Effects of Experiential and Digital E-Learning on Cross Cultural Learning Aimed at Reducing Conflict and Violence Among Youths in the Three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Background and Objectives: This study was conducted to examine the effects of using both experiential and digital e-learning for cross-cultural education aimed at reducing conflict and violence among youth in three southern border provinces of Thailand. The conflict in the region has complex roots that are political, ethnic, cultural, and religious in nature. These impact the not only the economy and community development, but security as well, particularly for children and youth. Traditional approaches have primarily focused on controlling the situation rather than transforming attitudes and behaviors using a behavioral science-based approach. Integrating digital media to create safe learning spaces can promote acceptance of diversity, reduce biases, and foster cross-cultural understanding—key foundations for lasting peace and sustainability.

Methodology: This study employed a combination of digital e-learning media and experiential learning through a training camp program. The targeted sample consisted of 30 at-risk youths with a tendency toward violent behavior, chosen for their potential to benefit from a non-violence volunteer role model program. The research instruments included: (1) E-learning media covering 12 topics on respecting diversity, adaptation, and coexistence in a multicultural society, (2) a training camp program with 12 practical activities, (3) a cross-cultural learning assessment tool measuring the impact on reducing violence and conflict, and (4) unstructured pre- and post-operation interviews. Data analysis involved content analysis for interview responses and statistical analysis using mean, standard deviation, and t-tests.

Main Results: The research findings show significant statistical improvement, with the mean score for perceptions increasing from a moderate level (mean = 3.17) to a high level (mean = 4.23). The most notable change was in attitudes, which shifted from a moderate level (mean = 3.31) to a very high level (mean = 4.52). Behavioral development also improved, moving from a moderate level (Mean = 3.30) to a high level (Mean = 4.37).

Discussions: The results indicate that digital e-learning media and practical training camps play a crucial role in enhancing cross-cultural learning. The significant increases in perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral changes in regard to violence, suggest that structured learning activities can effectively reduce conflict and promote peaceful coexistence. The integration of digital media and hands-on

activities offers a balance of theoretical and practical learning, emphasizing theoretical knowledge with practical application.

Conclusions: The study concludes that digital e-learning, when combined with experiential learning approaches, offers a powerful and sustainable model for promoting peace education and social harmony in conflict-affected regions. The ability of digital tools to provide flexible, engaging, and self-paced learning experiences enhances youth access to knowledge and supports ongoing personal growth. Meanwhile, experiential activities create safe spaces for dialogue and reflection, fostering emotional and moral development. The research further recommends that stakeholders expand the implementation of such hybrid learning models and ensure their alignment with local cultural identities. Ultimately, this research highlights the potential of combining digital innovation with grounded, real-world engagement to transform education into a tool for peacebuilding. It serves as a practical model for other multicultural and conflict-prone regions seeking to empower youth and build more inclusive and understanding societies.

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Introduction

The three southern border provinces of Thailand—Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat—have continued to face conflict and violence for over two decades. Despite endeavors by the government and various organizations to address the issue, the situation in the region remains unresolved. These conflicts have deep-rooted complexities related to political, ethnic, cultural, and religious issues. Jitpiromsri (2024) highlights that this conflict is one of the most prolonged situations in Thailand, significantly affecting all dimensions of society, including security, the economy, and community development. Meanwhile, Harish (2006) and Dongnadeng et al. (2024) point out that past conflict resolutions have primarily focused on political aspects or controlling the situation. In contrast, Tantivivat (2024) argues that these approaches have overlooked behavioral science, which is crucial for changing attitudes and behaviors among people in the region.

A particularly concerning aspect is the impact of violence on children and youth in the region. Such violence is not only a driver of fear and short-term stress among the populace, but also has long-term effects on the emotional and psychological development of young individuals. Additionally, it influences their ability to adapt to unfamiliar cultures. Youth play a crucial role in shaping the future of society in the region. Che-ubong and Chelong (2024) emphasize that it is essential to support youth in coexisting peacefully within a multicultural environment. Developing skills in acceptance and understanding of differences will lay the foundation for a long-term peaceful society.

However, the current learning approaches in the three southern border provinces still lack the systematic integration of digital media as a tool to address violence and conflict. Research on cultural disparities in Thailand by Kaewthep (2024) suggests that there must be spaces for cultural representation, activities for distributing information through public media, and the incorporation of digital learning materials for development. Most approaches to conflict resolution in the region tend to focus on situational control or structural solutions rather than implementing behavioral science perspectives, which are crucial for changing public thought patterns and behaviors. Thus, developing learning models that help local people understand and accept cultural differences is crucial. Tepsing et al., (2021) and Chelong (2022) support

the idea that creating open and safe learning spaces for youth can effectively reduce prejudice, build trust, and promote intercultural understanding.

Digital e-learning media, therefore, presents a highly effective option for promoting cross-cultural learning in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. With their flexibility, accessibility, and adaptability to target audience needs—particularly among youth—these tools can significantly contribute to the process. Barnet (1953) introduced the concept of using innovation to create new social relationships. The use of digital media in cross-cultural learning can thus be regarded as a form of social innovation that has the potential to change attitudes and reduce conflict. In recent years, 21st-century learning has increasingly emphasized the use of technology alongside the development of skills necessary for peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies—especially in Thailand's southern border provinces, where ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity is deeply rooted. This context has led to the design of educational innovations such as e-learning and experiential learning to support effective cross-cultural learning. E-learning, when based on constructivist learning theory, can provide flexible and inclusive access to education by centering on the learner and aligning with their cultural context (Ally, 2019). Meanwhile, experiential learning, grounded in the work of Kolb (1984), is widely used to develop essential soft skills like communication, collaboration, and adaptability, which are crucial in diverse environments (Scheerens et al., 2020). Cross-cultural learning plays a key role in fostering mutual understanding and reducing conflict by encouraging learners to explore, compare, and communicate despite differences (Deardorff, 2020; Steers & Osland, 2022). Integrating these three approaches into a cohesive learning model can create safe and engaging educational spaces that cultivate long-term skills for peaceful living in multicultural societies (UNESCO, 2021).

This research aims to examine the effects of using digital e-learning for cross-cultural learning to reduce violence and conflict among youth in the southern border provinces of Thailand. Cross-cultural learning will help instill acceptance of diversity, reduce misunderstandings, and foster positive relationships among different groups in the region, particularly in a culturally diverse contexts (National Research Council of Thailand, 2023).

This study is significant in that it addresses violence in the southern border provinces on multiple levels. Besides reducing biases and encouraging mutual understanding among different groups, it can also serve as a model for managing conflicts in other areas experiencing similar issues. Promoting learning through digital media not only contributes to long-term peacebuilding but also lays the foundation for youth participation in community development, ensuring the sustainability of Thai society in the future.

Method

This research employs: (1) digital media in the form of e-learning for cross-cultural learning to reduce violence and conflict among youth in the southern border provinces, and (2) cross-cultural learning training program designed to reduce violence and conflict among youth in the region. Both were developed by the researcher and validated by nine experts before being piloted with the target group.

Participants

The participants consisted of 30 youths, between the ages of 16 and 24, from the three southern border provinces of Thailand. They were students ranging from upper secondary school to their third-year of university, who exhibited behaviors inconsistent with the characteristics of non-violent youth role models in the region. Initially, 268 youths applied to participate in the program. However, the final selection of 30 participants was based on specific criteria derived from an assessment tool measuring the characteristics of non-violent youth role model network volunteering. This tool was validated by three experts: (1) a behavioral sciences expert, (2) a child and youth expert, and (3) an expert on the southern border provinces. The content validity was assessed using a three-level evaluation scale, resulting in an index of item-

objective congruence (IOC) score of 0.98, confirming its reliability for the use in the study. The assessment content focused on nine key areas, including: (1) cultural understanding, (2) inspirational leadership, (3) problem-solving, (4) teamwork skills, (5) behavioral change, (6) cultural awareness, (7) interpersonal skills for peace, (8) social participation, and (9) cultural adaptation.

Instruments

This research utilized to operate the study and collect data is as follows:

1. Operational Instruments

The operational instruments were divided into two main components, including digital e-learning media and a cross-cultural learning training program.

1) Digital e-learning media was developed to promote cross-cultural learning and reduce violence and conflict among youth in the southern border provinces. A total of 12 topics were included: (1) keeping up with differences (2) respect for diversity (3) readiness for change (4) avoiding cultural misrepresentation (5) building a beautiful and sustainable culture (6) forecasting a multicultural society for the future (7) justice in a multicultural society (8) reasonable coexistence in a multicultural society (9) a happy society (10) steps toward peace (11) strengthening society through cooperation, and (12) becoming a leader for peace. The quality of the e-learning media was assessed based on five key aspects: (1) characteristics of e-learning (7 items), (2) philosophical analysis of e-learning (108 items), (3) learning outcome analysis (16 items), (4) content and learning experience design (55 items), and (5) features and components of the e-learning lessons (5 items). The assessment was conducted by nine experts using a five-level rating scale, who were selected based on their expertise in behavioral sciences, learning processes, and multicultural societies, with particular regard to the three southern border provinces of Thailand. These experts were scholars from diverse higher education institutions across Thailand, representing a broad range of academic backgrounds. Their inclusion was intended to reflect international-level diversity and ensure a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation of the program's quality. The overall content validity index (CVI) was 4.25, indicating a high level of consistency.

2) The cross-cultural learning training program consisted of the following 12 activities designed to promote understanding and reduce cultural conflict: (1) bridging hearts: understanding culture, (2) learning culture through art, (3) understanding cultural change through drama, (4) creative lego in a multicultural land, (5) discovering identity through 12 non-violent cultural skills, (6) the future of culture in a multicultural world, (7) exploring to build a just society, (8) journeying across cultures, (9) overcoming cultural bias, (10) a journey through life, (11) cultural kitchen: cooking for understanding, and (12) pathway to a violence-free society. The quality of the program was assessed by nine experts—selected for their expertise in behavioral sciences, learning processes, and multicultural society—using a five-level rating scale. A total of 48 items related to the content of these 12 activities were evaluated. The overall Content Validity Index (CVI) was 4.24, indicating a high level of content consistency. The program was then refined based on expert feedback regarding language use and instructional design, ensuring suitability for the target youth audience. The training program was piloted with 70 youth participants from Narathiwat province to test content validity, observe participant behavior, and evaluate the difficulty level of the activities. The pilot was conducted in three culturally distinct communities to reflect the diversity of local contexts. The first trial involved 25 participants from Banthon Narathiwat, a highly urbanized area. The second was held in Bajoh, a semi-urban community that blends urban and local characteristics, with 28 participants. The third trial took place in Tak Bai, a border area adjacent to Malaysia that is culturally diverse and influenced by migration, involving 17 participants. These trials aimed to ensure the program's relevance and adaptability across varying cultural

and conflict environments. The pilot implementation revealed the need to adjust the content to suit the age group of the youth, particularly by using language that was simple and aligned with their experiences. It was also important to clearly explain the objectives of each activity so that participants could understand the value and purpose of their learning. Religious and cultural conditions specific to each local context should be appropriately integrated into the activities. Additionally, clear precautions for intercultural communication should be established to prevent misunderstandings and promote respectful coexistence in diversity.

2. Data Collection Instrument

The instruments used for data collection included a cross-cultural learning assessment and an unstructured pre- and post-interview process.

The cross-cultural learning assessment measured the impact of the program on reducing violence and conflict among youth in the three southern border provinces. It consisted of three components: (1) perception (36 items), (2) attitudes (36 items), and (3) behavior (36 items). Altogether, the three components totaled 108 items. The evaluation was conducted by five experts to determine consistency, with content validity assessed using a three-level evaluation scale. The results yielded an IOC score of 0.95, indicating a high level of reliability. Additionally, unstructured interviews were conducted before and after the implementation to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and changes in understanding.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process for this study was conducted in three key phases:

1) Pre-training assessment before conducting the training, participants were assessed using a Cross-Cultural Learning Measurement Tool designed to evaluate the impact of cross-cultural learning on reducing violence and conflict among youth in the three southern border provinces. The assessment included three key dimensions: (1) perception, (2) attitude, and (3) behavior. This pre-training assessment was administered to the piloted group prior to their participation in the cross-cultural learning training program and e-learning sessions. Additionally, participants underwent structured interviews to investigate their perspectives on the same themes covered in the assessment. The data collected was carried out for further analysis.

2) The research team conducted and implemented the cross-cultural learning training program, specifically designed to enhance cultural understanding and reduce conflict among youth in the southern border provinces. The program consisted of a series of interactive activities, discussions, and experiential learning sessions that complemented the digital e-learning lessons. The training was conducted in two separates three day camps. During the camps, the research team integrated e-learning content midway through the program—after the completion of six out of 12 activities. This timing was intentional, as participants had already grasped the camp's objectives and undergone initial behavioral adjustment processes. As a result, they were more receptive to and engaged with the structured e-learning content, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the program.

3) Post-training assessment after the completion of the training program and e-learning sessions was carried out. The same cross-cultural learning measurement tool was re-administered to the experimental group. This post-training assessment aimed to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior regarding cross-cultural learning and conflict reduction. Additionally, structured interviews were conducted again, using the same themes as in the pre-training interviews, to depict qualitative changes in participants' perspectives.

Data Analysis and Validation

The data collected from both pre- and post-training assessments were analyzed using mean scores, standard deviation, and t-tests. In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed through content analysis. The process began with

verbatim transcription, wherein audio recordings were transcribed into written text, capturing participants' responses exactly as spoken. This ensured accuracy and preserved the authenticity of participants' perspectives. Following transcription, the content was systematically coded and categorized to identify recurring themes and patterns relevant to the research objectives (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). The results were presented in a descriptive analysis. To validate the reliability of the result, a triangulation process was conducted to cross-check data from multiple sources (pre-training assessment, post-training assessment, and interviews). In addition, this study was reviewed and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus (NUR.PN-062/2024).

Findings

This section presents the findings on the effects of both experiential and e-learning on cross-cultural education for youths in Thailand's three southern border provinces The study focused on fostering a non-violence model youth network through cross-cultural learning.

Table 1. Effecs of e-learning and experiential learning on cross-cultural learning for violence and conflict reduction among youths in the three southern border provinces (pre- and post-intervention)

Aspects	Pre-study (*N*=30)			Post-study (*N*=30)			*t*-value	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	**S.D.**	**Level**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Level**		
Perception	3.17	.37863	Moderate	4.23	.69067	High	-10.426	0.00*
Attitude	3.31	.28561	Moderate	4.52	.52343	VeryHigh	-12.623	0.00*
Behavior	3.30	.29025	Moderate	4.37	.60235	High	-9.625	0.00*
Total	3.26	.25559	Moderate	4.37	.54471	High	-11.795	0.00*

*$P < .05$

The results of the study show that the e-learning and experiential learning significantly improved the youths' perception, attitude, and behavior regarding cross-cultural learning and coexistence. Before the study, participants had a moderate understanding of these issues, with mean scores of 3.17 for perception, 3.31 for attitude, and 3.30 for behavior. After completing the program, all three aspects showed significant improvement, with mean scores increasing to 4.23 for perception, 4.52 for attitude, and 4.37 for behavior, reflecting high to very high levels of understanding. The t-test results (*p*-values < 0.05) confirmed that these changes were statistically significant, signifying that the program effectively enhanced the participants' ability to adapt, respect cultural diversity, and engage in positive behavior, contributing to the reduction of violence and conflicts in the southern border provinces.

Table 2. Analysis of the effectiveness of e-learning and experiential learning in cross-cultural learning for violence and conflict reduction among youths in the three southern border provinces (pre- and post-intervention)

Perception	Before the Activity	After the Activity
1. Adaptation to cultural diversity	"...I think the news about cultural diversity in the South has led to conflicts..." (ID4)	"...Now I understand that if we open our hearts to differences, we can live together..." (ID4)
	"...In the past, I didn't understand people from different religions or cultures..." (ID12)	"...I've learned that diversity makes society stronger and brings different ideas when we work together..." (ID12)

Table 2. (Cont.)

Perception	Before the Activity	After the Activity
2. Respect for values and differences in beliefs and lifestyles	"...I used to think that I should hold onto my own beliefs and overlook others..." (ID1)	"...Now I understand that respecting others' beliefs doesn't mean agreeing, just respecting..." (ID1)
	"...Before the training, I thought different religions or beliefs couldn't coexist..." (ID11)	"...I see that differing beliefs lead to learning and understanding different ways of life..." (ID11)
3. Embracing changing cultures	"...I was afraid of changes in culture because they seemed different from what we used to do..." (ID15)	"...I understand that embracing change makes us ready for new challenges in the modern era..." (ID15)
	"...At first, I thought cultural changes caused confusion in beliefs and religion..." (ID18)	"...Adapting to other cultures is important; it's about learning to adjust, but not abandoning our own beliefs..." (ID18)
4. Avoiding distortion of others' cultures	"...I've heard wrong stories about other cultures, which led to misunderstandings..." (ID22)	"...I now know that distorting cultures causes conflicts, and we should respect the truth by learning..." (ID22)
	"...Sometimes, without knowledge, what we see in other cultures is distorted..." (ID8)	"...Distorting information creates misunderstandings and leads to unrest in society..." (ID8)
5. Striving for the improvement of cultures	"...I used to think preserving traditional culture was difficult and impossible..." (ID6)	"...Preserving our culture means using it correctly, without distorting others..." (ID6)
	"...I didn't see solutions for developing local culture, because sometimes it didn't come from or wasn't supported by us..." (ID28)	"...Youth should focus on collaborating to preserve and develop local culture..." (ID28)
6. Predicting the future of multicultural societies	"...I'm unsure about the future of a multicultural society here, but I think there may be more conflicts, based on past events..." (ID27)	"...If everyone understands, questioning our future and the future of our children will be a way to drive our wisdom..." (ID27)
	"...Before the training, I thought the future of the Southern Border provinces would still have conflicts, considering the past events..." (ID5)	"...Cultural issues need to be understood in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, not just politics..." (ID5)
7. Fairness in multicultural societies	"...Looking at religious and ethnic divisions in joint activities seemed difficult..." (ID7)	"...Creating fairness in society starts by respecting everyone's rights and practicing cross-cultural communication skills..." (ID7)

Table 2. (Cont.)

Perception	Before the Activity	After the Activity
	"...In the past, I thought multicultural societies might leave some groups overlooked or unfairly treated..." (ID7)	"...Fairness in a multicultural society happens when everyone has equal opportunity to express themselves..." (ID7)
8. Clear rationale for coexistence in multicultural societies	"...I used to think living together in a different culture would cause misunderstandings and make coexistence impossible..." (ID14)	"...Now I understand that living together in a multicultural society allows us to learn from each other and strengthens society..." (ID14)
	"...Before the training, I didn't see the clear reason to coexist with people of different cultures..." (ID3)	"...Now, I know that coexistence in a multicultural society gives us the opportunity to develop and exchange ideas..." (ID3)
9. Striving for a peaceful society	"...I thought conflicts in society couldn't be resolved because we've seen it for so long, and I was afraid to leave my house at night..." (ID3)	"...Now I know that understanding and acceptance are key to making society peaceful..." (ID3)
	"...I believe that working together and respecting each other will help us understand each other's feelings..." (ID1)	"...I believe cooperation and respect will help us understand and connect with others..." (ID1)
10. Effort to create peace in society	"...Creating peace in society is a big task for us; it seems difficult..." (ID114)	"...Sometimes, the involvement we see doesn't seem real, but we have to understand that many others are also involved..." (ID14)
	"...At times, our participation seems like it's only for projects rather than real change..." (ID10)	"...We can make a difference by participating in social activities, and it's important to understand we're not alone..." (ID10)
11. Cooperation with all sectors	"...I thought cooperating with other groups was difficult, and I didn't see much benefit because we're already different..." (ID11)	"...We can do activities by setting social rules or within our teams, based on our different beliefs..." (ID11)
	"...In the past, I thought cooperation with different groups was hard, especially in my school with only Muslims and separate boys and girls..." (ID16)	"...We need to understand that men and women live in this world, and we cannot avoid meeting each other, but we must remain ethical..." (ID16)
12. Leading efforts to promote peaceful society	"...I never thought I could be a leader in promoting peace because it seems like an adult's role..." (ID9)	"...If we have knowledge and understanding of different cultures, we can become leaders..." (ID9)

Table 2. (Cont.)

Attitude	Before the Activity	After the Activity
1. Adapting to diverse cultures	"...Before the training, I thought adapting to people with different cultures would make me lose my identity or even my religion..." (ID2)	"...Accepting diversity helps me grow and understand others better. The more we know people, the more we develop ourselves..." (ID2)
2. Respecting beliefs and lifestyles of others	"...I used to think my beliefs were the most important, so I didn't respect people with different beliefs..." (ID28)	"...Being open and understanding the importance of respecting others' beliefs is something that needs to be nurtured..." (ID28)
3. Embracing cultural changes over time	"...I thought cultural changes would confuse social matters..." "...I rarely heard about cultural changes in school..." (ID7)	"...Cultural changes are continuous, driven by technology, communication, or ourselves, shaping whether a culture survives or fades..." (ID7) "...Society needs to focus on managing cultural changes, as we won't be able to cope otherwise. We must develop essential life skills..." (ID7)
4. Avoiding distortion of other cultures	"...I didn't think cultural distortion was something to be concerned about or I might have overlooked it..." (ID15) "...Cultural distortion wasn't much of an issue in the mainstream culture..." (ID15)	"...Now I believe that distorting cultures leads to misunderstandings and affects peace in the area. Media creators must work to build understanding..." (ID15) "...Distorting information leads to division and misunderstanding..." (ID15)
5. Aiming for the preservation of good cultures	"...At home, we didn't talk much about how we could live in a better, diverse society. We mostly focused on addressing violence..." (ID9)	"...Cultural development comes from mutual respect and acceptance, but we need to adopt empirical methods, such as organizing cultural activities, visiting historical sites, and analyzing them. We can create networks like we did..." (ID9)
6. Forecasting the future of a multicultural society	"...I think the future in this area will still be full of conflict because of its entangled history, culture, beliefs, and politics..." (ID30)	"...No matter how complicated the issues are, it's important to look ahead. We should design a future with more peace than what we have now, otherwise, we won't improve..." (ID30)
7. Ensuring fairness in a multicultural society	"...I thought that some groups in society didn't receive fairness due to differences..." (ID9)	"...Fairness happens when everyone participates and respects each other..." (ID9)
8. Having a clear logic for coexistence in a multicultural society	"...If we look today, living together in a diverse society leads to conflict. We see wars and violence in many places..." (ID13)	"...Living together in a multicultural society gives us opportunities to learn and exchange views..." (ID13)

Table 2. (Cont.)

Attitude	Before the Activity	After the Activity
9. Striving for a peaceful society	"...In our home, some people try to find peace, but violence continues to persist, leaving us feeling insecure..." (ID8)	"...Peace must start with us having the right knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that do not cause violence..." (ID8)
10. Persistent effort to create peace in society	"...Creating peace in society is difficult, as seen with budgets, security personnel, or conflicts between groups..." (ID22)	"...Everyone can play a role in creating peace through their responsibilities. It starts from being a good child at home and a good citizen in society..." (ID22)
11. Cooperating with all sectors	"...Working with people who have different opinions will lead to failure..." (ID27)	"...Working together with all sectors helps build strength and understanding of diversity. Especially when working with people from different organizations, we get various ideas..." (ID27)
12. Leading efforts to promote peaceful society	"...I didn't think I had a role in creating peace in society because we are still young..." (ID7)	"...We can create happiness by not causing suffering to others, starting from being open-minded and practicing from a young age..." (ID7)
Behavior	**Before the Activity**	**After the Activity**
1. Adapting to diverse cultures	"...I used to avoid talking to people from different cultures, sometimes because of language..." (ID3) "...Before the training, I didn't pay much attention to cultural differences in society..." (ID3)	"...After the training, I started opening up and trying to talk to people from different cultures to learn..." (ID3) "...After the training, I made an effort to observe and understand other people's cultures more..." (ID3)
2. Respecting beliefs and lifestyles of others	"...I used to reject people with different beliefs from mine..." (ID4) "...Before the training, I didn't often show respect for beliefs different from mine..." (ID4)	"...Now, I try to show respect and give importance to other people's beliefs, starting with smiling and listening when we talk..." (ID4)
3. Embracing cultural changes over time	"...I didn't show interest in learning about cultural changes..." (ID4) "...I didn't care about how cultural changes impacted society, it felt like something far from me..." (ID4)	"...After the training, I began showing openness and enthusiasm in learning about changing cultures..." (ID4) "...I want my school to focus on these issues because they are important skills. I started discussing cultural changes with others during activities..." (ID4)
4. Avoiding distortion of other cultures	"...I may have spoken or expressed opinions that distorted other people's cultures without realizing it..." (ID9)	"...Now, I'm more cautious when speaking and try not to distort information about other cultures..." (ID9) "...If something is unclear, I try to avoid making comments that distort other cultures..." (ID9)

Table 2. (Cont.)

Behavior	Before the Activity	After the Activity
	"...I've mentioned other cultures incorrectly due to previous misinformation..." (ID9)	
5. Aiming for the preservation of good cultures	"...I wasn't in an environment where cultural development was promoted or supported, so I didn't feel part of it..." (ID15)	"...I want my friends at school to try the activities we did because they provide skills that help us look deeper at culture..." (ID15)
6. Forecasting the future of a multicultural society	"...I never really talked about the future of a multicultural society..." (ID22) "...I didn't know whether the future of a multicultural society in our country would improve, because the problems haven't been resolved..." (ID22)	"...I started talking about a better future for a multicultural society by wanting to do small activities in my group..." (ID22)
7. Ensuring fairness in a multicultural society	"...Since we live in the dominant culture, people from other cultures must adjust to be like us..." (ID29)	"...It doesn't mean that others must adjust to us; we also need to adjust to them or find common ground..." (ID29)
8. Having a clear logic for coexistence in a multicultural society	"...Generally, if a culture is dominant, we have to respect that culture first..." (ID6)	"...Learning about each other's cultures without seeing one as more important or less important is key. We should focus on how we live together, and that's why adaptability is important..." (ID6)
9. Striving for a peaceful society	"...I didn't think a few people's efforts could make society peaceful..." (ID27)	"...If we have a network working for peace in many places, it will be more powerful..." (ID27)
10. Persistent effort to create peace in society	"...I've heard so much about peace training that it's boring. Sometimes, I attend lectures without knowing what I'm doing..." (ID5)	"...If I have the opportunity, I want to apply the ideas from the activities we did to make it useful in a larger network. Gradually, I want to pass these opportunities on to others..." (ID5)
11. Cooperating with all sectors	"...I usually avoid working with people who have different opinions from mine because it takes effort to express my thoughts..." (ID30)	"...I try to find opportunities to work, starting with small activities at school, and if possible, gradually learn with the outside society..." (ID30)
12. Leading efforts to promote peaceful society	"...It's hard to encourage others to understand, some people might not like us..." (ID2)	"...I started to see the importance of being a leader in creating a peaceful society and am ready to do it, maybe using the model from these activities..." (ID2)

Discussion

This study focused on using both experiential and digital e-learning as tools to promote cross-cultural education for youths in Thailand's three southern border provinces. The primary objective was to develop youths' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors to alter to cultural diversity, as well as to create a multicultural society free from violence through the learning process employing digital technology. The research findings are in line with concepts of youth development and promoting cross-cultural learning, particularly in terms of the changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors after participating in the program. This helps to enhance one's perceptions of and ability to adapt to others within a climate of cultural diversity following participation in the program. Additionally, the use of digital e-learning plays a vital role in encouraging collaborative learning, which corresponds with the studies highlighting the significance of connecting youths with digital technology to increase cross-cultural learning (Chinachan et al., 2023; Lobue & Ogren, 2022; Lederach, 1997; Tuansiri & Sirisakdamkeung, 2022). The cross-cultural learning that resulted from participating in this program also aligns with a study from Chong and Grzymała-Moszczynska (2015), who assert that cross-cultural learning helps youth develop skills to understand the culture of others by using cognitive abilities, open-minded attitudes, and social skills to manage cultural differences. This shows that participants developed these mechanisms, which allowed them to adapt and value cultural diversity more effectively.

However, before changes occurred, this study also revealed challenges in the process of developing participants' attitudes at the first stage, especially regarding how youths perceive religious and cultural differences as obstacles. In this regard, Grossman et al. (2021) and Campos and Marín-González (2020) pointed out that cross-cultural work may encounter resistance or conflict, but when participants are committed to working together and accepting differences, they can adapt and learn to build better relationships. Thus, youth development in the southern border provinces should focus on creating broad-minded attitudes and accepting cultural diversity, as well as developing skills to manage conflicts and communicate to build mutual understanding.

Regarding the behaviors of participants, there was a significant improvement after using digital e-learning to learn about cross-cultural issues. Participants demonstrated increased respect for others' beliefs and cultures, such as avoiding alteration of information and being open to talking with people from different cultures. This aligns with the study by Boonsit and Chelong (2023), which showed that cross-cultural learning helps enhance social skills and proper change to cultural diversity. However, there are still some people that show difficulty adapting or continue to avoid interaction, possibly due to personal preferences or social factors in the region. This does not align with Hoffman et al. (2015), who argued that behavior is more likely to change when supported by a proper environment and responses to individual needs. The behavioral changes observed in participants indicate that digital e-learning is effective in promoting understanding and sustaining coexistence in a multicultural society. However, it still requires support from organizations and communities in the area to build more sustainable and comprehensive change (Chelong & Laeheem, 2020; Galtung, 1967; Laeheem, 2017; Macionis & Gerber, 2010).

However, the researcher views that the observed changes in perception, attitude, and behavior among youths result from the integration of diverse pedagogical approaches. The use of e-learning media and experiential learning activities, grounded in constructivist learning theory (Ally, 2019), enabled learners to access content that aligns with their own cultural contexts and proceed at a self-directed pace. This contributed to a shift in perception regarding cultural diversity and a reduction in existing biases. At the same time, experiential learning activities derived from the experiential learning theory of Kolb (1984), provided learners with opportunities to engage in real or simulated situations involving cultural differences. Such engagement facilitated attitudinal change from perceiving differences as threats or problems to viewing them as opportunities for learning and mutual understanding. Furthermore, the

researcher views that learning processes emphasizing participation and ongoing reflection, as framed by the intercultural competence model of Deardorff (2020), promote positive behavioral changes. These include demonstrating respect for others' opinions and beliefs, avoiding distortion of information, and fostering open dialogue with people from different cultural backgrounds. These behavioral transformations are driven by both internal factors, such as self-awareness and empathy, and external support through strategically designed activities that are contextually appropriate for youths in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. However, it still requires support from organizations and communities in the area to build more sustainable and comprehensive change.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the effects of digital e-learning media in promoting cross-cultural learning and reducing conflict among youths in the southern border provinces of Thailand. The findings indicate significant improvements in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, enable participants to better understand and adapt to cultural diversity. The integration of digital technology plays a crucial role in fostering collaborative learning, supporting youth development, and enhancing social skills necessary for peaceful coexistence. However, challenges remain, particularly in changing deep-rooted attitudes and overcoming personal biases toward cultural differences. To achieve sustainable change, continuous collaboration from educational institutions, community organizations, and policymakers is essential in strengthening multicultural understanding and promoting non-violent interactions among youth.

Recommendations

To reduce violence and conflict among youths in the southern border provinces of Thailand, national policy should prioritize cross-cultural learning in peace education. Digital e-learning and experiential learning should be integrated into youth development programs to promote cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence. The government must invest in digital infrastructure to provide access to culturally relevant learning platforms, especially in remote areas. Additionally, trained facilitators should lead both digital and field-based programs. Long-term policies should include monitoring and evaluating the impact of these models to ensure sustainability and continuous improvement.

Digital e-learning content should reflect the unique cultural context of the southern border provinces, while experiential learning activities should complement digital modules. Youth mentor networks, such as peace ambassadors, can promote peer-led engagement and community impact. Expanding this model to other communities outside the southern border provinces is crucial and should be guided by ongoing evaluations to refine the curriculum and better support attitude and behavior change among youths.

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