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Interface of folk culture and popular culture
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Abstract

The interface between folk culture and popular culture is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that has garnered significant scholarly attention. This paper explores the historical perspectives, areas of intersection, commercialization, and the role of mass media in disseminating folk culture. Drawing from a diverse range of case studies and theoretical frameworks, highlighted the regional variations in the folk-popular culture interface and the impact on cultural identity. The blending of folk and popular culture significantly affects local and national identities, creating complex dynamics of cultural exchange and transformation. Addresses ethical considerations, such as issues of cultural appropriation and commodification, and the power dynamics in the folk-popular culture relationship. The democratization of authorship and publishing, the increasing role of social networks in 21st-century publishing, and the impact of social media on popular culture and tourism are identified as key future trends. Finally, concludes by emphasizing the need for future research to adapt to global subcultures and social media, explore the intersection of metaverse and sustainable consumption, and examine how digital platforms blur the lines between folk and popular cultural expressions in tourism and cultural studies.

Keywords: historical perspective, commodification, global sub-culture, sustainable consumption

Introduction:

Folk culture refers to the traditional customs, beliefs, and practices of a particular group of people typically passed down through generations. According to Henry Glassie, it encompasses material culture that "embodies the people's plans, methods, and reasons for producing things that can be seen and touched" (Wacker & Glassie, 1970). Folk culture is characterized by its authenticity, local origins, and connection to a specific community's

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traditions. Popular culture is a more complex concept, defined as mass culture, the 'other' of high culture, and an arena of hegemony (Storey, 2003). They are often associated with commercial entertainment, media, and consumer products that appeal to a wide audience. Popular culture can be seen as a site for studying assimilation and integration and redefining the moral worthiness of marginalized groups (Alba, 2023). Contradictions and overlaps exist between folk and popular culture. While folk culture is viewed as more authentic and rooted in tradition, it can incorporate elements of folk culture or serve similar functions in modern society. Levine suggests that popular culture can be employed "in much the same way folklore is used to penetrate a collective consciousness often hidden from public view" (Kelley, 1992). Folk culture and popular culture intersect in various ways, with several key characteristics emerging from the papers: 1. Material folk culture often blends with popular and commercial elements, making it challenging to distinguish "true" folk creations (Wacker & Glassie, 1970). This intersection is evident in areas, such as architecture, tools, and cooking. 2. Popular culture sometimes appropriates elements of folk culture, reimagining the past to shape the present (Storey 2003). This process can involve romanticizing pastoral life as "primitive culture" or using folk elements in mass media. 3. Popular culture can serve as a site for studying the assimilation and integration of marginalized groups (Alba, 2023). This is exemplified by the inclusion of ethnic Catholics and Jews in American popular culture after World War II and the increasing representation of non-white groups in film and television. 4. Popular culture functions similarly to folklore in urban industrial societies, providing insights into collective consciousness and attitudes (Kelley, 1992). This perspective challenges the dismissal of popular culture as merely escapist or formulaic. 5. The interface between folk and popular culture is evident in unique cultural artifacts such as the Merry Cemetery in Sapanța, which combines elements of dark tourism with folk cultural expressions (Mionel, 2020).

Historical perspectives on folk and popular culture

Folk and popular culture have been extensively debated, with their definitions evolving over time. Folk culture, as described by Henry Glassie, is rooted in material culture, reflecting societal plans, methods, and production reasons (Wacker & Glassie, 1970). It is linked to traditional, rural, and pre-industrial societies and is characterized by organic development and generational transmission. Folk culture represents the "roots" of cultural identities, often seen as authentic and pure (Storey, 2003). In contrast, popular culture has varied conceptualizations. It is viewed as a mass culture, a product of industrialization and urbanization, and is often criticized for lacking authenticity and artistic merit (Storey, 2003). The 'culture and civilization' tradition, represented by figures like Matthew Arnold and F.R. Leavis saw popular culture as a threat to 'high culture' and social order (Storey, 2018). Contradictions and overlaps exist among these concepts. Some scholars argue that popular

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culture can function like folk culture in urban and industrial societies (Kelley 1992). In the postmodern era, the boundaries between folk, popular, and high culture have blurred, with popular culture being recognized as a site of cultural negotiation and identity formation (Storey, 2003).

Areas of intersection:

How elements of folk culture are incorporated into popular culture

Folk cultural elements have been incorporated into popular culture, reflecting the interplay between traditional and contemporary forms of expression. Integration often involves adaptation and transformation. Folk songs from China's Grand Canal Basin have been influenced by economic and social development, leading to diverse musical cultural characteristics (Li, 2023). This is evident in the preservation efforts of Youyang folk songs, incorporating traditional elements into educational curricula, and artistic engagement in rural communities (Fan et al., 2024). The concept of popular culture has evolved, and some scholars view it as a form of folk culture. The idea of pastoral life as primitive culture and imagining the past to make sense of the present demonstrates how folk elements are romanticized in popular narratives (Storey, 2003). The emergence of the 'local' as a new folk culture in globalization highlights the relevance of traditional elements in shaping contemporary cultural identities (Storey, 2003).

Commercialization of folk traditions

The commercialization of folk traditions involves a complex interplay between preservation, authenticity, and economic development. Studies indicate that tourism commercialization can positively impact tourists' perceived authenticity and satisfaction in cultural heritage contexts (Zhang et al., 2021). This challenges the idea that commercialization harms local identities and traditions. However, the relationship between commercialization and authenticity is complex. Research on cultural heritage sites in China reveals challenges such as over-commercialization and loss of cultural authenticity (Tang et al., 2019). Authenticity is negotiated among various stakeholders, including the state, businesses, tourists, and local communities, each with their own perspective (Wall & Xie, 2005). For instance, Li dancers in Hainan, China, view tourism as a source of pride and identity, as well as a political resource, suggesting that commercialization can lead to positive responses and empowerment in some cases (Cole, 2007).

Role of mass media in disseminating folk culture

Mass media play a crucial role in disseminating folk culture, serving as a powerful tool for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage across generations and boundaries. Media influence shapes societal views, values, and cultural identities (Sutrisno, 2023). This dissemination process has significant implications for the preservation and evolution of folk tradition. In the context of folk songs, the mass media has broadened the reach of these

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cultural artifacts. The study of Youyang folk songs in China highlights how media platforms have expanded communication channels for traditional music, attracting younger audiences and promoting cross-cultural communication (Fan et al., 2024). Research on folk songs along China's Grand Canal demonstrates how media contributes to the "distribution along the river, two cores, and two belts, influenced by water systems, landforms, and regional cultures (Li, 2023). However, the role of mass media in disseminating folk culture remains challenging. While it offers opportunities for cross-cultural interaction, it also poses risks to the preservation of local cultural identities in the face of global influence (Sutrisno, 2023). A case study of Singapore's national tourism policy illustrates how state-controlled media can shape the presentation of ethnic traditions, potentially leading to a manufactured version of culture for international consumption (Leong, 1989). This underscores the complex dynamics between the media, cultural preservation, and cultural commodification.

Case studies:

Folk cultural elements have been incorporated into various forms of popular media, reflecting the intersection of traditional and contemporary artistic expressions. In popular music, folk influences are evident in genres, such as folk rock and Americana. Bob Dylan's early work drew heavily from traditional folk ballads, while bands such as The Byrds blended folk melodies with rock instrumentation (Gibson, 2003). In films, directors such as Ken Loach have used folk traditions and working-class narratives to create socially conscious cinema that reflects regional identities and struggles (Kinder, 1994). Literature has also embraced folk elements, as seen in the works of authors such as Toni Morrison, who incorporates African American folk traditions and oral storytelling techniques into her novels (Alexander, 2003). The boundaries between folk culture and popular culture are often blurred, leading to what Henry Glassie calls "cultural hybrids of commerce and popular innovation" (Wacker & Glassie, 1970). In the visual arts, folk art techniques and motifs are frequently appropriated by contemporary artists, creating a dialogue between traditional and modern aesthetics (Alexander 2003). The incorporation of folk culture elements into popular media serves multiple purposes, including preserving cultural heritage, creating authenticity, and connecting with audiences through shared cultural experiences. However, this also raises questions about the commodification of traditional art forms and the potential loss of their original context and meaning (Cantillon et al., 2020). The integration of folk culture into popular media remains a complex phenomenon that reflects broader societal changes and cultural dynamics.

Regional variations in the folk-popular culture interface

Folk and popular culture exhibit significant regional variations that are influenced by historical, geographical, and socioeconomic factors. The distinction between them is often blurred, with elements intermingling across regions. In the United States, Henry Glassie's

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study of material folk culture reveals regional differences in architecture, tools, and cookeries, challenging conventional views (Wacker & Glassie, 1970). These variations are shaped by the local traditions, resources, and environmental conditions. Similarly, traditional buildings in Jiangxi Province, China, show regional diversity influenced by geography and neighboring cultures. Northern Jiangxi's architecture is influenced by Huizhou culture, while southern Jiangxi shows Hakka influences, resulting in diverse architectural features and artistic elements (Song and Liao 2023). The relationship between folk culture and popular culture is complex. Popular culture can sometimes be seen as a form of folk culture, especially in urban industrial societies (Kelley, 1992). This perspective suggests popular cultural functions, such as folklore, reflecting people's attitudes, values, and reactions.

Theoretical frameworks:

Theories on cultural hybridization and appropriation

Cultural hybridization and appropriation are complex phenomena that have been examined using various theories. Appropriation has been critically evaluated in the context of cross-cultural communication and globalization (Schneider, 2003). This is a hermeneutic procedure by which individuals negotiate access to symbolic elements from different cultures and challenging views of bounded cultures. Theories of cultural globalization focus on mixing cultural practices, but may overlook individual strategies (Schneider, 2003). Transculturation questions the bounded view of culture, positing it as a relational phenomenon constituted by acts of appropriation (Rogers 2006). This aligns with cultural hybridization resulting from globalization, which has accelerated cultural interactions worldwide (Tuncer, 2023). The literature reveals diverse approaches to understanding cultural appropriation and hybridization. Researchers categorize appropriation into exchange, dominance, exploitation, and transculturation (Rogers, 2006), or focus on its role in social sustainability (Lara-Hernandez & Melis, 2018). Oppression and intimacy accounts offer different explanations for the wrongfulness of cultural appropriation (Matthes, 2018). Diversity ideologies, such as colorblindness, multiculturalism, and polyculturalism, influence evaluations of cultural borrowing (Zhang et al., 2023). These perspectives highlight the complexity of cultural hybridization and appropriation in the interconnected world.

Cultural imperialism and glocalization

Cultural imperialism and glocalization are key concepts for understanding global cultural dynamics. Cultural imperialism refers to the dominance of one culture over others, often associated with the U.S. influence on globalization (Elteren, 2003). This concept extends beyond the media to business culture, management practices, and development policies, focusing on the spread of consumerist beliefs and practices (Elteren, 2003). However, cultural imperialism has been challenged by glocalization, which emphasizes the

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interdependence of local and global processes. Glocalization highlights how social actors construct meanings, identities, and institutional forms of globalization (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2006). This concept applies to various domains, including sports, where football clubs are seen as 'glocal' transnational corporations (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004), and migrant communities, explaining the transplantation and adaptation of cultural practices in new contexts (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2006). The debate between cultural imperialism and glocalization reflects broader discussions on the impact of globalization on cultural diversity. While some argue that globalization leads to cultural homogenization, others point to hybrid cultural forms. Glocalization offers a nuanced understanding of these processes, recognizing both global and local adaptations that shape contemporary culture. This perspective suggests that globalization does not necessarily result in uniform outcomes but can lead to diverse cultural manifestations across contexts.

Impact on cultural identity

The blending of folk and popular culture affects local and national identities

The blending of folk and popular culture significantly affects local and national identities, creating complex dynamics of cultural exchange and transformation. Folk culture interacts with popular culture to shape new forms of cultural expression and identity, reinforcing local identities and contributing to a broader national identity (Feng et al., 2023). The New Year paintings of Wuqiang in Hebei, China, demonstrate how traditional folk art can be incorporated into modern clothing design, creating products with high geocultural recognition (Feng et al., 2023). National identity is increasingly manifested in everyday popular culture rather than solely in "high" or "official" forms (Edensor, 2004). This shift suggests that the blending of folk and popular elements occurs organically in daily life, such as through iconic car models, mundane motorscapes, and everyday driving practices (Edensor 2004). However, while global manifestations of popular culture proliferate, they do not necessarily diminish the salience of national identity as the national remains grounded in everyday spaces and practices (Edensor, 2004).

Ethical considerations:

Issues of cultural appropriation and commodification

Efforts to preserve traditional folk culture involve various stakeholders including governments, educational institutions, and local communities. In China, there has been a concerted effort to preserve and transmit Youyang folk songs, which are considered part of the country's intangible cultural heritage. This involves integrating folk songs into educational curricula, promoting artistic engagement in rural communities, and implementing government initiatives to enhance their transmission (Fan et al., 2024). The preservation of traditional culture often faces challenges in urban settings, where developmental pressures threaten social and ethnic minority populations. In San Francisco,

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planners and preservationists are developing programs to encourage greater participation of marginalized populations in the local planning process and to protect cultural practices that contribute to the city's diversity. However, this approach presents challenges as the historic resources of marginalized populations are often more "intangible" than traditional landmarks (Buckley & Graves, 2016).

Power dynamics in the folk-popular culture relationship

The relationship between folk culture and popular culture involves complex power dynamics and cultural interactions. Folk culture, linked to local traditions passed down through generations, often contrasts with mass-produced, popular culture. However, the boundaries between these forms are unclear. Levine argued that popular culture can function like folk culture in urban societies, reflecting people's attitudes and values (Kelley, 1992). This suggests that popular culture may adopt the elements of folk culture or serve similar social functions. The power dynamics are multifaceted. Popular culture, associated with commercial interests and mass media, can dominate the potentially appropriate elements of folk culture. This is evident in the British folk-rock movements of the 1960s and the 1970s, where traditional folk ballads fused with modern styles created a commercially successful genre (Sweers, 2005). This shows how folk culture can be transformed and commodified. Conversely, folk culture can resist and assert cultural identity against dominant popular culture. Storey (2003) discusses the 'local' as a new form of folk culture in response to globalization, showing folk culture's adaptability. The study of material folk culture by Glassie helps to distinguish authentic folk creations from commercial hybrids, highlighting the ongoing negotiation between these cultural forms (Wacker & Glassie, 1970).

Future trends:

The interface between folk and popular culture will continue to evolve along with digital technologies and social media platforms. As online technologies integrate into everyday life, the boundaries between traditional and digital cultural expressions will blur further. A significant trend is the democratization of authorship and publishing. Self-publishing and social writing platforms such as Wattpad show a demand for authorship without traditional publisher intervention, challenging established authority and influence in publishing as emerging authors, and micro-celebrities gaining popularity through specific trends and domains. The increasing role of social networks in 21st-century publishing suggests that the line between folk and popular culture will become more fluid. Digital technologies and social media are also transforming participatory cultures, especially among young people, augmenting social interaction while creating an uneven landscape of access to participation (Marlowe et al., 2016). This digital/social nexus impacts social cohesion and how people form and maintain relationships, potentially reshaping folk cultural dynamics in the digital age. The impact of social media on popular culture and tourism is significant.

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Social media is deeply embedded in the corporatized and platformized tourism industry, serving as a strong rationale for travel (Gibson & Connell, 2024). However, as subcultures and social media proliferate globally, research must adapt to cultural diversity and create a more disruptive world.

Conclusion:

The reviewed papers highlight key findings and future research directions across intersecting fields: leadership and entrepreneurship research integrate entrepreneurial concepts with leadership theories, such as servant leadership and leader-member exchange. Future research should explore how entrepreneurial environments influence leadership effectiveness. In tourism studies, popular culture remains a strong driver, but research needs to adapt to global subcultures and social media. Regarding the interface between folk and popular culture, future trends may involve examining how digital platforms blur the lines between folk and popular cultural expressions in tourism and cultural studies. Research could explore how traditional folk practices are reimagined through popular culture channels, impacting cultural authenticity in an increasingly globalized world.

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