Isan Ethical Heritage: Worldview Interpretation in Bas-Relief Sculptures and the Creation of an Innovative Photobook for Buddhist-Art Tourism at Wat Klang, Kalasin

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ABSTRACT

Background and Objectives: Religious architecture shapes a community's way of life, beliefs, and principles. The study of Buddhist art sculptures highlights the role of art as a crucial means to convey philosophical ideas and Dhamma teachings. A unified perspective reveals that Buddhist sculptures offer more than mere visual beauty. Cultural knowledge repositories require careful interpretation to reveal the ethical values and historical stories embedded within communities. This article aimed to accomplish two objectives: (1) to examine the significance and semiotic interpretation of Buddhist art in the bas-relief sculptures on the parapet surrounding the ceremonial hall of Wat Klang Royal Temple in Kalasin, and (2) to develop an innovative photobook to serve as a learning resource for tourists and enhance tourism promotion.

Methodology: Within this mixed methods research, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with cultural experts and monks as key informants. Quantitative assessment was also used to evaluate the quality and suitability of the output by expert designers and tourists.

Results: The 56 bas-relief sculptures included in the study reflect Isan's profound ethical heritage through four categories, which show complex links between Buddhist precepts and the local way of life. The findings led to the design and development of a photobook featuring Wat Klang's bas-relief sculptures. The photobook, which was rated highly by experts, has potential to serve as a tool for learning about Buddhist art, while enhancing cultural tourism and sustainably adding value to local tourism products.

Discussions: The bas-relief sculptures of Wat Klang convey profound Buddhist tenets by depicting the human life cycle along with ethical parables. Trans-semiotic interpretation indicates that this section of the bas-relief functions as a prophetic inscription, serving as a cultural recording system that transmits societal anxiety. When compiled into a photobook, this medium proves highly effective for deciphering and transmitting the deep

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meaning of Buddhist art, emphasizing ergonomic principles, content integrity, and engaging communication. The three characteristics fundamental to understanding the Buddhist view of reality (namely that all conditioned phenomena are temporary, ultimately lead to dissatisfaction, and lack a permanent, unchanging self) are consistent with their presentation in the bas-relief sculptures. The photobook initiative is scalable to digital media and community products, fostering socio-economic value.

Conclusions: The analysis indicated that the sculptures carry Isan's ethical heritage and deep life teachings. The sculptures have been categorized into four Sections of Wisdom: Sankhara (volitional formation of body and mind), Prescribed Inscription, folklore, and Dhananchai Chadok presented as a court intellectual. The photobook revealed a new empirical body of knowledge in reconstructing the use of cultural heritage, derived from the symbolic analysis of 56 bas-relief sculptures that led to four sets of knowledge. The findings illustrated a complex linkage between Buddhist principles and the local way of life, which led to the creation of a high-quality photobook to be used as a primary interpretive medium and to effectively elevate Buddhist art tourism.

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Introduction

Religious sculptures are created for the purpose of worship and emphasizing religious content. In Buddhist architectural tradition, religious buildings reflect human life, images of society, culture, traditions, climate, and the wisdom of each era (Bunsut, 2018). The architectural styles influence the creation of sculptures that reflect the way of life of the faithful community. The Lan Xang Buddhist art at Wat Xieng Thong in Luang Prabang reflects the flourishing period of Buddhism during the reign of King Fa Ngum, inheriting the characteristics of the original Luang Prabang temple. These Buddhist art pieces are valuable in conveying faith through art and architecture and play a role in communicating Buddhist principles to contemporary viewers, transforming abstract concepts into concrete perceptions (Sengmany et al., 2021). This aligns with the Vientiane temples, which reflect the influence of Buddhist faith, a simple way of life, and the wisdom of the Lao people. This is conveyed through decorative patterns in bas-relief, high-relief, and free-standing sculptures, created using techniques such as molding, casting, and carving, along with the use of paint or stained glass (Keovongsay, 2016).

Studies of Buddhist art sculpture have underlined the role of art as a vital mechanism for communicating philosophy and Dhamma principles. The arts have been studied in accordance with the conceptual framework of this research. Sculptures in Wat Pho reflect Isan life philosophy or axioms and communicate, in Dhamma-puzzle style, a way of living with Dhamma

precepts for ethical practices (Chotidhammo et al., 2021). In addition to that, the trans-semiotic interpretation concept has been employed to perceive meaning that is embedded in signs and symbols. The paradigm assists in discovering virtue, aesthetic value, historical value, art, culture, and social meaning (Rodjanacheewinsopond et al., 2024). The findings indicate that sculptures are inspired by creators' faith, and that the sculptures also convey the Buddha's biography (Hualmanop, 2016). This is also echoed in the creation of conceptual sculptures about the social context struggles; the outstanding artwork titled 'Isan Father Form of Thought' (Booncham, 2022). Key methodology must include a conceptual framework for sculptural studies to support precise and careful research and analysis of embedded signs and symbols. Furthermore, the learning process regarding Theravada Buddhist sculpture must encompass three main components: knowledge, skills, and opinions or attitudes. In summary, the literature indicates that sculpture possesses not only aesthetic value but is also a cultural knowledge repository requiring in-depth interpretation to fully extract its deeply ingrained ethical and historical values (Ritruechai et al., 2022).

A temple or monastery has significant potential for tourism promotion due to four key factors: effective management of the premises, environmental management, historical significance, and the cultural value associated with the local way of life. However, a study identified a total of eight factors, including facilities, artistic genres, tourist information, and social services (Phuditthanawong & Hutacharoen, 2016). In terms of administration and management, emphasis should be placed on delivering these diverse experiences to visiting tourists, such as art appreciation and meditation training. It is also recommended that Kalasin's temples improve the temple landscape and enhance cultural identity to attract visitors. Appropriate media use must be improved to enhance visitors' experiences (Phootaemnin et al., 2022). It is recommended that researchers not ignore profound historical and religious knowledge or minor details found (Janmuang et al., 2015). As a tourist attraction, the site must develop digital media in QR code format to promote cultural tourism and achieve high tourist satisfaction (Chinnak, et al., 2024). Multilingual printing media, for instance, Thai, English, and Chinese, are studied and recommended (Nipawan & Kanthairaj, 2022). Information booklets should also be available in the temple area to promote the temple's activities. In conclusion, Buddhist art tourism requires integration with good administration and up-to-date media creation to enable effective cultural knowledge transmission that responds to visitor motivation (Klinmuenwai & Sudisusadi, 2022).

From the above review, numerous current studies indicate that Buddhist sculpture serves as a crucial mechanism for transforming abstract doctrines and teachings into concrete, easily understandable forms. It plays two important roles: first, the philosophical role of Isan Buddhist art, where modern academic works in northeastern Thailand demonstrate a profound connection between local life philosophy and religious art. For example, conceptual stucco and sculpture often serve as philosophical riddles, subtly incorporating ethical practices into the daily lives of communities. They also reflect the historical and socio-economic struggles of local people. In this context, contemporary researchers increasingly rely on symbolic and cross-symbolic interpretation frameworks to systematically discover the moral values, aesthetics, and socio-cultural narratives hidden within cultural knowledge. This underscores that, regardless of whether the original sculptures were created from religious devotion or for historical preservation, precise visual and contextual analysis is necessary to bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary interpretation.

The creation of a photobook and e-storybook is considered a key trend to transmit cultural heritage through easily accessible media to target the new generation. A photobook plays an important role in enhancing artistic value and content aesthetics. Many studies confirm that media has high potential as a universal transmission agent. Photobooks, as a contemporary medium, provide additional support for cultural and belief-based values, enabling universal dissemination of rich cultural diversity (Yang et al., 2023). Illustrations in this photobook are also designed based on cultural identity to support young people's perception within a conservation concept, which received very positive satisfaction feedback. This aligns with the concept that the quality of a photobook depends on its design, as many components have been confirmed in numerous studies (Uttamathannanon & Plengdeesakun, 2017). To ensure presentation quality and effective illustrations, a photobook must undergo quality evaluation, and its content and illustrations must be well designed to meet target standards (Chingchuang, 2017). Research confirms that technical components and aesthetics are substantial, including clear and beautiful pictures and symbols used inside, and good font selection (Danthainum & Thamjariyaphan, 2020). A culturally designed product must underline the identity of ancient artifacts, incorporate picture composition analysis, and include interesting learning activities. A photobook used in cultural tourism promotion has high potential to motivate tourists to take a trip (Suneta, 2023). A photobook based on murals enables the target group to better perceive and comprehend the content and motivates them to visit the mural (Imsamraan & Boonyananta, 2021). It is a useful medium for developing young tourist guides and helping them provide better services. The creation of a photobook that integrates modern design with artistic and cultural value communication serves as an important mechanism in converting wisdom heritage into innovative media, enabling the support and sustainability of Buddhist arts preservation and development (Singtanasarn & Panpairojn, 2023).

Wat Klang was established in 1841 and has been royally supported as a Royal Temple since 1968. Wat Klang is an important Buddhist institution and a cultural body in Kalasin and neighboring provinces. Wat Klang has been developed by Buddhist monks, local Buddhist communities, officials, and the famous Honorable Monk, Ven. Prathep Visutthajaan (Sook Sookkano). During his tenure, he devoted himself to developing buildings and artifacts, education, and the practice of Dhamma precepts. Together, Thai and Buddhist art creations were vital to the Buddhist monastery and were admired and appreciated by the local Buddhists. The temple is the center for Kalasin Buddhist ceremonies, a precept teaching and learning center, a repository of sacred artifacts, and an archaeological attraction. The temple is a learning and resource center for Buddhist arts and houses the famous Buddha image Phra Buddha Nirokhantrai (Luangphor Ongdam Romyen), which is ancient. The ancient Buddha image has been deeply revered in the belief that the blessing is sacred for the rain asking ritual. The temple built a magnificent ceremonial hall, decorated with graceful artworks, including bas-relief sculptures at the hall's gable. The hall is decorated with wooden carvings depicting scenes from the Buddha's biography on its windows and doors, along with fine art paintings illustrating the 13 chapters of the Mahavessantara Jataka inside the hall. The dominant artwork that gives Wat Klang its rich cultural value is the bas-relief sculpture on the parapet surrounding the hall.

The valuable artistic sculptures created in Ven Prathep Visutthajaan's time were not only intended as decoration but also served as magnificent cultural heritage, attracting both local and foreign tourists. This makes Wat Klang a predominant Buddhist temple, serving as both a religious center and a learning-focused tourist attraction. The sculptures are important and there

is a need to preserve and disseminate Wat Klang's bas-relief sculptures as part of the artistic, historical, and ethical heritage of Isan communities. At the same time, this reflects the temple's potential to serve as a sustainable Buddhist art learning center.

From the above discussion, the research employed transmedia experience and narrative transportation to link cultural dimensions with innovative media creation, emphasizing the bas-relief sculpture of Wat Klang. In terms of high-value local art aesthetics, it is full of ethical heritage and Isan wisdom which reflect worldviews and life philosophy via symbols. In practice, Wat Klang, despite its high potential, lacked effective media capable of deriving deep insight to interpret the value of the sculpture. Therefore, a photobook was aimed at elevating the tourist learning experience.

Hence, an innovative photobook is a significant tool for translating wisdom heritage by applying up-to-date, accessible communication tools that support and preserve sustainable tourism (Imsamraan & Boonyanan, 2021). The research questions were as follows: (1) What are the values and symbolic meanings of the sculptures on the parapet surrounding the hall? (2) To what extent does the designed and developed photobook meet the needs of Wat Klang visitors in supporting their learning and enjoyment?

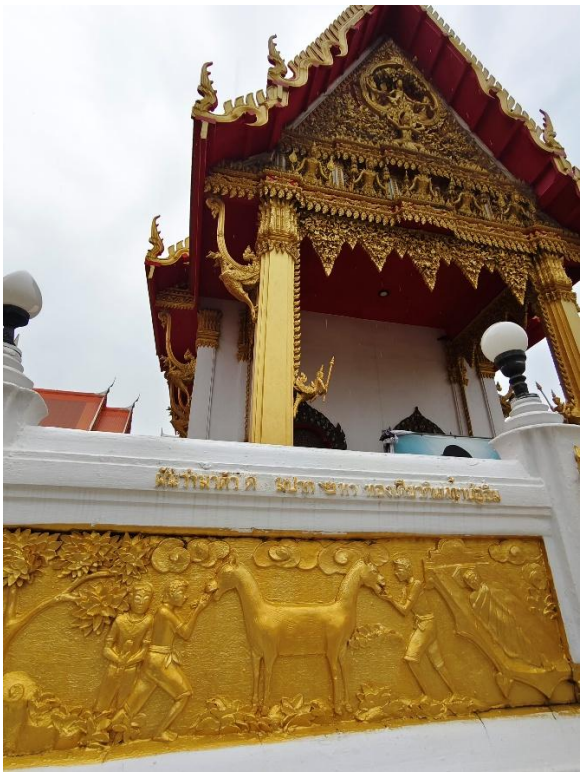
The research results will fill an academic gap and be applied to product development through semiotic analysis and interpretation derived from real and practical media creation.

Although Wat Klang possesses significant potential for Buddhist art tourism, it has faced substantial limitations in its promotional materials. Traditional media, such as permanent information signs or brochures, often only present mainstream historical information and fail to decipher the complex symbolic meanings of the 56 bas-reliefs. Furthermore, physical limitations of the bas-relief placement around the ordination hall prevent tourists from clearly and comfortably viewing the artwork's details, compounded by seasonal weather conditions. To address these challenges, a visual book was developed as a fundamentally different learning tool. It utilizes selective photographic enlargement combined with ethical thematic categorization. Therefore, the aesthetic design and symbolic system in the printed material enhance the understanding of Buddhist teachings. This innovation transforms the physical limitations of the site into a cross-media learning experience, serving as a tangible and portable interpretive guide. It stimulates understanding of Isan ethical values and significantly attracts tourists to experience the Buddhist art in person. However, the Isan cultural tourism sector lacked research integrating cross-media symbolic decoding with user-friendly media design. This study fills this academic gap by creating a digital archive for the preservation of Wat Klang 's Buddhist art. In addition, it delivers innovative media prototypes that can be adapted to sustainably enhance the social and economic value of other cultural tourism destinations in the region, as well as being adaptable for the development of other forms of media.

This study aims to examine the value and symbolic meanings of Buddhist art represented in the bas-relief sculptures on the parapet surrounding the ordination hall at Wat Klang Royal Temple, Kalasin, and to design and develop an innovative photobook showcasing these bas-relief sculptures as an interpretive educational tool for cultural tourism.

Figures 1 and 2

Bas-Relief Sculptures on the Inner Enclosure Wall of Wat Klang





Research Methods

Research Design

This research employed a mixed methods research approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain comprehensive data. Qualitative research was the primary method for achieving the first objective, requiring innovative semiotic interpretation, contextual analysis, and the categorization of the essential elements of 56 bas-relief images through field surveys and in-depth interviews with cultural experts and monastic administrators. They are crucial in capturing the cultural dimensions, ethical principles, and complex symbolic meanings that cannot be quantified numerically. Subsequently, quantitative research was used to support the second objective, specifically to evaluate the quality, aesthetic design, content appropriateness, and user satisfaction with the innovative photobook through structural evaluation and statistical analysis (mean and standard deviation). The combination of these two methods ensures a deep theoretical understanding of symbolic decoding and empirical reliability in developing media for Buddhist art tourism.

Participants

The first issue, concerning the meaning of bas-relief sculptures, targeted experts (including the abbot and monks of Wat Klang, and cultural scholars) selected through purposive sampling, totaling seven individuals. A related party was also targeted, selected through purposive sampling, totaling one individual. All those who provided information possessed direct knowledge about Wat Klang, the history of the temple, and the history of the sculpture's

creation, and were contemporaneous with the period in which the sculptures were created. This group included both laypersons and monks.

The second issue, the design of a photobook of the bas-relief sculptures of Wat Klang, targeted experts in book design, cultural scholarship, and book evaluation selected through purposive sampling, totaling nine individuals. All key informants were selected based on three main dimensions: experts in print design and layout, experts in Buddhist art and Northeastern Thai culture, and experts in evaluating the quality of tourism media, which ensured that the evaluation of the picture book was comprehensive.

Finally, the issue concerning guidelines for applying the photobook of bas-relief sculptures to promote learning for tourists visiting Wat Klang Royal Temple in Kalasin Province targeted tourists and tourism scholars, selected through purposive sampling and simple random sampling, totaling 25 individuals. All those who provided information were selected based on their direct experience viewing the bas-relief sculptures at Wat Klang, and they could suggest ways to use a pictorial record of the sculptures to promote learning for tourists visiting the temple.

Content scope is divided into three issues. First, the meaning of the bas-relief sculptures was collected as data and information in making diagrams, serving as literature and supporting meaning comprehension. The second issue concerns photobook design, including content, book format, design, and user satisfaction. The last issue concerns applying a photobook to promote tourists' learning about Wat Klang's bas-relief sculptures. The area scope is The Royal Temple, Wat Klang, Mueang district, Kalasin. Duration was from July 2024 to October 2025; 15 months in total.

Instruments

Survey guidelines were employed to collect data and information on the visual representations and literary aspects of the bas-relief sculptures on the wall of the main hall at Wat Klang Royal Monastery, Mueang District, Kalasin Province. The study employed structured and unstructured interviews to gather information on the visual representations, literary aspects, and meanings from a group of experts. Additionally, a rating scale was used to collect data on the drafts of the bas-relief sculpture catalog from another group of experts. Finally, closed-ended and open-ended surveys were conducted to gather information on tourist satisfaction with the application of the bas-relief sculpture catalog. The qualitative research instruments underwent content validity testing by three experts in Buddhist art and culture to assess the congruence of the research questions with the research objectives. Meanwhile, the quantitative research instruments were validated by calculating the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index by three experts with a value of 0.96. Statistics applied in the analysis included mean, percentage, standard deviation in addition to symbolic interpretation.

Procedures

Value Analysis and Symbolic Interpretation of Wat Klang's bas-relief

This step focused on bas-relief sculpture content analysis. It started with a survey and document research. Fieldwork was undertaken at the temple ceremonial hall at the parapet. All field records were collected directly from the site, with cultural content, literature, and symbols documented and added. All literature and symbols were systematically recorded one by one

from paintings and each panel. In the qualitative data collection step, cooperation and in-depth interviews were undertaken with art, culture, and religious experts, as well as related individuals, to interpret the symbolic meanings found in bas-relief sculptures, including the main literary content, symbolic hints, and ethical meanings implied in the sculptures. Data and information analysis: Collected data and information were categorized into groups and types and analyzed by using content analysis method. Triangulation was employed to verify the accuracy and reliability of the semiotic interpretation results supporting the conclusions regarding the value of the sculptures and strengthening the content validity and reliability of the analysis.

The researchers applied three processes of data triangulation: (1) Interpersonal data verification, comparing and cross-checking information obtained from in-depth interviews with groups of monastic administrators, laypersons/local scholars of similar age, and cultural academics; (2) Intertype verification, comparing information from personal sources through interviews with factual evidence; and (3) Expert verification. All data and interpretations were re-verified by the researchers in collaboration with experts in Buddhist art to reduce personal bias and refine the knowledge to ensure its accuracy before being compiled into the illustrated book.

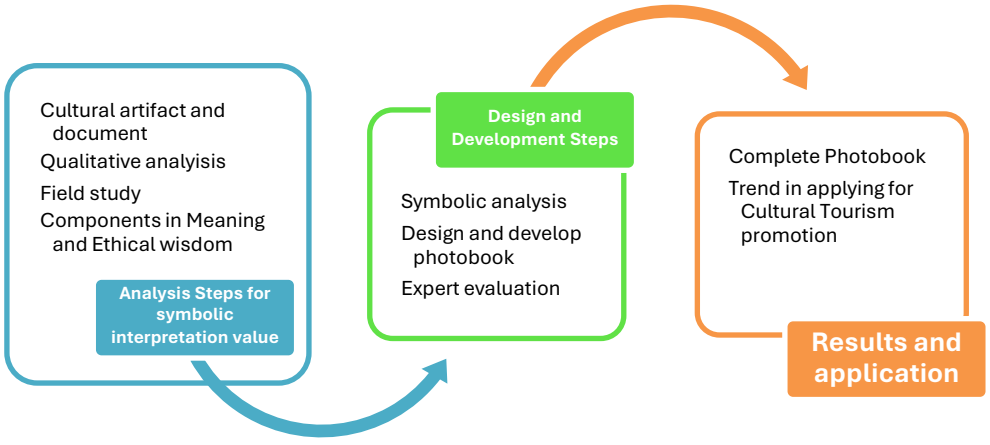
Innovative Photobook Design and Development

This step aimed to apply the results of the semiotic interpretation to innovative media in order to create learning opportunities for tourist promotion. There was a collection of preliminary suggestions and recommendations. It comprised inquiries and consultations on photobook design, content, and book format to establish basic work lists, photobook trends, and format frameworks. Production of the photobook started with a draft prototype based on the determination of the photobook concept. Expert evaluation was undertaken on the draft prototype by experts in photobook design, tourism, and literature to improve content, format, and appropriateness for actual uses. Complete production of photobook was carried out collaboratively after the draft had been evaluated and improved. Dissemination and application of the photobook included copyright registration and interviews with actual users to identify trends and potential applications of the photobook for promotion and sustainable Buddhist arts tourism.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework



Findings

Meaning of the Bas-Relief Sculpture at Royal Temple Wat Klang, Kalasin

Diagram of the Bas-Relief Sculpture

Fieldwork during the bas-relief data and information collection found that the outward-facing side of the parapet has 28 panels, most of which depict literature related to human physical and mental formation, prescribed inscriptions, and folklore. The inward-facing side contains 28 panels, depicting the story of Dhanachai Scholar Chadok, making a total of 56 panels. The position of each sculpture is marked in the diagrams shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4

Diagram of Bas-Relief Sculpture Outward Facing Side Parapet

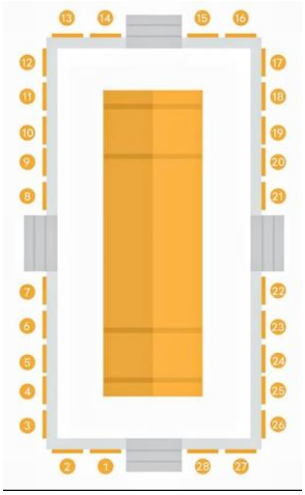
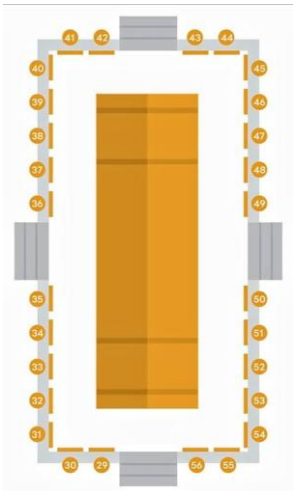


Figure 5

Diagram of Bas-Relief Sculpture Inward Facing Side Parapet



Literature and Meaning

From Figures 4 and 5, the content was transcribed from caption records and interpreted panel by panel.

Table 1

Panels, Scripts, Meanings and Transcription

Panel	Script	Meaning/transcribing
	Chapter: Body and Mental formations (Volitional Activities)	
1	The age of innocence and frivolity (10 years of age)	Describes the stage at 10 years of age when children do not shiver from cold water while bathing, symbolizing youthful resilience and physical vitality.
2	The age of courtship and maturation (20 years of age)	Describes the stage at around 20 years of age when young adults are highly social and actively engaged in courtship, preparing for future marital roles.

Table 1

(Cont.)

Panel	Script	Meaning/transcribing
3	The age of family building and diligence (30 years of age)	Represents the stage at around 30 years of age when individuals work diligently to establish a stable livelihood, build a family, and secure occupational stability.
4	The age of physical strain (40 years of age)	Represents the stage at around 40 years of age when individuals are devoted to family responsibilities and wealth creation, while early signs of physical deterioration begin to appear.
5	The age of senescence (50 years of age)	Represents the stage at around 50 years of age when individuals begin to set aside certain responsibilities and show clear signs of physical weariness and strain.
6	The aging stage: mortality (60 years of age)	Symbolizes the stage at around 60 years of age when physical decline becomes pronounced, shown through tooth loss, sunken cheeks, and the inability to play music on a flute.
7	The senility stage (70 years of age)	Represents the stage at around 70 years of age when individuals begin withdrawing from social and ritual activities due to declining physical capability.
8	The advanced senility stage (80 years of age)	Represents the stage at around 80 years of age when physical and cognitive changes become pronounced, shown through grey hair, reduced eyesight, and noticeable decline in mental capability.
9	The stage at 90 years of age	Represents the stage at around 90 years of age when individuals receive sympathy, affection, and supportive care from their children and grandchildren.
10	At 100 years of age	Represents the stage at around 100 years of age when individuals fully accept impermanence and are ready for death at any time, reaffirming the universal Buddhist truth.
	Chapter: Prophetic Inscriptions (Oneiromancy)	
11	Dream about 'Strong bulls charging from four directions'	Symbolizes man-made disasters arising from social immorality and ethical decline. The chaotic movement of the bulls represents instability in natural conditions and reflects the loss of social ethics and ecological balance.
12	Dream about 'Young shrubs giving flowers and fruits'	Symbolizes generational age inversion and premature sexual behavior, reflecting the erosion of traditional marriage systems and established sexual norms.
13	Dream about 'old cow asking for milk from a young cow'	Symbolizes the condition in which elderly individuals lack strength or support and must depend economically on the younger generation within the household.

Table 1
(Cont.)

Panel	Script	Meaning/transcribing
14	Dream about 'people using a young bull to plow a field'	Critiques improper delegation of authority, symbolizing situations in which leaders assign important responsibilities to inexperienced or incapable individuals, resulting in failure of essential tasks.
15	Dream about 'a horse with two mouths and never a full stomach'	Symbolizes corruption driven by greed (Lobha), especially among authorities who take bribes from multiple sides, undermining good governance and threatening society.
16 and 25	Dream about 'a mangy dog urinating on a golden platform or statue seat'/Dream about 'a golden swan mixing with a flock of crows'	Symbolizes social status inversion, in which individuals of low merit or corrupt character are elevated to high positions while capable or virtuous people are forced to serve them, reflecting a breakdown of proper social order.
17	Dream about 'a young man making rope while a dog bites his heel each night'	Symbolizes the decline of sexual ethics and the harm caused by spousal infidelity, reflecting how betrayal destabilizes the family institution and undermines household security.
18	Dream about 'rainwater collected in a pond, where people with large containers take everything while those with small containers cannot fill theirs'	Symbolizes economic discrimination, where powerful individuals exploit vulnerable people and accumulate wealth, while the poor work harder yet remain unable to improve their economic status due to structural inequality.
19	Dream about 'a large reservoir or lake filled with muddy, foul-smelling water'	Symbolizes social chaos and the deterioration of community harmony, reflecting immorality, unkindness, lack of compassion, and conflict over limited resources.
20	Dream about 'a man cooking rice in a pot that contains both uncooked and cooked rice'	Symbolizes moral deterioration and social disorder, reflected in unpredictable natural conditions, poor agricultural yields, and visible inequality within society.
21	Dream about 'a man possessing fragrant agarwood but trading it for fermented fish and poultry'	Symbolizes raw greed (Lobha), criticizing individuals who exchange valuable spiritual principles for trivial material benefits, reflecting corruption and pursuit of world gain.

Table 1

(Cont.)

Panel	Script	Meaning/transcribing
22	Dream about 'a gourd sinking while a heavy rock floats with the tide'	Symbolizes a reversal of truth and credibility, where unreliable voices are trusted and virtuous, evidence-based voices are ignored.
23	Dream about 'an eel fleeing its muddy pond and becoming a bird in a nest on a tree branch'	Symbolizes an inversion of social and religious status, where individuals of low merit or questionable integrity rise to power or admiration while genuine virtue is overlooked.
24 and 26	Dream about 'all poisonous snakes bow to frogs' and 'Old tiger is afraid of deeres'	Symbolizes injustice and the distortion of social order when corrupt or unworthy individuals hold power, causing virtuous people to withdraw from their roles.
	Chapter: Folklore (dramatic local storytelling)	
27 and 28	A hen keeping her chicks safely inside her coop'	Symbolizes maternal love, care, and protection, along with the emotional suffering caused by separation between a mother and her children.
	Chapter: Court Intellectual**s** (Ethical awareness by a storytelling of Dhananchai Chadok)	
29 and 30	The story started in Inthapat town, a king in Inthapat seeing a great flame in the night, foretelling the birth of the scholar Dhananchai	The arrival or birth of a man of great wisdom to the land.
31 and 33	'Dhananchai's wives conceiving and giving birth at the same time'	Symbolizes a miraculous sign affirming the scholar's exceptional merit and virtue.
34 and 35	'King Phraya Korapatrach summoning Dhananchai and his followers for an intelligence test'	The formal recognition and validation of a scholar's intellectual merit.
36	Four Logical Fallacy Problems	Symbolizes a framework of good governance requiring anti-corruption, compassion, responsible land management, and rule-based administration, validating the scholar's ethical leadership.

Table 1
(Cont.)

Panel	Script	Meaning/transcribing
37	After solving problems (from the storytelling about ethical awareness)	Dhananchai and his followers received rewards from the King and returned home.
38 and 40	Encounter dark power (from the storytelling about ethical awareness)	Symbolizes the threat of defilement (Kilesa) to righteous leadership, representing moral corruption and dark forces that endanger just governance. (Phra Ya Koroprach got lost in a big forest and faced Nandha Yuck which is the symbol of defilement (Kilesa) a threat for righteous governance.)
41 and 42	Suppress Defilement	The wise scholar overcomes the ten defilements (Kilesa), symbolized by a monster (Yaksha), through the power of wisdom and the Dhamma.
43 and 45	Phra Ya Koroprach commanded to find three more good scholars	To establish the system of checks and balance.
46 and 47	Regarding the "turning the little into the much" problem-	Meanwhile other sages offered material-based answers, the wise man Dhananjaya provided an ethical response; he interpreted giving alms to the wise as a way to transform a small offering into something of great magnitude, thereby elevating the value from the accumulation of material goods to the virtue of letting go.
49 and 50	Regarding the issue of "that which arises and kills its own mother,"	The wise man Dhananjaya concluded that "covetous intention" (greed, hatred, and delusion) is the thing that, once it arises, destroys a person's virtues.
51 to 56	Communication Ethics: - Adjudication of a case involving a dog biting a goat; - The definition of good play; - Auspicious direction; and -The Teachings of the Dhamma-Raja	It illustrates the classification of speech into three types—*Kūthabhānī* (foul speech), *Madhurabhānī* (sweet speech), and *Pupphabhānī* (flower-like speech)—emphasizing that both ruin and prosperity originate from the mouth. - The account of Dhananchai's ruling—finding the dog owner not liable because the goat owner was negligent (by allowing the goats to enter the dog's territory)—illustrates the principle of non-negligence (*Appamāda*). - It is recounted that the wise man Dhananchai explained that auspicious recreation consists of abstaining from the five unwholesome acts (observing the Five Precepts). - It recounts how Dhananchai rejected beliefs regarding auspicious directions, stating that "any direction is auspicious" if a person possesses a virtuous mind.

Table 1
(Cont.)

Panel	Script	Meaning/transcribing
		- The story recounts how the wise Dhananchai offered counsel to King Koraparach, emphasizing steadfast adherence to truth, patience, and the *Sangahavatthu 4* (the four virtues for social integration and fostering goodwill)—thereby laying the practical foundation for the monarch to become a *Dharmarāja* (a righteous king).

Figure 6
The Age of Innocence and Frivolity (10 Years of Age)



Figure 7
King Phraya Korapatrach Dreaming of a Great Flame Foretelling the Birth of The Scholar Dhananchai



Photobook of Bas-Relief Sculpture of Royal Temple Wat Klang, Kalasin for Promoting Tourist Learning

Content Design

Researchers designed a preliminary introduction aimed to inform readers/viewers about the contextual background and value proposition. It defines the communication scope and framework by synthesizing Wat Klang's history and background, particularly the cultural and historical context of the bas-relief sculpture at the hall. The main content was designed through Interpretation and application. The content was aligned with the objectives of the study, including a diagram of the bas-relief sculpture on the parapet surrounding the hall. The paintings' titles and meanings were studied to understand the themes of the bas-relief sculpture and were systematically categorized using the trans-semiotic interpretation concept for all meanings found on the parapet. The final part involved thematic categorization, in which the researchers synthesized literature findings and the body of knowledge to categorize all 56 paintings. Four main chapters were categorized to clearly show that all the paintings represent Isan wisdom and cultural heritage. The chapters are composed of 10 paintings of proverbs, 16 paintings of prophetic inscriptions, 2 paintings of folklore, and 28 paintings of Dhananchai scholar's chadok or court intellectuals. These categories are vital outcomes of the isan ethical heritage, systematized to be accessible to society-wide audiences.

Book Format Design

The book size was designed for a 10″x10″ square format, which is best for portability while still allowing photo details to remain clear and easy to view. The cover was designed into two main sections: the upper section features the second bas-relief sculpture to help viewers understand the main content inside, and the lower section contains the address, title, and editorial board names.

Typography and Color Palette: In typography, the designers selected the LINE Seed Sans TH font for its contemporary aesthetic and high readability at 55 points. The main color palette is orange for compatibility with the bas-relief sculpture color palette in the book. It is designed for aesthetic continuity to reinforce the cultural heritage of the sculpture.

Photobook Evaluation

Table 2

Photobook Evaluation

Subject	Mean	*SD*	Meaning
1.Book format			
1.1 Attractive format	4.89	0.33	Very Good
1.2 Portable size	5	0	Very Good
1.3 Suitable thickness	4.89	0.33	Very Good
1.4 Aesthetic and readable layout	4.67	0.5	Very Good
1.5 Durability	4.89	0.33	Very Good
1.6 Good quality printing	5	0	Very Good
2. Content			
2.1 Suitable content for tourist age and experiences	4.78	0.44	Very Good
2.2 Suitable length of content	4.89	0.33	Very Good
2.3 Order and continuation of content	4.78	0.44	Very Good
2.4 Content reflected ethical value from bas-relief sculpture	4.89	0.33	Very Good
2.5 Thoughtfulness of content in relation to present-day lifestyles	4.78	0.44	Very Good
3. Photo layouts			
3.1 Aesthetic cover	4.89	0.3	Very Good
3.2 Aesthetic photos layout inside	4.56	0.53	Very Good
3.3 Photos inside relatable to content of each page	4.78	0.44	Very Good
3.4 Comprehensible content from photo	4.78	0.44	Very Good
3.5 Clear and beautiful photos	4.89	0.33	Very Good
3.6 Photos and captions are clear	4.67	0.5	Very Good
4.Presentation			
4.1 New and attractive presentation	4.67	0.71	Very Good
4.2 Interesting presentation	4.78	0.44	Very Good
4.3 Easy to understand	4.89	0.33	Very Good
4.4 Creative presentation	4.78	0.44	Very Good
4.5 Suitable for target groups	4.67	0.5	Very Good

Table 2
(Cont.)

Subject	Mean	*SD*	Meaning
4.6 Presentation make viewing photos pleasurable	4.78	0.44	Very Good
5. Language and fonts			
5.1 Suitable for readers and viewers	4.78	0.44	Very Good
5.2 Easy and clear language use	4.78	0.44	Very Good
5.3 Appropriate language use	4.67	0.5	Very Good
5.4 Good font use	4.44	0.53	Very Good
5.5 Suitable font size	4.56	0.53	Very Good
5.6 Font colors suitable and easy to read	4.67	0.5	Very Good
6. Cover			
6.1 Attractive and interesting cover photo	4.89	0.33	Very Good
6.2 The cover image conveys the contents inside the photobook	4.56	0.53	Very Good
6.3 Font is visually striking	5	0	Very Good
6.4 Font style reflects the photobook personality	4. 67	0.5	Very Good
6.5 Striking position of book title	4.78	0.44	Very Good
6.6 Back cover relatable to front cover	4.78	0.44	Very Good
7. Tourism Promotion			
7.1 Photobook promotes tourists' learning about Buddhist art	5	0	Very Good
7.2 Photobook can be applied to other tourist attractions	4.89	0.33	Very Good
7.3 Photobook can be used by interpreters working for the temple	4. 89	0. 33	Very Good
7.4 Photobook is useful media for Thai and foreign tourists	4.67	0.71	Very Good

Table 2 (Photobook Evaluation) shows that the quality and suitability of the bas-relief sculpture photobook were evaluated by five experts from five disciplines. Overall, the photobook demonstrates very good quality and suitability. In all dimensions, the photobook appears effective as a Buddhist art medium and for promoting learning. In the category of Format and Aesthetics, the photobook received a high score, indicating good ergonomics of use and strong production quality. The Content and Ethical Value evaluation shows that the photobook successfully achieves the main objective of the research, with content reflecting the ethical values found in the sculpture across all chapters (M = 4.89). The Communication and Presentation evaluation reveals highly effective results.

Evaluators' Recommendations

Generally, a high-quality photobook requires good editorial content, excellent photo quality, and layout. In the case of a photobook intended to communicate basic information and knowledge about bas-relief sculpture and its ethical values, it is expected to demonstrate unquestionable quality. Thus, the inventive media photobook travels across various mediums from Buddhist arts to local proverbs, from teaching instruction to social obligations in cross-cultural tourism, acting as the key element needed in sustaining the conveyance of indigenous

values. The research team considered recommendations for modifying the photobook as follows.

Book format modification: The layout grid or column system must be made clearer to arrange sentences of unequal length on each page in a consistent style. Durability of the book must be considered for use at tourist sites. For effective communication, the reading fonts should be made larger, with bold or italic used to emphasize key words and to distinguish interview sections from the main content. Thai number fonts should be used to maintain cultural uniqueness in the content.

Enriching content and illustrations: The content should be enhanced with in-depth meaning by comparing Buddhist proverbs with local folk wisdom and proverbs to enrich the ethical value. Illustrations are considered infographics and the particular ones are very good; however, adding pictograms to the sub-photo line could indicate the physical position of the bas-relief sculpture more precisely.

Increasing accessible channels and development: To expand the photobook's international accessibility, foreign languages (e.g., English and Chinese) and online access through an e-book with a QR code should be added. It is necessary to include digital content to enhance benefits and accessibility for innovative media across spaces. In addition, the photobook could include neighboring tourist attractions to promote Buddhist art tourism more broadly, thereby supporting the development of additional value-added products.

Photobook Application to Promote Tourists' Learning on Wat Klang, Royal Temple's Bas-Relief Sculptures, Kalasin

Cultural Tourism Enhancement and Universal Communication

Digital platforms and online access should be considered for distributing the prototype photobook through an e-book and QR code. This aims to expand access through cross-cultural media and universal tourism, making it available to the international community.

Route determination: Trans-semiotic interpretation of Wat Klang's bas-relief sculpture across 4 chapters could be used to develop an Ethical Tourism Route focusing on academic quality and Isan wisdom learning.

Value-Added and Preservation Mechanism

Value-added products: The results could be developed into value-added products, for example, souvenirs based on accurate interpretation and well-designed community products reflecting similar Buddhist arts and cultural heritage found in local villages.

Educational program integration: **Findings** about Ethical Heritage could be integrated into local school programs or curricula to promote cultural value learning among young community members and to support young tourist guides as personnel for local wisdom preservation.

Media prototype development: Mixed-methods research was employed to analyze and synthesize information in order to develop media as a blueprint for trans-semiotic translation for local, cultural, historic, and religious tourist attractions.

Discussion

Meaning of Bas-Relief Sculptures in Wat Klang, the Royal Temple, Kalasin

The human life cycle symbol in bas-relief sculpture is presented from a cultural dimension as a tool to comprehend patterns of life and value perceptions within society. The sets of inscriptions present ages in human life in ten stages, from 10 to 100 years old, using symbolic analogy. It reflects social roles and changing physical status. The presentation reminds viewers of Trilak-khana in Buddhism, which refers to the Three Characteristics or the appearances that determine the truth about everything. Dhamma has the nature of impermanence (*anicca*), meaning that all conditioned things, both physical and mental, are in a constant state of change and are impermanent. Nothing lasts forever, and clinging to things as if they were permanent will lead to dissatisfaction. Suffering, dissatisfaction, and stress (*dukkha*) encompass not only physical and emotional pain but also a general sense of unease and discontent in ways of living that arise from the impermanent nature of life, the decline of age from youth to old age, and unavoidable death." Nonbeing, or not-self (*anatta*), refers to the understanding that there is no permanent, unchanging soul or "self" in any being or phenomenon. What we perceive as a "self" is a temporary collection of constantly changing physical and mental components. It is an uncontrollable condition. These three characteristics are fundamental to understanding the Buddhist view of reality, indicating that all conditioned phenomena are temporary, ultimately leading to dissatisfaction, and lacking a permanent, unchanging-self consistent with their presentation in the bas-relief sculpture.

Trans-symbiotic Interpretation is applied to find meaning in this section of bas-relief sculpture, which functions as a prophetic inscription or oneiromancy and transmits societal anxiety. When society faces or worries about the deterioration of value systems and corrupted power, symbiotic parables are used as a prophetic device to remind community members, functioning in this section as a form of oneiromancy. Symbolic parables portray the ethical devaluation of human society and its impacts on the vulnerable and powerless, economic structures, and family relationships. These issues include natural and economic aberrations, degeneration of social institutions, aberrations of power and ethics, and the devaluation of religious institutions and individual ethics.

In prophetic form consistent with the Buddhist Dhamma principle of *kilesa*, negative behavior and mental defilement are portrayed as the root causes of *samsara*, or the cycle of birth and death, as follows: (1) *Lobha* (greed): greed in the ruling and justice systems, oppression and exploitation of the vulnerable, and monks trading Dhamma for wealth; (2) *Raga* (concupiscence): premature sexual behavior, sexual misconduct, spousal infidelity, and loss of mental clarity caused by overwhelming sexual desire; and (3) *Moha* (delusion and ignorance): shown in appointing incompetent persons to important duties, misunderstanding or misperceiving things and believing them, and lacking the ability to distinguish between good and bad.

Thus, the bas-reliefs depicting bizarre dream sequences or unnatural events are the signifiers, but what lies behind them is the signified meaning, which is the anxiety over ethical devaluation and corruption by those in power. This aligns with de Saussure's (1959) concept of signs as being composed of a two-dimensional, unified structure: the signifier (the tangible or physically visible thing) and the signified meaning (the underlying concept or semantic value).

From the meanings interpreted from the prophetic inscriptions and the Dhananchai fable allegory, the Court Intellectual serves as a mentor to potentates through ethical teaching and

awareness-raising roles. It comprises: (1) the emergence and validation of intellectual authority; (2) solving administrative and ethical dilemmas; (3) intellectual competition and defining virtues; and (4) jurisprudence and the foundation of the *Dharmarāja*. The content emphasizes the ruler or potentate's ethics and administrative ideology, as advised by the scholar for establishing the *Dharmarāja* of the land. In the Tenfold virtues, *dāna* (giving or sacrificing wealth) aligns with the 'less is more' resolution. *Sīla* is to maintain proper conduct and behavior and corresponds to 'What is a good game to play in?' It is essential for a king to practice the following *sīla* and *mondharadhamma: pariccāga*, or sacrificing one's own pleasure for the pleasure of others, consistent with the Four Bases of Social Synthesis (Virtues for Social Integration). Kindness and gentleness in speaking and communication are also consistent with the Four Bases of Social Synthesis (Virtues for Social Integration). Non-violence and non-harming are reflected in the subduing of the monster who swears to cease killing. *Khanti* represents patient endurance, which the king is instructed to practice. Conquering anger with non-anger (akkodha) and fulfilling duties with perseverance and cooperation leads to wholesome paths, moving away from unwholesome courses of action (Akusala-kammapatha or *Mondharadhamma*). *Avirodhana* refers to adhering to the righteous and proper path, which is consistent with the scholar's instruction for the king to administer government officials to strictly follow the land's rules. *Sajja* is honesty or truthfulness consistent with the scholar's instruction to the king (The Four Bases of Social Synthesis / Virtues for Social Integration).

The administrative principles and guidelines for maintaining good relationships, as instructed by Dhananchai, support the king's ruling ability and ensure good welfare for the people. The principles include giving alms, or *dāna:* a king should be generous in giving and willing to sacrifice personal pleasure for the well-being of the public. *Piyavācā* is kind and useful speech that expresses sympathy and brings feelings of joy to listeners, consistent with the scholar's advice to the king. *Thacariyā* is beneficial conduct and supportive behavior that helps appropriate individuals and enterprises succeed in their duties, consistent with the scholar's advice. *Samānattatā* refers to equanimity and impartiality, requiring the king to be unpretentious and approachable in all situations. In addition, related Buddhist principles are incorporated. For instance, the 38 *Mongkhon* instructions warn against associating with people with ill behavior, and the ten *Mondhin* sayings explain that *Kilesa* are stains or defilements of the mind, an idea included in the scholar's instruction to the monster (Yaksa).

The findings, in accordance with Sengmany et al. (2021), state that Buddhist art plays a role in transmitting Dhamma principles to all audiences. Buddhist arts function through trans-symbiotic interpretation, transforming intangible abstract forms into concrete, perceptible forms. In the methodology, the conceptual framework, which applied the Symbolic Analogy concept aimed to comprehensively understand Dhamma Principles. The findings also emphasize that reading and reinterpreting the paintings is helpful for identifying new symbols insinuated by the painters (Rodjanacheewinsopond., et al., 2024). Furthermore, symbolic analogy consistently underlines that the study of sculptures must be conducted precisely and carefully in all details to uncover the storytelling insinuated or implied by the sculptor and painter, enabling effective knowledge transmission and practical benefit (Ritruechai et al., 2022).

The research also links to the study by Brown et al. (2005) on "ethical leadership theory," which states that the expression of appropriate and moral conduct, both in personal actions and interpersonal interactions, requires leaders to act as "role models" and provide crucial moral guidance to followers. This relies on qualities such as honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and

empathy to build acceptance and trust in authority. While ethical leadership is closely related to empathetic behavior, fairness in interactions, or charismatic leadership, it is a unique concept not limited to these.

Furthermore, ethical leadership is a significant predictor of positive organizational outcomes, including perceived leader effectiveness, job satisfaction, and follower dedication and commitment. In the same perspective, Western theory by Brown et al. (2005) views ethical leadership as stemming from personal traits and follower acceptance in modern organizations; however, this research indicates that in the Eastern context, art serves as an institutional mechanism to check and balance the power of rulers. Sculptors use artistic space and allegory to speak the truth to those in power, which is crucial in contemporary society, which often lacks effective leadership scrutiny mechanisms.

Photobook Design and Production for Bas-Relief Sculptures of Wat Klang, Royal Temple, Kalasin

The research results confirmed that the photobook is highly effective as an innovative medium for promoting the bas-relief sculptures of the Royal Temple. The media educates and provides learning resources that help viewers appreciate the in-depth meaning, background, and social teachings of Buddhist art. First, the integration of ergonomics, format, and aesthetics allows the photobook to establish a new standard for presenting Buddhist art, emphasizing ergonomics and the quality of the final product as essential for social acceptance and satisfaction. The design steps are carried out precisely to ensure perfection and durability. -It aims to achieve reliability and recognition as an aesthetically pleasing and durable item in real-world conditions. Second, the photobook constructs ethical and wisdom value through appropriate content, and the research confirms its potential as an ethical transmission tool that effectively connects Buddhist art with Dhamma principles. The photobook is successful in decoding and interpreting Buddhist arts into ethical knowledge. Age and experience appropriateness is reflected in the bas-relief sculpture art works in each chapter and section. It demonstrates achievement in applying content with depth and scaffolding, enabling key concepts to reach a broader target group without diminishing the core wisdom and ethical value of the Dhamma principles. Third, photo enhancement is effective in transmitting understanding; the photobook demonstrates success as a visual communication tool that increases comprehension and improves ease of presentation. It emphasizes that content order and layout design contribute to high communication effectiveness, and that tactics such as enlarged photos help convey clearer meaning.

Therefore, the key elements of an excellent photobook include format, usability, and ergonomics. Content and ethical significance must align with the primary aims of the media to ensure that the creators' intended meanings and expressions are effectively conveyed to the audience. Communication and presentation should be crafted to engage viewers and enhance their understanding of the art and content, serving as the ultimate outcome of the communication process, with aesthetics functioning as a pull mechanism that facilitates visual interpretation.

The findings discussed earlier, particularly the exceptional quality of printing, clear narratives, and remarkable photographs, reaffirm the concept outlined in the design of the e-book, with a very high satisfaction level noted in terms of aesthetics, symbol design, and font choices (Danthainum & Thamjariyaphan, 2020). This underscores the importance of quality

evaluation in the presentation and design of photobook/e-books, ensuring that both content and photographic designs are optimal for effective value transmission (Chingchuang, 2017). A successful photobook received a high evaluation score reflecting Dhamma Principles, providing visitors the opportunity to gain knowledge, trivia, or anecdotes about the temples they visit while also offering interesting insights into their history and background beyond simply observing (Janmuang et al., 2010).

Photobook in Application to Promote Wat Klang's Buddhist Arts -Bas-Relief

A prominent trend in photobook development is to transform the research product into a media product that serves as a tool for preservation and for building social and economic value through three main channels. First, global digital communication can be enhanced by developing the photobook into a multilingual e-book and/or QR-code-accessible format. Converting the photobook into an e-book with QR-code access removes limitations and allows the temple's information to reach worldwide audiences. This will support the cultural tourism sector. Second, socio-economic value creation involves using the research output as a foundation for community sustainability. Patterns and content interpreted from the sculptures can be converted into value-added tangible items such as souvenirs or community-based goods. It aligns with the concept of transforming cultural property into economic assets and supports the integration of cultural learning into school curricula as a preservation mechanism. A local school program can raise cultural awareness and enrich youth-focused local tourist-guide initiatives. The development of these products adds value to human resources and supports conservation and cultural-value awareness. Third, the research process serves as a methodological blueprint that can be replicated for other attractions and applied to media-interpretation frameworks. The mixed-methods approach used in the sculpture-art and photobook products provides a blueprint that can assist future researchers and development practitioners in expanding knowledge nationwide.

From the findings, the photobook is the most effective tool for learning about Buddhist art, supported by Imsamraan and Boonyananta (2021), who developed an e-storytelling book and found that the target group engaged more deeply with the content, leading them to want to visit the actual locations.

Likewise, the research results support using media for human-resource development, and this is consistent with Singtanasarn and Panpairojn (2023), who found that an e-book on Buddhist learning sources can serve as learning media to enrich young tourist guides' worldview and help them provide better service to visiting tourists.

Conclusion

Based on the research question concerning the meaning of the bas-relief sculptures at Wat Klang, this research reveals new empirical knowledge through the analysis of the symbolic value and meaning of the sculptures surrounding the main hall, a dimension that has never been systematically categorized before. The analysis found that the sculptures reflect the ethical heritage of the Isan people and profound life philosophies in a systematic way. They can be classified into four unique categories of wisdom: proverbs and sayings about life and death; Isan dream interpretation; folk tales; and Jataka tales (including the story of Dhananchai). This finding demonstrates the complex connection between Buddhist principles and the foundations of local

life, providing crucial data for creating a high-quality, innovative photobook to effectively interpret these principles and enhance Buddhist art tourism.

While addressing the issue of designing a photobook of the bas-relief sculptures at Wat Klang, this research reveals new empirical knowledge through a symbolic analysis of 56 bas-relief images, systematized into four main categories of Isan wisdom (proverbs, dream interpretations, folk tales, Jataka tales). This systematically categorized finding served as the foundation for designing and developing an "innovative photobook," particularly in determining the book size (10x10 inches) and selecting a font style that considered communication ergonomics and aesthetic harmony with the cultural object. This design, emphasizing clarity and portability, was deemed of the highest quality, confirming that the photobook can be a powerful reinterpretation medium to enhance Buddhist art tourism.

Regarding the application of photobooks on bas-relief sculptures to promote learning for tourists visiting Wat Klang, this research reveals new empirical knowledge in creating a 'value of utilization' from cultural heritage. A symbolic analysis of 56 bas-relief sculptures led to the systematization of four categories of Isan wisdom. This new knowledge forms a crucial foundation for application in three main dimensions: (1) Enhancing tourism through conversion into electronic media (e-book) and QR codes for international communication; (2) Creating added economic value by developing value-added products based on the interpreted patterns; and (3) Structural conservation through integration into local curricula to create a mechanism for young tour guides to support the sustainable transmission of this wisdom.

In practical terms, this research can be used to develop innovative pictorial books and multilingual e-book platforms (including English, Chinese, Japanese, etc.) as well as various online platforms. This research aims to transform cultural heritage from static artifacts into a powerful tool for driving the creative economy and cultural tourism in the area. The clarity of the photographs combined with embedded QR codes reduces language barriers and fosters a deeper philosophical understanding globally. Simultaneously, the decoded collection of symbols and patterns serves as intangible cultural capital for community enterprises and local artisans, enabling them to develop value-added community products and generate income. Furthermore, from a policy and educational perspective, this systematically categorized knowledge can be integrated into local curricula in Kalasin province, serving as a standard learning tool for conveying Buddhist principles and local history to young people. This policy mechanism strengthens the institutional protection of cultural heritage through the nurturing and development of "junior tour guide" skills in communities. This fosters a shared sense of cultural ownership and leads to the sustainable preservation of local wisdom through genuine public participation, aligning with Thailand's research policy focused on creating creative cities and creative folklore, ultimately contributing to the creative economy.

Author Contributions

K.Y.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Visualization, Writing –Review & Editing, Supervision, Funding Acquisition, and Correspondence Management. Y.C.: Writing –Original Draft Preparation, Supervision, Investigation, Field Data Collection. S.K.: Investigation, Field Data Collection. S.J.: Investigation, Field Data Collection. - Referring to Credit. P.N.: Visualization, Investigation.

Declaration of the Use of Generative AI

During the preparation and revision of this manuscript, the authors used Gemini (Google; Gemini Pro) and Grammarly as supporting tools for language refinement and improvement of the manuscript's readability. Their use was limited to enhancing clarity, grammatical accuracy, and overall presentation of the text. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed and revised by the authors, who retain full responsibility for the final content of the manuscript.

Ethics

Formal ethical approval was not obtained for this study; however, the research was conducted in strict accordance with standard ethical principles. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, and all personal data were anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

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