers to Women of Colour within Australian society and was hence not focused on the incompatibilities of the movement with Indigenous women’s experiences and needs, reducing relevancy, despite recency, being published in late 2021.

Paradies, Y., Thomas, A. 'Included, but still marginalised: Indigenous voices still missing in media stories on Indigenous affairs' in *The Conversation*, 1 July 2021, accessed 14 May 2023 <https://theconversation.com/included-but-still-marginalised-indigenous-voices-still-missing-in-media-stories-on-indigenous-affairs-163426>

Paradies and Thomas' piece assisted greatly in the development of my PIP, specifically my investigation of the role of media within journalism of Indigenous issues. This piece explored the percentages of pieces written by Aboriginal journalists, as well as the notion of 'surface level inclusion'; the idea that news outlets no longer perpetuate negative stereotypes, yet do not empower Indigenous voices, culture, history and perspectives. Hence, it informed my understanding of future changes within Indigenous media representation, and what authentic, accurate representation looks like. Relevancy and reliability of this source was affirmed by its recency, being published in 2021, as well as being published in a reputable website and news outlet, *The Conversation*. Further, the authors of this piece are reliable sources, as Paradies is an Indigenous man, and hence can authentically reflect upon the influence of media misrepresentation upon Indigenous peoples and communities, as well as ascertaining what an accurate representation of Aboriginal affairs is. Both authors are credible academics, as Paradies is a Professor of race relations at Deakin university and board member of All together Now, an anti-racism organisation, whilst Thomas is a research fellow at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Vrajlal, A. 'Indigenous Females Talk 'White Feminist Movement' And If Women of Colour Have Been Excluded Throughout History' in *Huffpost*. March 6, 2020. Accessed 9 January 2023. https://www.huffpost.com/archive/au/entry/blak-matriarchiesindigenous-international-womens-day_au_5e608b86c5b62d548c9d329c

This journal article and interview assisted in developing understanding of the specific issues faced by Indigenous women, including domestic violence, and the notion of matriarchy within Aboriginal communities that hence impacts the functioning of feminism. The preliminary article explores the exclusion of Indigenous women's issues from mainstream discussion, however as the author is an entertainment journalist rather than a feminist academic, and is further a non-Aboriginal woman, it was of limited reliability and usefulness to my PIP. Hence, I found that interview attached to the article to be more valuable, as a directly quoted conversation between two prominent Indigenous feminists that was hence reliable. Their discussion detailed the meaning of feminism within an Indigenous context, and the interrelationship between their Indigenous and female identities. Furthermore, I found the exploration of Indigenous matriarchy and the general public's misconceptions of the role of gender within Aboriginal communities to be specifically interesting. Hence, this interview developed my understanding of gendered functions within Indigenous cultures as a further point of cultural disconnect between mainstream and Aboriginal feminism. The article and interview are highly relevant due to recency, and the interview is highly reliable and valid, corroborating perspectives revealed by my Indigenous interviewees.



'TIL DEBT DO US PART

An investigation into the socio-cultural construction of heterosexual marriage. To what extent has the commodification of marriage functioned as an expression of western consumerist values?

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ABSTRACT

This research project provides an investigation into the socio-cultural construction of heterosexual marriage by exploring the extent to which the commodification of marriage has functioned as an expression of western consumerist values. Tiana Martino raises questions regarding the changing construction of marriage being altered by commercial enterprises and a valuing of displays of wealth to elevate one's status and social prestige. Has the commodified amalgamation of performance and identity across the wedding occasion escalated over time from the 1980s to the 2020s? Focus groups allow insights into an intergenerational analysis to compare and contrast the nuptial practices of Generation X (1965–1980) and Generation Z (1997-2012). These insights are complimented by extensive secondary research and a questionnaire with a large sample size, expert interviews with academics and industry specialists which facilitated a synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data to provide meaningful insights into the psychological motives for consumer behaviours and changing function of weddings over time. Tiana engaged couples who envisioned “perfection can be bought” and saw evidence of the diminished religious sanctity of the marriage rite with heterosexual couples opting to throw engagement parties, bridal party dinners, hens and bucks celebrations which coincided with secularisation of weddings. These events ceased to function solely as cultural and religious rites and rather, assumed the role of social performances wherein couples enact their love through pre-wedding celebrations and wedding commodities such as expensive attire and adornments, elaborate videography and often multi day events with a focus on social media outcomes that mimicked celebrity culture.

Introduction

“Weddings have never been occasions for frugality, but never have they been so thoroughly mined for profit by commercial enterprises.”²

The following research paper explores the changing socio-cultural construction of heterosexual marriage in western society which has been altered by macro-level commercial enterprises that have undermined its traditional cultural value. It can be argued that within contemporary settings, meso-level wedding ceremonies performed in a church and ensuing



- 1 Jenkin, M. “How to cut the cost of your wedding” *The Guardian*, (2022) available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/apr/18/how-to-cut-the-cost-of-your-wedding-venue-flowers>
- 2 Mead, R. “Princess for a day” *The Guardian* (2010) available from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/aug/07/weddings-industry-commercial-giles-fraser>.

celebrations held in reception venues function as a display of wealth to elevate one's status and social prestige.³ On a micro-level, the excessive disbursement of contemporary couples for their nuptial celebrations "compromises the once unassailable status of marriage" as a religious rite and embed into the Christian tradition thus, reconstructing heterosexual weddings into a commodified spectacle detached from traditional social values.⁴ Thus, the research question is, *'To what extent has the commodification of marriage functioned as an expression of western consumerist values?'* It is hypothesised that societal expectation of showmanship and expenditure surrounding all quintessential wedding celebrations has escalated overtime from the 1980s until the 2020s. From the 2000s onwards, it is presumed that the traditional custom of matrimony has more conspicuously inflated into a "commodified amalgamation of performance and identity"⁵ due to the dominance of wedding imagery in the media. Ultimately the affair has become driven by forces of commerce, and long ceased to be controlled by "religious authorities, familial oversight, or genuine social tradition,"⁶ reflecting a change in the social values of an increasingly secular, western society.

Society is conceptually relevant as a culmination of networks and institutions have reconstructed weddings, from a momentous rite of passage, into merely a corporate revenue stream. Invariably recognised as the wedding industry, these corporations have augmented the process of commodification into all sections of society and endorse the "marketisation of the marriage experience."⁷ Additionally, technologies have certainly influenced public discourse surrounding wedding celebrations, disseminating the perception that they should be "consumed as spectacle apart from a marital context."⁸ The oversaturation of material goods in the marriage celebration is driven by macro and meso-level pressure to uphold unrealistic standards of luxury and indulgence circulated via communication technologies and social media platforms such as Instagram. Thereby, affianced couples of Generation Z are exposed to online forums of consumption and idealised wedding celebrations that alter micro perceptions of the values and practices which constitute the western wedding experience. Institutional power is epitomised by the profitable wedding industry which capitalises on this romanticised consumption and inherently controls, changes and maintains the socially acceptable execution of weddings.⁹ Furthermore, secularisation is pertinent to the reconstruction of weddings from a sacred tradition to the more contemporary exhibition of wealth and status to achieve social inclusion.

A cross-cultural, intergenerational analysis was conducted during the investigation to compare and contrast the nuptial practices of Generation X (1965 – 1980) and Generation Z (1997 - 2012) as well broader acceptance and rejection of these practices. Time is pivotal in examining societal change, most discernibly "the use of a wedding day as a vehicle for self-expression"¹⁰ a distinctively modern tendency. A plausible change is the power of social media platforms emerging in the mid 2000s, abound with content of lavish celebrations that promulgate the construction of weddings as a "spectacular, within-reach consumer fantasy."¹¹ As such, Generation Z are pressured to partake in the commodities that necessitate a 'perfect' wedding and as such, concentrate greater monetary value to their celebration. Nonetheless, a perceptible continuity from the 1980s to 2020s is that arising

3 Boden, S. (2003). *Consumerism, Romance and the Wedding Experience* (first ed.). Palgrave Macmillan p:19-54

4 Knowledge at Wharton, "To Love, Honor, Cherish and Consume: The Selling of the American Wedding" (2008) available from: <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/to-love-honor-cherish-and-consume-the-selling-of-the-american-wedding/>

5 Hanslip, L. M. "The Ideologies of 'I Do': Commodification, Consumption, and Identity in the Wedding Industry" (Doctoral Thesis: University of Calgary's, 2020) p. 3

6 Mead, R. "Princess for a day" *The Guardian* (2010)

7 Bowcott, O. "Rowan Williams: commercialisation of weddings is threat to marriage" *The Guardian* (2014) available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/jan/10/rowan-williams-commercialisation-weddings-threat-marriage>.

8 Harzewski, S. "Consuming Heteroscripts: The Modern Wedding in the American Imaginary" *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4 (2004) p.86

9 Carter, J., Duncan, S., "Wedding paradoxes: individualized conformity and the 'perfect day'" *The Sociological Review*, 65 (2016) p. 3

10 Mead, R. "The white lie" *The Guardian* (2007) available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2007/jun/09/fashion.familyandrelationships>

11 Boden, S. (2003). *Consumerism, Romance and the Wedding Experience* (first ed.). Palgrave Macmillan p:21

out of wedding customs, families project an image of respectability, material success, and domestic gratification to meso-society through showcasing the blissful unification of two people. Secondary academic research has been crucial to access public knowledge on changes to the social institution of marriage resulting from commodification and how this is reflective of its social and cultural context. The large sample size and synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data that can be gained from a questionnaire was fundamental to the research process as examining responses spanning from Generation X and Generation Z on their micro perception of wedding expenditure will assist with the cross cultural component. Additionally, conducting a focus group was essential to gauge personal, subjective experiences and micro-level insight into the commodification of weddings overtime as the array of perspectives and open ended questions provided extensive qualitative data that was triangulated with secondary findings. Finally, an interview was conducted with Sociology Professor Jia Guo from the University of Sydney, as well as Stephani Harwezki and Mel Buttigieg, professionals in the wedding industry who provided credible judgement on the topic. This has provided invaluable insights into the psychological motives for consumer behaviours and dynamic function of weddings overtime.

Log

My initial interest in the commodification of weddings stemmed from my personal experience as a bridesmaid which allowed me to witness firsthand the extensive preparations and finances devoted to these celebrations in addition to the pivotal function of social media as a source of inspiration and comparison. This stimulated the direction of my research process as I was prompted to question the underlying motivations behind such elaborate wedding displays and how the introduction of modern communication technologies has altered the enactment of weddings within contemporary western society. As such, an overarching question was formed and resulting from initial secondary research, I hypothesised that the commodification of marriage can be used as a lens to discern the expression of consumerist values in contemporary western societies. Within the framework of both my focus question and hypothesis, I developed mini sub-questions that aided my chronological analysis of the generational cross-cultural component and allowed for the investigation of continuities and changes across Generation X and Generation Z. Chapter One was constructed to explore the socio-cultural construction of heterosexual weddings at the micro, meso and macro levels of society. Chapter Two addressed the prevailing social and cultural norms and values within the context of the 1980's and 1990's that dictated the production of weddings amongst Generation X, whilst Chapter Three replicated this structure delving into communication technologies and status consumption of Generation Z.

Once I commenced research on the interplay of identity, commodification, and conspicuous consumption in weddings, I found there was a lack of academic sources readily available online and that had considered both time-frames of the 1980's to the 1990's and the early 2000's to present, which underpinned my inquiry. It therefore became critical to access public knowledge in which I visited the State Library of NSW in December 2022 where I accessed a multitude of reliable research papers that furthered my understanding of the changing societal landscapes which have precipitated a discernible shift in the value ascribed to the socio-cultural rite of weddings. I undertook primary research to yield a more specific understanding of micro-level personal experiences of Generation X and Generation Z to be triangulated with the public knowledge I had collected. I chose to conduct a qualitative and quantitative questionnaire and a focus group which adhered to the subjective requirements of my hypothesis and were vital in discerning the micro-level attitudes, ideals and norms in relation to wedding consumption. The questionnaire was initially piloted to eliminate potential biases and evaluate misinterpretations before its distribution, thus reliability was increased. I then conducted a focus group which provided vital qualitative insights that were immensely useful in supporting the trends, extracted from secondary research, and those which the questionnaire results failed to address. Through the completion of interviews, I was able to gain the scholarly opinion of senior lecturer Stephanie Harzweski on the normalisation of consumption behaviours from high status celebrities and critical insights from a wedding industry worker, Mel Buttigieg. The interview with Jia

Guo, an expert from Sydney University's Faculty of Gender Studies proffered essential observations concerning the social construction that the grandiosity of a wedding equates to a couples devotion and love. Collectively, the application of these primary research methodologies provided invaluable insights during the research process that reinforced the secondary findings and informed the main arguments presented within the central material.

In undertaking this Personal Interest Project, I have developed as a socially and culturally literate person through an exploration of, and developed appreciation for generational perspectives and experiences other than my own such as in the cross-cultural setting of the focus group. I have grasped the importance of my role in exercising critical discernment of the media and undertaking research in an ethical manner. The results of the investigation challenged my initial hypothesis as both primary and secondary research indicated that the 1980's to 1990's was a period of deviation from simplicity which rather, observed a popularisation of opulent weddings. Overall, the PIP process was an educative experience in which I feel a notable sense of achievement in completing such a research project in an area of both personal interest and socio-cultural relevance.

Chapter One

The Cost of Commitment

The socio-cultural construction of heterosexual marriage and the wedding industry. To what extent have weddings become a commodified symbol of conspicuous consumption in an increasingly secularised western society?

*"The wedding industry profits from our cultures need for spectacle and affirmation, turning the deeply personal act of marriage into a commercial extravaganza"*¹³

The performance of heterosexual wedding rituals within the meso-level of society are continuously evolving and adapting to the macro socio-cultural values, norms and marital traditions of the respective time period. In alignment with widespread secularisation, the power possessed by, and value attached to, rites and religious authority has been undermined by the conspicuous consumerist behaviours of Generation Z and Y materialising from societal pressures and an unceasing battle for status. The contemporary wedding industry operates at a level of sophistication and with a degree of magnitude that commercial enterprises of the 1980s and 1990s relative to Generation X, appear quaint by comparison. The sociocultural construction of weddings in which monetary value and possessions has taken precedence over religiosity and the preservation of tradition is perpetuated through the pervasive wedding industry which inculcates the idea to consumers, typically the bride, that a diamond ring along with other accoutrements are an indispensable token of marriage and a measure of romantic love. An amalgamation of these forces has



"Will you spend eighteen months and tens of thousands of dollars planning a party with me?"

12

12 Warren, S., *The New Yorker*, (2022), available from: <https://www.newyorker.com/cartoon/a23519>

13 Carter, J., Duncan, S, "Wedding paradoxes: individualized conformity and the 'perfect day'" *The Sociological Review*, 65 (2016) p. 3

engendered the social norm of elaborate and costly wedding celebrations to ensure the attainment of individual and collective status and inclusion.

The macro-level institution of marriage has progressively strayed from its traditional inception as an expression of commitment, domestic stability and to substantiate the intimate union between a man and woman, towards a commodified display of status and wealth. Wedding etiquette derives from various prehistoric cultures with the commonality that heterosexual marriage was viewed as a legal contract between man and women rather than a romantic endeavour and that family members of the wedded couple bore witness to the event.¹⁴ Within a western social context, conventions pertaining to weddings such as the traditional white bridal dress and extravagant feast succeeding the ceremony originate from the Victorian Era. (1837-1901) The growth of the middle class with their newly acquired wealth strayed away from traditional social boundaries of weddings as a family-arranged event and set the foundation “that marriage should actually be based on love or companionship.”¹⁵ Wedding ceremonies were viewed as a symbol of prosperity, particularly as this time period foresaw a strong emphasis on those of the elite or nobility asserting their power and status in society. Contemporary wedding celebrations indicate a shifting cultural mindset from that of its history wherein traditional wedding customs and rituals have been subverted by an upsurge in micro-level expectations of indulgence and expenditure for the recognition of a significant milestone, arguably catalysed by exposure to idealised wedding celebrations via macro-level communication technologies. As expert in Sociology Sharon Boden argues, marriage content that is transmitted on social media platforms and highly publicised in the popular press, illustrate the criteria used for judging successful wedding consumption at a micro level.¹⁶ Interestingly, 80.7 % of Generation Z participants agreed that social media was the most influential agent on their perception of the appropriate cost of a wedding, highlighting the permeation of consumeristic beliefs and values to micro-level society through online communication technologies.¹⁷ Arguably, this extravagance is being expedited by the macro-level western wedding industry, a \$4 billion business sector comprising vendors such as florists, reception venues, bridal boutiques and videographers amongst an abundance of others.¹⁸ This is attributed to a shift in the socio-cultural construction of matrimony that has “never been more free from cultural norms and official control”¹⁹ as the performance of weddings is largely governed by the merchandising of commercial enterprises and is no longer stringently tied to religious authorities such as the Catholic Church. The predominance of the commodified white wedding amongst micro-level perceptions was corroborated by the results of the conducted questionnaire in which an overwhelming 96.3% of cross-generational respondents ‘agreed’ that weddings have become increasingly commodified since the 1980s. (*Figure 1*).²⁰ Thus, weddings assumed the form of a commercialised event and “site of culturally sanctioned conspicuous consumption”²¹ in contemporary western societies.

Sociocultural change in the twentieth century, most notably the postwar era (1945-1980) of prosperity signaled a shift and cultural movement towards individualised conspicuous consumption and the emergence of a wedding industry that “set the climate for enterprises to create convincing rhetoric

14 The Week Staff, “The origins of marriage: First love marriage in the world” *The Week* (2015) available from: <https://theweek.com/articles/528746/origins-marriage>

15 Everitt, L. “Ten key moments in the history of marriage” *BBC News* (2012) available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17351133>

16 Boden, S. *Consumerism, Romance and the Wedding Experience* (first ed.). Palgrave Macmillan p:54 (2003)

17 All respondents, Questionnaire, Question 4, February 2023

18 ABIA Weddings Australia “How much does a wedding cost in Australia?”, *ABIA* (2020), available from <https://abia.com.au/wedding/how-much-does-a-wedding-cost-in-australia>

19 Carter, J., Duncan, S, “Wedding paradoxes: individualized conformity and the ‘perfect day’” *The Sociological Review*, 65 (2016) p. 32

20 All respondents, Questionnaire, Question 7, February 2023

21 Hanslip, L. M. “The Ideologies of ‘I Do’: Commodification, Consumption, and Identity in the Wedding Industry” (Doctoral Thesis: University of Calgary’s, 2020) p.26

in favour of a consumerist wedding.”²² On a macro-level, the wedding industry has so swiftly and adroitly insinuated itself into the cultural script of traditional nuptial practices through advertising campaigns and digitisation of wedding planning services expanding its consumer reach. It has become virtually impossible for couples in contemporary society to escape its influence when devising their wedding celebrations in which they feel pressured to partake in the ‘traditions’ invented or co-opted by the industry and seamlessly repackaged as established conventions.²³ This pressure has translated into micro and meso-level expectations whereby weddings have evolved into a symbol of status, a notion further supported by a female Generation Z questionnaire respondent who expressed that when planning a wedding “*worrying about the judgement of guests definitely comes to mind*.”²⁴ Thus reinforcing the obligation couples feel in the course of their engagement to accede to the socioculturally constructed extravagances of wedding celebrations in order to achieve a sense of social inclusion and acceptance. Similarly, Sociologist Laurie Essig posits that contemporary couples have developed an aspiration for “‘perfect’ weddings...where there is no limit to materialising fantasies.”²⁵ in which, along with the traditional paraphernalia, the wedding industry has kindled a micro-level desire within heterosexual couples to consume formerly uncommon and inaccessible elements of a wedding that are marketed as absolute necessities to achieve social inclusion. This is exemplified through the use of products and experiences such as custom dance floors, pyrotechnics at the reception venue, pre-wedding bridal vacations and was affirmed by a male Generation X focus group participant that exclaimed “*even the simplest or most innocuous of trimmings can be sold for an extravagant cost*,”²⁶ marketed as vital components of the ‘wedding experience’. Furthermore, Professor Dr. Andrea O’Reilly propounds that the hyper-consumerist display of wealth associated with the wedding industry is tied to a performance and projection of success to friends and family at the meso level in which “there is pressure to show that you have made it,”²⁷ These expectations have undeniably shifted since the 1980s and the 1990s relative to Generation X, when weddings functioned as an expression of newfound social relationships uniting the two wedded families and the celebration of a major milestone, rather than a measure of economic and social standing. This was corroborated by a male Generation Z focus group participant who contended that the expectancy of couples to spend an indulgent amount of money has “*increased significantly to the point that it has become a societal norm*.”²⁸ As such, this aligns with the initial hypothesis in which weddings are a reflection of a broader “social impetus of competitive consumption”²⁹ and acquisitiveness as a means to achieve social inclusion.

Furthermore, the macro-level expansion of the wedding industry and plethora of vendors that incessantly target engaged couples into envisioning a “perfection that can be bought,”³⁰ has consolidated the notion that weddings function as a platform of contemporary conspicuous consumption. This originated in the twentieth century with the development of wedding registries as department stores had recognised the bridal market sector as a lucrative investment.³¹ Stephanie Coontz, author of ‘*Marriage, A History*’ articulates that commercial enterprises wield this service to “expand both the bride and groom’s aspirations and their guests’ sense of what might be an

22 Montemurro, B. “Why the traditional wedding isn’t as traditional as it seems” *Aeon* (2014) available from: <https://aeon.co/essays/why-the-traditional-wedding-isn-t-as-traditional-as-it-seems>

23 Wallace, H. “The marriage industrial complex” *Salon* (2007) available from: https://www.salon.com/2007/05/21/mead_weddings/

24 Female Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 12, February 2023

25 The Week Staff, “The wedding industrial complex” *The Week* (2015) available from: <https://theweek.com/articles/463257/wedding-industrial-complex>

26 Male Generation X Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 12, February 2023

27 Bilodeau, M., Cleveland, K. *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules*, (Dundurn Press, 2021), p.143

28 Male Generation Z Respondent, Focus Group, Question 4, 1st March 2023

29 Stewart, E. “Why do we buy what we buy?” *Vox* (2021) available from: <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/22547185/consumerism-competition-history-interview>

30 Escobar, N. “The Wedding-Industry Bonanza, on Full Display” *The Atlantic* (2019) available from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/02/wedding-expos-reveal-a-lot-about-americans-ideals-of-romance/582421/>

31 Del Valle, G. “Wedding registries are an outdated tradition, but they’re not going anywhere” *Vox* (2019) available from: <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2019/1/30/18202828/wedding-registries-honeyfund-zola-amazon-outdated>

appropriate way to be a good consumer,”³² suggesting that contemporary weddings serve as a platform of consumption rather than a culturally significant custom to validate a new relationship status. The act of businesses in capitalising on pre-wedded bliss and consumption was raised by the perspective Male Generation X focus group participant who, during his nuptial preparations “*toyed with the idea of not informing the vendor that it was for a wedding celebration to avoid the elusive [wedding] tax.*”³³. Thus, affirming the supposition that businesses capitalise on the social construction of weddings as an avenue of social mobility within the meso-sphere. This is further supported by 82% of questionnaire respondents who ‘*agreed*’ and ‘*strongly agreed*’³⁴ that “the wedding industry has transformed a celebration that should be an important rite of passage into nothing more than a corporate revenue stream,”³⁵ thereby reconstructing its function and value within society.

Moreover, as author Bilodeau argues, the wedding industry is “a billion-dollar machine that is obsessed with and fetishizes how women look, as a gateway to being a wife and mother.”³⁶ There are discernible undertones of sexism and heteronormativity in the wedding industry whose marketing schemes are geared specifically towards the bridal identity, feeding into the micro-level stereotypical hopes and dreams of a fantasy wedding that is societally normalised from a young age. In conjunction, macro-level media of film and television presents the narrative that marriage is the ultimate goal of female protagonists with the assumption that being wedded to a prince will lead to a “happily ever after.”³⁷ Sociologist Julia Carter asserts that “it is through romanticised consumption that women are encouraged to keep within the realms of middle-class femininity and domesticity,”³⁸ which was further affirmed by a Generation Z focus group participant who raised the point that “*females have the additional expense of a bridal shower*”³⁹ thus reinforcing the gendered nature of the wedding industry which thrives off the socially imposed desire of women to have an elaborate, expensive, and carefully orchestrated wedding celebration. While the core intention of ‘showering’ gifts upon the bride and supporting her transition into married life remains, stemming from the upper echelons of Victorian society, contemporary bridal showers no longer serve its initial purpose. The event has been constructed, relative to Generation X, as an opportunity to offer gifts of meaning that will enhance the bride’s new life and shed beauty on the wedded occasion rather than to gather items for the household and other domestic necessities.⁴⁰ It is therefore clear that the wedding industry assumes that even the most successful and independent women often succumb to the allure of a fairy-tale wedding and is devoid of the agency to reject the notion that she needs to purchase a \$5000 gown or hire a costly videographer.⁴¹

In addition, it can be contended that the contemporary conception of the betrothal period as “an extended occasion for retail consumption and elaborate event production”⁴² has diminished the religious sanctity of the marriage rite with heterosexual couples opting to throw engagement parties, bridal party dinners, hens and bucks celebrations. Coinciding with secularisation, weddings

32 Del Valle, G. “Wedding registries are an outdated tradition, but they’re not going anywhere” *Vox* (2019) available from: <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2019/1/30/18202828/wedding-registries-honeyfund-zola-amazon-outdated>

33 Male Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 5b, 1st March 2023

34 All respondents, Questionnaire, Question 8, February 2023

35 Scott, A.O “Bridesmaid Revisited, Again and Again” *The New York Times* (2008) available from <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/18/movies/18dres.html>

36 Bilodeau, M., Cleveland, K. *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules* (Dundurn Press, 2021), p.66

37 Boden, S. Consumerism, Romance and the Wedding Experience (first ed.). Palgrave Macmillan p:54 (2003)

38 Carter, J. “Traditional Inequalities and Inequalities of Tradition: Gender, Weddings, and Whiteness” *Sociological Research Online*, 27 (2021)

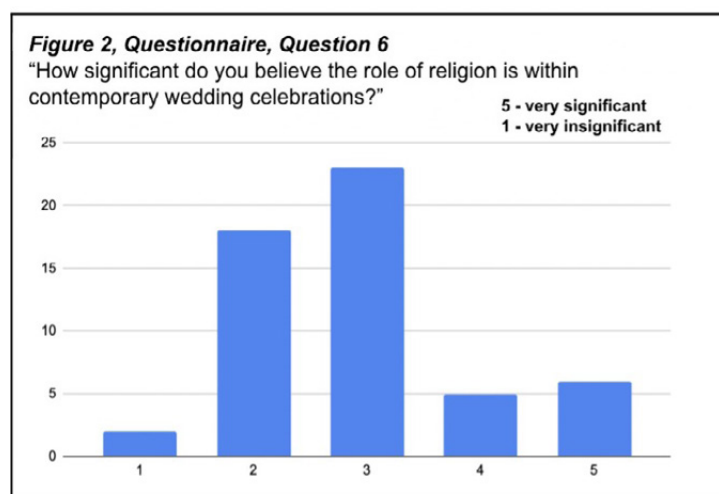
39 Female Generation Z Respondent, Focus Group, Question 6, 1st March 2023

40 World Bride, “Modern Lessons From History: The Bridal Shower” *World Bride Magazine* (2014) available from: <https://worldbridemagazine.com/3546/modern-lessons-from-history-the-bridal-shower/>

41 Hanslip, L. M. “The Ideologies of ‘I Do’: Commodification, Consumption, and Identity in the Wedding Industry” (Doctoral Thesis: University of Calgary’s, 2020) p. 32

42 Mead, R. “You’re Getting Married The Wal-Martization of the bridal business” *The New Yorker* (2003) available from: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2003/04/21/youre-getting-married>

have ceased to function solely as cultural and religious rites and rather, assumed the role of social performances wherein couples enact their love through pre-wedding celebrations which appease guests prior to the marriage ceremony and wedding commodities such as expensive attire, adornments and elaborate videography. Marriage is regarded as a sacred institution that retains religious significance within the institution of Christianity, which many adherents are detached from as they favour a secular ceremony. This notion was endorsed by a female Generation Z questionnaire respondent who predicated that *“as society becomes increasingly secular, individuals will be more influenced by current ‘trends’ rather than maintaining religious tradition.”*⁴³ Likewise, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 80.0% of marriage ceremonies were performed by a civil celebrant as opposed to a priest in 2020⁴⁴ compared to merely 36% of weddings throughout the 1980s,⁴⁵ which thereby substantiates how micro-level social values associated with weddings have undeniably shifted away from traditional religious beliefs and practices as “clergy and churches, once gatekeepers to the social respectability that marriage afforded, are now often reduced to paid extras and photo ops.”⁴⁶ within meso-society. This was further attested by a female Generation X focus group participant who expressed that *“guests don’t remember what the priest’s homily was, they remember the fun they experienced at the reception,”*⁴⁷ indicating the reduced institutional power held by religion as individuals discount and overlook these elements due to micro secular values of materialism and superficiality as a means to achieve social inclusion. Similarly, the decline in focus on religiosity within contemporary society was made evident through the conducted questionnaire where only 20% of Generation X and Generation Z participants stated that religion maintained an important function in contemporary wedding celebrations. (Figure 2)⁴⁸ This is plausibly attributed to the changing religious demographic of Australia as the proportion of individuals that identify with ‘no religion’ reached 38.9% in 2021.⁴⁹ As such, weddings have been progressively commodified and incarnated as a cultural event that “generates its meaning primarily through consumerism”⁵⁰ whereby the entity of ritual processes and ceremonies has become inconsequential.



43 Female Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 6b, February 2023

44 Australian Bureau of Statistics “Provisional 2020 marriages data” ABS (2020) available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/provisional-2020-marriages-data#:~:text=For%20the%20most%20part%2C%20characteristics,performed%20by%20a%20civil%20celebrant.>

45 Qu, L. “Families Then & Now: Couple relationships” *Australian Institute Of Family Studies* (2020) available from: <https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/families-then-now-couple-relationships#:~:text=Rise%20in%20cohabitation&text=In%201986%2C%206%25%20of%20all,2001%20and%2018%25%20in%202016.>

46 Lupfer, J. “Fewer Couples Are Marrying In Churches. Does It Matter?” *Ministry Matters* (2018) available from: <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/9049/fewer-couples-are-marrying-in-churches-does-it-matter>

47 Female Generation Z Respondent, Focus Group, Question 1, 1st March 2023

48 All respondents, Questionnaire, Question 6, February 2023

49 Australian Bureau of Statistics “Religious affiliation in Australia” ABS (2022) available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia#:~:text=Religious%20affiliation%20in%202021,-In%202>

50 Boden, S. *Consumerism, Romance and the Wedding Experience* (first ed.). Palgrave Macmillan p:19 (2003)

Moreover, weddings are synonymous with abounding traditions that wedded couples are readapting, to fulfil micro-level materialistic desires and establish status symbols at the meso-level. Professor of Economics, Hugo Mialon posits the sociocultural norm fuelled by industry marketing that wedding expenditure is a measure of a couple's love, an indication of commitment and valuable to the success of the marriage.⁵¹ According to a Generation Z focus group participant *"individuals are subjected to believe the amount of funds devoted to their 'big day' mirrors the effort put into the marriage"*⁵² which catalyses expansive budgets. Preceding the 1930s, the social norm of a diamond engagement ring as an essential piece of matrimonial equipage was not apparent and to change this narrative, and improve their business profit, the diamond company De Beers' launched the 1948 'A diamond is forever' campaign advertising that engagement rings were a true symbol of love. (Figure 3)⁵³ This, over-time evolved into the concept labelled as the 'three months salary rule'⁵⁴ which implies that a buyer, typically the groom, should devote three months of their financial earnings towards an engagement ring. An interview with Jia Guo, a PhD candidate in Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney further reinforced this concept as she posited that *"couples have the idea that if they fall short of having a fancy wedding or spending a sufficient amount of funds their love is not strong enough."*⁵⁵ Resultantly, prospective brides and grooms expect to face criticism and social exclusion within their meso-society when purchasing a reasonably priced ring amongst other inexpensive alternatives for their wedding celebrations "as if to do so is to cheapen your love."⁵⁶ Additionally, the perception held by an affianced person that investing into a lavish wedding provides an insurance against divorce eventuates into inordinate and upscaled affairs. This notion is articulated by author Rebecca Mead, who claims that couples believe that when engaging in wedding planning they need to consolidate their commitment by "going all-out."⁵⁷ The justifiability of wedding expenses is supported by the results of a conducted questionnaire whereby 72.2% of cross-generational respondents believed the average cost of a wedding to be above \$30 000.⁵⁸ Interestingly, a study conducted by Emory University economics professors Andrew Francis and Hugo Mialon in 2014 deduced that spending more than \$20,000 on the wedding celebration escalates the likelihood of divorce by 3.5 times compared to couples who disburse between \$5000 and \$10000.⁵⁹ While secondary research has statistically proven that marriage dissolution is more probable due to costly wedding celebrations, 53% of questionnaire participants strongly opposed this notion,⁶⁰ with one Generation Z female expressing that *"the ever-changing dynamic of relationships in western society*

Figure 3: De Beers "A Diamond Is Forever" Campaign (1948)



- 51 Francis, A., Mialon, H. "A Diamond is Forever' and Other Fairy Tales: The Relationship between Wedding Expenses and Marriage Duration" *Social Science Research Network* (2014)
- 52 Male Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 9b, 1st March 2023
- 53 Hanlon, S. "Do People Still Follow the 3 Months' Salary Rule for Engagement Rings?" *The Knot* (2021) available from <https://www.theknot.com/content/spending-three-months-salary-on-engagement-ring>
- 54 Hanlon, S. "Do People Still Follow the 3 Months' Salary Rule for Engagement Rings?" *The Knot* (2021) available from <https://www.theknot.com/content/spending-three-months-salary-on-engagement-ring>
- 55 Guo, J. *University Of Sydney*, Interview, Question 3, March 29th 2023
- 56 The Week Staff, "The wedding industrial complex" *The Week* (2015) available from <https://theweek.com/articles/463257/wedding-industrial-complex>
- 57 Wallace, H. "The marriage industrial complex" *Salon* (2007) available from: https://www.salon.com/2007/05/21/mead_weddings/
- 58 All respondents, Questionnaire, Question 5, February 2023
- 59 Francis, A., Mialon, H. "A Diamond is Forever' and Other Fairy Tales: The Relationship between Wedding Expenses and Marriage Duration" *Social Science Research Network* (2014)
- 60 All Respondents, Questionnaire, Question 9, February 2023

*is a clear representation of how personal values and intimacy can hold more power than the cost of a wedding.*⁶¹ Conclusively, the commodification of weddings is undeniably an outcome of the micro firmly held belief, subconsciously informed through industry marketing that a couples love and relationship stability is equated to the monetary value of their wedding celebration.

Conclusively, “the modern wedding ritual affords the opportunity to examine the concatenation of performance, identity, and consumption”⁶² and can be applied as a lens to discern macro-level conspicuous consumption in an increasingly secular western society. The commodification of weddings has been expedited by the pervading economic force and power of “an industry steeped in capitalist excess, heteronormativity, and conformism”⁶³ that has produced the micro-level inclination of couples to plan and execute the perfect wedding. This has immensely changed since the 1980s and 1990s in which the pressures of antiquated traditions experienced by Generation X has been replaced with the emerging socio-cultural construction of immoderate wedding spectacles imposed upon Generation Z. While there is a plausible continuity of values attached to nuptial celebrations, that being, commitment, romance and intimacy, the wedding ritual has progressed into an enactment of identity with the objective of achieving social status and acceptance within a person’s meso-society.

61 Female Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 9b, February 2023

62 Hanslip, L. M. “The Ideologies of ‘I Do’: Commodification, Consumption, and Identity in the Wedding Industry” (Doctoral Thesis: University of Calgary’s, 2020) p. 50

63 Bilodeau, M., Cleveland, K. *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules* (Dundurn Press, 2021),p.4

Chapter Two

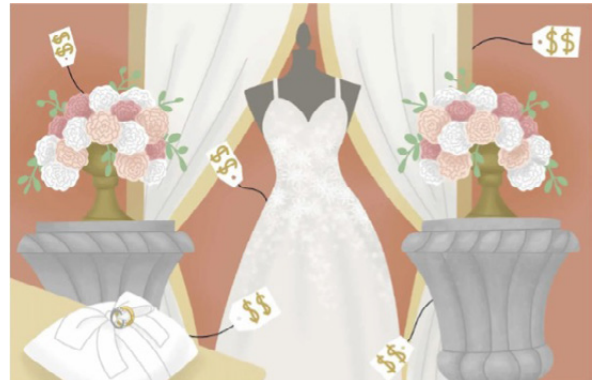
For Richer, For Poorer?

The socio-cultural construction of weddings in the 1980s and 1990s. To what extent were marriage celebrations commodified as a reflection of resistance to traditional social values and beliefs for Generation X?

“Why have a wedding, especially an ornate, expensive and time-consuming one, when there appears to be little social need to do so?”⁶⁵

Heterosexual weddings, once an intimate ceremony, have become a sizable celebration, demanding months of planning and a small fortune. This social aspiration escalated throughout the 1980s and 1990s which has been distinguished as a period of luxury obsession and frequent deviation from simplicity or financial prudence. While the weddings of Generation X were imbued with excessive accoutrements and unrestricted consumption, they were tied to traditional customs and devoid of the influence of social media, reducing meso and macro-level pressure to display and solidify status through consumption. As the wedding industry had not yet advanced into a dominant macro-level market sector, nuptial preparations were confined to close family and friends within the domestic sphere. Whilst secularisation, as a social phenomenon, was advancing within western societies, religious authorities retained a pivotal function in meso-level wedding ceremonies. Arguably, the culture of wedding consumption in the 1980s prospered from the micro-level aspiration to replicate the inordinate scale of the Royal Wedding (1981), and technological developments in videography. Progressing into the 1990s, weddings dominated popular culture and print media which cemented the consumption driven behaviours of affianced couples.

Consumption in the 1980s emerged more auspiciously, being constructed “as a source of creativity and meaning, central to social relations and identity formation.”⁶⁶ As a result of the proliferate economic conditions of the 1980s, as the era of the “resources boom”⁶⁷ wages were raised leading to an unprecedented growth in disposable income. Consequently, affianced couples exercised conspicuous consumption, purchasing non-essential luxury goods for the wedding ceremony, to signal social status.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, industry vendors and commercial enterprises, comprising what is presently known as the wedding industry, had not been professionalised and such, the organisation and execution of celebrations was predominantly from within the family at a micro-level. This was reinforced by academic Jia Guo who stated that during the 1980s to the 1990s “*the wedding industry would not have been as pervasive in each consumer decision of the bride and groom.*”⁶⁹ attributable to the reduced influence of communication technologies. This notion was further articulated by



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64 Posten, M, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, (2022) available from: <https://studybreaks.com/thoughts/why-are-weddings-so-expensive/>

65 Carter, J.,Duncan, S.“Wedding paradoxes: individualised conformity and the ‘perfect day’” *The Sociological Review* (2016) p.9

66 Trentmann, F. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p.15

67 Bilodeau, M. ,Cleveland K. *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules*, (Dundurn Press, 2021), p.4-143

68 Clark, A. “The 1980s: ‘When things actually happened’” *Australian Financial Review* (2022) available from <https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/the-1980s-when-things-actually-happened-20220118-p59p9k>

69 Guo, J. *University Of Sydney*, Interview, Question 2, March 29th 2023

novelist Rebecca Mead who delineated that “forty years ago your mother would’ve been planning your wedding and your uncle would’ve been taking the photographs,”⁷⁰ suggesting that the wedding celebration was largely confined to micro and meso-level environments. Thus, as parents of the bride and groom would collectively contribute to wedding preparation, this reduced expenses and the social construction of marital rites as a commodity as by 1990 the average wedding cost was \$15,208.⁷¹ These confines to the micro-sphere were reflective of a continuity in the antiquated tradition that the father must “give away the bride” to the groom, signalling the profound involvement of parents in the wedding celebrations for Generation X.⁷² Arguably for couples within the 1980’s, “stress was rooted in familial pressure and cultural influences that dictated how a wedding should be”⁷³ as macro-level social networking sites and communication technologies that produce a competitiveness amongst couples to partake in an elaborate wedding production were nonexistent. Similarly, this aligns with the perspective of a Generation X focus group participant who affirmed that “*while the Generation X cohort still had quite elaborate weddings, nobody would have known about it except for the people in attendance.*”⁷⁴ Furthermore, persons of Generation X were more likely to conform to conservative social values that shamed premarital sex and cohabitation which constituted only 6% of couples in 1986,⁷⁵ and as such, marriage used to signify a significant transition into adulthood and the leaving of the parental home. Therefore, the fact that marriage now follows rather than precedes cohabitation, has changed the meaning of the ritual, which no longer celebrates the formation of a new couple but serves to draw attention to and represent an existing one.⁷⁶ Traditionally, the wedded couple’s family assumed most of the financial cost associated with a wedding including invitations, ceremony, the dress and photography. This practice has continued from the 1980s to the 2000s onwards as ‘*The Knot’s*’ annual weddings survey found that “only 1 in 10 couples pay for the wedding entirely on their own,”⁷⁷ which in turn, endows parents with power and an active role in the handling of wedding expenses. While religious clergy are solemnising fewer marriages for Generation Z, religious authorities had a critical function in meso-level weddings ceremonies across the 1980s that largely took place in a church setting with ministers of religion performing 71% of marriages during 1983.⁷⁸ Furthermore, ‘*Easy Weddings*’ Manager Mel Buttigieg endorsed in an interview that modern weddings have evolved “*from a priest or clergy facilitating the ceremony, which was the norm decades ago*”⁷⁹ whereby ceremonies were driven by traditional religious beliefs, primarily the institution of Christianity and were not subjected to the pressures of commercialisation or viewed entirely as a platform of consumption. Decisively, the family institution and ritualistic conventions of marriage within micro and meso society had greater agency than the commercial interests of the industry for Generation X.

70 Wallace, H. “The marriage industrial complex” *Salon* (2007) available from https://www.salon.com/2007/05/21/mead_weddings/

71 Parker, B. “Probing Question: How has the American wedding changed?” Pennsylvania State University (2008) available from <https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/probing-question-how-has-american-wedding-changed/>

72 The Week Staff “The origins of marriage: First love marriage in the world” *The Week* (2015) available from <https://theweek.com/articles/528746/origins-marriage>

73 Bilodeau, M., Cleveland, K. *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules* (Dundurn Press, 2021), p.145

74 Female Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 4, 1st March 2023

75 Qu, L. “Families Then & Now: Couple relationships” *Australian Institute Of Family Studies* (2020) available from <https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/families-then-now-couple-relationships#:~:text=Rise%20in%20cohabitation&text=In%201986%2C%206%25%20of%20all,2001%20and%2018%25%20in%202016.>

76 Maillolochon, F. From tradition to personalization: Changing marriage norms in France since the 1960s (I.N.E.D, 2019) p.1

77 Grant, K. “Couples aren’t the only ones overspending on weddings” *CNBC* (2017) available from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/11/parents-often-overspend-on-wedding-expenses-for-adult-children.html>

78 Qu, L. *Australian Institute Of Family Studies* (2020)

79 Buttigieg, M. *Easy Weddings*, Interview, Question 3, March 7th 2023

Interestingly, social norms instituted into wedding culture from the 1980s have fuelled its commodification in succeeding generations from a discreet private ceremony to an elaborate event. Wedding commoditisation has been cumulative over time as new paraphernalia and an endless procession of pre-wedding festivities become “institutionalised or part of the wedding routine.”⁸⁰ The term ‘bachelorette party’ first entered into the social lexicon following its usage in a 1981 New York Times article detailing the former governor Hugh Carey’s fiancée celebrating with female friends at the 21 Club,⁸¹ and through the power of media such parties were culturally transmitted as a necessary pre-marital ritual. This signalled the resistance to traditional socio-cultural values of conservatism that was re-defining the 1980s, as it centred on a bride-to-be embracing her sexuality as someone who “isn’t just about anticipating marriage eagerly.”⁸² Whilst a formal luncheon or tea party was the standard feature of a 1980s bachelorette party, the wedding industry has reconstructed and commodified the affair within latter Generations serving as part of a broader trend toward more elaborate weddings with “nightclubs offering party packages, car services advertised...and wedding-planning guides laying out blueprints for an ideal bachelorette bash.”⁸³ Thus, the average cost of a contemporary Bachelorette party is projected to reach \$11,000⁸⁴ and there is a perceptible continuity in the social construction of the event as a profligate multi-day trip which vastly differs to the simplistic, inexpensive celebrations of the 1980s. This framework was validated by the results of the conducted Questionnaire which revealed 88.2% of Generation X respondents support the notion that pre-wedding celebrations have changed since the 1980s and 1990s,⁸⁵ thus, the process of commodification has extended well beyond a single wedding day. Coinciding with advancements in technology, the personal video camera was popularised following Sony’s release of its consumer camcorder in 1983 that had mainstream use in wedding celebrations as the primary medium of preserving memories.⁸⁶ However, videography remained a niche industry with only a small number of professionals providing the service and the intent of capturing a wedding was for collecting images as a sense of memorabilia rather than to be flaunted on social media. This notion aligned with the perspective of a Generation Z focus group participant who contended “*viewing my parents wedding album, it’s clear the focus was still on the ceremony itself rather than its reception by others*,”⁸⁷ deducing that although globalisation and modernisation precipitated an expansion of the wedding industry, most celebrations did not deviate from traditional, socially enforced expectations. The decade of the 1980s shifted from the modesty of the previous decades as all components of the western white wedding began to expand, the guest lists, bridal parties, gown and most distinctly, the emergence of pre-marital customs and videography which presaged its commodification from the 2000s onwards.

Moreover, the opulent and highly publicised celebrity marriages of the 1980s acted as catalysts, propelling the commodification of weddings and setting new standards to achieve social inclusion within micro and meso-society. The marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981, labelled as the royal ‘wedding of the century’ became the idealised nuptial ceremony for a generation of future brides.⁸⁸ The macro-level extensive media coverage, broadcasted to 750 million television

80 Montemurro, B. *Something Old, Something Bold: Bridal Showers and Bachelorette Parties* (Rutgers University Press, 2006) p.23

81 Duka, J. “Star-Studded Cast For Carey Wedding” *The New York Times* (1981) available from <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/04/10/nyregion/star-studded-cast-for-carey-wedding.html>

82 Elejalde-Ruiz, A. “Here comes the bawdy bride-to-be” *Chicago Tribune* (2011) available from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-xpm-2011-07-12-sc-fam-0607-bachelorette-gone-wild-20110712-story.html>

83 Hunt, K. “How a Bunch of Male Strippers Invented the Bachelorette Party” *Thrillist* (2016) available from <https://www.thrillist.com/sex-dating/nation/how-a-bunch-of-male-strippers-invented-the-bachelorette-party>

84 McCarthy, E. “Bachelor and Bachelorette Parties Are More Expensive Than Ever” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (2023) available from <https://www.inquirer.com/business/bachelor-bachelorette-parties-cost-2023-20230322.html>

85 Generation X Respondents, Questionnaire, Question 11a, February 2023

86 Hendricks, S. “Here’s what weddings looked like the year you were born” *Insider* (2018) available from <https://www.insider.com/how-weddings-have-changed-2018-2>

87 Generation Z Respondent, Focus Group, Question 7, 1st March 2023

88 Rotondi, J. “How Prince Charles and Lady Diana’s Wedding Became a Global Phenomenon” *History* (2020) available from <https://www.history.com/news/prince-charles-lady-diana-wedding>

viewers globally, perpetuated the social construction of a wedding being a pageantry and resultantly, grand reception venues, longer veils and bigger bouquets abounded.⁸⁹ This fixation formed micro-level ideas of “love, relationships, marriage — arguably, all things human and personal are weighed against fairy tales designed for public consumption.”⁹⁰ The opulent affair of the royal wedding with a presumed monetary value of \$48 million remarkably influenced wedding expenditure within western societies, a conviction supported by a female Generation X Focus Group participant who claimed that “*the royal wedding mentality was a turning point for wedding consumption*,”⁹¹ as individuals strived to reproduce its grandiosity.⁹² Consequently, each element of the marriage ceremony and accompanying festivities became more elaborate and concerned with “*heightened social visibility*”⁹³ as wedding cakes in the late 1980s “climbed as high as eight tiers”⁹⁴ and according to bridal designer Monique Lhuillier, wedding attire was “all about volume, epic proportions, and regal lace.”⁹⁵ It thereby became a social norm to achieve Princess Diana’s royal bridal ensemble as the famed nuptial event solidified the idea of the wedding as a moment of fairy tale excess, coinciding with the popular culture and media that reinforce archetypal princess weddings in the socialisation of young females.⁹⁶ Likewise, primary research revealed that 83.3% of cross-generational respondents ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’⁹⁷ that “lavish, high-profile [celebrity] weddings fuel a culture of luxury and extravagance, seeping into the aspirations of the masses while setting standards unaffordable to most.”⁹⁸ Thus, It becomes astoundingly clear therefore that the royal wedding effectuated a “return of the status wedding celebration; staged over-the-top productions”⁹⁹ detracting from the bond of the newly wedded couple, who entering into a new stage of life, seem almost secondary compared to the superficiality of their wedding.

Furthermore, wedding discourse dominated both popular culture and print media in the 1990s which perpetuated its social construction as a consumption-oriented rite of passage and the micro-level disposition of individuals to purchase luxury products as an expression of social identity.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, print media and the niche segment of bridal magazines that began to redirect wedding traditions into a consumerist framework rose to prominence “with a bevy of new publications making their debut, including *Premier Bride*, *Elegant Bride*, and *Bridal Guide*.”¹⁰¹ Correspondingly, Doctor of Philosophy L.M Hanslip noted that “wedding magazines functioned as curators of wedding trends and therefore served as an example of the voice of the wedding industry,”¹⁰² highlighting the institutionalised power of the media in shaping micro and meso-level beliefs and values. Additionally, In 1993, *People Magazine* added a yearly celebrity wedding issue to its lineup which substantiated the

89 Rotondi, J. “How Prince Charles and Lady Diana’s Wedding Became a Global Phenomenon” *History* (2020) available from <https://www.history.com/news/prince-charles-lady-diana-wedding>

90 Rakshit, D. “How the Obsession With Celebrity Weddings Fuels Unrealistic Expectations of Relationships” *The Swaddle* (2022) available from <https://theswaddle.com/how-the-obsession-with-celebrity-weddings-fuels-unrealistic-expectations-of-relationships/>

91 Female Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 5a, 1st March 2023

92 Briese, N. “Princess Diana and Prince Charles’ Wedding: All the Details” *People* (2022) available from <https://people.com/royals/princess-diana-prince-charles-wedding-details/#:~:text=Prince%20Charles%20and%20Princess%20Diana,today%20when%20adjusted%20for%20inflation>)

93 Generation X Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 11a, February 2023

94 Hendricks, S. “Here’s what weddings looked like the year you were born” *Insider* (2018) available from <https://www.insider.com/how-weddings-have-changed-2018-2>

95 Manners, I. “‘Epic’ Dresses and Maximalist Cakes: These ‘80s Wedding Trends Are Back” *The New York Times* (2022) <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/23/style/80s-weddings-dresses-cakes.html>

96 Knowledge at Wharton “To Love, Honor, Cherish and Consume: The Selling of the American Wedding”(2008) available from <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/to-love-honor-cherish-and-consume-the-selling-of-the-american-wedding/>

97 All respondents, Questionnaire, Question 8, February 2023

98 Rakshit, D. “How the Obsession With Celebrity Weddings Fuels Unrealistic Expectations of Relationships” *The Swaddle* (2022) available from <https://theswaddle.com/how-the-obsession-with-celebrity-weddings-fuels-unrealistic-expectations-of-relationships/>

99 Powell, C. “Revisiting Princess Diana and Her Wedding Legacy (Part I: The World of Celebrity)” *Huffpost* (2013) available from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/revisiting-princess-diana_b_3866907

100 Boden, S. (2003). *Consumerism, Romance and the Wedding Experience* (first ed.). Palgrave Macmillan p:54

101 Howard, V. “How Bride’s magazine created today’s wedding arms race” *Cleveland* (2013) available from https://www.cleveland.com/opinion/2013/06/how_brides_magazine_created_to.html

102 Hanslip, L. M. “The Ideologies of ‘I Do’: Commodification, Consumption, and Identity in the Wedding Industry” (Doctoral Thesis: University of Calgary’s, 2020) p. 10

pervasive influence of wedding media, its function in maintaining the romance of heterosexuality and the micro-level proclivity of conspicuous consumption. (Figure 4)¹⁰³ Nonetheless, these publications are nonpareil to the macro institution of digital media that has taken pre-eminence for Generation Z as an inescapable forum of wedding consumption. This was expanded upon by a Generation X focus group participant who voiced that their cohort engaged in a “purposeful exercise of purchasing a bridal magazine whilst, now there are algorithms and targeted advertising on social media,”¹⁰⁴ highlighting the lessened influence of communication technologies in driving excessive wedding consumption during the 1980s and 1990s.

Furthermore, scholars in consumer behaviour Otnes and Lowrey posit that throughout the 1990s the bridal dress and engagement ring, wedding decorations, the photography and reception became a hierophany experience for brides, whereby the aforementioned commodities were discovered and consumed in an extraordinarily intense, revelatory manner.¹⁰⁵ This was furthered in 1995 when retail giant Target became one of the first mass-market retailers to launch a comprehensive gift registry service, Club Wedd, that had 125,000 couples registered within its first year alone.¹⁰⁶ Evidently, the products couples nominated on their registry were reflective of macro-level societal norms and consumer behaviours of the time evolving from fine china and home appliances in the 1980s to personalised gifts and monetary contributions towards honeymoon funds for Generation Z couples. This aligned with a Generation X questionnaire respondent who contended “bridal showers are no longer concerned with setting up what is needed for the kitchen (as people weren’t cohabiting) but spending huge amounts on signage, formal lunches and coordinating outfits,”¹⁰⁷ signalling a shift from the 1980s and 1990s. Wedding registries have evolved far beyond couples venturing into a department store and scanning countless items as substantially more enterprises capitalise on love, such as Zola, an e-commerce company founded in 2013 that allows couples to register for gifts, experiences, and cash funds.¹⁰⁸ These findings clearly reinforce the initial hypothesis that the commodification of heterosexual marriage increasingly functions as an expression of micro-consumerist values in western societies as registries deter the focus of the occasion to the increasing acquisition of goods, rather than the officiation of a marriage.

Figure 4: People Magazine Celebrity Wedding Issue (1993)



103 Ingraham, C. “White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture” Routledge (1999)

104 Female Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 3, 1st March 2023

105 Otnes, C., Lowrey, T. “’Til Debt Do Us Part: the Selection and Meaning of Artefacts in the American Wedding” The Association For Consumer Research (1993)

106 Target “Fifty, Fun and Friendly: A Look Back at Target Firsts” *Target Company* (2012) available from <https://corporate.target.com/article/2012/05/look-back-at-target-firsts-50-anniversary>

107 Generation X Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 12, February 2023

108 Rose, C. “How The Wedding Registry Adapted With The Times” *The Medium* (2021) available from <https://medium.com/the-masterpiece/capitalizing-on-love-6f473505fc57#:~:text=A%20new%20type%20of%20wedding%20registry&text=This%20e%2Dcommerce%20company%20allows,items%20using%20their%20Zola%20accounts>.

Evidently, the power of macro-level media in reconstructing the cultural rite of marriage was apparent in representations of expensive weddings in 1990s films that inaugurated a period of excessive consumption. This is aligned with the theoretical framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, whereby individuals develop their expectations through observational learning based on the media that they consume.¹⁰⁹ The use of the wedding, whether conscious or unconscious, to establish or elevate social standing is ubiquitous, as is the depiction of weddings in popular culture. The saturation of weddings in the media ushered in by the release of *'Father of The Bride'* (1991), *'Four Weddings and a Funeral'* (1994), and *'My Best Friend's Wedding'* (1997) raised the level of grandeur that persons sought to replicate in their own celebrations such as that of Annie and Bryan's nuptials in *'Father of The Bride'* (1991), a prime example of fabricating unrealistic expectations with a \$1,200 priced cake, 572 guests in attendance and a charge of \$250 per person for the reception dinner¹¹⁰ Sociologist Chrys Ingraham conjectures that the media authorises micro-level social behaviours, and demonstrates where the margins of acceptability begins and ends.¹¹¹ These prominent films of the 1990s render it unimaginable to experience feelings of love and commitment without investing in marriage and the expense of a white wedding which was substantiated by the results of a recently conducted questionnaire in which 63.7% of cross-generational respondents selected *'popular culture, inclusive of film and television shows'*¹¹² as a factor that has contributed to the commodification of weddings over the past 40 years. Interestingly, 91% of these respondents are within Generation X, indicating their predominant perception that popular culture has contributed to the commodified nature of weddings as exposure to communication technologies and social media had not yet superseded.¹¹³ Arguably, films serve as a major site for wedding industry marketing in which they capitalise on the enormous success and popularity of these movies, shaping consumer behaviour and normalising the steep price of a wedding at the meso-level.¹¹⁴ This correlation was endorsed by a male Generation Z focus group participant that contended *"movies present their audience with the concept of an extravagant wedding...the vendor then steps in and capitalises on the ideal they generate,"*¹¹⁵ demonstrating the micro-level acknowledgement of this exploitation. Thus, 1990s films both commodified and created the market, desire and the demand for the contemporary understanding of a white wedding. It is therefore conclusive that the media both constructs and reflects dominant belief systems and societal expectations of institutionalised heterosexuality, consolidating the public perception of wedding as an exorbitant spectacle.

Summarily, status consumption pertaining to the modern wedding ritual became prominent in the 1980s to the 1990s period of Generation X due to the enduring impression of the royal wedding in 1981 which fuelled the micro-level ambition of couples to emulate the bridal trends transmitted in both print media and a succession of film releases during the 1990s. There was a clear inception of weddings as a commodified rite of passage which elicits its meaning primarily from conspicuous consumptions as the social construction of a bachelorette party as an indispensable ritual and videography as a profitable commercial business emerged.

Nonetheless, religious institutions retained a critical function and value at the meso-level, providing the framework for the wedding ceremony. Whilst the wedding industry had not thus far been established as a lucrative conglomeration of businesses and services, family members maintained a paramount role in the preparation and production of the momentous occasion.

109 Pajares, E. Prestin, A. Chen, J. and Nabi, R. "Social Cognitive Theory and Mass Media Effects" William and Mary ScholarWorks (2009)

110 Shinnars, R. "This is What Your Favourite Movie Weddings Would Cost in Real Life" *Country Living* (2016) available from <https://www.countryliving.com/life/entertainment/a39027/real-cost-of-movie-weddings/>

111 Ingraham, C. "White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture" (1999) Routledge

112 All respondents, Questionnaire, Question 7b, February 2023

113 Generation X respondents, Questionnaire, Question 7b, February 2023

114 Ingraham, C. "White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture" *Routledge* (1999)

115 Male Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 6, 1st March 2023

Chapter Three

Something Old, Something New, Posted On Insta and Facebook Too

The socio-cultural construction of weddings in the mid-2000s to the 2020s. To what extent do they function as an expression of contemporary consumerist culture for Generation Z?

“Modern weddings place brides and grooms as the stars of an elaborate production, with social media as the distribution channel”¹¹⁷



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Martial rituals have evolved substantially over time and now predominantly function as an expression of a westernised culture of conspicuous consumption. Contrary to traditional weddings of the 1980s and 1990s, when people married with the sole intent of uniting families or when wedded couples were constrained by parental expectations and conservative values, contemporary couples of Generation Z wield weddings as sites for personal expression within their meso-society. This pronounced emphasis on individuality within the twenty-first century, perpetuated by communication technologies and the socially constructed pressure to affirm a person’s status and wealth online has led to an exponential rise in wedding expenditure. In conjunction, highly publicised celebrity weddings have functioned as a conduit of social change towards further commodification through instituting an unattainable fantasy that has distorted the micro-level perceptions among Generation Y and Generation Z of what is deemed essential for the partaking in martial celebrations.

The socio-cultural environment of the mid-2000s to the 2020s that has witnessed remarkable advancements in technologies has cemented the function of wedding celebrations as a display of prosperity and as an avenue of social mobility. Sociologist Cherlin argues that the contemporary macro social norms which define and guide micro-level behaviour within the current institution of marriage are greatly evolving as there has been a perceptible rise in unmarried childbearing, cohabitation and a change in the division of labour which grants more workplace opportunities for females.¹¹⁸ Thus, with a changing social landscape, such liberal values have signalled a desertion from the traditional conventions of weddings and an emergence of the capitalist process of commodification which endorses that couples can “bring meaning to their lives through consumption of the right products.”¹¹⁹ Importantly however, Rebecca Mead asserts that weddings are at once intensely expressive and deeply conformist, in which affianced couples embed their personal style into long standing if ultimately borrowed traditions.¹²⁰ This was validated by a Generation Z questionnaire respondent who noted that individuals are “*abandoning the pressure to uphold tradition in favour of curating weddings that reflect their personalities.*”¹²¹ Sociologists Carter and Duncan account for

116 DWP Insider, “Changing the Game: Social Media Impact On The Wedding Industry” available from <https://dwpinsider.com/blog/changing-the-game-social-media-impact-on-the-wedding-industry/>

117 Montemurro, B. “Why the traditional wedding isn’t as traditional as it seems” *Aeon* (2014) available from <https://aeon.co/essays/why-the-traditional-wedding-isn-t-as-traditional-as-it-seems>

118 Cherlin, J. A. “The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage” *Journal of Marriage and Family* (2004)

119 Hanslip, L. M. “The Ideologies of ‘I Do’: Commodification, Consumption, and Identity in the Wedding Industry” (Doctoral Thesis: University of Calgary’s, 2020) p. 31

120 Knowledge at Wharton To Love, Honor, Cherish and Consume: The Selling of the American Wedding” (2008) available from <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/to-love-honor-cherish-and-consume-the-selling-of-the-american-wedding/>

121 Male Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 6b, February 2023

this framework as “Individualised conformity”¹²² whereby a couple’s supposedly unique and deeply personal adaptation of the wedding ritual is still in accordance with cultural norms to achieve a sense of social inclusion. This is typified by the planning and execution of a highly-unique marriage proposal that acts as a prelude to the commodified celebrations which follow. While in 1939, “one-third of all brides did without an engagement ring,”¹²³ contemporary Generation Z couples maintain a “*once in a lifetime mentality*”¹²⁴ with a growing cohort of suitors enlisting professional planners to stage theatrical marriage proposals that readapt from the traditional act of kneeling on one knee often including elaborate signage, luxury destinations and firework displays as a means to affirm their love and solidify social status. Additionally, as the average engagement extends over a one year period, permitting more time to conjure new events and additional expenses, “there is a constant drive towards excess.”¹²⁵ This notion was further reinforced by a male Generation X focus group participant who exclaimed that this “*lends more time to indulge in the realm of wedding-related consumption.*”¹²⁶ Moreover, consumption is framed as a “sphere of social action regulated according to the cultural principle of individual expression,”¹²⁷ which aligns with the continual appeal for personalised weddings in the mid 2000s to 2020s achieved through monograms, appointing relatives to officiate the ceremony and signage that holds distinct micro-level value to Generation Z persons. Thereby, reconstructing and commodifying the ritual as an enactment of their identity rather than its initial sacramental purpose in traditional religious institutions. It is therefore conclusive that changes to social values of the mid 2000s to 2020s have set the climate for weddings to be both uniquely representative of the couple and intensely conformist to the practice of conspicuous consumption.

Furthermore, since the early 2000s marital rites have become highly driven by communication technologies whereby social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have established micro-level perceptions on the suitable expenditure for a contemporary wedding. It has been socially normalised for Generation Z adolescents that all major milestones should be documented online with recent statistics proving 81% of Millennial parents having shared images of their children on social media, compared to only 47% of Baby Boomers thus revealing this disparity¹²⁸. Philosophy candidate Jia Guo contended that “*social media is a digital space allowing individuals to project an idealised version of themselves to others*”¹²⁹ This pertains to the prospective brides and grooms of Generation Z who exert their online presence on social media platforms to sustain a romanticised image of affluence and splendour surrounding their wedding celebrations.¹³⁰ Thus, contemporary couples’ micro usage of social media to curate and amplify the extravagant narratives of their weddings has compounded the process of commodification as individuals devote money to construct these online identities.

Along with the widespread adoption of e-commerce in western societies, macro-level social media platforms have become the “*modern day version of the wedding magazine,*”¹³¹ revolutionising nuptial preparations in which 62% of couples reported they spent more time on social media following their

122 Carter, J., Duncan, S. “Wedding paradoxes: individualised conformity and the ‘perfect day’” *The Sociological Review* (2016) p.15

123 Mead, R. “The white lie” *The Guardian* (2007) available from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2007/jun/09/fashion.familyandrelationships>

124 Female Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 12, February 2023

125 McCarthy, E. “When ‘one special day’ grows to a marathon of wedding fetes, is it too much?” *Washington Post* (2012) available from https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/weddings/when-one-special-day-grows-to-marathon-of-wedding-fetes-is-it-too-much/2012/05/31/gjQAIWtk6U_story.html

126 Male Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 4, 1st March 2023

127 Elliott, A. “Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies” Routledge Taylor and Francis Group (2019)

128 Greenthal, S. “How Millennial Parents Are Raising Their Children Differently” *Very Well Family* (2018) available from <https://www.verywellfamily.com/millennial-parents-raising-children-4158549>

129 Guo, J. University Of Sydney, Interview, Question 3, March 29th 2023

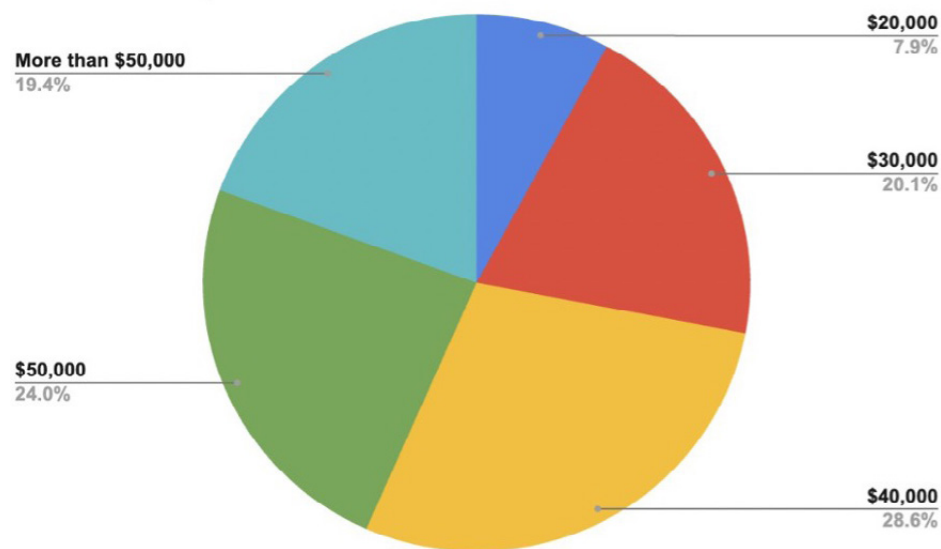
130 Bilodeau, M., Cleveland K. *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules*, (Dundurn Press, 2021), p.4-143

131 Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 12, February 2023

engagement.¹³² This was supported by a Generation Z focus group participant who stated “*after I had gotten engaged, I immediately found myself scrolling through Instagram, Pinterest and Tiktok, something which I wasn’t accustomed to doing.*”¹³³ illustrating that technologies have instituted a new form of wedding consumption in which couples are exposed to an endless supply of digital inspiration and can directly interact with suitable vendors online. These experiences, not previously faced by Generation X were affirmed by a Generation Z female in a conducted focus group who posited that brides-to-be become exceptionally overwhelmed with wedding discourse online that they “*eventually want to do it all,*”¹³⁴ consequently amounting to an unbridled budget and increasingly lavish celebrations.

Furthermore, Gieseler, who holds a Ph.D. in Communication asserts in her theoretical study ‘Milestone Celebrations in the Age of Social Media’ that it can feel impossible to escape the pressure of the once-unconventional elements of weddings when social media constructs them as indispensable.¹³⁵ In addition, targeted advertising and algorithms via social media platforms are a source of polarisation that infiltrates a consumers’ digital space with a constant stream of content, informing their micro-level perceptions on the suitable cost and enactment of a wedding. Social media has accordingly conditioned couples to the ideal of weddings as grand and excessive affairs as per the conducted questionnaire whereby 72% of Generation Z, compared to only 51% of Generation X respondents, conjecture the average cost of an Australian wedding to range between \$40 000 to exceeding \$50 000. (Figure 5)¹³⁶ On a micro-level, individuals are inundated with picturesque and lavish celebrations when swiping through their social media feeds, fuelling a competitive dimension to wedding consumption in which they strive to outdo others with whichever product necessitates an appearance of higher status.¹³⁷ Easy Weddings communications manager Mel Buttigieg maintains

Figure 5, Questionnaire, Question 5 (Generation Z Respondents)
 “How much do you think is the average cost of a wedding in contemporary Australian society?”



132 Arnold, A. “How Social Media Has Transformed The Idea And Costs Of The Ideal Wedding” *Forbes* (2018) available from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewarnold/2018/07/31/how-social-media-has-transformed-the-idea-and-costs-of-the-ideal-wedding/?sh=18c5ddb6f1bd>

133 Male Generation Z Respondent, Focus Group, Question 3, 1st March 2023

134 Female Generation Z Respondent, Focus Group, Question 3, 1st March 2023

135 Gieseler, C. *Milestone Celebrations in the Age of Social Media: Performativity, Ritual, and Representation*, (Lexington Books, 2022), p.5-10

136 Generation Z respondents, Questionnaire, Question 5, February 2023

137 Arnold, A. “How Social Media Has Transformed The Idea And Costs Of The Ideal Wedding” (2018) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewarnold/2018/07/31/how-social-media-has-transformed-the-idea-and-costs-of-the-ideal-wedding/?sh=18c5ddb6f1bd>

the ideal that “*social media is inspiring today’s couples to create Instagram-worthy ‘wow’ moments*”¹³⁸ through an excessive consumption of luxury goods with the underlying intent to upstage the wedding celebrations of others. This aligns with the Social Comparison Theory, initially proposed by Psychologist Leon Festinger in 1954 which deduces that people compare themselves as means of self-evaluating to understand and construct their identity.¹³⁹ and was additionally supported by a Generation Z questionnaire respondent who wanted their wedding to “*appear eye-catching and spectacular when weighing up against those seen on social media.*”¹⁴⁰ The popularisation of communication technologies as a mechanism through which people seek to gain recognition and validation as determined by the likes and views on their social media profile has augmented the construction of weddings as a showcase of prestige.¹⁴¹ Particularly, the act couples’ prescribing a wedding hashtag to accompany all images of their ‘marital celebrations that are shared and posted by guests’¹⁴² which a Generation X focus group participant articulated as a “*catalyst for commodification.*”¹⁴³ Thus, as couples using social media aim to gain greater visibility and a sense of social inclusion within their meso-society, weddings have been commodified into an occasion for personal promotion and elevation of status. The predominance of communication technologies in the enactment of weddings is a notable divergence from the experiences of Generation X, commodifying the celebratory events pertaining to marriage of heterosexual couples in the digitalised age of the mid 2000s to 2020s.

Moreover, romanticised celebrity nuptials that are extensively promoted and dissected by the media have conspicuously raised the micro-level aspirations and expenditure of affianced couples. While contemporary couples are emphatically pronouncing their uniqueness, they are nonetheless striving to emulate high-profile attributes of the white wedding that celebrity weddings perpetuate.¹⁴⁴ This has arguably established a “consumption environment supporting an upward spiral of expenditure,”¹⁴⁵ a view which was supported by 91.8% of participants in the conducted questionnaire.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, the tendencies and patterns of contemporary wedding consumption are instituted by and gain normalisation from celebrities, supermodels and famous actors as stated by interviewee Stephanie Harzewski.¹⁴⁷ This is due to macro-level media which promotes the social acceptability of an over-inflated ritual such as a post displaying the ornate nuptials of media personalities Sofia Richie and Elliot Grainge with a projected cost of \$4 million that has attracted over one million likes on Instagram¹⁴⁸ thereby, substantiating the micro-level “eagerness with which couples embrace these new protocols.”¹⁴⁹ Certainly, these high-profile and glamorised affairs have become the benchmark for individuals planning their own nuptials as “the vehicles through which the masses not only imagine the possibility of wealth and fame but seek to emulate it as well”¹⁵⁰ within their meso-society. Although, celebrity weddings are distinguished by such a degree of luxury and splendour that is “*unattainable to the everyday consumer*”¹⁵¹ thus, the endeavour to replicate this requires an

138 Buttigieg, M. Easy Weddings, Interview, Question 1, March 7th 2023

139 Festinger, L. “A Theory of Social Comparison Processes” Sage Journals Social Science Collections (1954)

140 Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 12, February 2023

141 Montemurro, B. “Why the traditional wedding isn’t as traditional as it seems” *Aeon* (2014) available from <https://aeon.co/essays/why-the-traditional-wedding-isn-t-as-traditional-as-it-seems>

142 Hanslip, L. M. “The Ideologies of ‘I Do’: Commodification, Consumption, and Identity in the Wedding Industry” (Doctoral Thesis: University of Calgary’s, 2020) p. 15

143 Female Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 3, 1st March 2023

144 Johnson, C. “Here comes the debt: How media is changing the way we wed” *Deseret News* (2014) available from <https://www.deseret.com/2014/4/25/20540171/here-comes-the-debt-how-media-is-changing-the-way-we-wed> Wren, A. O. Chupp, M. G. Albers, N. D. Knotts, T. L. “Consumer Perceptions and Pricing Practices for Weddings” *Springerlink Journal of Consumer Policy* (2021)

146 All Respondents, Questionnaire, Question 8, February 2023

147 Harzewski, S. University of New Hampshire, Interview, Question 2, March 16th 2023

148 Cox, N. “Inside Sofia Richie and Elliot Grainge’s ‘perfect’ wedding: Performers, fireworks, more” *Page Six* (2023) available from <https://pagesix.com/2023/04/24/inside-sofia-richie-and-elliott-grainges-perfect-wedding/>

149 Mead, R. “Princess for a day” *The Guardian* (2010) available from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/aug/07/weddings-industry-commercial-giles-fraser>.

150 Johnson, C. *Deseret News* (2014)

151 Buttigieg, M. Easy Weddings, Interview, Question 5, March 7th 2023

over-investment of money that individuals willingly partake in under the pressures of social media, leading to commodification. This is validated by the public perception obtained from the results of a conducted questionnaire whereby 81.5% of cross-generational respondents selected “*Social Media*”¹⁵² (celebrities and influencers) as a contributing factor to the commodification of marriage over the past 40 years. On a macro-level, media reports on celebrity weddings have instigated a culture of materialism whilst also reinforced the heteronormative ideal that a bride should aspire for a fairytale wedding as the pinnacle of their femininity. In place of focusing on the event itself, couples union or love, it foregrounds the commodities such as the article titled “This bride wore pearls and a customised veil for her black-tie wedding in Jackalope.”¹⁵³ Thus, these manufactured mass-media events in which the external appearance of the wedding takes precedence has led individuals to become de-linked from their micro value structure as they “*prescribe to this same type of celebration*”¹⁵⁴ has recontextualised the notion of success into materialistic displays of wealth rather than emotional connectivity.

Consequently, through greater exposure to opulent constructions of weddings which challenges normative discourse of the traditional ritual of matrimony, Generation Z are more inclined than Generation X to accept secular ceremonies as normal. It is plausible that heterosexual Generation Z persons substitute the experience of departing from the family with the financial burden of wedding expenses so as to signal the major milestone they have undergone.¹⁵⁵ This assumption was further supported by a female Generation X focus group participant who observed that within the 1980s and 1990s the social stigma attached to cohabitation “*truly cemented marriage as a momentous rite of passage.*”¹⁵⁶ Within the current socio-cultural climate, Generation Z are more liberally-minded as only 43% of individuals aged from 18-39 are identifying with a conventional religious institution such as Christianity, contrasted to 66% of persons over the age of 40.¹⁵⁷ This suggests that while for Generation Z the distinction between unmarried and married life has become much less momentous, the wedding itself has become far more so, attributable to the pervasiveness of social media within macro society where the introduction of new elements that have “*no ties to the cultural inception of marriage i.e pyrotechnics, flower centrepieces, designer gowns*”¹⁵⁸ are staged to elevate social status.

Comparatively, despite the normalisation of consumption-driven ceremonies for Generation Z, several members of the Generation X cohort continue to reject it as an inauthentic enactment of a couple’s union with one questionnaire respondent labelling these commodified nuptials as a “*social media event.*”¹⁵⁹ The exclusion of traditional accoutrements and customs from wedding ceremonies such as the virginal white bridal gown, officiation by a clergy and the ‘giving away’ of the bride elicits “*backlash from older generations*”¹⁶⁰ who perceive these changes as a departure from time-honoured traditions and a reflection of shifting societal values. Thus, indicating the rigid expectations of the production of weddings within the 1980s and 1990s, bound by traditional conservative values that have limited progress in micro-level perceptions and highlights a resistance to social change.

152 All Respondents, Questionnaire, Question 7b, February 2023

153 Lai, G. “This bride wore pearls and a customised veil for her black-tie wedding in Jackalope” *Vogue* (2022) available from https://www.vogue.com.au/culture/careers/victoria-devine-wedding/image-gallery/76f05494f453867711f2364c6f97e_d25

154 Male Generation Z Respondent, Focus Group, Question 7, 1st March 2023

155 Wallace, H. “The marriage industrial complex” *Salon* (2007) available from https://www.salon.com/2007/05/21/mead_weddings/

156 Female Generation X Respondent, Focus Group, Question 7, 1st March 2023

157 Pew Research Center “Young adults around the world are less religious by several measures” (2018) available from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/06/13/young-adults-around-the-world-are-less-religious-by-several-measures/>

158 Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 12, February 2023

159 Generation Z Respondent, Questionnaire, Question 12, February 2023

160 Harzewski, S. University of New Hampshire, Interview, Question 1, March 16th 2023

Conclusively, in the advent of celebrity culture, the editorialization of weddings and social media, the commodification of weddings has reached unprecedented heights at all levels of society.¹⁶¹ Within the mid 2000s and 2020s onwards, the prevailing norm of individualised conformity in order to achieve social inclusion at the meso-level advanced by communication technologies and driven by status projection have undermined the ritualistic and relational aspects of marriage. It is therefore conclusive that the social progression of the marriage institution into a commodified amalgamation of performance and identity, to a substantial extent functions as an expression of the shifting values towards consumerism in western societies and cultures.

Conclusion

The investigation into the extent to which the commodification of heterosexual marriage functions as an expression of consumerist values in western societies and cultures, has significantly informed my understanding that contemporary nuptials continue to be influenced by communication technologies and the ascent of secularisation. Resultantly, the authority and sanctity held by traditional institutions of matrimony has been undermined by the capitalist ideals of the wedding industry which propagate that micro-level affirmations of love and the longevity of an espousal are contingent upon an investment into a grandiose celebration. I have personally released such assumptions that affianced couples can imbue emotional sentiment into their nuptials through materialistic consumption are merely a product of the pervasive wedding industry. The perpetuation of weddings, as once a fundamental social institution, into a consumable spectacle via social media platforms has normalised the use of a ‘virtual stage’¹⁶² to upraise social status within meso society.

Chapter One of the Personal Interest Project disclosed the institutional power wielded by the wedding industry in reconstructing the socio-cultural ritual of marriage into a status symbol within meso-society, instituting a climate of expenditure whereby couples feel pressured to stage an elaborate production as affirmatory of their love. Chapter Two delved further into the prevalence of the wedding’s in popular culture which challenged traditional family and religious structures that retained some social agency for Generation X. It became evident in Chapter Three, on a macro-level, that social media continues to function as a vehicle for the commodification of weddings, a site of social comparison and status elevation. Through the sustained synthesis of my research methods, it was deduced that social expectations of showmanship and expenditure in conventional wedding celebrations have exponentially risen from the 1980’s until the 2020’s, thus confirming my initial hypotheses. Although, a further consideration beyond the scope of my initial hypothesis was that the custom of matrimony for Generation X, whilst still conditional to religious authorities and in alignment with social customs and traditions, marked the inception of weddings as consumption-oriented rite of passage.

With the benefit of hindsight, areas of refinement include the construction and execution of the conducted primary research methods. The questionnaire, although providing critical qualitative data, somewhat lacked the depth of responses which would necessitate valid research and it became arduous to obtain respondents. If I were to conduct the investigation again I would consider alternate means of distribution such as social media pages and the inclusion of specific questions on social status, which is conceptually relevant to the topic to explore its role in both wedding consumption and practices. To mediate this, I conducted a focus group with Generation X and Generation Z participants that involved more precise questioning based on the conceptual and theoretical ideas explored in the Central Material. Ultimately, I am able to reflect upon the Personal Interest Project, noting that although it was a time-consuming and demanding task, I have acquired immeasurable skill particularly, social and cultural literacy on the experiences of persons within Generation X as being different to my own. I have developed an appreciative understanding of the intricacies of wedding planning and the contemporary pressures to honour a newly formed relationship with the consumption of commodities.

161 Bilodeau, M., Cleveland K. *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules*, (Dundurn Press, 2021), p.4-143

162 Montemurro, B. “Why the traditional wedding isn’t as traditional as it seems” *Aeon* (2014) available from <https://aeon.co/essays/why-the-traditional-wedding-isn-t-as-traditional-as-it-seems>

Annotated References

Primary Research

Focus Group

The primary research method of a Focus Group proved to be immensely useful to the Personal Interest Project research as it allowed for the gathering of in-depth qualitative data that assisted in my analysis of micro-level perceptions and cross-generational ideas on the commodification of weddings. All attempts were made to eliminate bias in this method including the collection of responses from an equal number of male and female participants as well as ensuring a distribution of Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z respondents, which permitted a comprehensive analysis of the chosen cross-cultural component, generational continuity and change, whilst also revealing distinctions based on gender. Additionally, the questions were constructed utilising secondary research and were written objectively so as to minimise the influence of my own personal opinions. Furthermore, as there was a dynamic group of participants who offered a range of unique responses, the qualitative insight gained from the focus group on the social pressure to indulge in lavish wedding celebrations was essential to the construction of the Central Material and in achieving synthesis with academic public knowledge. The Focus Group allowed for an honest expression of perspectives and personal experiences in an unprejudiced and receptive setting whereby the participants' answers were clarified and validated, certainly ensuring the reliability of the data obtained. The validity of the data obtained was further enhanced as all questions were constructed based on a combination of extensive academic research and social commentary. This prompted invaluable discourse on the contemporary social constructions of nuptial practices in comparison to the 1980s. Despite thorough ethical considerations in the research process, the marital status of participants produced some bias in their responses most notably for those who are married as the process of planning and celebrating their own wedding undeniably influenced their opinion on this topic.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was a highly useful primary research method, as it was administered to an expansive sample size of participants, allowing for the collating and extrapolating of a substantial amount of both qualitative and quantitative data. The analysis and synthesis of this primary data with existing public knowledge thus provided greater insight into the commodification of marriage. The opinions gauged from a randomly selected sample size of female and male participants from Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z assisted with the cross-cultural focus in the Central Material of the changing values surrounding wedding ceremonies and functions overtime, shifting from domestic stability and commitment to status and wealth. However, the distribution of the questionnaire was somewhat limited to respondents within my own micro and meso-level spheres, and as such responses may not accurately reflect the broader views of society on a macro-level. Nonetheless, the conclusions that were able to be drawn out from the data align with the results of other studies found when attaining secondary academic research, and thus it can be argued that the validity of this method remained high. Additionally, the inclusion of quotations from secondary evidence throughout to prompt participant thinking and responses was incredibly useful for developing synthesis as it clearly indicated whether primary data contrasted or verified the claims of secondary articles on social and media pressures stemming from elaborate celebrity weddings, commercialisation of rituals and the continuity of traditions. While all questions were phrased objectively, so as to not skew responses, an unavoidable bias should be noted, as the anonymity of the questionnaire allowed all participants to remain honest, there were traces of subjectivity in responses based on their own wedding or attendance at other nuptial celebrations. However, as the purpose of the questionnaire was to gain insight into personal experiences, this did not impact the reliability of the measure. Finally, the construction of the questionnaire was followed by in-depth editing, enhancing reliability as it allowed for the refinement of potential misinterpretations.

Expert Interviews

Interviews were exceptionally useful as they produced extensive qualitative data on the social construction of weddings and how over time, it has diverged from its traditional inception and evolved in contemporary society to a commercialised event. An interview conducted on 7/02/23 with Mel Buttigieg, *Easy Weddings* Communications Manager allowed for an extensive understanding of how the pressure to have a costly wedding stems from discourse on macro-level social media platforms such as Instagram. It provided a critical interpretation of societal shifts from the 1980s which have altered the construction of wedding ceremonies including secularisation and deviation from conservative, orthodox values. The well-informed and scholarly opinion of Stephanie Harzewski a Lecturer of English Women's and Gender Studies at the University of New Hampshire in the interview conducted on 17/03/23 was tremendously useful for the cross-cultural component when examining the changing stigma attached to elopement, reflecting how liberal social values have led to greater flexibility and individualism in wedding celebrations. The interview with Jia Guo, an academic tutor specialising in Gender and Cultural Studies taking place on 29/03/23 assisted with relating concepts of westernisation and globalisation to the PIP topic. Each set of interview questions was modified in accordance with participants' profession and expertise to exhaustively utilise their knowledge and thereby, gather precise information for the Central Material. It was inevitable in seeking micro-level personal experiences and perceptions that the interviewees included anecdotal accounts based on their attendance at wedding celebrations leading to a sense of subjectivity and response bias. However, this did not diminish the reliability and validity of the data acquired due to the credentials of Buttigieg, who holds a Journalism degree and a Graduate Diploma of Communications, Harzewski who has published the academic article *Consuming Heteroscripts: The Modern Wedding in the American Imaginary* in the Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies and Jia Guo who has obtained a Doctorate of Philosophy at the University Of Sydney.

Secondary Research

ABIA Weddings Australia "How much does a wedding cost in Australia?", ABIA (2020), available from <https://abia.com.au/wedding-blog/how-much-does-a-wedding-cost-in-australia>

The online article published by the Australian Bridal Industry Academy (ABIA) was highly useful in revealing the contemporary cost of wedding celebrations in Australia and the increasing commercialisation of weddings, as it contained quantitative data through the academy's national survey on the annual revenue of the macro-level wedding industry. While the article did assist in obtaining statistical information on the monetary value of the wedding industry, integrated into Chapter One investigating the socio-cultural construction of weddings, it was limited in its broader applicability to the Central Material as it does not consider external societal factors.

Validity was assured as ABIA's National Survey on the Average Cost of a Wedding was conducted recently with its results published in 2020. This aided an extensive understanding of current, micro level consumption behaviours and tendencies that are predominant in wedding celebrations within contemporary western societies namely, Australia. The researchers at ABIA extrapolated data from an expansive sample size of ten thousand married couples, thus enhancing the reliability of the data that was presented. Although the article was written in an informal, conversational tone as a form of social commentary, there was no evident or unacknowledged bias as the publisher remained objective when delving into a statistical analysis of wedding expenditure. Despite this, the reliability of the article was limited somewhat as the article was a segment from ABIA's wedding blog which lacks the professionalism and academic rigour found in more scholarly sources. These limitations were mediated through the corroborative use of other more academic sources and the credibility of ABIA who since 1996 have hosted the longest-standing wedding industry awards in Australia and have attracted nearly thirty thousand married couples annually to review wedding vendors.

Australian Bureau of Statistics “Provisional 2020 marriages data” *ABS* (2020) available from <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/provisional-2020-marriages-data#:~:text=For%20the%20most%20part%2C%20characteristics,performed%20by%20a%20civil%20celebrant.>

The quantitative data obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics article on provisional 2020 marriages data was highly useful in providing insight into contemporary statistics surrounding marriage and religious affiliation with marriage within a western context. It was particularly valuable in the construction of the first chapter when examining the sociocultural construction of weddings and the positive correlation between secularism and the declining significance of religious conventions and traditions for contemporary couples in their weddings. Conversely, usefulness was hindered by the deficiency of qualitative data which would allow for a more detailed understanding of couples’ motivations, values, and desires in the enactment of their wedding.. The quantitative dataset was immensely reliable as it was sourced from Australia’s national statistical agency which is trusted and highly respected thus enhancing reliability. The high level of validity can be attributed to the date of publication as the provisional data is based on January to June 2020, highlighting changes in patterns of marriage across a relatively contemporary time period. As the article was published by a highly reputable government organisation and is qualitative in nature, there is certainly no evidence of bias as it solely provides factual, analytical data. The demographics assessed to produce quantitative data are reflective of the broader population, including an extensive sample size of both men and women and expansive age range that further aided my cross-generational analysis.

Australian Bureau of Statistics “Religious affiliation in Australia” *ABS* (2022) available from [https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia#:~:text=Religious%20affiliation%20in%202021,-In%202021%2C%20more&text=Christianity%20\(43.9%25\),No%20religion%20\(38.9%25\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia#:~:text=Religious%20affiliation%20in%202021,-In%202021%2C%20more&text=Christianity%20(43.9%25),No%20religion%20(38.9%25))

This summarised report of religious affiliation in Australia was vastly useful in discerning the prevalence of secularisation. The plethora of quantitative data extracted from the 2021 Census specifically on the proportion of Australians that reported having ‘no religion’ proved to be considerably useful when synthesised with questionnaire results. It effectively supported the claim that the social institution of religion has reduced authority in the functioning of weddings at the meso-level. Reliability was assured as the ABS is a reputable government agency responsible for collecting trusted, official statistics based on rigorous methodologies and standardised collection procedures. This source was highly valid as the data was obtained in 2021 and thus is reflective of religious adherence with contemporary Australian society, and is in accordance with the qualitative information presented by other secondary sources.

Furthermore, the cited sources of Australian National Audit Office and Department of Home Affairs corroborate the data provided and further strengthen validity. An expansive sample size of the Australian populace, consisting of both men and women of varying ages assisted with the cross-cultural analysis and substantiates the validity of this source. There is the potential for social desirability bias in which respondents may underreport or embellish certain religious or non-religious affiliations to appear more favourably.

Arnold, A. “How Social Media Has Transformed The Idea And Costs Of The Ideal Wedding” *Forbes* (2018) available from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewarnold/2018/07/31/how-social-media-has-transformed-the-idea-and-costs-of-the-ideal-wedding/?sh=18c5ddb6f61bd>

This source was substantially useful in discerning how macro-level communication technologies such as social media platforms have reconstructed the micro-level perception of an ideal wedding, pertaining to the focus of Chapter Three. It provided useful information on the competitive dimension to wedding consumption in which communication technologies have become an avenue for persons to display their lavish wedding celebrations and in turn, couples endeavour upstage others for social validation. Andrew Arnold is a freelance writer and has contributed to the peer-reviewed *Journal of Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus* and his academic qualifications and past experience

which resultantly heightens the sources reliability. Validity may be questioned as the article was composed in 2018 and, although Forbes is a reputable business publication, it cannot be deemed a scholarly source. This limitation however was compensated by consistent references to external sources including the statistical evidence that sixty-two percent of couples reported they spent more time on social media following their engagement which was integrated into Chapter Three. Bias is suspected as most of the external references were linked to other articles that have been published on Forbes which indicates that the journalist has not consulted a wide range of sources and limits the diversification of perspectives. This was mediated as the viewpoint explored in the article was supplemented by other academic secondary research thus reducing the implications of the bias.

Bilodeau, M. ,Cleveland K. *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules*, (Dundurn Press, 2021), p.4-143

This nonfiction novel titled '*The New Wedding Book*' was tremendously useful in detailing the social pressure of manufactured wedding traditions, outdated customs and an ethic of perfectionism that has been endorsed by the wedding industry. The consistent generational contrasts of nuptial experiences between Generation X and Generation Z was vastly useful as it informed my cross-cultural component and provided insight into the continuities and changes over time which enhanced my analysis. While it did not extensively consider the time period of the 1980s to 1990s, the information obtained from this source was used in collaboration with additional research to ensure a more holistic applicability to my topic. The high level of reliability can be attributed to the book's recent release in 2021 which affirms that it pertains to an accurate reflection of the commodification of wedding celebrations in contemporary society and its publication with a renowned company, Dundurn Press. The book was co-written by two female authors that discredited the wedding industry for its fixation on women and their presumed desire for a stereotypical fantasy wedding, a perspective that could contain some inherent bias. This personal subjectivity is compensated by the credentials of the authors - Michelle Bilodeau who has obtained a degree in Print Journalism from Centennial College and Karen Cleveland who completed a double major in Women Studies and Mass Communication at York University. The limitations were balanced by the various valid sources referenced from Kristen Maxwell Cooper, the editor-in-chief of The Knot and Dr. Chrys Ingraham, professor of sociology at Purchase College at State University of New York which heightens its reliability.

Boden, S. (2003). *Consumerism, Romance and the Wedding Experience* (first ed.). Palgrave Macmillan p:19-54

This book was tremendously useful in forming a comprehensive understanding of the broader socio-structural alterations and the modernisation of marriage. It provides an academic exploration of contemporary consumer culture until 2003, proving useful for the cross-cultural examination of Generation Z that has altered weddings into a commodity rather than a traditional rite of passage. This further enhanced my exploration of continuity and change as it implies that while time-honoured, customary practices remain an integral part of the wedding experience, the media has espoused unrealistic standards of a consumption driven spectacle. There are no instances of unacknowledged bias although the author presents an unpretentious tone, they remain analytic, factual and impartial on the topic. Reliability can be attributed to the author Sharon Bodens extensive credentials as a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Warwick and expertise in the sociology of consumption. Validity is most definitely reduced by the outdated publication in 2003 however, this can be compensated by the combination of primary qualitative and quantitative research conducted including interviews with heterosexual married couples and media evidence including bridal magazines and advertisements. Additionally, the author has referenced an immense amount of external, secondary source heightening its validity and factual accuracy in comparison to existing research.

Bowcott, O. "Rowan Williams: commercialisation of weddings is threat to marriage" *The Guardian* (2014) available from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/jan/10/rowan-williams-commercialisation-weddings-threat-marriage>.

This article was moderately useful in aiding an understanding of the marketisation of the marriage experience and the threat it poses to the success of romantic heterosexual relationships. However, the brevity of the article limits its usefulness in gaining a more comprehensive and broad understanding as it fails to expand upon how the focus on short-term celebrations has subverted traditional social values. To have been more useful, the insightful perspectives on the commercialisation of weddings from macro level institutions such as Church leaders could have been explored in greater depth. There is a clear bias as the article focuses on the conservative and traditional Christian perspective of former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams whose subjectivity criticises the excessive monetary value placed on weddings. The article is fairly reliable, as it was written by Owen Bowcott who has obtained a Diploma in Journalism from Cardiff University, although it was sourced from The Guardian which cannot be considered an academic place of publication, but rather a reputable source of social commentary. The dated nature of this article published in 2014 lowers its validity as it does not pertain to a contemporary perspective however, this is balanced by the various external sources referenced.

Briese, N. "Princess Diana and Prince Charles' Wedding: All the Details" *People* (2022) available from <https://people.com/royals/princess-diana-prince-charles-wedding-details/#:~:text=Prince%20Charles%20and%20Princess%20Diana,today%20when%20adjusted%20for%20inflation>)

This online article proved to be highly useful as it provided critical details on the remarkable event of the royal wedding occurring in 1981 that expedited wedding consumption within meso-society. In particular, it approximated the monetary value of the wedding as \$48 million which assisted with synthesis with my own primary research findings from the conducted focus group. It is moderately reliable as the site of publication *People Magazine* has an established editorial process to ensure accurate and factual reporting whilst also employing professional journalists such as Nicole Brises who has acquired a Bachelor Of Arts, Journalism from Michigan State University. Validity can be attributed to the recent publication date in 2022 which assures that the information provided aligns with a contemporary social context. While bias is suspected due to the article's nature as a social commentary piece, the source does reference numerous secondary sources throughout including The New York Times and interview extracts from journalist and royal biographer Kenneth Rose.

Carter, J.,Duncan, S."Wedding paradoxes: individualized conformity and the 'perfect day'" *The Sociological Review* (2016) p.3-32

This academic article was useful in discerning the prominence of weddings as both a social aspiration and form of popular culture in contemporary society. It posits the manipulation by the powerful industry that has subverted the role of cultural norms and official controls in nuptial practices and thus proved highly useful in developing a more extensive understanding of the inessential consumerism of weddings . The researchers extrapolated data from a small qualitative sample of fifteen interviews with heterosexual weddings celebrants to support their claims, enhancing reliability. However, there is certainly evidence of bias as the authors explicitly present a subjective argument on the topic that weddings involve celebrants adapting from, and re-serving, tradition as a process of bricolage. Sage Journals is an exceptionally reliable academic publisher of books and journals, that produces high-quality content composed by skilful writers. This article was co-written by Julia Carter, senior lecturer in Sociology and Simon Duncan, who has published an abundance of articles covering topics of Social Sciences & Humanities. This was compensated however, as the article was published in 2016, enhancing reliability through its consideration of contemporary modernisation processes in the commodification of wedding ceremonies.

Carter, J. "Traditional Inequalities and Inequalities of Tradition: Gender, Weddings, and Whiteness" *Sociological Research Online* (2021)

This academic journal article was singularly useful in developing my understanding of gender differentiation and heteronormativity in the macro-level wedding industry. It details how contemporary society retains traditional inequalities through the division of wedding labour in which the industry targets women through romanticised consumption and exploitation of their stereotypical desire for a fantasy wedding. Sage Journals is a highly reliable academic site of publication as all articles are rigorously peer-reviewed and this particular piece was produced by Julia Carter, a senior lecturer in Sociology at the University of the West of England. Bias is not suspected as it is an analytic journal article and the author upholds a proficient level of professionalism by remaining impartial on the topic. As the article references a plethora of external sources all of which are obtained from academic journals, it certainly increases validity. The validity of the article is sufficient as it draws on three years of extensive research on weddings including interviews and ethnographic observations. Its recent publication date on February 11, 2021 substantiates the data provided and enhances both its usefulness and applicability to wedding practices in contemporary western society.

Cherlin, J. A. "The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage" *Journal of Marriage and Family* (2004)

This journal article was extensively useful in providing the socio-cultural context for chapter three as sociologist Cherlin argues that marriage has undergone a process of deinstitutionalization and a weakening of the social norms, aligning with an emphasis on personal choice and self-development. It is tremendously valid as part of the *Journal of Marriage and Family* which is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the National Council on Family Relations. Reliability can be attributed to Andrew Cherlin who has acquired a Phd in philosophy from UCLA and has been a Professor of Sociology and Public Policy at Johns Hopkins University for several years. Although, the article is limited in that the online issue was published in 2004 and ensuing social changes have likely rendered the publication's data on rates of cohabitation and qualitative framework on the declining practical importance of marriage unreliable. These limitations were mediated through the writer's erudition, omission of bias and corroboration of this source with my qualitative primary research findings thus, heightening its usefulness in the construction of chapter three.

Clark, A. "The 1980s: 'When things actually happened'" *Australian Financial Review* (2022) available from <https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/the-1980s-when-things-actually-happened-20220118-p59p9k>

This financial review was considerably useful in forming an understanding of the economic conditions within the 1980s that afforded opportunities for consumption as individuals had disposable income they devoted towards wedding expenditure. As such, this information was useful when composing chapter two as it provided a critical context for the ensuing analysis of consumption practices pertaining to weddings of the 1980s. The source has been published in the *Australian Financial Review* which has been commended in the journalism sector for delivering the highest quality content and statistical information, heightening reliability. As the source was written in 2022, this corroborates that the information and qualitative evidence provided is well-informed and concurs with the most current data available. It is highly valid as the author, Andrew Clark has been employed as a journalist at Fairfax Media for an extensive period of time and is a former editor of *The Sun-Herald* and *Australian Business*. This provides further evidence of the objectivity and reliability of the information obtained which also minimised the probability of any unacknowledged bias being present.

Cox, N. "Inside Sofia Richie and Elliot Grainge's 'perfect' wedding: Performers, fireworks, more" *Page Six* (2023) available from <https://pagesix.com/2023/04/24/inside-sofia-richie-and-elliott-grainges-perfect-wedding/>

This source was moderately useful as it provided an exemplary and contemporary model of the highly publicised celebrity nuptials on macro level social media that have altered the socio-cultural construction and enactment of weddings. Its usefulness in providing a scholarly perspective or information to aid my understanding of this PIP topic was lacking. The publication site *Page Six* functions as a platform of social commentary with an unavoidable bias due to its informal nature. Although, reliability is heightened by the journalist Nicki Cox who has earned a degree in broadcast and digital journalism from Syracuse University and has several years of experience in the field. Additionally, as a media outlet, *Page Six* primarily covers pieces on celebrity and entertainment news and as such there is no guarantee that the articles have been fact-checked or informed by academic research, which reduces the validity of the information provided. These limitations were mediated through the corroboration of this source with external academic research, and acknowledgement that social commentary is necessary in accessing personal experiences and social perceptions of the shifts in wedding culture and consumption.

Del Valle, G. "Wedding registries are an outdated tradition, but they're not going anywhere" *Vox* (2019) available from <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2019/1/30/18202828/wedding-registries-honeyfund-zola-amazon-outdated>

This article from Vox was especially useful in informing my understanding of the expansion of wedding registries as a forum in which commercial enterprises generate a micro level eagerness in engaged couples to amass material goods for their wedding celebrations. Its conceptual link to time was valuable as it posited that wedding registries are an enduring tradition that originate when marriage was centred around stability and domestic love rather than consumption and a projection of status. Reliability is diminished as the author Gaby Del Valle is not a qualified academic but rather, a freelance reporter that specialises in topics of power and politics. Although sections of the article were not relevant to the topic being researched, this was counteracted by the strength of the secondary sources incorporated within its contents. Validity is highly evident as it acknowledges Stephanie Coontz, a professor of history and family studies at Evergreen State College and primary statistical data from Pew Research Centre. The article incorporated anecdotal information from interviews conducted with engaged couples and Sara Margulis, the CEO of an online wedding registry, Zola. There were minimal instances of bias as some commentary within the article was phrased in a subjective, conversational tone.

Duka, J. "Star-Studded Cast For Carey Wedding" *The New York Times* (1981) available from <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/04/10/nyregion/star-studded-cast-for-carey-wedding.html>

This source was highly useful in contextualising the institution of pre-wedding practices within the 1980's as a digitised version of an article from The Times's print archive that inaugurated the term 'Bachelorette party' as a gathering held in honour of a woman's upcoming marriage. As it was composed in 1981, it is significantly outdated, however this did not compromise validity as it effectively reflected the dominant perception and social values of wedding celebrations in the 1980s which was a key component in distinguishing continuity and change in chapter two.

Reliability can be attributed to the publication site of *The New York Times*, a reputable newspaper and credible source of information which thus corroborated well with the findings of my own primary research. The usefulness of the article was enhanced as the information was sourced directly from the time period of Generation X in which bachelorette parties emerged as an indispensable premarital celebration. Although the article was not analytical and rather provides social commentary on the wedding of Evangeline Gouletas and Governor Carey, there are no instances of bias as the reporter remains factual and impartial on the topic.

Elejalde-Ruiz, A. "Here comes the bawdy bride-to-be" *Chicago Tribune* (2011) available from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-xpm-2011-07-12-sc-fam-0607-bachelorette-gone-wi ld-20110712-story.html>

This article was considerably useful in forming an understanding of the socio-cultural construction of bachelorette parties and its institution into the contemporary western wedding experience. It details how the prevalence of bachelorette parties and merchandise from the outset of the 1980s was reflective of a resistance to macro-level conservative social values for Generation and a broader inclination towards commodified weddings which were both critical focuses of chapter two. The author Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz has obtained a degree in international relations from Brown University and has expansive journalism credentials which enhances reliability. An assortment of references to external secondary sources including sociologist Beth Montemurro and publisher of "Something Old, Something Bold" certainly assures validity of the article. However, the colloquial tone of the article as a form of social commentary rather than a piece of academic work evinces an element of bias and it was composed several years ago.

This is rectified by the publication site, Chicago Tribune which is highly rated for the integrity of its researchers and producing accurate information supported with reputable evidence.

Elliott, A. "Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies" Routledge Taylor and Francis Group (2019)

The Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies was tremendously useful in the research process as it provided critical insight on consumption as a sphere of social action regulated according to the cultural principle of individual expression. This aligned with, and supported the theoretical framework of individualised conformity that was synthesised into chapter three. It is immensely reliable as the Routledge Taylor and Francis Group is a well-known and reputable academic publisher which upholds high editorial standards. Validity can be attributed to the erudition of Anthony Elliott who is the Executive Director of the University of South Australia, where he is a Research Professor of Sociology. There is no evidence however, of Elliott's topical knowledge on the micro-level practice of conspicuous consumptions in the enactment of weddings which diminishes its reliability. The recent publication date of 2019 adds to the source's validity as it pertains to the contemporary socio-cultural context in chapter three, spanning from the mid 2000s to the 2020s. As an academic handbook, the researchers maintain objectivity and account for multiple perspectives in their scholarly analysis which eliminates any form of bias.

Escobar, N. "The Wedding-Industry Bonanza, on Full Display" *The Atlantic* (2019) available from <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/02/wedding-expos-reveal-a-lot-about-american s-ideals-of-romance/582421/>

This online article was vastly useful as it detailed the emergence of bridal expositions that permit wedding vendors to market their services to affianced couples. It provided a prime example of how forces of commerce and materialism have diverted the focus of wedding celebrations from its religious origins and the intimate union of two people. Additionally, as the source was published on The Atlantic, a distinguished online periodical known for its academic rigour and experienced, reputable authors who demonstrate topical knowledge, reliability is definite. It is somewhat valid as the article contains minimal references to external sources of research including Sociologist Laurie Essig and commentary from business people partaking in the exposition. This was balanced by the expertise and strong educational background of the author, Natalie Escobar who acquired a Bachelor of Journalism from Northwestern University and is an assistant editor at The Atlantic. While the source contains limited bias from the author who uses academic research in support of their own findings, they occasionally integrate a subjective viewpoint on the topic.

Everitt, L. "Ten key moments in the history of marriage" *BBC News* (2012) available from <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17351133>

This online article was immensely useful in contextualising the conventions pertaining to weddings in western society that stem from the Victorian era including the white bridal gown and extravagant function succeeding the ceremony. Validity is diminished by the article's publication year as it is over 10 years old; however, this is compensated by the credentials of author Lauren Everitt, who is a journalist and news editor for an abundance of publications such as HuffPost and Thrillist. Reliability is confirmed by the multitude of external credible sources that are referenced, including marriage legislation, a quantitative analysis of religious wedding ceremonies, and the academic perspectives of author Stephanie Coontz and historian Joanne Bailey of Oxford Brookes University. As this article was published on BBC, which has been operating as a worldwide mass media corporation since 1922, it is highly reliable. This can be further attested by the lack of bias as the author recounts ten key moments in the history of marriage, considering an array of cultures and traditions, without incorporating their subjective opinions.

Festinger, L. "A Theory of Social Comparison Processes" Sage Journals Social Science Collections (1954)

This thesis paper, released from the program of Laboratory for Research in Social Relations, was immensely useful as it extensively detailed Festinger's sociological theory in which people compare themselves as a means of self-evaluating to construct their identity. This is aligned with the focus on social media in chapter three and communication technologies as a mechanism through which persons are exposed to the wedding consumption of others, which they inherently compare to their own. The author, Leon Festinger, is highly educated and skilled, having earned a Bachelor in Psychology from the City College of New York and originated the theory of cognitive dissonance, which enhances the reliability of this source. Festinger's theoretical framework, in which the concept of social comparison was first termed and hypothesised, is highly valid as there are emerging researchers in the field of social psychology that have extensively expanded upon and replicated its findings. The theory has been supported by empirical research and is published in the reputable and rigorously peer-reviewed Sage Journals Social Science Collection, thus proving its substantial reliability. Nonetheless, the research conducted by Festinger is plausibly discredited by the cultural biases and environment of the time of its publication in 1954 and thus cannot pertain to contemporary western societies or macro-level social media platforms, limiting its validity and usefulness in chapter three.

Francis, A., Mialon, H. "'A Diamond is Forever' and Other Fairy Tales: The Relationship between Wedding Expenses and Marriage Duration" Social Science Research Network (2014)

This academic journal article was immensely useful as it allowed for a deeper understanding of the intersection of wedding expenses and marriage duration. Validity was enhanced as the quantitative data from Table A2 'Hazard Model Predicting Marital Dissolution as a Function of Wedding Expenses' was extrapolated from an expansive sample size of over three thousand married couples from the United States. It provided critical evidence that marriage duration is inversely associated with monetary expenditure on the engagement ring, as spending more than

\$20,000 on the wedding celebration escalates the likelihood of divorce by 3.5 times. The publication site, Social Science Research Network, is an online repository of scholarly research that has high academic rigour with over one million published research papers in over 70 disciplines, indicating its credible nature and thus enhancing its reliability. This piece was co-written by Hugo M. Mialon and Andrew Francis-Tan, Associate Economics professors at Emory University, which attests to their expertise and academic erudition. There was minimal evidence of bias as it is written objectively with no use of personal or emotive language, or anecdotes used. The source's validity is depreciated by its publication date, which is over 10 years old, indicating that it does not project an accurate reflection of contemporary social change to the interrelationship between wedding expenses and marriage cessation.

Gieseler, C. *Milestone Celebrations in the Age of Social Media: Performativity, Ritual, and Representation*, (Lexington Books, 2022), p.5-10

This novel was immensely useful in its theoretical and methodological approaches based in cultural studies as it provided critical insight on how the phenomena of social media has altered the performance of rituals within meso-society. Its exploration on how the public sharing of major life events on social media platforms has reconstructed the dynamics of personal rituals in digital spaces, instigating a performative culture, where individuals actively curate their online identities was particularly useful. Although the sole focus was not on the wedding ritual, its time frame of the decade spanning 2010-2020 enhances its usefulness for my cross-cultural analysis. Reliability is heightened by the author, Carly Giessler who has obtained a Bachelor of Journalism and Mass Media from Rutgers University and has published a doctoral dissertation on the intersection of gender, media, and cultural studies. The publication date in 2022 validates the information as factually relevant and reflective of contemporary wedding consumption and social media use at the micro and meso levels. There are no instances of bias as the author sustains impartiality on the topic.

Grant, K. "Couples aren't the only ones overspending on weddings" *CNBC* (2017) available from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/11/parents-often-overspend-on-wedding-expenses-for-adult-children.html>

This source was highly useful in establishing a foundational understanding of the generational shift of families involvement in nuptial preparations and expenditure which distinctively aided my cross-cultural component. It referenced an abundance of external sources including Anne Chertoff, analyst for WeddingWire and The Knot's annual Weddings survey that was extensively useful when examining prime contributors to wedding expenditure for Generation X within chapter two. Reliability can be attributed to the author, Kelli Grant who is Deputy Personal Finance Editor and has expertise in the psychological rationale for consumer spending which further enhances the article's usefulness in relation to the commodification of weddings. Whilst sections of the source did not have relevance to the topic being investigated, this was counteracted by the publisher, CNCB which is a well established internationalised business and financial news network, strengthening validity. There is no suspected bias from the author who has composed the article in an objective manner.

Greenthal, S. "How Millennial Parents Are Raising Their Children Differently" *Very Well Family* (2018) available from <https://www.verywellfamily.com/millennial-parents-raising-children-4158549>

This online article was moderately useful for the cross-cultural generational focus as it detailed the exposure and normalisation of communication technologies and social media in publicising major life events for Generation Z compared to Baby boomers. Nonetheless, several sections of the article lacked relevant information that pertained to my PIP topic thus, reducing its overall usefulness. The statistical data from this article that was integrated into chapter three was extracted from a poll of more than 2000 U.S. parents with children under the age of 18, heightening reliability. Additionally, the article was published on *VeryWell Family* which is under DotDash Meredith publishers and has 140 million readers annually. Its articles undergo a rigorous editorial process to ensure all content is reviewed for accuracy and integrity. The "How Millennial Parents Are Raising Their Children Differently" article is highly valid as it was fact checked by James Lacy who has earned a Masters of Library Science degree from Dominican University and has over 15 years of experience in the field. This source was last updated on November 24, 2020 which certainly enhances its validity to contemporary society. Bias is minimal due to the quantitative nature of the article.

Hanlon, S. "Do People Still Follow the 3 Months' Salary Rule for Engagement Rings?" *The Knot* (2021) available from <https://www.theknot.com/content/spending-three-months-salary-on-engagement-ring>

This article proved to be immensely useful in the construction of chapter one as it outlined wedding etiquette rules and cultural marriage traditions that have been practised for centuries. It granted significant insight into the infamous three months' salary rule for purchasing an engagement ring which was a foundational macro marketing campaign launched by De Beers that initiated the social construction of material possessions as measure of romantic love at the meso level. Reliability can be attested to the article's place of publication, The Knot which is a media and technology company that provides a wedding marketplace for engaged couples. The article is considerably valid as it was composed by Sarah Hanlon, a co-editor of The Knot that specialises in popular culture and has attained a Bachelor of Journalism at Hofstra University.

The inclusion of interviews with jewellers enhanced the usefulness of the article as it provided further apprehension on the micro level consumer behaviours in relation to wedding engagement. Bias is not suspected in the article as the writer upholds a proficient level of professionalism and remains impartial on the topic.

Hanslip, L. M. "The Ideologies of 'I Do': Commodification, Consumption, and Identity in the Wedding Industry" (Doctoral Thesis: University of Calgary's, 2020) p. 3-50

This thesis paper was immensely useful as it examines both the commodification of ritual and identity that pervade modern weddings and gauged a deeper understanding of contemporary practices of Generation Z. It comprehensively outlined how the display of monetary expenditure in wedding celebrations functions as the establishment or elevation of a person's social prestige. The honours thesis does not present any form of bias and the author sustains objectivity throughout their analysis. Reliability is enhanced as it is a doctoral thesis written by a student in the graduate program of Communication and Culture at the University of Calgary which attests to their expertise and that it is an academic dissertation. It has been submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements to receive a degree in Doctor of Philosophy, proving the authors erudition. This source is most definitely valid as it is relatively current, dated as 21-08-2020 and thus is highly useful when examining the commodification of wedding ceremonies in contemporary context, particularly when understanding the experiences of Generation Z.

Harzewski, S. "Consuming Heteroscripts: The Modern Wedding in the American Imaginary" *University Of Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* (2004) p:86

This academic research paper was certainly useful for the cross cultural component of the personal interest project as it examines the commodification of weddings across an extensive time period dating from the 1660s to the 1990s, allowing insight into the context of both Generation X and Z. It provided discernment into the growing appeal of lavish celebrations as a result of modern communication technologies, however, its usefulness is restricted as certain chapters discuss social concerns irrelevant to the focus of weddings. There is no instance of bias as the author remains objective when delving into an analysis of the commodification of weddings. It's moderately reliable as the research paper was created at the University of Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies and the author, Stephanie Harzweksi is a senior lecturer that has published many peer review journals on topics including female sexuality and popular culture. While the author has cited an abundance of external, reputable sources, this research paper's validity is questionable as its date of publication, 2003 indicates that it may not posit an accurate reflection of contemporary nuptial practices.

Hendricks, S. "Here's what weddings looked like the year you were born" *Insider* (2018) available from <https://www.insider.com/how-weddings-have-changed-2018-2>

This online article was moderately useful for researching Sony's release of its consumer camcorder that induced the launch of professional wedding videographers and allowed for the permanent documentation of celebrations. It provided brief details on the preparations, production and financial dimensions of nuptial events during the 1980s, concerned with heightened social visibility and

overblown proportions such as multi-tiered cakes. Although Sara Hendriks has extensive journalistic experience on various publications such as *The Daily Beast* and *Refinery29*, reliability is compromised as the article was released on the *Insider*, a site mostly composed of social commentary which lacks legitimacy and academic credibility. This is compensated by the relatively recent publication date in 2018 pertaining to an accurate reflection of contemporary wedding practices and the consistent inclusion of external references to support its claims. Although the source is not of a scholarly nature, the distinct examples provided were synthesised with my own primary findings and corroborated by academic research.

Howard, V. "How Bride's magazine created today's wedding arms race" *Cleveland* (2013) available from https://www.cleveland.com/opinion/2013/06/how_brides_magazine_created_to.html

This article was considerably useful as it is an insightful examination on the evolution of Bridal magazines and how publications devoted to the profitable wedding market, showcasing products and trends have had a critical role in its growth and on consumer behaviours at a micro level. It is a highly reliable source due to the erudition of the author, Vicki Howard who is an associate professor of history at Hartwick College and has authored the novel "Brides, Inc. American Weddings and the Business of Tradition. Hence, proving her expertise in the topic of wedding consumption and validating the information detailed within the article. The integration of quotes from individuals employed in the Bridal magazine sector such as Alexandra Potts, head of Bride's magazine merchandising and Barbara Tober, the editor-in-chief of Bride's from 1966 to 1994 further strengthens usefulness and reliability. The article's outdated release in 2013 is compensated by the balanced viewpoint of, and objective approach to the analysis thus eliminating bias.

Hunt, K. "How a Bunch of Male Strippers Invented the Bachelorette Party" *Thrillist* (2016) available from <https://www.thrillist.com/sex-dating/nation/how-a-bunch-of-male-strippers-invented-the-bachelor-ette-party>

This online article was sufficiently useful in forming an understanding of how the wedding industry has reconstructed meso-level pre-wedding rituals namely, Bachelor and Bachelorette parties as expensive and prodigal affairs that are an indispensable part of the western wedding experience. Reliability can be attributed to the author, Kristin Hunt who has acquired a Bachelor of Magazine Journalism from Syracuse University and has extensive experience as a senior writer for several publications. Although *Thrillist* is a well-established online media website, it lacks the academic rigour of scholarly sources that were used in conjunction with this article in the research process to supplement my understanding on the topic. However, the article has extensive coverage of factual information, offering a comprehensive overview of the subject matter. It is moderately valid as there are consistent and several references to external sources most notably, Sociologist Beth Montemurro who is highly knowledgeable in the realm of wedding consumption. The source exhibits a discernible subjective tone, indicating the presence of potential bias.

Ingraham, C. "White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture" Routledge (1999)

This novel proved to be exceptionally useful as its examination of heterosexual weddings and their portrayal in popular culture aided my understanding of the pivotal function of macro-level media in expediting the commodification of weddings. It was critically useful in chapter two as it draws upon illustrations such as the celebrity wedding issue introduced within Peoples Magazines lineup in 1993 which once synthesised with primary findings, provides reasons for conspicuous consumption in wedding practices. Chyrs Ingraham is a recognized scholar in the field of sociology, specialising in gender studies which lends credibility to her work and heightens the validity of this source. Moreover, Routledge is a reputable academic publisher that's rigorous editorial and peer-review processes enhance reliability. The comprehensive list of citations to support the author's claims and combination of qualitative research methods including content analysis and textual interpretation attests to its validity. Due to the focus on heterosexual white weddings, a narrow scope may introduce potential bias by omitting other perspectives; however, this aligns with the socio-cultural context of this PIP topic and is compensated by the author's erudition and its reputable publication.

Johnson, C. "Here comes the debt: How media is changing the way we wed" *Deseret News* (2014) available from <https://www.deseret.com/2014/4/25/20540171/here-comes-the-debt-how-media-is-changing-the-way-we-wed>

This article was substantially useful as it provided critical insight on the romanticised and extravagant portrayal of weddings within macro-level media that affianced couples buy into. Reliability can be attributed to Chandra Johnson who is a proficient and skilled journalist that is also on the editorial staff of Herald Times and the publication site, *Deseret News* founded in 1850 that has committed to "being a standard-bearer of journalistic integrity and principled reporting". The inclusion of interview excerpts with Brad Wilcox, a sociologist and director of the National Marriage project in addition to quantitative data from a Pew Research study heightens reliability and minimises the prospect of unacknowledged bias as the writer has consulted a wide range of external sources. However, there are traces of subjectivity in the article as the writer impels readers to distinguish between the fantasy of manufactured celebrity events and reality to avoid the financial ramifications. While the validity of the article is diminished as it was written in 2014, the article's findings can be corroborated with subsequent studies that I have utilised in the research process and remains of great usefulness in chapter three.

Knowledge at Wharton To Love, Honor, Cherish and Consume: The Selling of the American Wedding" (2008) available from <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/to-love-honor-cherish-and-consume-the-selling-of-the-american-wedding/>

This source was highly useful during the research process as it provided a valuable viewpoint on the fluid nature of weddings, no longer signifying a major life change and unending, sacred commitment that they once did. Moreover, there is evidence of bias as it is not merely a deconstruction of the commodification of marriage but rather, contains opinionated pieces of information from the unspecified authors. Reliability is arguably limited as the source was penned by 'Knowledge at Wharton Staff' which is quite vague and undermines its factual accuracy as it remains unclear if the authors have expertise in the topic. Despite this, The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania is a business analysis journal site that provides intellectual pieces on various topics, improving its reliability. Although its publication in 2008 may limit its validity to the cross-generational analysis, the article references several external studies and academic sources thus providing validation of reliable evidence.

Lai, G. "This bride wore pearls and a customised veil for her black-tie wedding in Jackalope" *Vogue* (2022) available from <https://www.vogue.com.au/culture/careers/victoria-devine-wedding/image-gallery/76f05494f453867711f2364c6f97ed25>

This online article was moderately useful as it demonstrated how media outlets perpetuate the commodification of wedding celebrations. The title was beneficial to the Central Material as it highlighted the materialistic focus of the article due to its fixation on the bride's attire and the wedding venue rather than the emotional connectivity of the couple. Although, *Vogue* predominantly reports on fashion based content which lends to a bias within the article towards the aesthetic elements of the ceremony. In addition, the author Gladys Lai is a fashion and entertainment writer which increases her partiality towards reporting the acquisitive nature of the wedding. While the article has been written subjectively, it is a piece of social commentary and fails to reference academic secondary evidence which diminishes reliability. Validity of the article is favourable as it was composed in 2022 and thus, an accurate reflection of the skewed reporting evident in modern publications that focuses on the commodities of weddings. The source's reliability can be attributed to the reputability of *Vogue*, a well-established publication that has been operating globally for over 130 years.

Lupfer, J. "Fewer Couples Are Marrying In Churches. Does It Matter?" *Ministry Matters* (2018) available from <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/9049/fewer-couples-are-marrying-in-churches-does-it-matter>

This online article was substantially useful to the construction of chapter one due to its focus on the decline in religiosity and pervading influence of secularisation in wedding ceremonies. It distinguishes how clergy are solemnising fewer marriages due to social expectations concerning sex, cohabitation, and marriage that have undergone profound changes. As such, it assisted with developing a foundational understanding of the increase in civil marriage ceremonies which once synthesised with primary data, provides reason for the commodification of weddings. Validity is confirmed by the recent publication of the article in 2018 and the author's credentials as Jacob Lupfer has obtained a Ph.D. candidate in political science.

However, this was comprised as the author does not possess any prior knowledge or expertise on the field of sociology or in relation to the commodification of marriage. The reliability of the source is questionable as it was published on the site Ministry Matters which is specifically designed as a collection of resources for preachers and worship leaders. As the article is mostly social commentary it is less valid and there is suspected bias from the author but this did not inhibit its value for the research of my Personal Research Project.

Maillochon, F. From tradition to personalization: Changing marriage norms in France since the 1960s (I.N.E.D, 2019) p.1

This journal article was vastly useful in forming an understanding on the normalisation of premarital cohabitation from the outset of the 1980s which reconstructed the social value attached to weddings as no longer celebrating the formation of a new couple but rather drawing attention to an existing one. Florence Maillochon is a highly knowledgeable sociologist, research director at the CNRS at the Maurice Halbwachs Center and associate researcher at INED, strengthening reliability. It is tremendously valid as the journal article was published on Cairns International Edition, a comprehensive online collection of francophone publications in social sciences and humanities. As the research focus is on changing marriage norms since the 1960s, the examination across a expansive time period was considerably useful for the cross-cultural focus in chapter two when garnering sufficient evidence that pertains to the 1980s. Nonetheless, the narrow field of research in France limits the sources usefulness and applicability to the commodification of weddings in western societies and cultures. This did not detract from validity and reliability due to the author's academic rigour and the innumerable references to external scholarly sources which supported its claims.

Manners, I. "Epic' Dresses and Maximalist Cakes: These '80s Wedding Trends Are Back" *The New York Times* (2022) <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/23/style/80s-weddings-dresses-cakes.html>

This online article was vastly useful in forming an understanding of the societal trends that dominated the wedding planning process and nuptial celebrations of the 1980s. As the New York Times is a well-established and widely respected newspaper known for its rigorous editorial processes and fact-checking procedures, this contributes greatly to the reliability of the source. It is considerably valid as there are several references to external sources including experts within the wedding industry and professionals such as bridal designer Monique Lhuillier which support the article's assertions. However, without specific citations and absence of academic references, it is challenging to determine the breadth and depth of the research conducted. The author, Ivette Manners has extensive topical knowledge on the social construction of weddings as it has been the focus of various articles she has released which certainly enhances reliability. There is no discernable bias as the author refrains from promoting any particular viewpoint on the resurgence of wedding trends from the 1980s.

McCarthy, E. “Bachelor and Bachelorette Parties Are More Expensive Than Ever” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (2023) available from <https://www.inquirer.com/business/bachelor-bachelorette-parties-cost-2023-20230322.html>

This online article was critically useful in forming an understanding of the increased expense of Bachelor and Bachelorette parties, providing the statistical evidence that it is projected to reach \$11,000 which was synthesised with the primary research of questionnaire results. Reliability can be attributed to the Philadelphia Inquirer which is a reputable newspaper that has been providing factually accurate articles from its operation since 1829. The article’s content, while informative, was limited in its broader applicability to my Central Material. As such, this source was utilised in corroboration with other academic sources which provided more depth on generational changes to the execution and monetary value associated with pre-wedding rituals. The inclusion of external secondary sources to support its claims enhances the validity of this source. In addition, the highly credited author has obtained a Bachelor of Journalism from Penn State University and is consumer reporter for the Philadelphia Inquirer thus indicating a high level of knowledge in the realm of commodification and wedding expenditure. While the article is constructed using an informal tone, the author does not disclose their subjective opinions on the topic minimising bias which further strengthens the sources reliability.

McCarthy, E. “When ‘one special day’ grows to a marathon of wedding fetes, is it too much?” *Washington Post* (2012) available from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/weddings/when-one-special-day-grows-to-marathon-of-wedding-fetes-is-it>

This online article was considerably useful as it provided insight on how extended engagements have caused a myriad of pre-wedding events to be instituted over generations in which persons are pressured to partake in to achieve a sense of social inclusion. The publication data from 2012 comprises validity however, the content remains relevant and in line with current research. Bias was slightly present as the article functioned as a social commentary and advised readers how to avoid becoming engrossed in a costly and inordinate wedding. Reliability was affirmed by the publication site, *Washington Post* which is a reputable, leading daily newspaper and the highly knowledgeable author Ellen McCarthy, having earned a Bachelor of English from the State University of New York. Additionally, McCarthy anchored the newspapers section on love from 2009 to 2013 which involved extensive writing on weddings, proving her topical expertise. The inclusion of interview excerpts with a Generation X female bridesmaid and wedding planner, Debbie Berkelhammer who has experience in the industry since 1998 heightened both validity and its usefulness in chapter three.

Mead, R. “Princess for a day” *The Guardian* (2010) available from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/aug/07/weddings-industry-commercial-giles-fraser>.

This article was considerably useful in the construction of the introduction as it provided an extensive insight into the pivotal role of the wedding industry as an agent for social change in expenditure and production of contemporary marriages. It was particularly useful to form an understanding of the cross cultural component, insinuating that the intensity of planning a wedding under commercial pressure is a substitute for the experience of real nuptial difficulties encountered by earlier generations. This source can be deemed somewhat reliable as though it was composed by a credible journalist, subjective claims are made in relation to the excessive amount of finances devoted to wedding preparations. Hence, personal bias was evident in some sections of the article that was not supported by external, secondary research. Validity is diminished by the dated nature of the article, released in 2010 indicating that it cannot be wholly applicable to a contemporary context or the experiences of Generation Z. Nonetheless, this can be compensated by the qualifications of the journalist. Rebecca Mead has been credited for composing critically acclaimed literature on contemporary wedding practices most notably, the novel *One Perfect Day*, proving her expertise in the topic.

Mead, R. "The white lie" *The Guardian* (2007) available from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2007/jun/09/fashion.familyandrelationships>

This extract of a novel 'One Perfect Day: The Selling Of The American Wedding' was substantially useful in understanding how the wedding industry, a capacious category, including service providers and business have escalated the commercial interests of society and are a catalyst for improvident wedding celebrations. There is evidence of subjective bias as the author openly acknowledges their perspective, claiming that the perpetuation of wedding fantasies is quite a pernicious social issue, minimising the article's reliability. In spite of this, the author, Rebecca Mead has extensive credentials, obtaining a master's degree in journalism at New York University and completing previous work as a journalist for New York magazine and The Sunday Times of London which heightens reliability. Validity is debatable as even though the article was published on a reputable site, The Guardian renowned for its incisive reports, it was composed in 2007. It is plausible that contemporary research has emerged latterly, pertaining a more accurate reflection of rising wedding expenditure, particularly relevant to Generation Z. Nonetheless, the article is suitable for the cross cultural component which involves an examination of wedding practices over time from the outset of the 2000s and onwards.

Mead, R. "You're Getting Married The Wal-Martization of the bridal business" *The New Yorker* (2003) available from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2003/04/21/youre-getting-married>

This online piece was a useful tool in researching the macro level profitable wedding industry and how it has every interest in ensuring that wedding celebrations are progressively lavish and complex. Through a fusion of investigative journalism and social commentary the article generally examines how the nature of weddings has changed into an extended occasion for retail consumption and elaborate event production. This was distinctly useful when composing chapter one as it is a broad overview of the commodification of marriage, not pertaining to a specific time period. Reliability is confirmed by the article's publication from The New York Times, a well-established and credible source of news and information. Bias is evident as the author, Rebecca Mead critiques the inordinate scale of wedding celebrations. This is compensated by her extensive credentials, obtaining a master's degree in journalism at New York University and releasing several critically acclaimed novels. However, validity is diminished as the article was released in 2003 which is considerably outdated and unable to take into account contemporary wedding practices.

Montemurro, B. *Something Old, Something Bold: Bridal Showers and Bachelorette Parties* (Rutgers University Press, 2006) p.23

This nonfiction novel was substantially useful in providing insight into the innumerable pre-wedding events and festivities that have become institutionalised practices apart of the extravagant, highly ritualised, and costly affair of the contemporary western wedding. Rutgers University Press is an academic publishing company that indexes and provides access to high quality, peer-reviewed journals which enhances the reliability of this source. Validity is sufficient as the article cites an extensive amount of ethnographic research to support its examination of generational change to the fabrication and expense of prenuptial events. This is further heightened by the credibility of the author, Beth Montemurro who is an esteemed professor of sociology at Penn State University and knowledgeable in the field of cultural studies.

Nonetheless, reliability is tarnished by the outdated publication of 2006 which diminishes its authenticity to and usefulness when exploring contemporary wedding expenditure.

Montemurro, B. “Why the traditional wedding isn’t as traditional as it seems” *Aeon* (2014) available from <https://aeon.co/essays/why-the-traditional-wedding-isn-t-as-traditional-as-it-seems>

This digital article proved to be exceptionally useful for cross-cultural generational focus as it clearly outlined the shift in micro-level values associated with wedding celebrations in the latter decades of the 20th and into the 21st century. It also provided a brief history of the culture of heterosexual romance and the emergence of the wedding industry which fuelled consumerism and the social construction of weddings as grand spectacles. This was immensely valuable for the construction of chapter one which focuses on the historical context of wedding rites and initial stages of its evolution into a commercial driven event. Validity is sufficient as the article referenced an abundance of credible external sources of research to support its arguments most notably, the sociologist perspective of Chrys Ingraham. Reliability has been ensured within this article as its publisher Aeon is a well established magazine that produces in-depth essays, incisive articles and editorials. This is further heightened by the credentials of the author Beth Montemurro, a Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Psychological and Social Sciences at Penn State University. Bias is not suspected within this article as it appraised an array of perspectives and does not subjectively critique the societal progression of matrimony into a commodified excess of lavishness and identity.

Otnes, C., Lowrey, T. “‘Til Debt Do Us Part: the Selection and Meaning of Artefacts in the American Wedding” *The Association For Consumer Research* (1993)

This conference paper was exceptionally useful as it provided a clear understanding of the ritualised elements of consumption and hierophany experience of brides when acquiring products for their wedding. The source was published in the proceedings of *The Association For Consumer Research*, a peer-reviewed and reputable journal site which enhances reliability.

Although the research was conducted 1993 which provides direct sociological insight on consumer behaviours relative to that specific time, it is probable that contemporary research has emerged latterly, providing a more accurate examination and thus reducing validity.

Nevertheless, scholars in consumer behaviour Cele Otnes and Tina Lowrey are highly credible as a Professor of Marketing at the University of Illinois and obtaining a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from the University of Houston respectively. Given the focus of the study on the financial aspects and debt implications of the selection and meaning assigned to wedding artefacts, there is a potential unconscious bias towards presenting a pessimistic perspective on excessive wedding expenditure. This is rectified by the research methods conducted for the study including several focus groups with a sample of nineteen brides, interviews with more than fifty couples and non-participant observations at approximately one hundred weddings over a four-year period.

Pajares, F. Prestin, A. Chen, J. and Nabi, R. “Social Cognitive Theory and Mass Media Effects” *William and Mary ScholarWorks* (2009)

This scholarly book chapter ‘Social Cognitive Theory and Mass Media Effects’ proved to be immensely useful in gauging an understanding of the psychological impacts on media consumption. It was specifically useful in detailing Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory that could be applied in chapter two to the release of copious wedding movies in the 1990s that influenced micro consumer behaviours. The academic nature of the source resulted in limited bias as the co-authors deconstructed the social cognitive theories without interference of their subjective perspectives or experiences. Reliability can be attributed to the publication company, *William and Mary ScholarWorks* which is a highly credible institutional repository of journal articles and an ample reference list to other academic sources. Although the source was composed several years ago, this does not detract from its validity due to the combined expertise of the authors.

Such skill and knowledge includes Dr. Pajares, an extensively published author and frequent lecturer on educational psychology and Robin Nabi who has received an AB from Harvard College and a PhD from the Annenberg School for Communication.

Parker, B. "Probing Question: How has the American wedding changed?" *Pennsylvania State University* (2008) available from <https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/probing-question-how-has-american-wedding-changed/>

The qualitative data on the median wedding expenditure within the period of Generation X extracted from this article was immensely useful to the construction of chapter two centering on the evolution of marital rites as a commodity. The article was slightly valid as although there were several references to the scholarly perspective of Beth Montemurro, associate professor of sociology, its contents were last updated in 2008. Validity can be attributed to the publication site, PennState University whose interdisciplinary researchers uphold academic integrity in their pieces of work. Bias is minimised by the inclusion of quotes from external secondary sources and the sustained objective tone. Overall, the source enabled a significant understanding that through the affluence of the decade relative to Generation X and an increasingly consumerist culture, indulgent weddings became a social standard at the meso-level.

Pew Research Center "Young adults around the world are less religious by several measures" (2018) available from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/06/13/young-adults-around-the-world-are-less-religious-by-several-measures/>

Numerical data from the Pew Research Centre was highly useful in providing current statistics on the increasingly secularised worldviews of Generation Z. The quantitative statistics were useful when investigating the continuity and change of religious affiliation across Generation X and Generation Z in chapter three. The survey conducted by this institution is distinctly valid as the data was obtained in the past 5 years and extracted from an expansive sample size of 18 - 60 year old persons across 106 countries. This allows for replication and verification of the findings and further adds to its usefulness when synthesised with my questionnaire findings on Generation Z's rejection of traditional religious institutions in the enactment of weddings.

Reliability is notable as the Pew Research Centre is a nonpartisan database that undertakes rigorous research methodology when conducting public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other social science research. There is certainly no bias as the statistical data is derived from a diverse array of ethnicities, generations and gender.

Powell, C. "Revisiting Princess Diana and Her Wedding Legacy (Part I: The World of Celebrity)" *Huffingpost* (2013) available from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/revisiting-princess-diana_b_3866907

This article was vastly useful in understanding how the watershed moment and media spectacle of the royal wedding in 1981 imploded the social construction of weddings as a consumer rite.

As an abundance of external sources were referenced including journalist Susan Pearson and Vicki Howard, author of *Brides, Inc.: American Weddings and the Business of Tradition* validity is indisputable. This is further strengthened by the article's composer, Cornelia Powell who demonstrates topical knowledge as a wedding folklorist and acclaimed publisher of several novels that centre on wedding pop culture. Reliability is assured as the source as derived from the *Huffingpost*, a substantially credible publication site that ensures thorough fact-checking prior to the release of articles and integrates a diverse range of perspectives in the research presented. Whilst the article was highly useful in exploring how weddings of the 1980s became more theatrical, it nonetheless was released several years ago in 2013 which reduces its capacity to provide accurate information that pertains to a contemporary perspective. There is no perceptible bias as the author clearly refrained from the inclusion of subjective opinions or statements in the construction of this article.

Qu, L. “Families Then & Now: Couple relationships” *Australian Institute Of Family Studies* (2020) available from <https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/families-then-now-couple-relationships#:~:text=Rise%20in%20cohabitation&text=In%201986%2C%206%25%20of%20all,2001%20and%2018%25%20in%202016>.

The qualitative data extracted from this Australian Institute of Family Studies research report was markedly useful as it supplemented my understanding of the rise in cohabitation across 1980-2017 signalling a macro shift in social values that has an indirect association with the commodification of the wedding ritual. Distinctly, the statistical evidence that merely 6% of all couples were cohabiting in 1986, when synthesised with my primary findings, assisted with the formation of coherent and well-supported arguments in chapter two. It is valid as it has been published recently and can be corroborated with a range of external sources from the same area of discourse. There is no detectable bias of any form as the analytical report provides factual and statistical evidence collated from extensive ethnographic research. Reliability can be attributed to the Australian Institute of Family studies that conducts high-quality, impartial research with a highly knowledgeable executive team that oversees all publications to ensure accurate information is provided as public knowledge. Lixia Qu, the senior researcher manager for the report has acquired a PhD in sociology and specialises in the topics of family and society which reinforces the reliability of this source.

Rakshit, D. “How the Obsession With Celebrity Weddings Fuels Unrealistic Expectations of Relationships” *The Swaddle* (2022) available from <https://theswaddle.com/how-the-obsession-with-celebrity-weddings-fuels-unrealistic-expectations-of-relationships/>

This article was extensively useful as it comprehensively expounded how extravagant, opulent weddings are transmitted on communication technologies and consuming such media develops a micro desire to emulate the aesthetic of these idealised affairs within a person’s own matrimonial celebrations. A plethora of evidence was integrated into this source to support its claims that fixation on celebrity weddings fuels unrealistic and unaffordable expectations, certainly enhancing validity. The Swaddle is an independent media company that purses topics on culture, gender, societal issues and is a reputable publication site. Reliability is also substantiated by the author, Devrupa Rakshit who is an Associate editor and has obtained a degree in journalism in addition to the neoteric publication date which permits a contemporary perspective on the commodification of weddings. There is minimal bias suspected within the article as it is composed objectively and omits use of personal language or anecdotal evidence.

Rose, C. “How The Wedding Registry Adapted With The Times” *The Medium* (2021) available from <https://medium.com/the-masterpiece/capitalizing-on-love-6f473505fc57#:~:text=A%20new%20type%20of%20wedding%20registry&text=This%20e-commerce%20company%20allows,items%20using%20their%20Zola%20accounts>.

This online article was especially useful in informing my understanding of the modern wedding registry and how this western consumerist practice, instituted in the twentieth century, has changed over time, depending on its socio-cultural context. The consistent and plentiful inclusion of external secondary sources to support its arguments including Pew Research Centre, a reputable site of demographic studies, media content analysis and other empirical social science research certainly enhanced validity. However, reliability is undermined as the article was sourced from, *The Medium* which is not a journalistic enterprise but rather an online publishing platform and thus not limited to professional writers or guarantees that information is derived from places of academia. Nonetheless, there is no suspected bias in its contents as the author remains impartial on the topic through providing objective statements on the adapting and evolving practice of wedding registries, correlating to the commodification of weddings.

Rotondi, J. “How Prince Charles and Lady Diana’s Wedding Became a Global Phenomenon” *History* (2020) available from <https://www.history.com/news/prince-charles-lady-diana-wedding>

This online article proved to be considerably useful in the construction of chapter two as it detailed the global phenomenon of the royal wedding transpiring in 1981 which became the idealised nuptial ceremony for several ensuing generations. The usefulness however, is insubstantial as various sections of the article provide details of the wedding irrelevant to the PIP topic that could not be effectively synthesised with my own primary findings. Reliability can be attributed to the author, Jessica Pearce Rotondi who has obtained a Bachelors in English from Brown University and has work published on The History Channel, Atlas Obscura, The Huffington Post and Refinery29. The validity of this source is heightened by its recent publication date in 2020 which corroborates the information provided on the micro-level desire to replicate the nuptials of Prince Charles and Lady Diana which in turn, expedited the commodification of weddings within the period of Generation X. The inclusion of external sources such as interview extracts from Jonny Dymond, a royal correspondent of BBC news strengthened reliability. Bias is not present as the author abstains from the implementation of subjective claims and *History.com* collaborates with a wide range of writers and editors to produce accurate and informative content without the inference of personal opinions.

Scott, A.O “Bridesmaid Revisited, Again and Again” *The New York Times* (2008) available from <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/18/movies/18dres.html>

This article was moderately useful when examining how popular culture has become a facilitator of commodified wedding experiences and has introspectively reflected on the increased value on materialistic possessions which has taken precedence over religiosity. It was slightly reliable as it was sourced from The New York Times which cannot be considered an academic place of publication, but rather a reputable source of social commentary. The validity is not assured as it was published several years ago in 2008 and cannot accurately reflect contemporary society. The articles content is primarily focused on the movie release of *27 Dresses* and has minimal useful to the research process or construction of the central material. A quotation was extracted from the article and integrated in chapter one to support how the wedding industrial complex has played a pivotal role in instituting the social construction of weddings as an elaborate affair rather than a symbolic rite of passage. The author, A.O. Scott is a journalist and cultural film critic with no apprehension on the subject of weddings and commodification thus, greatly reducing the reliability of this source.

Shinners, R. “This is What Your Favourite Movie Weddings Would Cost in Real Life” *Country Living* (2016) available from <https://www.countryliving.com/life/entertainment/a39027/real-cost-of-movie-weddings/>

This online article was moderately useful as it provided estimated costs of wedding portrayals in films with a particular focus on *Father of the Bride*, released in 1991 that was effectively integrated into chapter two centred on the Generation X time period of the 1980s to 1990s. It was highly useful in sourcing specific evidence to support that argument that macro representations of extravagant nuptial affairs in the media alter micro perceptions that excessive expenditure and lavishness is vital to the ‘perfect’ wedding day. Although the article is not academically natured, reliability is assured by the publication site, Country Living which is directed under Hearts Corporations a global, diversified information, services and media company. Nonetheless, it is a lifestyle and home magazine and has insufficient reference to external sources which overall reduces the validity of this source. This is somewhat rectified by the author, Rebecca Shinner’s expertise as evidenced through her Bachelor degree in communication and political science from Tulane University. There is no suspicion of bias as the author sustained a neutral perspective when composing the article

The Week Staff “The origins of marriage: First love marriage in the world” *The Week* (2015) available from <https://theweek.com/articles/528746/origins-marriage>

This online source was considerably useful in providing a historical context of the institution of marriage that was critically integrated into chapter one. It clearly outlined the purpose of weddings, the involvement of religion and evolution of marriage from practical reasons to a mutual love and devotion between the couple. The articles’ usefulness was enhanced by the extensive research conducted by the authors as it contained specific examples of wedding rites, time periods and scholarly opinions. Validity is not assured as the article was scribed by The Week Staff and as such, the credentials of the authors are undisclosed. This is rectified by the numerous external sources references throughout the article including Marilyn Yalom, a Stanford Gender historian and author of *A History of the Wife*. Reliability can be attributed to the reputable publication site *The Week* which employs an erudite team of journalists and is owned by Future plc, an international media group and leading digital publisher. Bias is not evident as the authors provide factual information on the origins of marriage without the inference of their personal opinions, sustaining objectivity.

The Week Staff “The wedding industrial complex” *The Week* (2015) available from <https://theweek.com/articles/463257/wedding-industrial-complex>

This online article was thoroughly useful as it was a precise deconstruction of the wedding industrial complex and the evolution of social expectations to spend fortunes on an elaborate wedding. It was critically useful for expanding my understanding of the cross-cultural generational focus as it succinctly outlined how wedding celebrations have been an occasion for an extravagant display of wealth from the onset of the 20th century. Validity is questionable as the article was scribed by The Week Staff and the official author remains unknown. This was compensated as the article was published on a periodical journal site The Week that has been rated high for factual reporting, knowledgeable staff and reliability. Throughout the article, references to a multitude of credible external sources including Carol Wallace author of *All Dressed in White: The Irresistible Rise of the American Wedding* and Sociologist Laurie Essig were made which certainly enhanced validity. There is no traceable bias as the article excludes any personal opinion or perspectives on the topic and sustains a factual, objective tone.

Target “Fifty, Fun and Friendly: A Look Back at Target Firsts” *Target Company* (2012) available from <https://corporate.target.com/article/2012/05/look-back-at-target-firsts-50-anniversary>

This source had limited usefulness since the predominance of its contents were irrelevant to this PIP topic. However it increased my understanding of Target’s launch of its comprehensive gift registry, Club Wedd in 1995 that cemented the link between consumerism and the western wedding experience. While it is written from and sustains an objective perspective, the source is highly biased due to the intent of the article to summarise the five decades of innovations and retail revolutions Target has achieved as a mass-market retailer. Validity is diminished by its outdated publication 2012 and unclear authorship which undermines its factual accuracy.

Reliability is somewhat evident as the article was sourced from Target corporations website which is reputable and Brian Cornell, the head of the dynamic global team oversees publications prior to their release.

Trentmann, F. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p.15

This handbook was exceptionally useful when constructing the introductory sections of chapter two as it provides a sociological approach to the study of the desire, acquisition, use, and disposal of goods and services. It is highly reliable as the source was founded from Oxford University Press, a renowned company that undertakes a process of peer review for all scholarly publications. Validity is arguably limited due to the dated nature of its publication in 2012 however, this is compensated by the credentials and erudition of Frank Trentmann, a historian of consumption and materiality embedded into societies and cultures overtime. The source is free from biased perspectives as it produces highly objective information which is indicative of extreme validity when synthesised with additional

secondary findings and further, increasing its usefulness due to its impartiality. Whilst the source did not specifically disclose information on weddings its broader focus on consumption was undeniably useful in forming an understanding of prevalent, micro-level consumer behaviours within the period of Generation X.

Wallace, H. "The marriage industrial complex" *Salon* (2007) available from https://www.salon.com/2007/05/21/mead_weddings/

This article was highly useful throughout the research process, as it provided an in-depth understanding on the critical role macro scale wedding industrial complex has in fueling the commodification of weddings. This was framed through an interview with Rebecca Mead who is credited for composing the critically acclaimed novel *One Perfect Day* which substantiates her expertise on the topic. Reliability is debatable as the article was sourced from Salon, an independent publication that releases opinionated pieces on topics of current news and politics. Although the article's content is predominantly an informal, unstructured interview this did not retract from the validity of the source as it sustained a clear focus on the social construction of extravagant wedding celebrations. Additionally, it was extensively useful when investigating the undertones of feminism and heteronormativity in the process of wedding planning and the manner in which the industry capitalises on the micro level ideals of material possessions as a token of enduring love most notably, the engagement ring. The source is mostly unbiased however, the author does occasionally provide a subjective position on the emergence of lavish and excessive weddings ceremonies.

World Bride "Modern Lessons From History: The Bridal Shower" *World Bride Magazine* (2014) available from <https://worldbridemagazine.com/3546/modern-lessons-from-history-the-bridal-shower/>

This online article was considerably useful in providing a historical context on the evolving nature of bridal showers, adapting to their relative socio-cultural environment and time. Its brevity, however, reduces its usefulness when constructing the central material as only a limited extent of information could be extracted and synthesised with primary results. Bias is inherent to the specialised publication which focuses on wedding-related topics however, the author remains objective throughout the entirety of the article. Although *World Bride* is not considered a scholarly or peer-reviewed source, reliability can somewhat be attributed to its establishment in 2006 and knowledgeable journalism team whom many are veterans of the wedding industry thereby, providing informed first-hand insights. The site of publication is a resource for individuals seeking general information and social commentary on wedding-related matters rather than empirical evidence and thus can be deemed moderately reliable. Validity is compromised by the lack of specific citations to external academic sources to support the factual evidence presented.

Wren, A. O. Chupp, M. G. Albers, N. D. Knotts, T. L. "Consumer Perceptions and Pricing Practices for Weddings" Springerlink Journal of Consumer Policy (2021)

This extract sourced from the Journal of Consumer Policy was vastly useful in the construction of chapter three as it provided an in depth analysis of the social and media pressures for a more grandiose wedding that have distorted micro-level consumer perceptions and pricing practices in relation to nuptial celebrations. Spring Linker is an international publishing institution which upholds academic credibility of its journals through a diligent peer review process thus heightening reliability. It supported its claims with quantitative research extracted from a survey of female participants in an age range of 18 to 30 which may lend to a generational and gender bias in the results. Its recent publication in 2021 effectively validates the data provided, thereafter ensuring all evidence is relevant to the continual commodification of wedding ceremonies in the 2020s. The journal publication was co-authored by highly skilled researchers with topical expertise on consumer behaviour and three of whom work in the department of psychology at Louisiana State University including Nancy Albers who is Dean of the School of Business. While the presence of bias within this academic discourse is acknowledged its impact is inherently limited and does not compromise its integration into my central material.



MENTORING: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Wendy Mockler

ABSTRACT

This research paper is the result of my work as a critical friend for the ACEL “New Voices” project in collaboration with Professor Frank Crowther. Scholars in the “New Voices” project participated in the Gifts program. This research explores leading improvement in schools through teacher learning and empowerment by nesting the Gifts program in cultural renewal through a framing of the schoolwide pedagogy.

Mentoring is ubiquitous in schools, but when educative mentoring is embedded in a culture, it can set in train a transformational agenda in a synergistic model. Multiple ventures at critical junctures build momentum and understanding, and in this model for mentoring a school, a culture of inquiry that invites cognitive conflict, recognises strength comes from diversity and multiple perspectives. The schoolwide pedagogy (SWP) draws individuals into a shared articulation of values and beliefs privileged in the school teaching and learning, while the Personal Pedagogical Gifts program (PPG) celebrates the unique pedagogy of individuals. They work in concert to develop a synergy between organisational and individual pedagogies through reflexive practice embedded in a culture of inquiry. It is an educative mentoring model that transforms through reframing, in a community of practice (CoP) that values each other and the students it serves.

Mentoring: Bringing it all together

Mentoring is ubiquitous in schools, but when educative mentoring is embedded in a culture, it can set in train a transformational agenda in a synergistic model. Multiple ventures at critical junctures build momentum and understanding, and in this model for mentoring a school, a culture of inquiry that invites cognitive conflict, recognises strength comes from diversity and multiple perspectives. The schoolwide pedagogy (SWP) draws individuals into a shared articulation of values and beliefs privileged in the school teaching and learning, while the Personal Pedagogical Gifts program (PPG) celebrates the unique pedagogy of individuals. They work in concert to develop a synergy between organisational and individual pedagogies through reflexive practice embedded in a culture of inquiry. It is an educative mentoring model that transforms through reframing, in a community of practice (CoP) that values each other and the students it serves.

Coping with uncertainty

Mentoring is an effective strategy to enhance professional learning in productive partnerships (Aderibigbe, Gray, & Colucci-Gray, 2018) and provides stability and certainty in a school culture. Educative mentoring goes further with a transformative aspiration that seeks to reframe teachers’ understandings of students, identify challenges and develop alternative approaches (Langdon & Ward, 2015). It moves to a model of reflective mentoring which is developmental not judgemental, promoting critical reflection (Tonna, Bjerkholt, & Holland, 2017). “Educative mentoring is based on a broader conception that prioritizes reflection and continued growth” (Bradbury, 2010, p. 1050) and this is at the heart of creating a “culture of inquiry”. Figure 1 highlights a range of initiatives strengthening a mentoring culture, and emanating from the centre, is this culture of inquiry for the school context.

In a futures-focused discourse that appreciates the uncertainty and ambiguity of contemporary society, a deliberate democratic dialogue can create deep learning between teachers in the service of students (Reid, 2018). The situated context for this model is buffeted by change from the wider landscape of education. The pervasive influence of standardised testing looms over the teaching and learning, narrowing curriculum (Polesel, Dulfer, & Turnbull, 2013) and limiting professional autonomy (Welch, 2015). The demands on teachers to meet national and international standard requirements for teacher development that straddle these competing discourses of a standardised approach and a future-focused vision can leave teachers unsure of their professional identity.

The schoolwide pedagogy (SWP) is a visible and discoverable “articulation of shared values, beliefs and pedagogical practices within a school community in support of the school’s vision” (Conway & Abawi, 2013, p. 3) that strengthens identity within the community. It features in the mentoring model as a starting point for critical reflection, as it derives from a shared understanding of our pedagogical priorities as a learning community and is anchored in authoritative pedagogies. It highlights our commonalities in this domain, drawing us all together in a CoP.

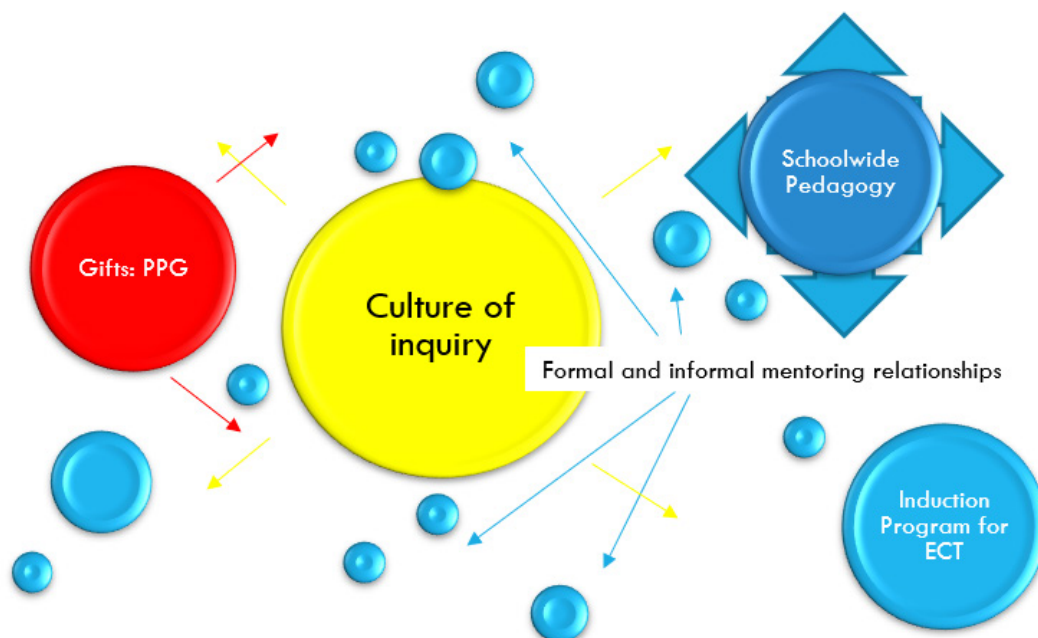


Figure 1: Mentoring in the school context

Personal pedagogical gifts

The Gifts program supports teachers to articulate their unique and distinct personal pedagogical gifts (PPG) so they can be celebrated and utilised in the teaching and learning environment (Crowther & Boyne, 2016). It changes the narrative of a deficit model of compliance where teachers are measured up against a standardised ideal, to an empowering and future-focused dialectic privileging the voice and agency of teachers. Participants are invited to engage in authentic professional conversations in co-mentoring partnerships and through an appreciative inquiry, discern their PPG. These small groups are motivated by a culture of compassion in a community of inquiry, moving beyond the dyadic dynamic to a CoP with a shared belief in each other’s PPG.

The Gifts program works through a series of exercises (Crowther & Boyne, 2016) that uncover five key influences that define a teacher's PPG through:

1. Personality type, as defined by Myers Briggs;
2. Personal subject area passion;
3. Preference for a distinct level of cognition;
4. "First choice" teaching context; and
5. Priority mode of student engagement.

Successful change will not be borne out of further intensive teacher evaluation, but spearheaded by self-understanding and heart-work to sharpen the focus and motivation for the daily work of teachers building lateral capacity (Apple, 2013). Systems that have made progress in around six years with varying starting points and fewer resources than similar designs have sustained that growth by harnessing the collaborative expertise of their teachers to strengthen pedagogy as part of an overarching strategy (Barber, Chijioke, & Mourshed, 2010). The Gifts project is an initiative that realises this and maps out a trajectory for self-actualisation that lights that path.

Teaching quality is a critical factor in negotiating change and sustaining innovations, and school leaders seek this out in prospective candidates. In establishing mentoring schemes it is generally accepted it should be democratic and voluntary with individuals fully committed (Munro, 2017). Inevitably however, when someone is left behind, they may become soured by the experience or teachers become overwhelmed (Inzer & Crawford, 2005) causing the system to become dysfunctional. Initiatives that live in a deep shared meaning across an entire system are the antidote and will galvanise individuals into a CoP, becoming transformational and sustainable. The Gifts program harnesses the collaborative power of teachers as every teacher can be part of this project.

A teacher's PPG cannot be scaled, measured or standardised. Embedded in the Gifts program is the relationship based on relational trust between individuals in an educational setting that supports teachers to be innovative. Researchers advocating for change in education acknowledge that "educational change is technically simple and socially complex" (Fullan, 2016, p. 67). With that understanding, innovation leaders in education socialise change while aligning strategy with expertise and a co-mentoring strategy among peers achieves this, as reciprocity exists between all of the participants. The Gifts program builds authentic relationships as teachers become conscious of who they are as a teacher in this co-mentoring experience. Strengthening and sharing teachers' PPG in learning partnerships reflects an educative mentoring model which can focus on conceptual change. It is in that dynamic, multiple teacher leaders can emerge who affect transformational change on the culture of teaching and learning.

Synergy

Innovating in a school using top down or bottom-up strategies is problematic. Top-down strategies need to draw on wholesale endorsement, while bottom up strategies meet power and influence from the wrong side. 'Leadership from the Middle' breaks middle ground and can lead to sustainable change (Fullan, 2016). This synergy of a mentoring model creates proactive roles for teachers, recognising the power of the collaborative capacity of the organisation by investing in the suprastructure of coexisting CoPs and in the teachers themselves in a developmental, generative model. In this school context, the clear intent is to pay significant attention to a practice-focused approach and pursue transformational change in the teaching and learning environment through reflective practice using the SWP, the Gifts program and formal and informal mentoring programs.

The premise of educative mentoring is for mentors to learn in practice with others and the model of parallel leadership supports this. "It (parallel leadership) embodies four distinct qualities -mutual trust, shared purpose, allowance for individual expression and a commitment to sustainable school

success” (Crowther, 2010, p. 37). Intrinsic in the qualities it prioritises in leading organisations, is the essence of a development and generative dialogue in a mentoring partnership that promotes an educative purpose built on trust and transformation.

A model for change: ‘Learning Partnerships’

Teachers work autonomously with discrete groups, usually in separated classes with “little time to engage in dialogue with colleagues about teaching practice” (Hadar & Brody, 2010, p. 1643). Bringing teachers out of isolation reveals their tacit knowledge and promotes informal conversations to improve practice. Breaking the isolation of the school culture is a strategic goal in implementing a mentoring program. In Figure 3 a layered model illustrates how each layer forms the basis of the next with ‘breaking of isolation’ overlaying the school culture. In Hadar and Brody’s (2010) model they identify key elements in this process: “acquaintance, share topic, interdisciplinary discourse, and safe environment” (p. 1650). Breaking isolation through these instruments becomes a critical function for building social capital.

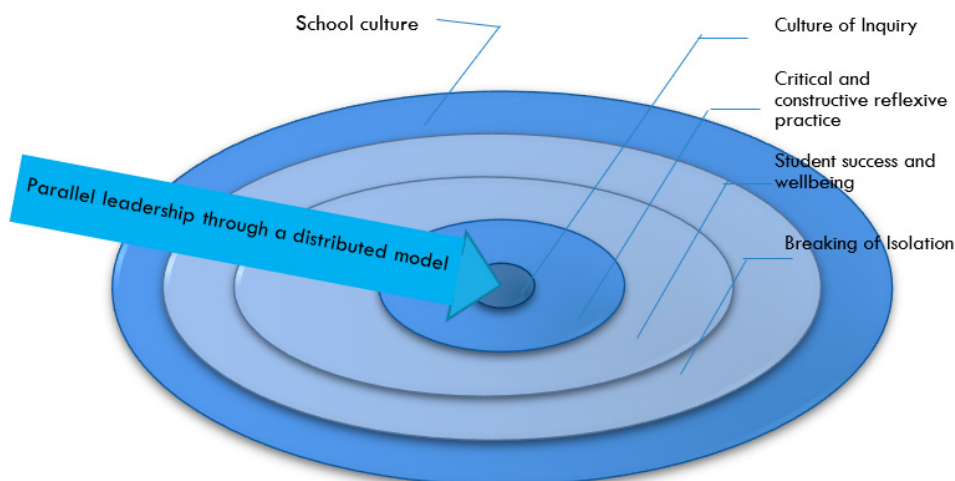


Figure 2: Layered model for mentoring program implementation

The school culture within which a mentoring program sits is usually not resistant to mentoring but neither does it actively seek it. Breaking the isolation of teachers through informal sessions, periodic workshops and opportunities to learn from colleagues will help reimagine the nature of mentoring and become the foundation for the next layer: ‘student success and wellbeing’. The SWP breaks the isolation in the school using an appreciative inquiry.

Building the model

In continuing to build the cultural fabric to support the implementation of a mentoring program, the next focus in the mentoring strategy is to engage protocols and professional conversations that drive a culture of ‘critical and constructive reflexive practice’. Professional conversations are couched in the SWP but in more personal and smaller CoP, the Gifts program comes to the fore. The critical and constructive aspects of this reflexive practice combine the complementary nurturing and guiding roles of a mentor in professional learning when teachers:

1. Articulate and share their PPG,
2. Seek to strengthen it, and
3. Share and demonstrate their PPG.

Whilst being reflective is an important part of improving teaching practice, being reflexive changes practice (Lamb & Aldous, 2016). In developing the Gifts program, that encourages teachers to understand, strengthen and then share their PPG, direct changes to teaching practice take place across a school (Crowther & Boyne, 2016). This is reflexive practice. “It is necessary to appreciate that reflexive practice operates with reflection as its fulcrum” (Roebuck, 2007, p. 78). Following the opportunity to articulate their PPG and develop a narrative around their gifts, teachers can select a colleague’s PPG and observe them in their classes, usually across a range of year levels. They then meet and discuss the PPG observed. Focus questions for individual teachers in learning partnerships include the following:

- How is the PPG integrated or visible in teaching practice?
- How does it relate to authoritative pedagogies and the SWP?
- How does the PPG improve student outcomes, including academic considerations as well as student wellbeing?
- How do the students react to a teacher’s individual PPG?
- How can the observer strengthen their teaching practice after appreciating the teacher’s PPG?
- What new and curious ideas has this experience inspired that you would like to follow up?

The Gifts program operates in a tri-view model: *intra*-view, *inter*-view and *trans*-view. The *intra*-view stage allows for initial self-reflection, the *inter*-view component promotes active discussion, while the final *trans*-view phase brings the opportunity for the individual to consider all the views of the community (Roebuck, 2007). Deliberate personal reflection in this model moves the individual along as they consider and seek feedback from the CoP built around this mentoring relationship. It also provides for secondary reflection and in this developmental and generative dialogue of the CoP, it can challenge understandings, moving beyond just the acquisition of knowledge to a deeper learning and reflection of practice. Bourdieu (2003, p. 164) shared “Every established order seeks to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalisation of its own arbitrariness” (as cited in Arnold, Edwards, Hooley, & William, 2012, p. 291), referring mainly to sociopolitical influences. A rigorous critique of ourselves and a critical challenge to our practice contextualises the dominant interrelationships between individuals and institutions, and between individuals in the school environment. Supported by educative mentoring in this model, reflexive practice challenges culture and pedagogy.

Reflexive practice creates a *culture of inquiry*, contrasted with a culture of acceptance. In Figure 3 it is central in the layered model for this mentoring program. Questioning routine practices and investigating effects of teaching practice on student outcomes underpins this. Against a backdrop of curriculum review at a state level and a growing discontent with standardised testing, especially the Higher School Certificate, the school community is moving away from didactic teaching with a prescriptive curriculum. A future-focused discourse is apparent in the school community in faculty and staff meetings as well as the teaching and learning agenda of the college. This discourse recognises that the knowledge that teachers require is complex, rapidly changing and needs to be informed by the context in which it is being shared (Reid, 2018) and that it is through critical and creative thinking that this flexibility can be met.

It is in a culture of inquiry where cognitive conflict flourishes (Bird, 2014). New learning only happens at the limits of knowledge and understanding in that moment of challenge or epiphany. Cognitive conflict comes out of self-reflection when a teacher recognises new learnings that they can use in their teaching practice. The culture of inquiry in a collaborative model is what challenges them to reimagine their own and others’ practices and in the context of emerging new technologies and the knowledge this is generating, it creates a larger professional commitment to improving teaching and learning in the school community.

It is reflection activities that empower teachers to self-evaluate their practice, such as the Gifts program and through mentoring relationships in a CoP that they can express meaningful feedback and develop their practice. The focus questions offered here create a culture of inquiry informed by the SWP and teachers' PPG and through critical and rigorous reflection they can identify interventions and changes to pedagogy. A practice-focused dialogue increases teacher efficacy and will result in improved teaching practice and outcomes for students. "Teachers with strong efficacy beliefs are more likely to engage in professional learning and improve their practice" (Bird, 2014) and in the dynamic and reflexive models integrating SWP and Gifts, a culture of inquiry will help build sustainable change in the community.

Shaping the structure

In creating a sustainable and authentic culture that supports mentoring, strategic goals at an organisational and individual level need to be aligned. An overarching focus should be on teacher learning and growth without focusing on measuring teacher effectiveness. (Bird, 2014). In developing the structures to support this transformative goal, the program should follow the principle of democratic voluntary involvement. It should strive to be democratic, guaranteeing everyone can participate. It needs to remain voluntary, ensuring each person can choose whether they want to be involved. Structures should also support individuals to shape the process and make it work in their context (Munro, 2017). In formal mentoring partnerships, teachers will be invited to suggest who they would like to be mentored by and those individuals can respond. Informally, mentoring partnerships are likely to develop more readily in a culture that privileges teacher learning in an open culture of inquiry. Specific timings and professional learning schedules require collaborative planning at a leadership level as this is subject to resource availability and school improvement priorities, however, some base lines can be established around implementation goals and enablers.

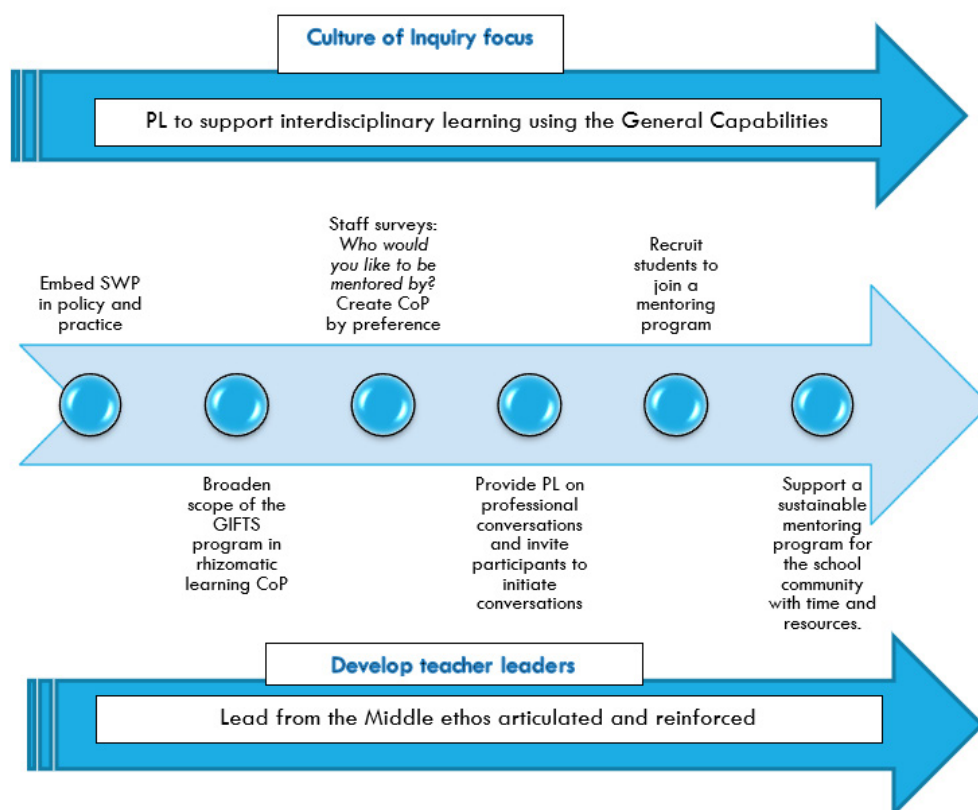


Figure 3: Implementation goals and enablers

At the heart of mentor training is communication and an “expert should conduct this part of the training” (Inzer & Crawford, 2005, p. 53) with quality training provided by a qualified professional as this is “paramount to program success” (Inzer & Crawford, 2005, p. 43). As a new program, it is important to start small and gradually build sustainability by encouraging an inclusive and trustworthy environment for everyone in these co-mentoring relationships. Leadership needs to consider that mentoring programs need to develop a strong infrastructure and time to build trust in the school community. Figure 3 details the small steps in a big picture for mentoring in the school community as it begins with the broader but clear objective of embedding the SWP in policy and practice, but then develops more simplified and targeted moves to create an inclusive mentoring program to engage a whole community, such as supporting other Gifts groups, surveying and providing professional learning about mentoring as well as inviting students to become mentors. These goals are enablers for a strong infrastructure in establishing the mentoring program.

Conclusion

This mentoring model serves the needs of its community by helping create, foster and grow a continuum of peer relationships that support improving teaching practice. The SWP has articulated the shared values and beliefs of the teaching and learning community and drawn everyone into a CoP by breaking the isolation and insulation of teachers. Further work is needed to embed it in policy and practice to act as a compass and a map for improving teaching practice and introducing innovation. Helping teachers to discern their PPG in the tri-view model brings an intentionality to the professional conversations around the integration of their PPG and its influence on students and student outcomes. The practice-focused emphasis is achieved through reflexive practice supported by a culture of inquiry with teachers emerging as leaders in the community. A transformational learning culture values mentoring but not necessarily for every individual. This broader perception of mentoring in an educative model of synergy values transformation for every individual and makes a place ready for all.

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THE EFFECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS IN PE-BASED INTERVENTIONS ON SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social behaviours and social skills have emerged as vital elements of effective schools. Students learning and maintaining social skills has proven to be highly important for successful classrooms and schools have been tasked with helping student develop these highly sought skills. Physical education (PE) classes have become the vessel in which to do this, even though positive social behaviours are highly desirable not just in schools but in life after formal education. PE classes offer students highly unique social benefits and the opportunity to work on developing in many different areas, including the social domain.

Methods: 16 studies featuring interventions that take place in PE classes were selected through a systematic review. The characteristics of these studies was evaluated in order to find 'effective' characteristics in PE- based intervention design. For this systematic review, we searched ERIC, PsychInfo, Web of Science and SportsDiscuss. All PE-based interventions were included in the study if they were written in English, between January 1st 2000-31st December 2020, were peer reviewed. Studies were included if they featured PE-specialists as facilitators and had to be conducted in PE lessons.

Findings: The findings show that there are a multitude of characteristics based on theoretical pedagogy including the SEM, cooperative learning theory and the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model. Further, due to the multicultural and environmental factors that exist in literature worldwide, it can be difficult to gauge whether one approach can be more effective compared to another, if the intervention design is vastly different.

Keywords

Social behaviours, social skills, social competence, PE, interventions, school, characteristics, social

Background

Physical education (PE) has been used as a primary vessel in delivering and trialling interventions aimed at improving the overall student experience in school. Noting the steady decline in participation rates in PE, literature is often aimed at improving engagement in PE classes (Cheung, 2019; Martins et al., 2020), focusing on factors like movement and exertion rates (Hollis et al., 2017). Understanding the social nature of students' school experience may, however, yield improvements in PE-based research. One of the advantages of exploring the social impact in schools has been the significant link between students social, emotional and academic wellbeing (Rose-Krasnor, 1997; Van den Berghe, Cardon, Tallir, Kirk, & Haerens, 2016), with studies demonstrating the positive impact of social interactions on academic performance (J. Fernandez-Rio & Casey, 2020).

There has been some confusion amongst researchers as to the definition of the many terms falling under the 'social' umbrella (Schüller & Demetriou, 2018). Social competence, social cohesion, socialisation, and social skills are some of the often-interchangeable terms scattered through

literature. For the purposes of this study, the term ‘social behaviours’ will be used to encompass these terms. Social cohesion can be defined as an individual’s ‘membership attitudes’ toward a group; their identification, loyalty, attitude or behaviour to/about the group, or its members (Friedkin, 2004). The term ‘social competence’ can be referred to a student’s ability to perform behaviours others find desirable (Vidoni & Ward, 2009). Therefore, in order for students to develop identity and loyalty to a group (social cohesion), they must exhibit behaviours desirable to the members of that group (social competence). These behaviours would belong to the subset of ‘social skills’, or, ‘social behaviours’ that are deemed ‘acceptable’ in their environment, like a school (Cartledge & Milburn, 1978).

With the rise in interventions targeting social outcomes, there has been renewed interest in student-centred approaches like Cooperative Learning (CL). Cooperative Learning is categorised by small groups where the focus is on students helping each other learn (Slavin, 2014). Teamwork, empathy, and care are amongst some of the skills taught within this framework which helps develop face-to-face interactions as well as tactics and strategy amongst group members (Javier Fernandez-Rio, Sanz, Fernandez-Cando, & Santos, 2017). The Sport Education Model and the Teaching Games for Understanding Model, are two prominent frameworks within Cooperative Learning. The Sport Education Model is based on students working with and learning from their peers (Siedentop, 2002). It is done during PE time and has a strong emphasis on student-centred learning where students gradually feel empowered and autonomous, and therefore become intrinsically motivated to participate in lessons (Bessa, Hastie, Rosado, & Mesquita, 2020). The Teaching Games for Understanding Model (TGfU) is based on strategy, tactics, decision making, and problem solving with teammates in order to achieve the desired outcome (O’Leary, 2016). These modified versions of well-established and popular sports allow students to focus on developing social skills through game play.

With schools being socially charged environments, social behaviours become essential for many different relationships within the school community. Social behaviours rely on successful interactions amongst group members in order to achieve the desired outcome, and drives self-identity within the group (Slavin, 2014). Social skills and collaboration are vital elements to successful classrooms but have been informal components in education within schools. The impact of social outcomes on learning is so significant that it has been referred to as a ‘hidden curriculum’ (Cartledge & Milburn, 1978). As with many student centred approaches like CL, teachers have often used aspects of it their classroom at some capacity and at all levels of learning (Slavin, 2014). While it appears that it may have been an implied concept in the past, it has since been identified as a vital skill not just for use in schools, but in life after formal education, impacting values, attitudes and self-confidence (Bajric, Bajric, Srđic, & Basinac, 2019).

Social behaviour development is important for interaction at all stages of life, however due to the social nature of education and the increase in social issues falling within the school environment, there is growing public concern over the detrimental effects of bullying, school refusal, and other such anti-social behaviours (Dobrescu, 2019). There is international interest (Derri, Kellis, Vernadakis, Albanidis, & Kioumourtzoglou, 2014; Gulay, Mirzeoglu, & Celebi, 2010; Yücel & Özdayi, 2019) in potential improvement to social factors within the school system, that has brought about literature on existing theories like CL, which has demonstrated links between the social environment and improvements in various cognitive functions. Cooperative learning and developing social skills has been examined in PE settings in the form of interventions (Dyson, Linehan, & Hastie, 2010; Engels & Freund, 2020; Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017). PE classes provide a unique environment for students to develop social behaviours through group play which has demonstrated improvements in students’ interactions with one another, amongst other important findings.

As PE based interventions with an emphasis on social health have been so effective in literature, one of the advantages has been the volume of interventions highlighted in existing studies. However, in order for interventions to be deemed ‘effective’ they need to demonstrate certain outcomes. For example, interventions that have evidence-based outcomes, feature randomised control trials and demonstrate quantitative outcomes are generally favoured (Davies, 2006). Further, in terms of

intervention design, it has been found that self-feedback as well as participants' feedback compared to others has been deemed as a construct of an 'effective' intervention (Williams & French, 2011). Similarly and significant to PE based interventions, self-regulated techniques derived from control theory (goal setting, feedback and self-monitoring) as well as 'active' rather than 'passive' interventions were most effective (Michie, Abraham, Whittington, McAteer, & Gupta, 2009).

The aim of this paper is to identify the effective characteristics of PE-based interventions aimed at improving social behaviours and social skills. A systematic review will be used to source appropriate studies and it can be hypothesised that a host of 'effective' measures will emerge as a result. A literature review will follow highlighting the gaps in literature, strengths and weaknesses of existing interventions, and the significance of the current study on empirical research.

Methods

A systematic literature review was chosen because they include quantitative pooling of data called meta-analyses (Mallett, Hagen-Zanker, Slater, & Duvendack, 2012) and was used in this study due to the volume of literature in this field. In the hierarchy of research evidence, systematic reviews and meta-analyses that feature RCT's are the most effective and successful forms of investigation (Mallett et al., 2012). As RCT's allow for comparison of control groups during, and, at the conclusion of studies, an evaluation and analysis against set criteria is possible. Due to the broad and thorough design of systematic reviews, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines are important in order to maintain consistency in research reporting (Vrabel, 2015) and have been used in this study.

Eligibility criteria

The aim of this systematic review of literature was to examine existing literature on PE-based interventions aimed at improving social behaviours. Studies were included if they:

- Were published in English
- Delivered during PE lessons to school aged children
- Delivered by a specialist PE teacher
- Focused on evaluating the interventions as opposed to how it affected specific population groups
- Examined effects of social behaviours, and/or:
- Report outcomes using independent group difference values

Exclusion Criteria

Studies were excluded from this systematic review of literature if they:

- Were not published as journal articles
- Published outside the specified date (January 1st 2000- December 31st 2020)
- Did not include experimental groups
- Did not feature a practical element of intervention
- Included subjects with physical, mental or intellectual disabilities

Information Sources/ Search Strategy

A systematic review was conducted across three databases; ERIC, PsycInfo, SportsDiscus and Web of Science with the following search terms being examined:

The search strategy that has been employed included the following categories (i) School based, (ii) physical education, (iii) teacher delivered, and (iv) study design. Specifically, the title and abstract field will be searched using the following terms:

1. School* OR “secondary college” OR “secondary education” OR primary education” OR “elementary education”
2. “physical education” OR “phys ed” OR PE
3. Teach* OR Educat* OR Lead* OR Instruct*
4. Test or RCT or randomi* or control or trial or evaluat* or quasi-exper* or cluster or intervention*
5. Social competenc*” OR Cooperat* OR “Social skill*”

Selection Process and Data Collection

In consultation with the university Librarian, the first author (SM) collated a variety of search terms which were then discussed and agreed upon with the second (WC) and third reviewer (JC). All three individuals were involved in selecting databases, under the advice of the university Librarian. All articles were collated on EndNote and duplicates were removed. The first author (SM) manually scanned the remaining articles for additional duplicates or discrepancies, such as incomplete or blank references.

Following that, (SM) and (JC) were then involved in selection process, firstly by screening title/ abstract independently, then resolving any conflicts through the third reviewer (WC). All reviewers used the inclusion/exclusion criteria when screening. When articles required further discussion, notes were added to the articles on EndNote and discussed afterwards. A full text review was completed by the same two initial authors SM and JC independently, and if necessary the second reviewer WC was consulted in any discrepancies emerged.

Data Items

We collected data on:

- the journal article: author year, source of publication
- the study: characteristics, key terms and definitions, methods, limitations
- the participants: age and school level, gender
- the research design: length/ duration, follow up
- the intervention: type, duration, sample size, delivery, results, method of analysis, teacher training

Study Risk of Bias Assessment

One author evaluated each study using an assessment scale derived from van Sluijs and colleagues (van Sluijs, McMinn, & Griffin, 2007). The results of this process can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Methodology quality assessment criteria (van Sluijs et al., 2007)

Author/Year	Methodological Quality Assessment Items										No. of criteria met
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
(Akelaitis & Malinauskas, 2016)	X	X			X	X			X	X	6
(Akemi et al., 2019)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(Balderson & Sharpe, 2005)	X	X				X			X		4
(Bessa et al., 2020)	X	X				X			X		4
(Derri et al., 2014)	X	X		X		X			X		5
(Engels & Freund, 2020)	X	X		X					X	X	5
(J. Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(Filiz & Demirhan, 2019)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(Gil-Madrona et al., 2016)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(Gulay et al., 2010)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(Guzman & Paya, 2020)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(PÉRez-OrdÁS et al., 2020)	X	X		X		X		X	X	X	7
(Ruiz-Ariza et al., 2019)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(Sohrabi, 2019)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6
(Viciano et al., 2020)	X	X		X		X			X	X	6

Table 2: Criteria for assessment of methodological quality

Item	Description
A	Groups comparable at baseline on key characteristics (positive if stratified baseline characteristics were presented for age, sex, and at least one relevant outcome measure; for cluster randomised controlled trials and controlled trials, positive if this was statistically tested; and for all studies only positive when differences observed were controlled for in analyses)
B	Randomisation procedure clearly described and adequately carried out
C	Unit of analysis was individual (negative if unit of analysis was school level or school level randomisation not accounted for in individual level analyses)
D	Validated measures used
E	Dropout described and not more than 20% for studies with follow-up of six months or shorter and 30% for studies with follow-up of more than six months
F	Timing of measurements comparable between intervention and control groups
G	Blinding outcome assessment (positive if those responsible for assessing were blinded to group allocation of individual participants)
H	Participants followed up for a minimum of six months
I	Intention to treat analysis used
J	Potential confounders accounted for in analyses

Reporting bias assessment

Of the 16 included studies, 14 met five or more of the assessment criteria. The remaining two studies (Balderson & Sharpe, 2005; Bessa et al., 2020) met four of the assessment criteria. Only one study had a followed participants for longer than 6 months (PÉRez-OrdÁS et al., 2020)

Synthesis methods

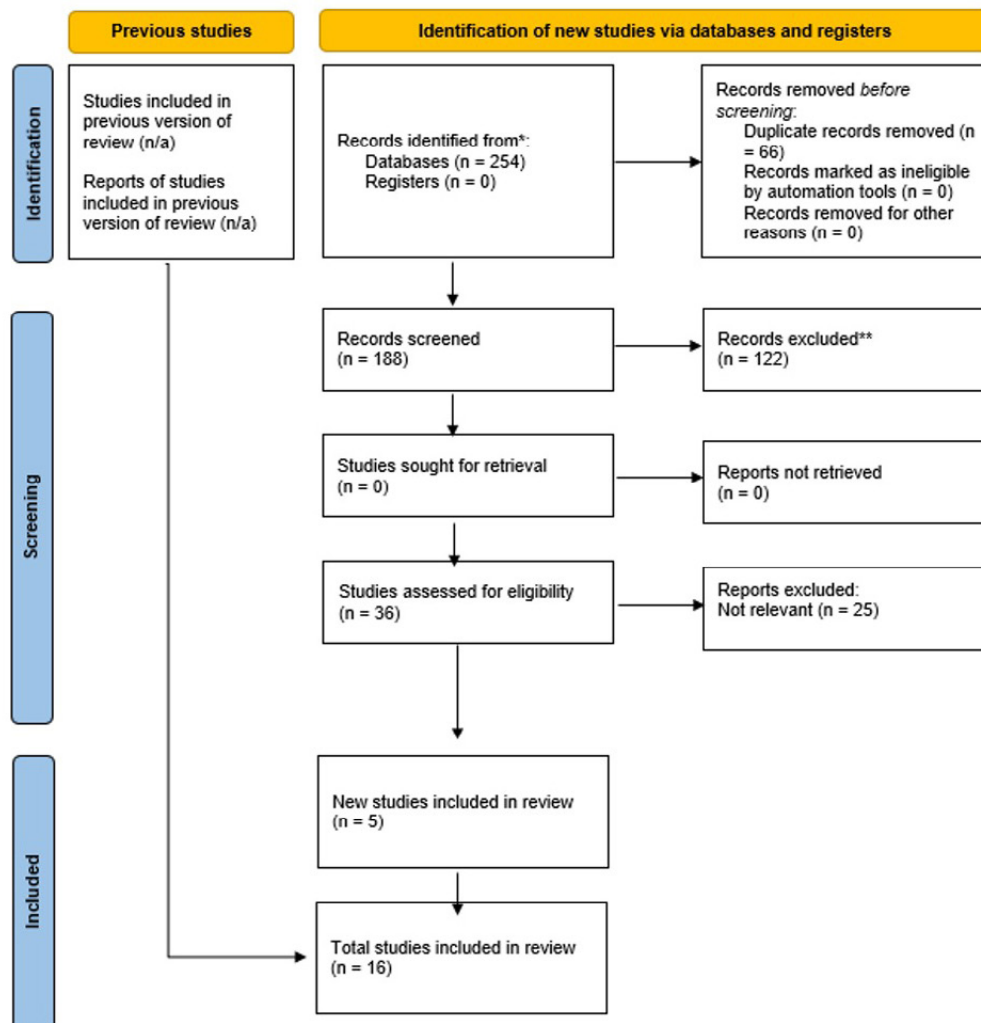
A meta-analysis could not be undertaken due to the heterogeneity of interventions.

Study Selection/ Results

254 articles were identified through database screening (ERIC: 41, PsychInfo: 50, Web of Science: 101, SportsDiscus: 62). After removing 66 duplicates, 188 articles titles and abstracts were screened by two authors (SM) and (JC). Screening for titles and abstracts returned 36 studies which were reviewed in full. The same two authors reviewed 36 full text articles for inclusion in the study. Five additional articles were also added to the review through handsearching (Derri et al., 2014; Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Filiz & Demirhan, 2019; Guzman & Paya, 2020; Sohrabi, 2019). This resulted in 11 articles being identified through the systematic review process.

The process is summarised in the PRISMA flowchart in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Review of studies as per PRISMA guidelines



Study Characteristics/ Results of Synthesis

After careful analysis and a meticulous review of literature, 16 articles were chosen, see Table 1. It is worth noting that whilst some studies featured additional variables like physical and psychological outcomes, they were predominantly chosen as they featured a strong social element and were therefore included in the review.

Of the 16 interventions, nine studies went for at least 12 weeks, with the shortest being 6 weeks in length (Sohrabi, 2019), and eight studies featuring two sessions per week. Out of the 16 studies the most occurring model was the Sport Education model with three articles using this approach (Bessa et al., 2020; J. Fernandez-Rio, Mendez-Gimenez, & Mendez-Alonso, 2017; Viciana, Casado-Robles, Perez-Macias, & Mayorga-Vega, 2020). The length of study ranged from six weeks to eight months and the locations ranged internationally; one study took place in Lithuania (Akelaitis & Malinauskas, 2016), and one each from Japan (Akemi et al., 2019) the US (Balderson & Sharpe, 2005), Portugal (Bessa et al., 2020), Greece (Derri et al., 2014), Germany (Engels & Freund, 2020), and Iran (Sohrabi, 2019). Two studies came from Turkey (Filiz & Demirhan, 2019; Gulay et al., 2010), and seven studies came from Spain (J. Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Gil-Madrona, Samalot Rivera, & Kozub, 2016; Guzman & Paya, 2020; PÉRez-OrdÁS, Pozo, & Grao-Cruces, 2020; Ruiz-Ariza, Suárez-Manzano, López-Serrano, & Martínez-López, 2019; Viciana et al., 2020).

Participants' ages also ranged from elementary to high school aged students. Most studies had mixed gender participant groups, however, three studies featured same-gender groups (Akemi et al., 2019; Gulay et al., 2010; Sohrabi, 2019). Out of the 16 studies, only five took place in primary schools (Balderson & Sharpe, 2005; Derri et al., 2014; Guzman & Paya, 2020; PÉRez-OrdÁS et al., 2020; Sohrabi, 2019). To the authors knowledge, all studies featured pre-test questionnaires of some variety. All studies took place in the school setting and were led by PE specialists.

Interestingly, seven of the 16 studies featured teacher training in preparation for the intervention (Bessa et al., 2020; Engels & Freund, 2020; J. Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Gil-Madrona et al., 2016; PÉRez-OrdÁS et al., 2020; Ruiz-Ariza et al., 2019) which was either in the form of seminars or workshops. One intervention distributed homework (Akelaitis & Malinauskas, 2016), and another featured a reward system (Derri et al., 2014). Two studies gave their teachers some kind of visual support, either with the use of visual aids (Derri et al., 2014) or through Skype with researchers (Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017). Only one study used a pair system with students rotating between partners (Ruiz-Ariza et al., 2019), all other studies featured group work.

All studies featured improving social behaviours or social skills. When conducting pre and post testing, the Perceived Locus of Causality Scale was the most common, used by three studies (J. Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Viciana et al., 2020), two of which also model their approach on the Sport Education model. Two of the chosen studies used a version of the Likert Scale Questionnaire (Gil-Madrona et al., 2016; Viciana et al., 2020), and the rest of the studies used other questionnaire measures.

Interesting results were observed when analysing the limitations of each study. Out of the 16 studies, five identified their study setting as a limitation (Akelaitis & Malinauskas, 2016; Balderson & Sharpe, 2005; Engels & Freund, 2020; J. Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Gulay et al., 2010), citing that future studies should focus on a more diverse age bracket, perhaps including primary school students too. Similarly, the length of study was also a cause of concern for authors of five studies (Derri et al., 2014; Engels & Freund, 2020; Filiz & Demirhan, 2019; Gulay et al., 2010; Ruiz-Ariza et al., 2019) who argued that longer study would yield better result. This ranged from studies who went on for periods of 7 – 12 weeks, often citing that year-long studies would yield the best results.

Furthermore, five studies identified the sample size as a limitation (Derri et al., 2014; Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Filiz & Demirhan, 2019; Gulay et al., 2010; Ruiz-Ariza et al., 2019). These studies identified that a larger sample size would yield more positive results of their study. In addition, transfer of positive measures was a limitation in five studies (Balderson & Sharpe, 2005; Derri et al.,

2014; Gil-Madrona et al., 2016; PÉRez-OrdÁS et al., 2020; Viciano et al., 2020) whose authors found that whilst they produced favourable results in PE time, these improved qualities did not extend to after school or home time. Similarly, two studies (Derri et al., 2014; Filiz & Demirhan, 2019) identified inclusion of other stakeholders in the studies, like parents, teachers, and friends, would be significant in students’ ability to transfer their learnt skills into the real-life context.

A limitation that was quite prominent in most school systems was that by the time researchers are able to enter schools for testing, students’ classes are already set based upon whatever system schools are using in that region. This would impact randomisation of groups. Whilst only two schools (Bessa et al., 2020; Engels & Freund, 2020) identified this as problematic, it would be a cause of concern if an intervention was to take place during PE time where classes are well established ahead of time. Furthermore, in terms of study design six studies would have expanded their research to include a broader range of elements; like social responsibility and aggression, (Engels & Freund, 2020; Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Filiz & Demirhan, 2019; Guzman & Paya, 2020; PÉRez-OrdÁS et al., 2020; Ruiz-Ariza et al., 2019) and three studies (Gulay et al., 2010; PÉRez-OrdÁS et al., 2020; Viciano et al., 2020) would have included both qualitative and quantitative measure variables.

When observing the results of the effectiveness of the abovementioned studies, a few consistencies emerged. For example, when only three studies identified ‘social responsibility’ as having experienced a notable increase (Bessa et al., 2020; J. Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017; Filiz & Demirhan, 2019), three studies observed positive increased for ‘emotional control’ (Gil-Madrona et al., 2016; Gulay et al., 2010; Ruiz-Ariza et al., 2019), and a further three studies (Engels & Freund, 2020; Gil-Madrona et al., 2016; Viciano et al., 2020) observed notable increased in either ‘pleasure’ or ‘enjoyment’ as a result of the interventions. As so few trends emerged in the 16 selected studies, more research in this area is essential in order to discover the best approach toward conducting PE-based interventions. Furthermore, these results suggest that the perimeters or measures of interventions are not fully established in literature which causes confusion when researchers conduct studies.

Table 3. Study characteristics

Author/ Country/ Year	Number of Participants	Model	Length of intervention	Results	Outcome Variable
(Akelaitis & Malinauskas, 2016) Lithuania	51 students	Social emotional learning- no clear model	8.75 hrs	Experimental group students demonstrated better communication (a medium effect, $\eta^2 = .13$), cooperation (a medium effect, $\eta^2 = .09$), assertiveness (a medium effect, $\eta^2 = .14$) and social adaptation (a large effect, $\eta^2 = .25$)	Social skills
(Akemi et al., 2019) Japan	33 male students	Acquisition of Social Knowledge in Sport (ASKS) Model	24 hours over a year	All teams showed significantly higher average scores of KiSS-18 after the unit compared to before the unit (A; $t(5) = -4.79, p < .01$, B; $t(8) = -2.41, p < .05$, C; $t(6) = -2.53, p < .05$)	Social skills, team organisation
(Balderson & Sharpe, 2005) USA	100* 4x classes with average of 25 students	Responsibility based youth program	8.5 weeks	Passive off-task, disruptive off-task, and positive social behaviours, show the percentage of class time spent in passive off-task behaviours to substantially decrease as a function of initial treatment in Classes 1–3	Personal responsibility

Author/ Country/ Year	Number of Participants	Model	Length of intervention	Results	Outcome Variable
(Bessa et al., 2020) Portugal	430 students	Sport Education Model	8 weeks	Improvements on social responsibility ($p < .001$, $r = .40$). Alight improvements on personal responsibility ($p < .001$, $r = .23$), dedication ($p = .021$, $r = .18$), vigor ($p < .001$, $r = .26$), and enthusiasm ($p = .002$, $r = .22$) in SE context.	Social skills, student responsibility
(Derri et al., 2014) Greece	79 students	Intercultural physical education program (IPEP)	16 – 8 weeks?	Group X nationality X measure interaction was significant, $F(8, 108) = 2.05$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.14$	Social skills
(Engels & Freund, 2020) Germany	285 students	Self determination theory	7-14 weeks	Highest scale means for pleasure ($M = 2.18$; $SD = 0.69$) for the intervention group at t2 and the lowest value for social relatedness ($M = 1.38$; $SD = 0.67$) for the control group at t2	Social relatedness
(J. Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017) Spain	217 students	Sport Education Model	12 lesson unit (2x per week)	DI group had final higher scores only in one variable: Autonomy ($p < .05$)	Social relationships, social responsibility
(Javier Fernandez-Rio et al., 2017) Spain	249 students	Cooperative Learning Theory	16 weeks	Intrinsic motivation significantly increased only in the experimental group from $3.96 + 0.75$ to $4.20 + 0.70$ ($p \frac{1}{4} .006$). Identified regulation also increased significantly only in the experimental group from $4.03 + 0.74$ to $4.26 + 0.69$ ($p \frac{1}{4} .004$).	Social factors
(Filiz & Demirhan, 2019) Turkey	55 students	Social Responsibility Model	8 weeks	Responsibility scores of the experimental group who were taught by the PSR-S were higher than the control group scores which were not taught	Social responsibility
(Gil-Madrone et al., 2016) Spain	204 students	Social skills and values	3 months	Significant scores in the intervention group in relation to the values of enjoyment ($t = -7.10$; $p < .01$), fair play ($t = -8.09$; $p < .01$), social relation ($t = -6.48$; $p < .01$), good habits ($t = -7.43$; $p < .01$) y emotional control ($t = -6.03$; $p < .01$)	Social skills
(Gulay et al., 2010) Turkey	44 female students	Cooperative Games Model	12 weeks	Significant differences in emotional expressivity ($F_{1,42}=5.94$, $p < .05$; $n_2=0.13$, $power=0.66$); emotional control ($F_{1,42}=4.33$, $p < .05$; $n_2=0.94$, $power=0.530$); social sensitivity ($F_{1,42}=17.08$, $p < .01$; $n_2=0.29$, $power=0.981$); social control ($F_{1,42}=7.44$, $p < .01$; $n_2=0.15$, $power=0.760$) between pre-test and post-test measurements	Social skills

Author/ Country/ Year	Number of Participants	Model	Length of intervention	Results	Outcome Variable
(Guzman & Paya, 2020) Spain	75 students	Cooperative Learning Theory	7 weeks	In both the exam and the reminder, the scores obtained by CL students were higher than those of their DI peers	Cooperative behaviours
(PÉRez-OrdÁS et al., 2020) Spain	210 students	Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR)	8 months	Lower-middle socioeconomic context schools that, in comparison to upper-middle socioeconomic context schools, showed a significant decline in the variable physical and verbal aggression total score ($p = .028$, $h^2 = .045$), and in the subscale verbal aggression ($p < .005$, $h^2 = .082$).	Social responsibility
(Ruiz-Ariza et al., 2019) Spain	184 students	Emotional Intelligence Model	12 weeks	The EG increased well-being after 12 weeks (post: $4.75 + 0.71$ vs. pre: $4.34 + 0.77$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d \frac{1}{4} 0.553$) in inactive students.	Pro-social behaviours
(Sohrabi, 2019) Iran	66 students	Vygotsky's theory of social development	6 weeks*	Significant differences were found between pre-test and post-test for the experimental group, and between post-tests for control and experimental groups	Social skills
(Viciano et al., 2020) Spain	123 students	Sport Education	12 sessions	The goodness-of-fit results ranged: $-2LL = 190.031-422.695$ and $AIC = 200.031-432.695$. The MLM analyses showed that the EG participants had a statistically significant increase in the scores of all positive measured dimensions	Interpersonal variables

Discussion

The present study was aimed at systematically reviewing literature on PE-based interventions at school level, designed to improve social behaviours and social skills of its students. The purpose was to evaluate and develop the positive characteristics which, when included in the design of the study, were effective. The systematic review indicates many inconsistencies in PE-based interventions. For example, the wide range of theoretical models used in the 16 studies varied greatly, as well as factors such as measurement tools, sample size and secondary components indicate that at present, what is considered as 'effective' in interventions is unclear. The results indicate that in most cases, when students are exposed to PE-based interventions, there was general improvement in participation rates and engagement.

It was found that there was some contention in literature over several of the study characteristics. For example, the duration of the studies, the multicomponent nature of study design and the age of subject sample was identified as needing further clarity. The findings have also shown that certain characteristics were effective across all similar studies, like the need for a theoretical framework to feature in the study design and including stakeholders in order to improve transfer. Included studies clearly focused on some type of social development in the PE setting however, this paper demonstrates the need for these terms to be reconciled within literature on social development in order to obtain more valid and replicable results in future studies.

When evaluating the limitations of the study, one of the most prominent issues of this paper has been the lack of studies in this field, making comparisons difficult. Due to the interchangeable terms in literature on the ‘social’ aspect of students’ development, it was difficult to source a wide range of studies in this field. Further, due to the scope of the research on social cohesion, it was eliminated from the study’s research terms. In order to have obtained the most authentic assessment of social determinants, the other three search terms were used. Social cohesion was too broad to focus on in this study.

Further, many studies noted the sample size as problematic which impacts results and has an impact on a study like this where ‘effectiveness’ is measured according to the study results. Lastly, many studies identified the age of the students as having an impact on results. A wider variety of age groups would need to be represented in future studies in order to obtain a better understanding of the effect of social elements on students and class groups.

Conclusions

The findings of the current systematic review on the effective characteristics in PE interventions on social behaviours and social skills have shown that effective characteristics of interventions are still unclear. It has, however, yielded positive results in establishing a ‘effective’ intervention design in the future. The findings suggest that a Cooperative Learning approach may play an essential role in improving the way students interact with each other and their teachers. Further, it shows that improvements in student social skills are not the sole responsibility of schools and would be far more effective if they involved parents and other stakeholders. The systematic review also demonstrated that for future research to yield more concrete results, they must include bigger sample sizes and include students from both primary and secondary settings. The length of the interventions has also shown to be a point of contention and further research in this area is essential in developing a strong and effective intervention.

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ADVICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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The Education Research Journal (erj) suggested guidelines

What's your question?

A good research paper addresses a specific research question. The research question—or study objective or main research hypothesis—is the central organising principle of the paper.

Whatever relates to the research question belongs in the paper; the rest doesn't.

Structure of your research article

Once your research question is clearly defined, writing the paper becomes considerably easier. The paper will ask the question, then answer it. The key to successful scientific writing is getting the structure of the paper right. The basic structure of a typical research paper is the sequence of Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion (sometimes abbreviated as IMRAD). Each section addresses a different objective. The author states: (i) the problem they intend to address - the research question—in the Introduction; (ii) what they did to answer the question in the Methods section; (iii) what they observed in the Results section; and (iv) what they think the results mean in the Discussion.

In turn, each basic section addresses several topics, and may be divided into subsections.

In the Introduction, the author should explain the rationale and background to the study.

What is the research question, and why is it important to ask it? While it is neither necessary nor desirable to provide a full-blown review of the literature as a prelude to the study, it is helpful to situate the study within some larger field of enquiry. The research question should always be clearly defined.

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