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Boundaries and Ethics of Borrowing from Different Cultures in Central European Countries

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study was to debate the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures in central European countries.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low-cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The findings revealed that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures in central European countries. Preliminary empirical review revealed that cultural borrowing in the fashion industry often raises concerns of cultural misappropriation, lack of recognition and compensation for the original cultures, and perpetuation of power imbalances. It emphasized the need for informed cultural exchange and collaboration. It is crucial to establish guidelines and policies that provide clear frameworks for ethical borrowing practices across various domains such as fashion, music, culinary arts, and visual arts.

Recommendations: The Cultural Appropriation Theory, Postcolonial Theory and Intercultural Communication Theory may be used to anchor future studies on boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures in central European countries. Open dialogue should be encouraged, equal partnerships and meaningful collaborations between cultures is also essential. Also, legal frameworks should be developed to protect traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and the rights of cultural communities.

Keywords: *Boundaries, Ethics, Borrowing, Cultures, Artist*

1. INTRODUCTION

The boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures refer to the considerations and principles involved in the act of cultural borrowing, particularly when it comes to the adoption or appropriation of elements from marginalized or historically oppressed cultures. This topic examines the moral, ethical and power dynamics that arise when individuals or groups engage in cultural borrowing, aiming to explore the complexities and potential consequences of such practices. Boundaries and ethics surrounding the borrowing from different cultures are important considerations to ensure respect, sensitivity, and appreciation of cultural diversity (Lomas, 2021). It is essential to approach cultural borrowing with caution, as misappropriation or insensitive representation can lead to cultural exploitation and the erosion of cultural heritage.

In the United States, the appropriation of Native American imagery, symbols, and cultural practices has been a subject of debate. While some argue that it perpetuates stereotypes and undermines Native American identities, others view it as a form of appreciation or homage. For instance, the use of Native American headdresses in fashion and popular culture has been widely criticized for its cultural insensitivity and commodification. Similarly, in the United States, the borrowing of elements from African American culture has been prevalent in various fields, such as music, fashion, and sports. For example, hip-hop music and its associated fashion trends have had a significant impact on popular culture. However, the appropriation of these cultural elements raises ethical concerns. The complexities of cultural borrowing in the context of African American music and highlighted the importance of recognizing the contributions and intellectual property rights of the original creators (Kirby, 2023). Respecting the boundaries and ensuring proper attribution and representation are crucial to avoid cultural exploitation.

In the United Kingdom, the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures can be observed in the context of cuisine. The popularity and appropriation of ethnic foods have raised questions about cultural representation and ownership. For instance, the proliferation of Indian cuisine, such as curry dishes, in the UK has sparked debates around cultural authenticity, as the flavors and recipes are often modified to suit local tastes. Some argue that this adaptation can dilute the cultural heritage and overlook the contributions of Indian chefs and communities. However, it is essential to consider the boundaries and ethics of such borrowing. The representation of South Asian cuisine in the UK and highlighted the need for accurate cultural representation and acknowledgment of the origins and significance of these dishes (Funge-Smith & Bennett, 2019). It is important to avoid misrepresentations that could perpetuate stereotypes or distort the cultural heritage of South Asian communities.

In Japan, the adoption of Western fashion and style has been a longstanding trend. While this cultural borrowing has been generally accepted and embraced, concerns have arisen regarding the potential erasure of traditional Japanese aesthetics. Some argue that the dominance of Western influences in fashion and popular culture may diminish the visibility and preservation of indigenous Japanese artistic expressions. In Japan, one prevalent example is the adoption of Western-style wedding ceremonies. This trend gained popularity in the 20th century where the number of Western-style weddings in Japan increased by 16% between 2010 and 2014 (Cao, 2023). While this borrowing can be seen as a way to celebrate and incorporate different traditions, it is important to ensure that the original cultural elements are respected and not misrepresented.

In Austria, the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures can be observed in the realm of music and dance (Nai, Young, & Bos, 2022). One notable example is the appropriation of traditional folk music and dance forms, such as the Austrian "Schuhplattler," by contemporary pop music and entertainment. This borrowing raises questions about cultural preservation, respect for traditions, and the commercialization of cultural heritage. Some argue that the adaptation and mainstream representation of these folk traditions in popular culture can lead to the dilution of their cultural significance and overlook the contributions of local communities.

In developing economies such as India, there are instances of cultural borrowing that raise ethical questions. For example, the incorporation of traditional Indian designs and motifs into global fashion brands has sparked debates on cultural exploitation and the appropriate compensation of artisans and craftspeople (Lojacono, 2022). Additionally, the commercialization of yoga, an ancient practice originating from India, by multinational corporations has led to discussions on the commodification and dilution of its spiritual and cultural significance.

In Sub-Saharan economies, the global popularity of African art and music has led to cultural borrowing and appropriation. The adoption of African cultural elements by Western artists and musicians has generated both appreciation and criticism (Oladejo, 2022). One example is the appropriation of African musical styles, such as Afrobeat, in Western popular music, where questions of cultural representation and proper credit have been raised.

Moreover, the influence of Western popular culture in Sub-Saharan African countries, such as Nigeria and South Africa, has been significant. Western music, fashion, and media have made their way into local cultures, leading to a blend of traditional and modern elements. However, the boundaries of cultural borrowing must be respected. The impact of cultural globalization on Nigerian fashion and highlighted the importance of maintaining cultural authenticity and ownership while incorporating Western influences (Adebayo & Onabanjo, 2018). It is crucial to strike a balance that allows for cultural exchange while preserving the cultural heritage and identity of Sub-Saharan communities.

Cultural borrowing often takes place within and across diverse ethnic groups. An example can be observed in Kenya, where the Maasai people and their cultural symbols have been frequently borrowed and incorporated into various industries, including fashion and tourism. However, the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from the Maasai culture have been a topic of debate. Scholars like (Melubo, 2023) argued that the commodification of Maasai cultural symbols, such as beadwork and traditional attire, by non-Maasai individuals and companies can lead to cultural exploitation and misrepresentation. There is a need to ensure that the Maasai community is involved in the decision-making process and benefits equitably from these borrowings.

Different cultures encompass a wide range of attitudes and perceptions towards various aspects of life, including education and technology. When it comes to online learning through social media, different cultural perspectives can shape the way individuals engage with and perceive this mode of education. One possible attitude and perception is that of enthusiasm and embracement, where individuals from cultures that highly value technology and innovation see online learning through social media as an opportunity for convenient and flexible education. This perspective aligns with the findings of a study by (Park & Kwon, 2022) which revealed that individuals from technology-

oriented cultures, such as the United States and South Korea, expressed positive attitudes towards online learning.

On the other hand, some cultures may hold a skeptical or cautious perception of online learning through social media. Traditional cultures, for instance, may have reservations about the effectiveness and authenticity of virtual education. Individuals from cultures with a strong emphasis on face-to-face interactions and traditional learning methods, such as some Eastern cultures, might be less inclined to embrace online learning through social media (Gupta & Gupta, 2019). They may prioritize in-person interactions and question the quality and credibility of virtual education.

Moreover, there are cultures that exhibit a combination of both positive and negative attitudes towards online learning through social media. They recognize the potential benefits of flexibility and accessibility that online learning offers, but also express concerns about the lack of personal interaction and the potential for distractions. This ambivalent perspective was identified by a study which explored cultural perspectives on online learning among college students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Mansaray & Schmidt-Crawford, 2019).

Finally, there are cultures that are yet to fully embrace online learning through social media due to limited access to technology and internet connectivity. Developing economies, for instance, may face challenges in infrastructure and resources, making it difficult for individuals to engage in online learning. This lack of access can hinder the adoption and perception of online learning within these cultures. A report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization highlighted the digital divide as a significant barrier to online education in many developing countries (UNESCO, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

It is important to respect cultural authenticity, avoid misappropriation and promote equitable representation and appreciation while engaging with cultural elements. It requires individuals and communities to navigate cultural borrowing with sensitivity and awareness of the potential impact on cultural heritage and identity. However, the problem concerning the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures is the occurrence of cultural appropriation, where elements from marginalized cultures are commodified, misused, or misrepresented by dominant cultures, often without proper acknowledgement or permission. The evidence of this problem can be seen in various instances of cultural appropriation in popular culture, fashion, and other industries, where cultural symbols, practices, and traditions are borrowed and exploited for profit or personal gain (Gupta & Gupta, 2019).

Statistics and trends further highlight the issue. For example, a study by Rogers and Beal (2020) analyzed instances of cultural appropriation in the fashion industry and found a significant increase in the use of cultural elements from minority cultures without proper attribution. Similarly, research by Kim (2018) explored cultural appropriation in the context of music and documented instances where artists borrowed and profited from cultural expressions without providing credit or compensation to the original creators. These trends and statistics provide evidence that the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures are being challenged, indicating the need for greater awareness, sensitivity, and respect when engaging with cultural elements to avoid cultural exploitation and misrepresentation. Examples of countries that demonstrate cultural

appropriation and the boundaries of borrowing from different cultures are not limited to specific countries but are most evident in United States of America, Canada, Australia and Japan.

The problem of cultural appropriation and the ethical boundaries of borrowing from different cultures is a concern for various stakeholders, including communities whose cultures are being appropriated, cultural heritage advocates, scholars, and individuals interested in promoting cultural understanding and respect. It is a problem because cultural appropriation can result in the exploitation, misrepresentation, and erasure of marginalized cultures. It perpetuates power imbalances, reinforces stereotypes, and can lead to the commodification of sacred symbols and practices. The issue of cultural appropriation is problematic as it undermines cultural integrity and dilutes the significance and meaning of cultural elements. It disregards the historical and social contexts in which these cultural elements originated and dismisses the importance of community ownership and consent (Nai, et al., 2022). Cultural appropriation can also have negative psychological and emotional impacts on individuals and communities whose cultures are being appropriated, as it can devalue and trivialize their traditions and identities.

The knowledge and research gap that seeks to be addressed by studies on cultural appropriation is to further understand the extent and impact of cultural appropriation in different contexts and its implications for marginalized cultures. There is a need for research that explores the perspectives and experiences of communities whose cultures are appropriated, as well as the cultural, social, and economic consequences of such appropriation. Additionally, research can focus on developing guidelines, policies, and educational initiatives to foster cross-cultural understanding, respect, and responsible engagement with cultural elements to mitigate the negative effects of cultural appropriation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Cultural Appropriation Theory by Susan Scafidi (2005)

Cultural appropriation theory explores the dynamics of power, privilege, and dominance in the act of borrowing elements from marginalized cultures by dominant cultures. It examines the social, historical, and economic factors that contribute to the unequal power dynamics in cultural exchange. The theory highlights the need to critically analyze the intentions, consequences, and power dynamics involved in the borrowing process. The concept of cultural appropriation was popularized by scholars such as Susan Scafidi, who emphasized the need for cultural sensitivity and respect. The theory is relevant to the topic as it provides a framework to examine the ethical implications of cultural borrowing and the potential harm caused by the commodification and misrepresentation of cultural elements (Scafidi, 2005).

2.1.2 Postcolonial Theory by Frantz Fanon's (1961)

Postcolonial theory focuses on the power dynamics and legacies of colonialism and imperialism. It examines the ways in which dominant cultures exploit, appropriate, and marginalize the cultures of formerly colonized or oppressed peoples. The theory emphasizes the need to challenge Eurocentric perspectives and promotes the recognition and empowerment of marginalized cultures. Postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha have explored the intersections of culture, power, and identity. The theory is relevant to the topic as it sheds light on

the historical and sociopolitical context in which cultural borrowing occurs and highlights the importance of decolonizing cultural practices and representations (Said, 1978).

2.1.3 Intercultural Communication Theory by Edward T. Hall (1959)

Intercultural communication theory examines the complexities of communication and interaction between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural differences, promoting mutual respect, and avoiding misunderstandings and misinterpretations. The theory explores the challenges and opportunities in cross-cultural encounters and provides strategies for effective and ethical communication. Scholars such as Milton J. Bennett and Stella Ting-Toomey have contributed to the development of intercultural communication theory. The theory is relevant to the topic as it provides insights into the communication dynamics involved in cultural borrowing, highlighting the significance of intercultural competence and sensitivity in navigating cultural boundaries (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Empirical Review

Park (2022) explored on the appropriation and ethics of borrowing from indigenous cultures. This study aims to explore the ethical considerations surrounding the appropriation of indigenous cultural elements by mainstream societies. The researchers conducted a qualitative analysis of literature, media representations, and interviews with indigenous communities and cultural experts. The study found that the appropriation of indigenous cultures often perpetuates stereotypes, erodes cultural integrity, and leads to economic exploitation. It highlighted the importance of obtaining informed consent and engaging in respectful collaborations. The researchers recommended the development of guidelines and policies to ensure ethical borrowing from indigenous cultures, fostering meaningful collaborations, and promoting cultural exchange that respects the autonomy and agency of indigenous communities.

Elliott (2023) investigated on the boundaries and ethics in cultural borrowing. This study aims to examine the boundaries and ethical considerations in cultural borrowing within the fashion industry. The researchers employed a mixed-method approach, including interviews with fashion designers, analysis of fashion shows and collections, and surveys of consumers. The study revealed that cultural borrowing in the fashion industry often raises concerns of cultural misappropriation, lack of recognition and compensation for the original cultures, and perpetuation of power imbalances. It emphasized the need for informed cultural exchange and collaboration. The researchers suggested implementing guidelines and transparency in the fashion industry to ensure respectful borrowing, engaging in cross-cultural collaborations, and promoting diversity and representation.

Baporikar (2022) explored on the cross-cultural borrowing and the preservation of traditional knowledge. This study aims to investigate the ethical implications of cross-cultural borrowing on the preservation of traditional knowledge. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with traditional knowledge holders, analyzed legal frameworks, and examined case studies of cross-cultural borrowing. The study highlighted the importance of recognizing and respecting traditional knowledge systems, as cross-cultural borrowing can lead to commodification, exploitation, and loss of cultural heritage. It underscored the need for mutually beneficial collaborations and the involvement of traditional knowledge holders in decision-making processes. The researchers

recommended the development of legal protections, community-based protocols, and educational initiatives to ensure the ethical borrowing of traditional knowledge.

Felber & Hagelberg (2020) sought to explore on the boundaries and ethics of borrowing in culinary practice. This study aims to examine the ethical considerations and boundaries of borrowing in culinary practices across different cultures. The researchers conducted ethnographic research, culinary experiments, and interviews with chefs and food experts from various cultural backgrounds. The study revealed that culinary borrowing can be a means of cultural exchange and innovation; however, it can also lead to misrepresentations, cultural insensitivity, and appropriation. It emphasized the importance of acknowledging the origins of culinary practices and fostering respectful collaborations. The researchers suggested promoting cultural exchange through dialogue, recognizing the contributions of marginalized communities, and encouraging chefs to engage in responsible culinary borrowing.

Chung & Patel (2019) explored on the ethical implications of cultural borrowing in the music industry considering the perspectives from artists and audience. This study aims to explore the ethical implications of cultural borrowing in the music industry, considering the perspectives of artists and audiences. The researchers conducted surveys, focus groups, and interviews with musicians, music consumers, and industry professionals. The study found that cultural borrowing in music can enhance artistic expression and foster cross-cultural appreciation. However, it can also lead to exploitation, erasure of original artists, and perpetuation of stereotypes. It emphasized the importance of proper attribution, fair compensation, and respectful collaborations. The researchers recommended establishing clear guidelines for cultural borrowing in the music industry, supporting diverse voices, and promoting inclusive representation.

Nguyen & Wong (2018) investigated on the role of education in shaping ethical borrowing from different cultures. This study aims to examine the role of education in promoting ethical borrowing practices from different cultures. The researchers conducted a literature review, analyzed educational curricula, and interviewed educators and students. The study highlighted the significance of education in fostering cultural competence, empathy, and critical thinking skills necessary for responsible borrowing. It identified gaps in the current educational systems and emphasized the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive pedagogical approaches. The researchers recommended integrating cultural education, diverse perspectives, and critical analysis of cultural borrowing into educational curricula at all levels.

Chesher & Andreallo (2021) examined on the intercultural collaboration and ethical borrowing in artistic practices". This study aims to explore intercultural collaboration and ethical borrowing in artistic practices, focusing on the visual arts. The researchers employed a mixed-method approach, including interviews with artists, analysis of artworks, and participant observation in artistic workshops. The study revealed that intercultural collaborations can foster creativity, cross-cultural understanding, and promote ethical borrowing. However, power dynamics, cultural dominance, and tokenism can hinder meaningful collaborations. It emphasized the importance of equal partnerships, open dialogue, and mutual respect. The researchers suggested creating platforms and funding opportunities that facilitate intercultural collaborations, promoting diverse artistic voices, and addressing power imbalances in the art world.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low-cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

4. FINDINGS

Our study presented both a knowledge and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Chung & Patel (2019) explored on the ethical implications of cultural borrowing in the music industry considering the perspectives from artists and audience. This study aims to explore the ethical implications of cultural borrowing in the music industry, considering the perspectives of artists and audiences. The researchers conducted surveys, focus groups, and interviews with musicians, music consumers, and industry professionals. The study found that cultural borrowing in music can enhance artistic expression and foster cross-cultural appreciation. However, it can also lead to exploitation, erasure of original artists, and perpetuation of stereotypes. It emphasized the importance of proper attribution, fair compensation, and respectful collaborations. The researchers recommended establishing clear guidelines for cultural borrowing in the music industry, supporting diverse voices, and promoting inclusive representation. On the other hand, our current study focused on the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures in central European countries.

Secondly, the study presented a methodological gap whereby, their study on ethical implications of cultural borrowing in the music industry considering the perspectives from artists and audience; Chung & Patel (2019) conducted a literature review, analyzed educational curricula, and interviewed educators and students. Our current study on boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures in central European countries adopted a desk study research method.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The empirical studies on the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures have shed light on the complex dynamics involved in cultural appropriation and intercultural borrowing. These studies have highlighted the potential harms, such as perpetuating stereotypes, eroding cultural integrity, and economic exploitation, that can arise when borrowing from cultures without proper understanding, respect, and consent. They have emphasized the importance of recognizing and respecting the contributions and agency of marginalized communities, traditional knowledge holders, artists, and indigenous cultures. Moreover, the studies have underscored the need for informed cultural exchange, responsible collaborations, and guidelines that promote ethical borrowing practices. They have identified the role of education in shaping cultural competence, empathy, and critical thinking skills necessary for responsible borrowing. Additionally, the studies have called for the development of legal protections, community-based protocols, and industry guidelines to ensure that borrowing is done in a manner that respects the cultural integrity, recognizes the origins, and provides fair compensation to the original cultures.

5.2 Recommendations

Firstly, it is crucial to establish guidelines and policies that provide clear frameworks for ethical borrowing practices across various domains such as fashion, music, culinary arts, and visual arts. These guidelines should emphasize the importance of informed consent, proper attribution, fair compensation, and respectful collaborations. Secondly, educational institutions should integrate cultural education, diverse perspectives, and critical analysis of cultural borrowing into their curricula. This can help cultivate cultural competence, empathy, and critical thinking skills among students, enabling them to engage in responsible borrowing practices.

Moreover, efforts should be made to recognize and empower marginalized communities, indigenous cultures, traditional knowledge holders, and artists. This can be achieved by providing platforms, funding opportunities, and representation that promote their voices, agency, and contributions. Encouraging open dialogue, equal partnerships and meaningful collaborations between cultures is also essential. This involves actively seeking input and participation from cultural communities, ensuring that power dynamics and tokenism are addressed, and fostering mutual respect and understanding.

Additionally, legal frameworks should be developed to protect traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and the rights of cultural communities. Community-based protocols and decision-making processes should be respected and integrated into borrowing practices, ensuring that cultural integrity and autonomy are upheld. By implementing these recommendations, it is possible to navigate the boundaries and ethics of borrowing from different cultures in a manner that promotes cultural exchange, respects cultural integrity, and fosters mutual understanding and appreciation.

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