

PHANOM Model: An Integrated Learning Model for Developing Local Photographers' Potential into Cultural Heritage Communicators Wat Phra That Phanom, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand

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Abstract

This research is a participatory action research with three main objectives: (1) to find effective methods for developing local photographers into cultural heritage communicators through integrated learning; (2) to create and apply the PHANOM Model to enhance the capabilities of photographers; and (3) to assess the impact at the individual, community, and site levels at Wat Phra That Phanom, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. A preliminary survey found that 85% of local photographers lacked advanced technical knowledge, 78% had insufficient knowledge of cultural heritage, and 92% experienced problems with low service pricing. A total of 120 local photographers were selected through neighborhood sampling. Quantitative research instruments included a Pre-Post Knowledge Test (35 items, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89), a Portfolio Assessment Rubric, and a Satisfaction and Attitude Questionnaire, supported by qualitative tools including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observation protocols. The PHANOM Model integrates three theoretical frameworks, namely Transformative Learning Theory, Community of Practice Theory, and Cultural Heritage Preservation Theory, into six components (Photography Art, Heritage Consciousness, Artistic Excellence, Network Building, Organizational Culture, and Memory Preservation), carried out across four phases within 24 weeks. Results showed a 167% increase in overall knowledge and competence ($p < .001$, $d = 7.51$), portfolio quality improved from 28% to 82.3%,

and 88% of participants shifted their professional identity from service providers to cultural heritage communicators, with an average income increase of 28%. At the community level, a photographers' club of 135 members was formed and continues to operate independently, along with a heritage database of 1,047 photographs. The PHANOM Model shows that integrated learning can effectively connect technical skills with cultural understanding, providing a model that can be applied to heritage conservation through local photographers and community members in other contexts.

Keywords : PHANOM Model, Heritage communication, Photography capacity building, Integrated learning, Professional identity change

Introduction

Culture heritage is a precious national treasure reflects the intelligence, concept and identity of local residents. Hence, it has become an important task for everyone in the society to participate in the preservation and inheritance of cultural heritage. This is particularly important now, in the age of digital photography and visual communication, as these are vital means to distribute and communicate the value of cultural heritage to new generations and the public at large. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2003), made explicit in participatory cultural heritage preservation, recalls the importance of local communities to protect their own history and art practices, stating that train-ing knowledge holders from within results sustainable conservation closely related social and cultural contexts.

In cultural heritage conservation, photography is important for documentation,utilization and communication of the values embedded in cultural heritage to the community. As Edwards, E. (2012) argues, photography is not a recording of external realities only; but also instrumental in creating meaning or interpreting cultural histories. Photographers, who know well about cultural background are also a sort of “cultural heritage communicators" that can represent beauty, sacred feelings and meanings by using photographs. But that’s not all it takes to make a photographer an effective heritage communicator.

Phra That Phanom is one of the most prominent Buddhist relics in Nakhon Phanom, with historical evidence dating to the 8th century. Located on the Mekong River bank, it is revered as the sacred site where Buddha delivered teachings to all living beings. According to legend, Phra Mahakassapa and 500 arahant monks, together with Phra Upagupta, enshrined the Buddha's relic (Phra Borommahareeruek). The pagoda's construction was funded by five senior officials who served as the project's chief builders at the current site. (Nakhon Phanom Provincial Office, n.d.) It takes photographers not only of artistry but also who understand the richness of cultural context and have conservation, sacred places sensitivity.

However, initial surveys conducted in the Wat Phra That Phanom indicate most local photographers face four main challenges: 85% lacking advanced knowledge and technical skills in photography, especially for

natural light photography and visual storytelling; 78% do not understand the context or deeper meanings behind local cultural heritage which leads to their work having no depth of meaning; 92% experience low service pricing due to inability to add value to photography and other services; and all of them face a lack on quality certification / credentials. Problems of conduct and ethics in photography, such as entering forbidden zones, using flash in places of worship and disturbing the a.a., ceremony, affecting believers' faith and the image of the temple were also identified.

Even worse, most photographers are out there battling exclusively as being run of the mill freelancers oblivious to their role and duty as a cultural/heritage communicators and conservators. Initial interviews with 20 photographers showed that most saw themselves only as "service providers", working for money, and did not acknowledge the worth of their work in safeguarding culture or creating art. This absence of interrelation between professional competences and social-cultural missions leaves a niché between available potentiality and the requirement to already effectively generate cultural knowledge keepers.

This study is significant in that it compensates for the lack of the preservationists and conservators' understanding on culture by introducing an integrated learning model, i.e "PHANOM MODEL" which links skill development at professional level with consciousness relevant to conservation through the formulation based on a system. 120 local photographers are empowered as quality professionals and aware cultural heritage communicators, capable of multiple impacts: at the individual level, photographers have significantly augmented skills and income while obtaining a new professional identity; at the community level, Wat Pra That Phanom and the locality will have cultural heritage communicators who come from within the area to make conservation sustainable through an aligned with context locality; at the academic level, a model of integrative learning is provided that can be applied to other knowledge custodians in other cultural heritage sites; policy-wise, it serves as a model for integrating vocational development policies with cultural heritage conservation policies in order generate not only long-term sustainability of transmission knowledge but also mechanic where custodians arise from community co-financing continuously.

Research Objectives

1. To find the ways that enables local photographers in capability building into cultural heritage communicators through integrated learning.
2. To develop and apply the PHANOM MODEL to enhance the competence of community-based photographers in Wat Phra That Phanom.
3. To assess the contribution made by individual, community and site level using the PHANOM MODEL in building local photographers' capacity.

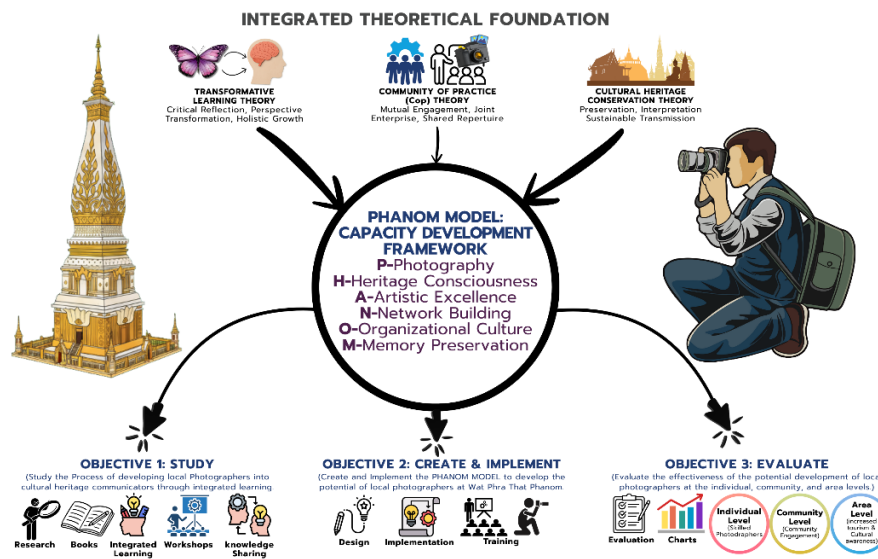


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This research is a participatory action research mixed methods research and development. In a situation where the researcher has a dual role as a researcher and a developer alongside the target groups. Three rationales were afforded to this format; the first was the need for the new model development, the PHANOM Model, to be used to address a specific problem in a specific context where the flexibility to change is needed. The second was the collaboration between the local community, including artists, the council of the Phra That Phanom Subdistrict Administration Organization, and the community, to ensure appropriateness and sustainability of development that requires. The third was the need for quantitative data to measure the change and qualitative data to understand the process and context that made the change happen. The research took place in three stages based on the objectives. It should be noted that as a participatory action research, this study has inherent methodological limitations, including the researcher's dual role as both researcher and developer, the absence of a control group, and the context-specific nature of the findings at a single heritage site. These limitations are acknowledged and discussed further in the Limitations and Recommendations section.

1. Population and sample

The research's population is artists in the Phra That Phanom District, Nakhon Phanom Province. First surveyed, approximately 200 people were selected from a 120 sample using neighborhood sampling. The criteria selected were; firstly and secondly, all professional and semi-professional photographers in an area who have practiced for at least a year and have a primary working area in Phra That Phanom and surrounding areas,

thirdly, Intent to participate and participating in all activities, fourthly, over 18 years of age, and finally, they can use a digital camera at a basic level. For qualitative information, the researcher selected 3 unpacked groups of primary informants. Firstly, a photographer who participated in the project, 15 people selected from the most developed people in each dimension, such as skill-based development, conscious development, or playing a vital role in the Phra That Phanom Temple Village, secondly, leaders of community and Phra That Phanom Temple, 5 people to provide information about community level change, and thirdly, three photographic and cultural heritage experts.

2. Research instruments

Quantitative Data Instrument This research uses various instruments to obtain comprehensive and reliable information. The instruments are divided into 2 main groups

Quantitative Tools

1. Pre Post Test Pre-Post Test developed by the researcher is divided into 5 parts as follows: *10 multiple choice items regarding photography technique skills, cover camera operation, light control, and picture composing. *05 multiple-choice items about natural light use, which covers characteristic and use at different hours. *10 multiple-choice items about Wat Phra That Panom cultural heritage understanding, which consists of history, architecture, meaning, and social role. *05 multiple-choice items about storytelling using pictures covering principle and techniques on the story-telling photograph. *05 multiple choice items on photography ethics discussing etiquette and responsibility taking photographs in sacred place. The Pre-Post Test instrument has a content validity check performed by three experts, namely, photography experts, cultural heritage experts, and research experts included 35 multiple-choice questions. Which verifies an IOC score between 0.67-1.00 and a trial test on 30 piloting experiment groups, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89, which is considered very good.

2. A Portfolio Assessment Rubric, or a set of quality measures of photographs' performances that was developed based on a literature review and experts' consultation, was developed to make it culturally responsive. It consists of three main dimensions

Technical Quality consists 10 points: Sharpness & Detail (10 points) Lighting & Shadow (10 points), Color & Tone (10 points) and Balance & Composition (10 points)

Storytelling & Meaning consist of 10 points: Story Clarity (10 points), Cultural Depth (10 points), Emotional Expression (10 points), Social Context

Cultural Appropriateness consist 10 points: Respect for Sacred Space (10 points), Accuracy of Representation (10 points), Cultural Value Reflection (10 points), Photography Ethics (10 points).

The total score is 30 points. Assessors are two people, including the researcher and an expert. Both assessors independently assess the submitted work. They do not communicate about the assessment before scanning all and then averaging their evaluation scores for inter-rater reliability.

3. Satisfaction and attitude questionnaire

This questionnaire employs a 5-out-of-5 proportion estimate using Likert Scale , 5 signifies strongly agree, 4 indicates agree, 3 means undecided, 2 shows disagree, and 1 indicates strongly disagree in four major sections consisting of 1) This model is suitable for 10 items emphasizing appropriateness of content delivery schedule and benefits 2) An attitudinal to being a culture-legacy communicator. The eight-element questioning considers pride role, self-implication feeling, and worth of work (3) Intention to grow attainments. The seven questioning item based on goals to evolve skills, seek new knowledge, and perfection and lastly 4) Readiness to engage further. The five questioning items in readiness to participate, assist members, and support group's mission. There are a total of 30 items included in the questionnaire.

Quality tools

1. **The in-depth interview guide** is a semi-structured questionnaire developed based on the research framework, including 5 main issues. These issues are:

Experience and feelings about participation include reasons for participation, feelings at different stages, memorable or challenging experiences, and comparisons with other training experiences.

Changes in skills, knowledge, and attitudes include new skills gained, used at work, changes in the understanding of the culture heritage, and changes in self-awareness and work.

Understanding one's own role in heritage conservation, before and after the workshop, feelings of responsibility of cultural heritage, and their initiatives to use these skills for conservation.

Factors that facilitate or hinder development learning that facilitated the learning process, obstacles that were met, suggestion for improvement, and support needed.

Sustainability and Continuity include plans for their own development, group role, preparedness, knowledge transfer, and how they see their future role as a conservator.

Fifteen participating conservators, five community leaders and temple committee members, and three experts in the field conduct the interviews, which lasts about 45-60 minutes per interview. These interviews are recorded and noted while transcription for analysis is done.

2. **Focus Group Discussion Guide** Three focus group discussions were conducted with 10–12 participants in each group, following the guidelines for optimal focus group size recommended by Krueger, R.A. & Casey, M.A. (2015), who suggest that groups of this size facilitate effective and focused discussion without being too large or too small yet not too large, equating to the retention and inclusion of 35 individuals at follow-up attending one or more sessions). All sessions were performed during 2 h, at different times. The first and the second parts of the meetings were dedicated to examination of the learning process, problems identification and recommendations. Thoughts about what they learned in general, the things they would like to do differently and how they were already thinking ahead for next year. Discussions also covered club operations, visited challenges and explored strategies for ongoing progress. Topics on the agenda focused on

1) an overview of learning and development process; 2) a group analysis of problems/issues; 3) a proposal to improve the PHANOM MODEL; and 4) ways for improvement and sustainability.

3. Observation Protocol

This protocol describes the participant observation that the researcher used to detail behaviours and interactions amongst participants, as well as general environment in diverse settings. It involves four basic areas: 1) participation and engagement, 2) interaction with other learners, 3) implementation of learning in their work, and 4) specific events or content that stimulated interest. The observer observed all the activities along 24 sessions. Field notes were attentive to detail and observational data was enriched with photographs and videos for analysis.

4. Data collection

Collection of data was carried out between June and November 2025 over a period of six months, divided into four stages as follows:

Phase 1: Preparation (Weeks 1-2) Field trips were made to meet with local leaders, temple committees and explain the project. A focus group discussion method was done with 120 photographers in the form of questionnaires and presample group discussions. Photographic skills were assessed by getting respondents to take a standard 5-image test set including images of Phra That Phanom, community shots, peoples pictures events snaps and close-ups. Also, a pre-test was carried out.

Phase 2: Skill training (3–10 weeks) Training was conducted following an 8-week schedule over 4 cohorts. During the weeks of training, the data were collected through participant observation, photographic and video documentation, weekly portfolio evaluations, spontaneous conversations with participants and in group discussions on the 4th and 8th week.

Phase 3: Evaluation (Weeks 11-12) Post-training evaluations (post-tests) were administered in conjunction with final portfolio reviews where participants submitted 10 photographs and captions. A second focus group meeting was conducted and in-depth interviews with 15 participants. Satisfaction was reported, as well as attitudes, the formation of the photographers' club and work in progress planning.

Phase 4: Follow-up (Weeks 13-24) The transactions, the events, and the new developments within the club were observed over a 3-month period. Observation, follow-up interviews and a third focus group discussion were the sources for data collection together with reports (written feed-back) and analysis of documents as well as the photographic database generated. Community leaders and temple committees were also interviewed about these perceived changes in this phase.

The discussions were moderated by the researcher with assistants recording. Audio and video tapes were produced for later review.

5. Data analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

1. Descriptive Statistics Mean, standard deviation and range alongside percentage was used to present demographic characteristics of the sample as well as skill and knowledge levels before after development program and satisfaction with project.

2. Statistical Analysis Paired sample t-test was used to compare the skill and knowledge scores before and after participation in the project with null just that "there is no significant difference between pre- and post-training scores." This statistical significance value was set at 0.05, and effect size (Cohen's d) was used to determine the difference of each variable irrespective of sample size. The criteria outlined by Cohen, J. (1988) for interpreting effect sizes were followed: $d = 0.2$ (small), $d = 0.5$ (medium), and $d = 0.8$ (large).

Percentage of Development The formula applied was $\text{Development (\%)} = \frac{[(\text{Post-score} - \text{Pre-score}) / \text{Pre-score}] \times 100$ that plainly showed the difference on each skill and gave a visual representation regarding development and comparison among different skills.

Qualitative Data Analysis

1. Analysis of Data Interviews, focus group discussions and observations were transcribed and documented. Coding was conducted through a deductive method where categories were created based on the conceptual framework, and at the same time allowed for new themes to emerge from the participants' data using an inductive approach. The researcher read the data multiple times to identify common themes, sorted data with similar meaning, and constructed in-depth categories.

2. Thematic Analysis A six-stage process was employed, following the work of Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006): 1) Familiarizing yourself with the data through repeated and reiterative readings; 2) Generating initial codes by systematically coding all data items; 3) Searching for themes by grouping related codes to form potential themes; 4) Reviewing themes to ensure that coded extracts reflect their definition, as well as accurately representing the entire dataset; 5) Defining and naming themes while constantly analyzing in order to capture the 'essence' of each theme; and effectively describing patterned responses from analysis of other selected extracts; Producing the report – selecting clear, representative examples.

3. Trustworthiness The following four triangulation types were used: 1) data by informant groups; a variety of photographers, leaders, and temple committees as well as experts 2) method by instruments such as interviews, focused group discussions and observation 3) Investigator, two experts independently reviewed an analysis and gave suggestions; 4) theory: multiple theories to interpret data. Further, informant feedback was obtained through member checking by sending the analysis findings back to informants for validation and additional input.

6. Research ethics

This research has been conducted in strict accordance with human research ethics, including: 1) fully obtaining and explaining the research objectives to each participant in clear and understandable language; and 2) requiring each participant to sign Informed Consent prior to participation, explicitly stating that participation is purely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from the project at any time with no repercussions. 3) Ensure the confidentiality of personal information by using codes instead of names for reporting, storing the information securely, and limiting access to researchers and research assistants. 4) Provided immediate, direct benefits to the participants through learning skills and building a network; 5) report the research results directly and honestly and not twist or distort the data; and 6) use research findings to benefit the community and communicate them to the public. This research project was certified by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Nakhon Phanom University, HE No. 65-045, on May 15, 2025.

Results

According to the research objectives, the results are divided into three main parts:

1. Results on the Study of the Process in Developing Local Photographers' Capacity through

Based on a review of literature, theories and relevant documents, expert consultation, environmental investigation and pilot study for this exploratory stage, the researcher concludes that capacity building for local photographers as visual cultural heritage communicators through integrated learning involves six interdependent factors.

1.1 Elements of integrated learning

Component 1: Photography Art (P) The software development of photography art skills need to include the following four integrated aspects: 1) Basic and advanced handling techniques, from basic camera operating skill and lighting manipulation (including aperture, shutter speed, ISO), to more advanced techniques specifically developed for architectural photographs such as High Dynamic Range (HDR) imaging or focus stacking; 2) Natural lights utilization, particularly during golden hours (6:00 - 7:30 a.m., 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.), which add beauty and sacredness to Phra That, blue hours in promoting mystery effects (5:30–6:00 AM, 6:30-7 PM), noonlight illuminating architectural details; 3) Composition and framing by using different elements including rule of thirds, leading lines, symmetrical structure or framing composition that can have an enjoyable outing topic; 4):Photo narration which could allow photographers serve stories emotional factor cultural meanings through images created a conjure up innermost feelings.

The pilot teaching in the preparatory phase showed that when these four dimensions were taught one by one, students considered each technique to be isolated. The way the dimensions were integrated, for example photographing Phra That during golden hour and HDR photography combined with symmetry to tell

the story of sacredness, learners could now better understand how all these skills fit into one system that they could use to create more meaningful images.

Component 2: Heritage Consciousness (H) Cultivation of heritage consciousness involves an in-depth understanding across a range of dimensions, namely: 1) The history and role of Wat Phra That Phanom over 1,500 years as the guardian pagoda for both the Nakhon Phanom people and Lao people with deep religious significance as a regional center of belief; 2) Architecture coupled with symbolism illustrated through the Lao/Lan Xang artistic style, its height at 53 meters quintessentially reflecting Lao-Isan architecture and the spire depicting Mount Meru while 12 chofa along the base symbolize zodiac signs; 3) Social roles of Wat Phra That Phanom in community life serving as focal point for religious activities, venue for communal gathering events and prime cultural tourism site; and 4) Ethical considerations and responsibilities related to photography such as not using flash within pagoda precincts, showing respect towards worshippers, non-interference from personal gain or disruption during ritual ceremonies.

Such consciousness cannot be developed through lectures alone; critical reflection processes where the learners answer questions like "What does my photo mean?" must also be engaged. "Is it a space sacred to me? "Is my photograph part of the solution or part of the problem, when I think about this issue of culture?"

Component 3: Artistic Excellence (A) This element emphasizes a continuous pursuance of quality through: 1) Establishing quality criteria on a portfolio assessment rubric, which includes three domains—technical quality (10 points), storytelling (10 points), and cultural appropriateness (10 points)—for 30 points total; (2) Prompting peer review and development by prompting group members to conduct constructive critiques for one another's work by citing two strengths and providing one suggestion for improvement; and 3) Learning from exemplary works by researching national and international photographers specializing in cultural heritage with insights from Nakhon Phanom photographers who have been awarded national photography awards.

By promoting a culture of excellence, photographers are inspired to rise above mere technical proficiency in the craft they live and breathe so that we all may elevate our industry by recognizing the true worth of quality craftsmanship.

Factors Four to Six: Network Building, Organizational Culture and Memory Preservation (N-O-M) These three factors together work in favour of sustainability. (N) Networking (Photographers') 120CLUB amateur photographers who meet Bi- monthly to participate In knowledge exchange and collaborative photography sessions at amuesWat Phra That Phanom. The corporate culture (O) is characterized by formality (bylaws and code of ethics), structure (president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, with four committees), established guidelines for behavior. (M)emory preservation The memory of the place is preserved through a well organized photographic database, including themes like: –architecture –traditions –activities -people -nature.

1.2 Integrated Learning Process – Four phases The study found that an episodic process of capacity-building occurs through four levels:

Phase 1: Build-up Phase - Week 1-2 This phase is about trust and insight development. The major activities included: 1) Meeting and relationship building, where the researcher goes on field visits connecting with photographers community leaders, temple committees to understand photographic context and build trust; 2) Need Assessment approach - a tool designed based on survey & FGD for identifying problems and needs, which revealed that learning of technical skill - lighting was prioritized 87% in ranking among learning themes followed by storytelling (76%) cultural knowledge(68%); and Basic Photography Skills test- taking through photographing the test-set followed by written assessment showing paper greatly indicating an average score of 13.2 out of 35 having indicated development needs 62.29% meaning there is need to develop the basic skills first.



Figure 2 The researcher conducted field visits to learn about the context and establish trust. at Wat Phra That Phanom, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand (June 2025).

Phase 2: Implementing phase -Weeks 3-8 It is this phase that represents the heart of the project, a training cycle that will span over six weeks with four hour sessions each week totalling 24 hours. All six elements of the training are included in the curriculum. In Weeks 1-2, we concentrate on building the foundation. While learning about the techniques of photography, participants gradually gain fundamental knowledge on Wat Phra That Phanom. On your first day, for example, you'll be taught how to work the camera and told about the long history of the temple. Attendees are guided through daily meditation practice around the temple grounds while noticing architectural elements and expressions of space as well as use of camera to photograph Wat Phra That Phanom from different viewpoints in articulating how images carry differing messages. Weeks 3-4 calls for a focus on taking light into consideration and understanding it better. Participants receive training on photography levels based on different lighting situations and the symbolic emblem meanings. For instance, the golden light that illuminates the sweeping pagoda spire as symbol of sacred and Buddhism power. You shoot pictures at various times of the day and note how you feel – the specific emotional responses evoked by these settings. Ethical issues are considered here, notably the need to take vivid photographs without distracting other peoples worship. The focus turns to storytelling and integration in Weeks 5-6. The students learn the basics of photo storytelling and are asked to produce a set of 5-10 images that tell stories about Wat Phra That Phanom. Themes might touch on “A Day at Wat Phra That Phanom,” “Faith That Never Fades” or “Architecture That

Tells History.” Students are asked to think about how they'd like to structure their narrative, what one thing each image says to them, and what the collective representation of the whole means in a cultural perspective. Learning in this stage is grounded in an experiential learning principle that allows participants to experiment and try out things, face real challenges, make mistakes with immediate feedback. After the activities, they are encouraged to reflect upon their experiences with questions such as "What did you learn today?" "What challenges did you face?" "What are you going to do with that information?" and "How has your opinion about being a shooter at Wat Phra That Phanom changed?"

Phase 3: Empowerment - Week 9-10 This stage is marked by the exhibition of work and the foundation of a photographers' society. On week 9 there was an exposition of the work from all the 120 person students in Wat Phra That Phanom. It included postcard stands showing pictures of Wat Phra That Phanom, the cards were sold at 9 baht each and proceed given to That Phanom City Learning Fund. Photographers had the chance to show their work and explain their intention, getting compliments and constructive critiques. Many people who participated in this felt really proud and saw that what they have done has huge importance. The Wat Phra That Phanom Photographers' Club was formed in week 10, 9 committee members were voted into office and a further 5 as sub committee. The goals of the club were outlined and a 6 month rota was devised along with rules, which included a code of ethics for photographers.

Phase 4: Maintenance Phase- Weeks 11-24 This stage includes a post-application 3-month follow-up to check on sustainability and further expansion of the initiative. Accordingly, the club carried out various activities, such as: i) holding bi-monthly meetings in order for people to share their knowledge and plan future activities; ii) working collaboratively on photographic outings one – two times per month, capturing important customs and daily life photo opportunities; iii) recruiting a total of 15 new members under a strict selection and entry level training program, whole community photography database was ranked up to be consisted 1047 high quality images by end of month five; and iv) hosting two exhibition show. Importantly, the club found a way to continue running without depending upon researcher interventions. They were learning from each other, training new recruits and collectively developing longer term plans of action.



Figure 3 Photography techniques combined with heritage knowledge.

2. Generation and Implementation of the PHANOM MODEL

THE PHANOM MODEL: AN INTEGRATED COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING MODEL Following the study process as described in this section 1. (research), a PHANOM MODEL has been designed as the integrated learning framework and also created to improve local photographers' skills, changing them to be powerful communicators of cultural heritage. This structure includes the following items:

Theoretical Background: Synthesis of Three Major Theories **Transformative Learning Theory** → Transforming perspectives and identity **Community of Practice Theory** → Building sustainable learning communities **Cultural Heritage Preservation Theory** → Creating heritage custodians from local people.

Six Components (PHANOM) P = Photography Art H = Heritage Consciousness
A = Artistic Excellence N = Network Building O = Organizational Culture M = Memory Preservation

4-Phase Process Foundation → Skill Development → Empowerment → Sustainability

THE OUTCOME OF APPLYING THE PHANOM MODEL ON 120 TARGET PARTICIPANTS

Sample Characteristics

The photographers were 120 in number. Males represented 68.3% (n=82) and females 31.7% (n=38). Participants had a mean age of 36.0 years (SD = 9.2), and had been practicing photography for an average of 8.0 years (SD = 3.5; range :1–20). Regarding self-report of type of photographer, most were professional (n = 108, 90.0%) whilst 12 were semi-professional (10.0%). In terms of educational attainment, the majority of participants reported having received education lower than a bachelor's degree (n = 90, 75.0%), followed by those who had been granted a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education (n = 28, 23.3%), with a few individuals having education greater than a bachelor's degree (n = 2, 1.7%).

Participation and Satisfaction From those, 115 (95.8%) attended all activities and for the 5 participants who missed some of them but continued to be eligible. Importantly, no participants dropped out (withdrew) from the program suggesting high motivation and interest.

Overall satisfaction with the PHANOM MODEL was high (M = 4.67, SD = 0.42). Results of the Individual Item Analysis The appropriateness of content had the highest mean score (4.73), while methods used in teaching and duration posted a close second with 4.69; benefits reaped also scored at an impressive level (4.75).

Illustrative Case Studies of Transformations among Respondents

Case 1: A 53-year-old male photographer with eight years of experience at Wat Phra That Phanom previously identified solely as a freelance photographer serving tourist clients. After participating in the program, his professional self-perception shifted markedly. He reflected, "My photos are documentation of tradition and culture for generations to come. I am more proud and responsible." He subsequently assumed the role of vice president of the Photographers' Club and became actively involved in mentoring new members.

Case 2: A 28-year-old female semi-professional photographer with three years of experience had previously felt disadvantaged compared to formally educated peers. Through the program, she recognized her

distinct advantage as a community insider: her deep familiarity with local Isan culture, ritual practices, and the sacred significance of Wat Phra That Phanom

3. The Results of the Evaluation of the Efficacy of Local Photographers' Capacity-building

Knowledge and Photography Art Development The test showed a highly significant improvement in knowledge and competence in all 4 areas ($p < .001$), all with very large effect sizes ($d > 3.95$). These results implied that the changes we observed were not due to chance, but rather consequences of the PHANOM MODEL. The category that started to rise was photo stories, with a 322% growth. Before the trainings, almost all participants (91%) had not previously thought about how to tell a story with their photos. But after training, they produced well-defined series of photos that carried strong stories. The next most improved area was in cultural understanding with a growth of 286%. Prior to the training, most of the photographers (78%) had no detailed knowledge about Wat Phra That Phanom. They could explain the significance of the architecture, the symbols and some rituals related to it after training.

Table 1 Comparison of Knowledge and Skills Scores Before and After Capacity Development (N=120)

Dimension	Before	After	Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	% Increase
Photography Techniques (10)	4.5 (1.2)	8.8 (0.9)	+4.3	28.45	<.001	3.95	+96%
Natural Light Utilization (5)	1.8 (0.7)	4.5 (0.6)	+2.7	32.18	<.001	4.12	+150%
Cultural Understanding (10)	2.2 (1.1)	8.5 (1.0)	+6.3	41.27	<.001	5.98	+286%
Photo Storytelling (5)	0.9 (0.5)	3.8 (0.7)	+2.9	36.54	<.001	4.68	+322%
Photography Ethics (5)	2.0 (0.8)	4.8 (0.4)	+2.8	31.92	<.001	4.21	+140%
Tota (35)	11.4 (2.8)	30.4 (2.1)	+19.0	52.36	<.001	7.51	+167%

Note: Numbers in parentheses represent standard deviations (SD)

Development of Work Quality Quality of portfolio work (Portfolio Assessment Rubric, total score 30) showed an impressive increase in average work quality scores by 194% from a mean of 8.4 out 30 (28%) to a mean value of 24.7 out of 30(82.3%). This change is a move in quality of work from "Good" quality to "Very

Good" quality. Of the dimensions tested, story and meaning increased most dramatically, 276%. This improvement is consistent with the increase of skill scores. The cultural appropriateness dimension also increased substantially by 248%, indicating that photographers have become much better aware and respectful of a specific culture in how it is portrayed.

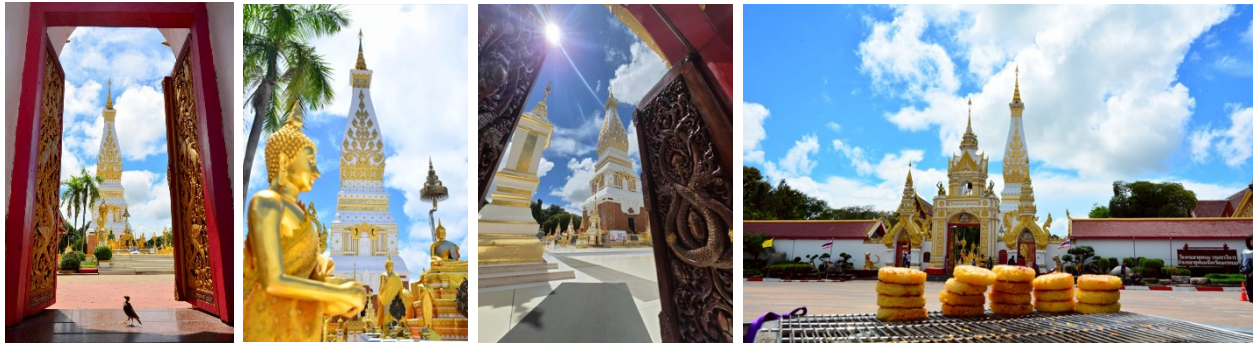


Figure 4 Photography Portfolio from Capacity Development Program.

Table 2 Average Work Quality Scores Before and After Development (N=120)

Dimension	Before	After	Difference	% Increase
Technical Quality (10)	3.8 (1.2)	8.1 (1.1)	+4.3	+113%
Storytelling and Meaning (10)	2.1 (0.9)	7.9 (1.2)	+5.8	+276%
Cultural Appropriateness (10)	2.5 (1.0)	8.7 (0.9)	+6.2	+248%
Total (30)	8.4 (2.3)	24.7 (2.5)	+16.3	+194%

Note: Numbers in parentheses represent standard deviations (SD). Assessed by 3 experts and calculated as mean scores. Inter-rater Reliability (ICC) = 0.85

Personal Level: Becoming Something More Than Human

SHIFTS IN ATTITUDE AND PROFESSIONALISM Based on 15 detailed interviews and three focus groups, four key changes to professional identity were identified

1. From “Service Provider” to “Cultural Heritage Communicator” Before participating in the project, 92% of photographers described only being temple event or freelance photographers who primarily shot to make money and viewed themselves only as customer service providers. However, a large proportion of reengaging photographers (88 per cent) started to perceive themselves as “cultural heritage communicators” that have the task of documenting and communicating the meaning behind Wat Phra That Phanom via their photography. Vice president of the Wat Phra That Phanom Photographers' Club, who said his perspective has

changed there. "Before, I thought it's my job to make a beautiful picture for customers. But now I feel that I have a role as a kind of medium between Wat Phra That Phanom and future generations. My own photos might be used someday by the descendants of those I capture to study. That's what makes me feel so heavy, and also a sense of responsibility.

2. From "Working for Income" to "Working for Mission" A significant transformation was the shift in work motivation from extrinsic motivation (money, fame) toward intrinsic motivation (pride, meaning, mission). This does not mean income is disregarded, but rather that the value of work is recognized in other dimensions as well. The president of the Wat Phra That Phanom Photographers' Club stated: "Of course we need to make a living, but now we feel that photography work has meaning beyond just income. I have a mission to preserve culture through photography because I feel it's important for documenting cultural heritage, such as the annual pagoda restoration or rare rituals that might not be photographed by anyone else, because we are at Wat Phra That Phanom every day, more than anyone."

3. From "Without Direction" to "Clear Goals" Prior to participation in the project, 85% of members indicated that they had no clear self development goals with respect to understanding their existence and mindlessly drifted through the day without a roadmap for personal growth. It was a very different story after they became involved in the project, however, with 91% expressing targeted goals. Members of the project had a wish to be "experts in cultural heritage photography" leading high-quality work "transmitting knowledge to future generations".

4. From 'Working Alone' to 'Being Part of a Professional Community' Photographers used to be solitary guys; they understood each other more as rival artists than fellow professionals, so there wasn't really an exchange of information. The foundation of the club was a game changer in this atmosphere that pulled photographers together. They had started to back each other up, trade secrets, and become a community as they leveled up together.

Effects on Earnings and Career Prospects When the project was finished, a follow-up three months later resulted in some interesting findings:

Higher earnings: A stunning 73% of graduates reported earning more, with an average income increase of 28%, between 10% and 60%. Factors driving this success included: the ability to charge more for their work because of quality improvements; increased business from new clients who wanted photographers with cultural sensitivity; and a surge into higher-value/fee-earned cultural photography services. **New Opportunities:** Almost 45% of photographers revealed that new opportunities were made available to them as a result of their belonging to the club. These involved requests to take pictures of for nearby tourism brochures and displays at numerous other celebrations in That Phanom City. **Community Respect** - An impressive 89% of people felt they were more respected in their community. Some local worshippers even approached them, impressed with a landscape image that was on display and out in public: "This person photographs respectfully and understands culture.

Community Level: Role of Temple and Community Changing

1. Evolution of the role of Wat Phra That Phanom Interviews with 5 temple committee members identified three main shifts in Wat Phra That Phanom's function:

1.1 From "Religious Tourism Site" to "Living Cultural Learning Center" The temple was traditionally seen as a tourists' and worshipers' stopover, rather than a destination of its own. But now, in the age of the Wat Phra That Phanom Photographers' Club, it has become sort of a "living cultural photography learning space." The temple now offers architecture, history and culture study classes for photographer students and the general public alike. "This project has provided us with a new facet for our temple," said one committee member. It is not only where people go to worship but a place of learning. Even more materialize asking about architecture or begging to hear historical stories. "These photographers also tell the temple's stories to others."

1.2 Better Quality of Service and Image The education around ethics and respecting sacred places that has been given to photographers successfully insulated the company from a rash of bad manners, as complaints dropped off. There have been no real complaints about photographers' behaviour, showing that some sense of consciousness and morality has rubbed off on them. I am amazed that not one congregation member has complained about the photographers. Before, the issues were extremely common we had to post warnings and keep staff on hand. Now, however, it's: The photographers are self-aware and know what's appropriate and not appropriate." "For them, this space is sacred above all else - they fear here not just to be embarrassed but actually respect it."

1.3 Temple and Photographers' Club Cooperation The temple and the photographers' club maintain a working relationship, together planning around key events. Photographers, for example, participate to take important traditional ceremonies for the temple pro bono; and the temple gives space here and there for exhibitions or activities. And, the meanings behind rituals and festivals also help further collaboration.

Area Level: Sustainability and Area Impact

Formation of the Wat Phra That Phanom 'Photographers' Club The formal recognition of Wat Phra That Phanom's Photographers' Club was an important accomplishment, the club beginning with 120 members and another 15 classification members. The committee of the club stipulated that any new member be sent for capacity building training before being admitted.

Club Objectives The club's objectives encompass five core commitments: providing ongoing training to strengthen local photographers' skills; establishing and upholding photographic standards for cultural heritage documentation; systematically photographing the cultural treasures of Wat Phra That Phanom; fostering collaboration and professional networks among local photographers; and disseminating high-quality photographs to promote cultural tourism in the region.

Photo Database for Cultural Heritage photographs The club established a well-organized photo-image collection for Wat Phra That Phanom and, as at the end of October 2025, already stored 1,047 high-resolution photos in its files. These were (and the number of images for each category): Architecture (342,

32.7%), Traditions and Rituals (298, 28.5%), Temple Activities (187, 17.9%), Worshippers and Community (145, 13.8%) and Nature and Environment (75, 7.1%).

This database is categorized and has a strong storage function and can be used for multiple purposes, for example: 1) in the materials of study and research; 2) promotion materials about tourism; 3) historical changes of temples; and finally, resulting to a non-traditional cultural heritage from old one.

Continuous Activities and Sustainability The club held bimonthly meetings in the three month period postprogram, with an average attendance rate of 71% (85 people), suggesting buy-in to the program and initiative. These collaborative photography were the pilgrim tradition at Phra That Phanom, sunsets at Phra That and day life atmosphere.

The club was also involved in bringing out photo-exhibitions related to the "That Phanom City of Learning" project, with two exhibitions offered by the club. The first featured a showing of 120 members' works (three photos per photographer) displayed inside Wat Phra That Phanom for sale as postcards. A second exhibition was held during the That Phanom Winter Festival.

6-Month Plan The club's six-month action plan includes organizing an annual cultural heritage photography competition, producing a commemorative photo book of Wat Phra That Phanom, and delivering training programs for youth interested in heritage photography. The club also aims to expand its photographic database to cover other cultural heritage sites across Nakhon Phanom Province, develop a website and social media presence to disseminate its work, and establish collaborative networks with photographers' clubs in other provinces. The long term planning capability and independence of working un-supported are witnesses to the sustainability of PHANOM MODEL.

RESEARCH SUMMARY The three objectives of which the PHANOM MODEL was designed, integrated learning model for local photographers to develop own capacity into communicators on cultural heritage, could be executed well and brings about powerfulness to individual, community and area in parallel. Of particular importance were the development of professional identity from "Service provider" to "Cultural heritage communicator", and a sustainable club that could operate independently.

Conclusion and Discussion

1. Discussion

The purpose of this research was to create and measure the effectiveness of the PHANOM MODEL through which local photographers can be empowered to become cultural heritage communicators at Wat Phra That Phanom. The results showed that the three main goals were achieved and had positive effects in several areas. The findings are discussed with respect to the objectives as follows.

Objective 1: Institutional Development Pathway Through Holistic Learning The article demonstrated that in order to develop local photographers into a communicative heritage, an approach

comprised seven components (P-H-A-N-O-M) is needed across four phases of implementation. This part of the research validates Freeman, R.E., et al. (2010)'s stakeholder theory framework that emphasizes collaboration between stakeholders, understanding of organizational processes, and positive engagement attitudes toward development. One significant advantage of the PHANOM MODEL lies on its emphasis for integration of photography skill enhancement with awareness creation on cultural heritage. Prommas, R., (2024) investigated Thai elephant conservation in the photographic creative process as a result of four rounds of training workshops and a "People and Elephants" photography competition. It's about what works and doesn't work when it comes to visual communication, which is tied up in positive imagery that mirrors human-elephant interactions. Those attending the workshop left with an understanding on how to properly photograph Thai elephants and allow them to speak through images. Such a public exposure of these photographs effectively raised the public's consciousness about saving Thai elephants, and it is consistent with the PHANOM MODEL program to teach photographers photography techniques as well as make them understand the past history and symbolic meanings through Wat Phra That Phanom.

The results showed that the most developed dimensions were photo storytelling (+322%) and cultural heritage understanding (+286%). Such a dramatic increase in these two areas is indicative of the many benefits of integrating Transformative Learning Theory. Stairboards of transformative learning design for learner-centered learning Poohongthong, C. & Supparerkchaisakul, N. (2017), the 10-step transformation process presented is comparable with that from PHANOM MODEL focusing on critical reflection after every activity as an aid to student in realizing their own transformations.

It is crucial to adopt the PHANOM MODEL's 4 steps, especially Phase 3 (Empowerment Phase) and Phase 4 (Sustainability Phase), in order to sustain. Endu, P., et al. (2024) explore the Khmer ethnic community's participation for preserving their intangible cultural heritage: "Ancient Jariang Nor Kaew" in a trilingual (Khmer Surin), Thai and English language learning innovation to conserve. This methodology is consistent with heritage education and knowledge interconnection.

The PHANOM MODEL structure's formal club aims to keep running and remain independent of the researcher. The emphasis on Network Building and Organizational Culture elements is consistent with the Community of Practice theory. In a study on community innovation for lifelong learning among "three-age people" (children/youth, working age, and aged), conducted by Simsin, C., et al. (2016) who identify behavioral changes occurred through three channels of learning in the community, where these channels are described that: they are learning in my community, then it is to learn with other communities and at last it is collective learning which this reflects principles of PHANOM MODEL in networking process and the creation for learning communities.

Objective 2: Development and Application of the PHANOM MODEL The satisfactory application of the PHANOM MODEL with target participants (120), attended all activities by 95.8% with no drop out as well

illustrated the suitability and attractiveness of the model. The high level of satisfaction ($M = 4.67$) for the model suggests that participants appreciate its relevance and value to their professional and personal lives.

A great merit of the PHANOM MODEL is its smooth incorporation of three theories which plays to each other's strengths. This combination contrasts with the major research that leans towards a single theoretical perspective. The concentration of meaning from PHANOM (derived from Phra That Phanom) is a strategic bridge between the local and global cultures.

Sotwithi, S., et al. (2021) studied communication strategies for cultural tourism management at Ban Tapon Community Market and suggested that "participation" is an important tool in sustainable development. Using cultural heritage as a tourism resource, they emphasized the need to establish cooperative networks and preserve community identity.

Use of a Portfolio Assessment Rubric specifically designed to assess three aspects (technical quality, storytelling and meaning, cultural appropriateness) is an important novelty. This overall assessment is an expression of the aim to form cultural heritage communicators. Photographic art creation to promote online sales of cultural products by a women's farmers' community enterprise group (Ruamsap, P. & Thongkaew, S., 2024) on the product identity (hand-woven fabric) and markets in which it were sold online. Their results had product photos with model and long shots as preferred format from experts in promoting online sales, and Shopee is not only most selected platform being used by them (74%). This supports PHANOM MODE's strategy of quality work and photography standards that communicate the value of cultural goods.

Objective 3: The efficiency of the PHANOM MODEL will be assessed Individual Level

The research outcomes show substantial individual-level transformation in knowledge, skills and professional identity. The overall competency and skill scores improved by 167%, with a very large effect size ($d=7.51$). Mean work quality scores increased 194%, from 8.4/30 (28%) to 24.7/30 (82.3%), reflecting a shift in work quality from "fair" to "very good."

The most significant shift was a change in identity, from "service provider" to "cultural heritage communicator". The change is deeper than just the development of a competency and changes how one views self, role, and what work is about (see Poohongthong, C. & Supparerkchaisakul, N., 2017 for an understanding of this transformative learning that necessitates critical reflection). The 28% growth in average photographers' income after the project implies that upskilling and identity creation have real-world, QoL-impact implications that can contribute to a sustainable future.

Community Level Sotwithi, S et al. (2021) studied in the context of participatory cultural tourism management, putting forward the significance of community-based participation and multi-interest stakeholders cooperation. They concentrated on communication approaches that underpin responsibility and sustainability in the tourism industry.

The reconceptualization of the function of Wat Phra That Phanom from a “religious site” to the “living cultural learning center” corresponds with those, as contemplating by Punnamano, P.B. et al. (2022) that implemented into the LAMIC Model. Developers need to support and preserve restored buildings as part of the community's cultural heritage.

Area Level The sustainable Wat Phra That Phanom Photographers' Club is also a relevant impact at local level. During the 3 months after the intervention, the club was self-run (independently of the researcher) with a bimonthly meeting and maintained attendance at 71% organizing activities on an ongoing basis.) Yontrakul, S., Lamduan, S. & Laoakka, S. (2015) investigated traditional merit-making festival formats in community participation to develop cultural tourism and classified the format into five aspects: event planning, symbols and meanings, resource management, personnel coordination and management. This is also consistent with principles of participatory community development. A digital photo archive with rich, well-structured information of 1,047 cultural heritage images is a significant long-term product. Yes, they are being posted today but can be considered also a ‘new form of cultural heritage’ in terms as witnessing the beauty and importance and the changes over time of Wat Phra That Phanom.

Strengths and Best Practices of the PHANOM MODEL From the discussion, there are five major strengths of the PHANOM MODEL: They include as comprehensive nature and integration, which includes development of skills, consciousness building mechanism creation. Secondly, it has a strong theoretical basis that emerged from the systematic combination of three theories. Third is its context-appropriateness in the sense that it responds to the latter's particular environment of subsequently being at Wat Phra That Phanom and having access to local photographers. iv) The systematic procedure is characterized by a clear and continuous four-phase structure. Finally, it provides tangible and measurable benefits at various levels.

Based on the research findings, the following best practices are recommended for implementing the PHANOM Model at other cultural heritage sites: 1) Begin with a thorough Need Assessment to understand the specific challenges and learning needs of local photographers before designing the program; 2) Integrate technical skill development with cultural heritage knowledge simultaneously rather than sequentially to maximize learning transfer; 3) Establish a formal photographers' club with clear bylaws and code of ethics during the Empowerment Phase to ensure sustainability beyond the research period; 4) Build a structured photographic database from the outset to create a tangible community asset; and 5) Engage temple committees and community leaders as active stakeholders throughout all four phases to ensure cultural appropriateness and community ownership.

Conceptual Contribution Beyond its single-site application, the PHANOM Model makes three conceptual contributions. it integrates three theoretical frameworks into a unified operational model for the first time in community photographer development; it introduces 'cultural heritage communicator' as a distinct professional identity bridging technical practice with cultural stewardship; and it demonstrates that participatory

action research can simultaneously function as both a research methodology and a sustainable community capacity-building mechanism.

Educational and Curriculum Implications In terms of educational implications, the PHANOM Model's six components and four-phase structure offer a replicable curriculum template for non-formal community learning programs and formal courses in cultural heritage photography and visual communication. The Portfolio Assessment Rubric, which simultaneously measures technical quality, storytelling, and cultural appropriateness, provides an innovative assessment tool applicable to photography training programs seeking to integrate cultural competency alongside technical skills.

Limitations and Recommendations Limitations to this study are the short-term follow up, sole setting at Wat Phra That Phanom and lack of control group. However, the large effect sizes and converging qualitative evidence suggest that it is the PHANOM MODEL itself which makes a considerable contribution to transformative change.

The PHANOM MODEL may be used by appropriate agencies to support other cultural heritage sites and contextualized for conditions at ground. Network support for photographers' clubs web is necessary and it is interesting to create curriculum or certificates to the photographic heritage workers. 2-3 year Long-term follow-up studies need to be performed to ensure sustainability. Moreover, comparative studies should be conducted using the PHANOM MODEL in other regions and deep analyses of professional identity transformation processes. Future research directions include: 1) conducting longitudinal studies with 2–3 year follow-up periods to assess the long-term sustainability of the PHANOM Model outcomes; 2) applying the model at other cultural heritage sites in Thailand and Southeast Asia to test its replicability across different cultural contexts; 3) developing formal certification systems for cultural heritage photographers trained under the PHANOM Model; 4) exploring digital and online adaptations of the model to reach photographers in remote areas; and 5) conducting comparative studies between sites to identify contextual factors that enhance or limit the model's effectiveness.

2. Conclusion

This study reveals the effective role of the PHANOM MODEL as an integrated learning framework derived from three theories, empowering local photographers to become communicators in cultural heritage. Through six components and a four-phase approach, the process achieves deep, long-lasting change at a personal, community or area level. As a result, the PHANOM MODEL is proposed as a potential model for development of cultural knowledge keeper at others cultural heritage sites.

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