

Participatory Communication of Thai Youth in Strengthening Pride in Their Local Southern Identity

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ABSTRACT

The southern people in Thailand are often questioned and given negative connotations by society and the government. The media also portrays stereotypical images of southerners and characterizes them as having a stagnant identity. Most of it is constructed through the eyes of an "outsider," who would present the southern community in a more negative light than a positive one. This study aims to create a participatory communication process among the target youth by establishing a prototype media kit and enhancing pride in the southern identity through participatory action research among junior high school students as active audiences and students in the change agent communicator group. The study revealed that the participatory communication process has created a communication story arising from the exchange of experiences of the target groups with regards to their pride in their southern identity. The process of collecting information on the use of words that oppress Southern localities eventually led to the setting up of an entry point as the starting point to communicate the narrative for "transforming pain points into proud points", to change negative experiences that are painful points and transform them into feelings of positive identification reinforcement and shift their mindsets from forbidding others to mock them into an immunity against mockery. It has also revealed empirical results with regards to building pride in the southern region's local identity of the target group and the ability to re-process the application of participative communication processes to building acceptance of diversity and cultural pride.

Keywords: *Local identity, proud identity, media prototype, participatory communication, Southern Thai youth.*

INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, the identity of the local people has gradually broken down by social development discourse that mainly focuses on top-down and one-way communication via mainstream media. The presentation of locals through contemporary media revealed that the media continues to portray stereotypical and stigmatized identities as perceived by mainstream media as stagnant identities. This is highly evident when presenting the identity of the people in the south of Thailand.

The identity of Southerners was shaped by some reasons and factors: the geographical characteristics, the region's historical, political, and economic background, and religious and cultural leadership status, it has resulted in the casting and convincing people of the south to possess similar characteristics with the majority of Thais in general, whether it is a matter of beliefs in Buddhism or adherence to morality. However, when they sense that they are being bullied or unfairly exploited, Southerners tend to band together and respond with sharp, quick, unyielding verbal responses (Detthongkham, 2002).

Locals in the south seem proud and believe that these identities are their true selves. The identity of the rural south was severely affected by the development discourse that made the locals almost indistinguishable from the people in other regions, which has made them marginalized, suffering from poverty, with a lack of pride, insecurity, and sufficient resources that would strip them of their self-reliance as in the past (Pruechakul, 2014).

In presenting images of the southern people through various populist media, it was found that the media still presented them based on a stereotypical image of Southerners and their unchanging identity. The reproduction of the Southern identity is presented based on the ideal Southern identity, which is the same identity that people perceive or is the stereotype of the people that existed before to create recognition and create popularity through the media (Khunpol & Rittinim, 2017). Projecting the identity of the Southern community through the eyes of "outsiders" in the southern region is often presented in a negative light rather than a positive one. However, on the other hand, presenting through the perspective of "the locals", or from the perspective of the southerners themselves would primarily present a more positive aspect that glorifies the value of one's identity, which is not usually parodied (Nupinit, 2018). People in the south see it as a value and realize it as a local identity trait that fuels the community in a more responsive direction to sustainable community development and dignity. Southerners have collaborated and created development activities to negotiate and counter the dominant identities imposed by the state and society (Chitnirat, 2005).

To pull the people back to establish the identity of their values and identity in a positive light, it is necessary to create awareness, starting with the locals to create meaning and define their personal and communal identity, which will add value to their own historical, ethnic, and social-cultural identity, "by themselves or by the people in the society". Building a collective group social consciousness will allow members to realize the collective nature of the group and understand how "we" differ from "them", as a retaliation to the identity that is dominated by the state and external society in a manner of interpreting and giving meaning to oneself to restore the self-esteem of the Southern self.

In identity formation, media can positively and negatively impact identity development, which is a fundamental cognitive, social, and developmental task related to understanding one's place in the social world (Bersana et al., 2019). Although the content of the media reflects the reality of social diversity. But presenting a representation of a specific social group and/or depicting them also has limited characteristics (Scharrer et al., 2022). Negative media portrayals can have adverse effects on the national identity of some minority groups, and-crucially-that these effects may be stronger than those of personally experienced discrimination (Saleem et al., 2019). Furthermore, national and non-national media are called upon to facilitate the formation of the identity not only with an ethnic group but also with a civil (national) identity (Bidzilya & Solomin, 2021).

The role of the mainstream media in portraying ethnic minorities has influenced ethnic pride, self-esteem, and expression (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017). The local community has relied on the global circulation model of creative cultural production and digital technology to maintain and express ethnic identity. It produces alternative ways of representing and articulating ethnic identity that departs sharply from the national templates of representing ethnic culture (Suleymanova, 2018).

Mainstream and ethnic media are also areas for negotiating and rebuilding identity in response to diverse cultural and social discourses. The media thus play an important role in creating a space of cross-cultural identity in each local social context that emerges (Eswari,

2014). While ethnic media serve a special role in upholding languages, forming identities, and fostering better communication and unity among the ethnic communities it portrays (Tsai, 2022). Ethnic media has to expand interactions between minority media and mainstream culture to the public sphere (Budarik, 2017; Budarik & Han, 2015). The media has to re-engage audiences as citizens, not just potential customers because their audiences also preferred to use media that are congruent with their salient cultural identity (Deuze, 2006; Sui, 2023). Media can also promote people-centered communication, allowing local audiences to make their opinions about societal issues known and thus participate in dialogic communication (Abiolu & Teer-Tomaselli, 2018).

Participatory communication is a communicative process that engages the local people with social issues, especially in communicating local identity issues, by creating content from the local people themselves (Rodríguez-Malebrán & Mohammadi, 2022). The process aims to engage people with content and narratives through shared experiences (Jongsuksomsakul & Roehl, 2022). Although participatory communication takes on different forms in different contexts, the real people who control the communication tool are the community members and not the outsiders who act only as agents and information mediums. Participatory communication is also "an exchange among individuals that values each individual's perspective and voice," resulting in the emergence of communicators who can create "a stronger collective voice for change at many levels of society" (Stuart & Bery, 1996), especially in communities that have been oppressed or neglected. Participatory communication contributes to cultural pride and self-esteem. It reinforces the values of people in society, helps preserve traditions and cultural values, as well as, assists in combining new elements with matching the local identity (Gumucio, 2001).

In this study, the concept of participatory communication emphasizes the communication process, and the development of a media kit with active participation from youths in the southern region as "insiders", was used in this study to positively define the identity of the southern people. As an active audience, they will also assume the role of the doer and/or the receiving end of mocking insults due to their locality and southern identity, jointly with communication arts students who are from the south, as a collective group of change agents to create a participatory communication process among youth in the area in determining issues and communication styles and using the concept to create a narrative through a media kit that aims to create pride for the target group and the producer themselves, as a Southern local as well.

Research Objectives

1. To create a participatory communication process for the target youth through the establishment of a prototype media kit.
2. To understand pride in the Southerner's identity of the target group

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Participatory Communication

Participative communication has been a widely used tool in the development and transformation of society (Polnigongit et al., 2022). It has been credited with transforming the perspectives of communicators and encouraging flexible communication processes to two-way communication (Koningstein & Azadegan, 2021; Backhaus, 2020). It is also defined as a dynamic process that emphasizes the exchange, interaction, and synergy between people, groups, and institutions in society (Rogers & Singhal, 2003; Melkote & Singhal, 2021).

A key feature of participatory communication styles begins with a belief in people's potential, whereby individuals embody development. This development can be defined as the uplifting of the local community's spirit to take pride in their culture, intellect, and environment (Akhda et al., 2019). It aims to educate and motivate people to actively improve themselves. Additionally, participatory communication styles also recognize, understand, and appreciate the diversity of people. It also believes in enhancing one's dignity and equality. Ordinary people are seen as critical agents of change. Emphasis is placed on the local community rather than the nation-state and on dialogues than monologues or one-way communications (Singhal, 2001).

Participatory communication emphasizes the value of democratization, participation, and cultural identity at all levels—international, national, local, and individual (Servaes & Servaes, 2021). The concept of participatory communication is based on three aspects of public participation communication, including (1) access to the media, which is defined as the right to access media provided to the community; (2) participation, which means that people can participate in the communication system at all levels, and (3) self-management, which is considered the most significant participatory aspect of participants (Servaes & Malikhao, 2020). Participatory communication is a communication process that emphasizes participation at every level. It also believes in the potential of people in the community and locality to play an essential role in social changes that come from local people's participation rather than outsiders (Rochim et al., 2020). It believes in defining agendas, content, media formats, and communication methods that create dynamic conversational spaces. It is not top-down communication or one-way communication initiated by outsiders (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

Consistent with studies in Thailand, previous research in Thailand that employed participatory communication to be a framework of study can be divided into two groups: a study of the investigation of the role of media as community media, and a study of the design of participatory communication as tools for solving problems, community development or strengthening relations along the border (Musakophas & Polnigongit, 2017; Polnigongit, 2016). Participatory communication processes are used to produce media, content, or innovations that are beneficial to the community to present local culture, traditions, wisdom, and history. Participants will be able to learn the context of the local community through a participatory media production process to feel more proud and understand the value of the community (Promruksa, 2021).

Concept of the KAP Model

The concept focuses on three main variables, namely knowledge, attitude, and practice, and describes the relationship between providing knowledge to the audience to change attitudes, and eventually lead to actual practices (Ahmad et al., 2015). Knowledge or cognitive (K), refers to the initial perception, which is generally obtained through experience and life lessons, and is organized based on its characteristics accordingly. The attitude of affection (A) refers to a person's unique body of knowledge built based on an individual's belief in response to various stimuli. This determines the behavior of that person in society, or in other words, the way that an individual perceives the world. The practice of behavior (P) refers to the way how a person behaves, or what is explicitly expressed and identified as the individual's identity. Most of them are rooted in an individual's KA, which differs according to the level of exposure to information and how it is interpreted (Gustafson & Rice, 2016).

This study's evaluating survey follows the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) approach. The KAP is one of the most frequently used survey methodologies in social research (Liao et al., 2022; Tran et al., 2018). The KAP model is a structured, standardized questionnaire filled out by a target audience that may measure and assess what is known (knowledge), believed (attitudes), and practiced (practices) concerning an issue of interest (Nguyen et al., 2019; Andrade et al., 2020; Al Amin et al., 2021). An important role of KAP surveys is to provide essential data for demonstrating the impact of communication activities. The KAP approach is often used to evaluate the communication process outcomes to determine the effect on participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior (Mahanta et al., 2016; Srinivasan et al., 2018). KAP surveys can also assess communication processes and sources that are key to defining practical activities and messages on relevant issues (World Health Organization, 2008). In this study, the researcher utilized the KAP Model to design the tools necessary for evaluating the participatory communication process to gain access to the participants' knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

METHODOLOGY

Participatory action research and participatory communication are the research methodologies used in this study. Participatory action research emphasizes interaction during the research process in such a way that participation helps construct and form the research process (Bell et al., 2012; Canto-Farachala & Larrea, 2022). Participatory communication provides a strategy that establishes agendas and communication processes with the participation of the local community (Tuftte & Mefaloputlos, 2009). Moreover, the KAP model is applied to assess the media kit and the outcome of the communication process in this study.

Participants

a. Participants 1

30 junior high school students from Tha Sala Prasit Suksa School, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. They were selected from nearby schools to facilitate their engagement in the research process, following Participatory Action Research (PAR) principles for continuous involvement until research objectives are achieved. Equal numbers were chosen across different grade levels for balanced representation, with the researcher thoroughly explaining the objectives and ensuring voluntary participation.

b. Participants 2

30 communication arts students studying at Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, who possessed basic knowledge of various media production, were classified as change agents. These students were distributed across different provinces in the southern region and participated voluntarily after being informed of the objectives of their involvement.

The participants all culturally identified with the southern region, which was in line with the research topic. This qualitative data collection involved using Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Design Thinking to choose suitable words for media content creation, aiming to engage the target youth in a participatory communication process for the target youth by establishing a prototype media kit and evaluating the media using the KAP Model to understand pride in the Southerner's identity. The specified number of participants effectively allowed for systematic data collection, meeting the research objectives, and was

consistent with sample sizes in similar studies. (Katoppo & Sudradjat, 2015; Phetkongtong & Nulong, 2022; Irwandi et al., 2023).

Data Collection

This study employs an integrated approach that combines the Design Thinking process with the KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice) Model to enhance participatory action research (Cornish et al., 2023) and participatory communication among Thai youth in the southern region to increase their pride in their local identity. There are five stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. In the Empathize stage, comprehensive data is collected through focus group interviews (Phetkongtong & Nulong, 2022) and observations to understand the youth's knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to their local identity through mocking words. The Define stage analyzes the level or impact of words, leading to the identification of appropriate words and media types to create proper understanding. The Ideate stage involves collaborative brainstorming sessions with participants to generate communication strategies and activities. These ideas are then developed into media prototypes in the Prototype stage and piloted by the participants. In the final Test stage, feedback is evaluated and analyzed to refine these participatory communication methods, ensuring their effectiveness in enhancing knowledge, attitudes, and practices. This systematic and integrative approach ensures active youth participation and fosters sustainable reinforcement of their local identity pride.

The research tools used in this study include: 1) a focus group question to study attitudes, knowledge, and behavior towards the mocking of the southern locality among junior high school students who are considered as the new generation of media producers; 2) the establishment of a focus group for in-depth study of attitudes towards mocking and building Southern pride; and 3) focus group interviews, to evaluate the communication process and media model.

The research tools were used together to complete the Participatory Action Research process. The group utilized the design thinking process to identify several mocking words. These words were then used in focus group interviews and discussions, with criteria established to measure the emotional impact of the words. The agreed-upon mocking words were subsequently used in the media production process and carried through to the evaluation of the media, which followed a participatory communication approach.

The research has been certified for human research ethics by the Academic and Ethics Committee of Phranakhon Rajabhat University, with the assigned research project number 62/126. Moreover, information related to social interactions is secured confidentially by not disclosing any data from the information providers obtained through observation, interviews, evaluating surveys, or group discussions throughout the participatory communication process according to the research methodology.

Data Analysis

This study has applied the concepts of Tufte and Mefalopotlos (2009) as a conceptual framework for the research (see Figure 1).

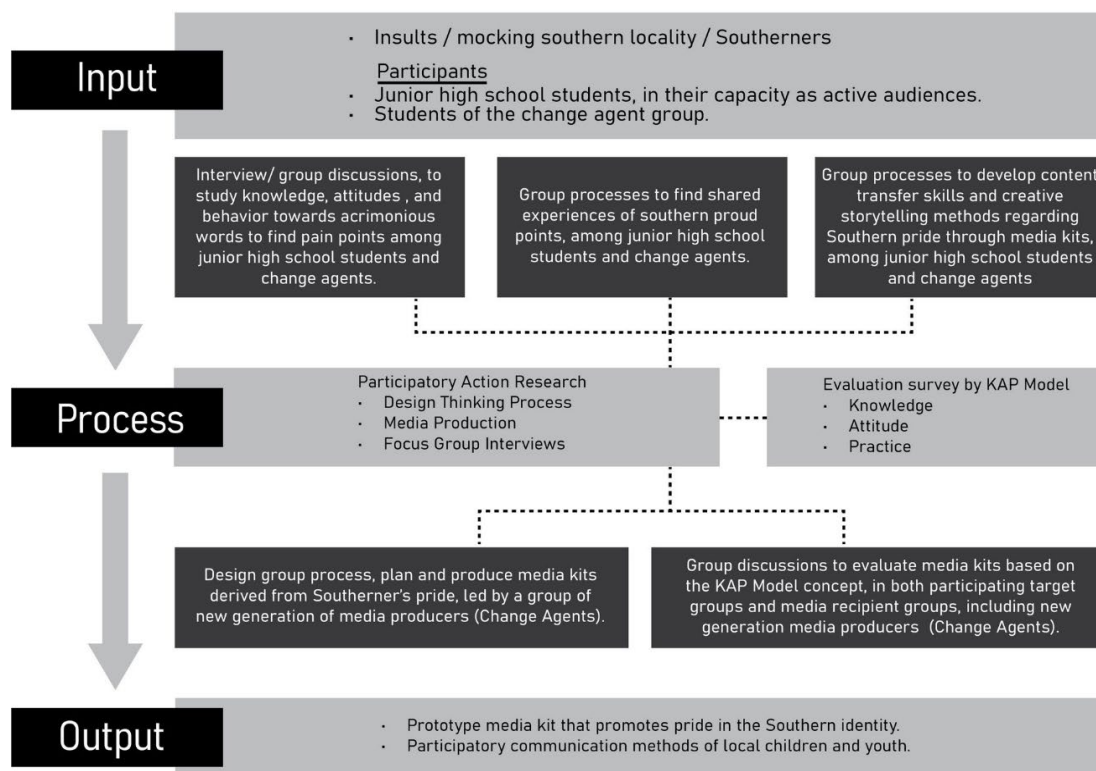


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

A study of the problem of mocking the southern locality characteristics, which will be used in the formulation of questions in design thinking process regarding offensive words or languages mocking or insulting the southern localities, will be used as a set of questions in conversations and focus group interviews. The researcher chose to use interview questions to study words that encourage acrimony in the form of insults, in combination with group discussions and observation to gain in-depth information on the attitudes of the target audience, both in the role of a victim and as the offender, as well as find pain points that are common in target groups.

Implementation of media production through focus group interviews aimed at exchanging experiences about the local southern identity among group members. This information was used to select and design content issues for the production of media kits. This process ultimately led to the creation of a participatory communication approach for the target youth by developing prototype media kits.

The focus group interviews and evaluation survey consisted of assorted members of the change agent and active audience target groups, intending to exchange experiences about the local southern identity between the group members and use the information to select and design content issues in producing media kits. The evaluation of media kits assessment of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAP Model) was obtained from focus group interviews with the participants, namely the junior high school students who participated in the process of determining content issues and media formats, the junior high school students who were recipients of the media but did not participate in the media production process, and a group of change agents. The methodology aims to fulfill the research objective of understanding the pride in the Southerner's identity among the target group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participation Communication Assessment (PCA)

The results of focus group interviews to study the words that were used to mock the Southerners, both in terms of being the perpetrator and as a victim, to find pain points that are common experiences in the junior high school student target group, by evaluating feelings toward words on four levels: causing life-affecting pain, don't like it but can let it pass, may feel it but depends on who inflicts it, and accepting it as it does not affect their feelings.

The results of the study found that, as a victim who has been acted upon or mentioned or ridiculed, the subjects did not like to be mocked but were able to let it pass. But it is also to be noted that at least subjects considered certain words painful and cause problems in their lives, such as being mocked about their skin color, accent, curt, and rapid speech mannerisms. These types of mockery usually refer to the external appearances and their Southern identity expressed in their everyday lives.

As the perpetrator or a mocker of others, it was found that the target group realized and recognized that they should not mock others with insulting words as it will hurt others' feelings. These include words that usually refer to cruelty, violence, and barbarism, such as Southern bandits, barbarians, extremists, or brutal. But there are also some words, especially those that mock external appearances in which the target group sees as acceptable as it does not hurt nor affect the feelings of others.

Points worth noting are some words such as the fierce face, dark-skinned, black, unable to speak the Central dialect clearly, in which the sample group commented that they would feel offended when teased with such words. But as a perpetrator, they view that it is acceptable as it cannot cause any harm to anyone. Surprisingly, most of the sample group considered them acceptable words that cannot hurt anyone, but at the same time, are aware that these words can affect a person's feelings, create an emotional disturbance, and should not be used to mock others. This corresponds to the 3 types of perpetrators' feedback actions, namely, personally initiating the taunt themselves, ignoring it when they come across mockery, and issuing a warning when they come across a mockery incident.

The results from the Design Thinking process led to a participatory approach in selecting terms based on the measurement of feelings and types of media. This reflects participatory communication linked to the participants' Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) Model. Consequently, a set of mocking words was identified for media production, as shown in Table 1.

Participatory Communication Strategy Design

The researcher used the results of the focus group question to study the words used to mock the southern people of the target group in a group process by emphasizing participatory communication between junior high school students, the active audience, and change agent groups, to exchange experiences with regards to violence from the use of words that oppress Southern locality, and applied the awareness of the harsh words into the process of bringing the pain points into joint group discussions to share their experiences.

As a result of the group process using Design Thinking, which shaped knowledge, attitudes, and practices, the process of selecting words for media production was implemented; it was found that the common point or experience between the group of junior high school students and the change agent group, was the origin of these words or being mentioned. Part of it comes from the presentation through the media that creates a memorable image in people outside the area where they collectively stereotype and look at

the people of the area in the same way. For the conclusion on the issue of focusing on the development of positive media prototypes, action should be taken to change negative experiences into mocking pain points and revert the perspective of the narratives into proud points in 3 areas: 1) pride in their external appearance and Southern identity, 2) the Southern language and local arts and culture, and 3) the Southern environmental attractiveness and abundance in resources.

Implementation of Communication Activities

The sample group involved in media production begins the process by defining the objectives and target audience of the media kit, by analyzing issues and needs from sharing experiences in group discussions, using a media production model based on the concept of production and narratives across media (transmedia and storytelling) , to link content issues in communication into diverse media products. The selected media will be presented according to the needs of the analyzed target audience and the media type. These are classified as follows: 1) digital media includes video clips and podcasts; 2) print media such as posters and literature; and 3) special media such as stickers, tote bags, t-shirts, and mascots to create awareness and recognition.

The method of participatory communication has helped in media design by addressing and transforming pain points into strengths, and sharing them through different media formats. The participants initially expressed their struggles as Southerners and then presented a new perspective that highlights the charm and emphasizes the pride of Southerners in their local identity. This included aspects such as skin color, dialect usage, and regional culture, as mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of media development, of turning pain points into proud points

Media Types	Pain Points	Proud Points
Video clips	Outdated, rustic, old-fashioned speak with a crude Southern dialect, curt and rapid speech Southern bandits, barbaric	Southern language and identity Beauty of the Southern region
Podcasts	Curt and rapid speech, rude Black skinned, crude Southern dialect	Southern language and identity
Posters Literature	Outdated, rustic, old-fashioned Crude Southern dialect, curt and rapid speech Fierce face, black-skinned	Language and culture Southern dialect Southerners' external appearance and character
Stickers Cloth bags T-shirts	Fierce face, black-skinned, dirty Hooligan, barbarians Outdated, rustic Southerners eat hot spicy food Crude Southern dialect, curt and rapid speech	Southerners' external appearance and character Southern dialect
Mascot	Fierce face, black-skinned, barbaric, callous	Southerners' external appearance and character

The Table 1 shows that the Design Thinking process was applied throughout the PAR process, resulting in the development of diversified media kits in terms of formats and coverage of issues addressing the main pain points of junior high school students. This approach transformed the narrative into points of pride, making it possible to reach the target audience and foster a sense of pride. This process can also be applied to other issues in the future, fulfilling the objective of creating a participatory communication process for the target youth by establishing a prototype media kit.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation of the media kit: The knowledge, attitude, and behavior assessment method (KAP Model) was applied for the evaluation, whereby the results of the focus group found that the group of junior high school students who participated in the process of determining content issues and media formats were satisfied with the prototype media kit with regards to the variety of media formats and the transformation of the negative narratives and turning them into positive ones. This allows the sample group to obtain the media that meets their own needs and the capability to share the media to others to communicate positive perspectives that they can be proud of, as it is the creation of a media option that can transform pain points that are stuck in their minds and turn them into actual proud point actions, and at the same time create awareness with regards to mocking or offending others with harmful words.

Table 2: Evaluation of the media kits based on the KAP Model

Knowledge (K)	Attitude (A)	Practice (P)
<p>1.Understanding of harmful or teasing words</p> <p>Participants understand the harsh or teasing remarks about Southern identity presented through the media kit, including an awareness of the intention behind the communication as a reflection of Southern identity that should not be mocked.</p> <p>"I used to be teased about my unclear accent and referred to as 'tong daeng' for speaking in the local dialect. At that time, I felt upset. However, after participating in the activities, selecting the media I wanted to create, and watching the media, I changed my perspective. I realized that my accent is a unique aspect of my identity." (Participant 1 Interview, September 9, 2020)</p>	<p>1.Satisfaction with media kits</p> <p>Participants appreciated the media kits because they represented them well and helped others, particularly those who might look down on them, better understand that these traits are part of Southern identity. They recognized that being this way is not strange or different from others.</p> <p>"The media speaks for us, comforts us, and shows others what Southern people are like. Even though our skin is dark, our hearts are not dark like our skin." (Participant 1 Interview, September 9, 2020)</p> <p>"I liked the messages and the cartoon characters that were created to reflect Southern identity, such as the curly hair, which matches me since my friends usually tease me about it. But when presented this way, it looks cute, and I want to use it as my representative image because it suits me well." (Participant, Interview, September 9, 2020)</p>	<p>1. Sharing or dissemination of media</p> <p>The participants found that the media effectively conveyed what they wanted to communicate and were willing to share or disseminate the media on their social media platforms. They believed the press aligned with their interests and expected their friends who saw the shared media would also appreciate it.</p> <p>"The presentation method was engaging and made me want to look closer. What caught my interest was the use of youthful language, especially in the quotes, which were in a style we understand. When I share it, my friends will find it amusing, but it also has a positive aspect. I've already taken pictures and will share them with my friends." (Participant, Interview, September 9, 2020)</p> <p>"I will share this with others to showcase the language, unique Southern identity, and culture so people can see that the South has its strength and we should be proud of it." (Participant, Interview, September 9, 2020)</p>

<p>2.Understanding the content of the media intended to foster pride in Southern identity Participants understand the media content aimed at highlighting the uniqueness of Southern identity. When aspects such as language, appearance, or external traits are acknowledged as part of their identity, they are seen as a source of pride rather than something to feel negatively about. Additionally, the evaluation revealed that pride is effectively conveyed through local role models or well-known figures from the South. This approach enhances participants' sense of involvement and facilitates a more profound recognition of their pride. It serves as a compelling method to communicate pride in a more impactful and relatable way. "It feels that the accents of Southern people vary by region, and the media kit highlights that the Southern language is a distinctive feature. Not speaking it would be considered outdated because it is unique and has a beautiful accent, making it a charming way of speaking." (Participant, Interview, Sept 9, 2020)</p>	<p>2.Attitudes toward harmful language, teasing, and pride in Southern identity Participants have changed their perceptions after engaging with the media kit, particularly regarding accent and appearance. They now view differences as unique and charming rather than harmful. Exposure to the prototype media kit has shifted participants' perspectives on harmful language and teasing. Words that previously evoked negative feelings and dissatisfaction with their characteristics, such as accent, skin color, and appearance, are now understood as aspects of their local identity and uniqueness. Participants have come to view these traits with pride. "...the people in the media are representatives of Southern people, which helps us understand that Southerners also have qualities to be proud of. As we and others see it more frequently, people will start to recognize these traits as highlights and positive aspects, reducing the likelihood of teasing." (Participant, Interview, September 9, 2020)</p>	<p>2.Participants' responses to teasing with harmful language, whether as offenders, bystanders, or victims Participants have become more aware of the impact of harmful language on feelings and have developed an understanding of such language. As victims, they now experience less distress or none at all when teased, recognizing that they can shift their perspective. As offenders and bystanders, they have learned that different words have varying degrees of impact on people's feelings. Therefore, they choose not to tease others, and if a friend is teased, they adjust their role from being a bystander to either admonishing the offender or comforting the victim. "If we are teased again, we won't be as upset because the media has shown us that Southern language is our unique trait. We don't need to worry about it too much." (Participant, Interview, September 9, 2020)</p>
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Table 2 illustrates that the evaluation of the prototype media kit, which was developed through a participatory communication process, revealed participants' satisfaction with the communication methods. Participants transformed their perception of teasing remarks, previously considered pain points, into an understanding and appreciation of their Southern identity, which became proud points. They chose not to engage in teasing, avoided using hurtful language toward others, and began to appreciate and view their characteristics as strengths. According to the research objectives, this indicates an increased understanding and pride in their Southern identity among the target group.

Assessment of Media Producer Skills: through an evaluating survey to assess the participatory communication process within this research.

Table 3: Assessment of thinking skills and media production process of change agent

Topic	Average	Level of Skill
Creative thinking	4.13	High
the idea of new content sees different perspectives on the matter to communicate	4.15	High
think about content issues to create pride in being local in the southern region	4.36	High

think of a variety of communication styles	4.21	High
Analytical thinking	4.16	High
can examine the connection or relationship between various contents	4.24	High
audience analysis and understanding of the connection between communication and creation can contribute to the issue	4.15	High
analyze the issue can see the relationship between issues to create a media production process	4.06	High
Critical thinking	4.17	High
essential to identify by using reasoning includes gathering information	4.21	High
consider the factors that affect communication to achieve goals responsibly	4.21	High
consider the benefits, limitations, and appropriate utilization of communication styles	4.12	High
Innovative thinking	4.41	High
understand how to use various media to communicate similar issues	4.39	High
understand communication to create pride in being a local in the southern region	4.42	High
be able to apply thinking processes and media production skills	4.45	High
understand the directions and forms of creative and exotic media production	4.33	High

Table 3 found that thinking skills regarding media production developed for the change agent group at a high level across all skills. Creative thinking skills were the skill with the highest mean (4.41), followed by critical thinking skills (4.17) and analytical thinking skills (4.16). Creative skills yielded the lowest mean (4.13). Only one sub-skill yielded a moderate level of cognitive skill development.

The media we created makes us feel proud of our Southern identity. When people speak to us, we no longer feel bad. (Participant, Interview, September 2, 2020)

The media production process taught us to take pride in our uniqueness. We will not use such terms to bully anyone. (Participant, Interview, September 2, 2020)

Qualitative data collection in the change agent focus group found that the group process that collaborated with the junior high school students resulted in a mutual understanding and experience and established a better understanding of the media formats that the target audience needs. Throughout the process of conceiving about narrative options, including producing creative media based on the needs of the target audience, the results obtained from the change agent group, in addition to, obtaining a media package that was able to meet the needs of communication, has also strengthened the change agents' feeling of proudness of their Southern identity. Therefore, this media production process, did not only provided an opportunity to build pride among junior high school students, but also provided a chance for the change agents to simultaneously absorb the pride during the process and become producers or prosumer who will be able to reproduce the process for future communication issues. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of participatory communication processes in creating pride while still communicating about violence awareness.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the research, which aims to respond to the issue of creating a participatory communication process for the target youth group, through the production of a prototype media kit and enhancing the pride of the target group's Southern identity, may be summarized as follows.

Figure 2 illustrates the link between participatory communication and the design thinking process to develop a media prototype. It starts with the grouping of insulting words that are often used to mock and insult local Southerners and negatively stereotype their Southern identities and brings it forward into the first world-building process. This is the initial start of the communication issue and sharing experiences process between junior high school students and the change agent group students. The researcher found that the insults created pain points for junior high school students and the change agent students during the process. The insults from such words are etched and reflect their way of thinking in both groups. This finding supports the research that shows the role of the mainstream media in portraying ethnic minorities has influenced ethnic pride, self-esteem, and expression. (Bidzilya et al.,2021; Ramasubramanian et al.,2017; Nupinit,2018; Detthongkham,2002; Sui,2023). Another interesting finding from the group process is that although the junior high school student group felt pain when they were victims, they also initiated similar mocking actions as perpetrators.

The process of collecting information on the use of words that oppress Southern locality eventually led to the setting up of an entry point as the starting point to communicate the narrative for, "transforming pain points into proud points", to change negative experiences that are painful points and transform them into feelings of positive identification reinforcement and shifting their mindsets from forbidding others to mock them into an immunity against mockery.

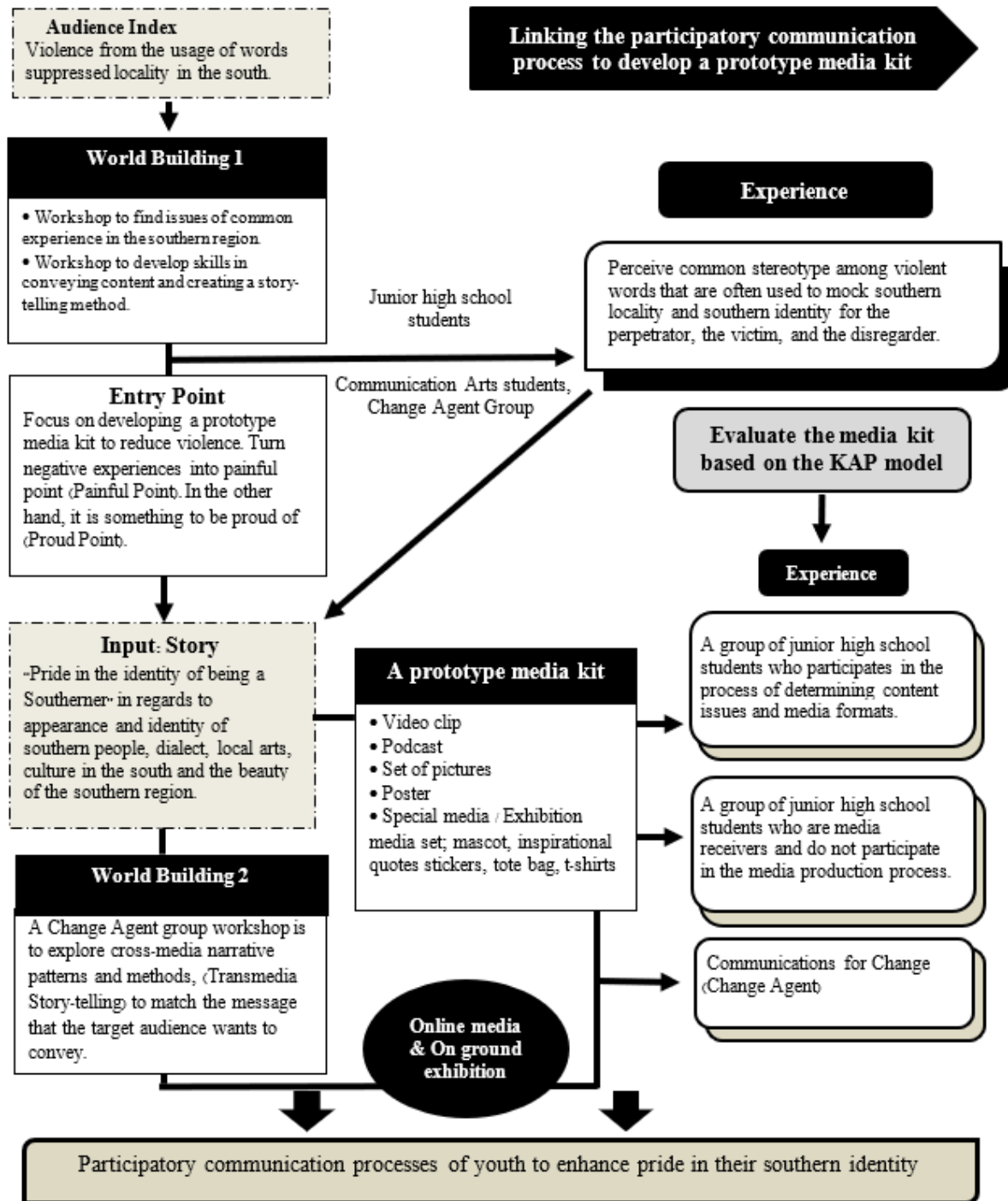


Figure 2: Linking the participatory communication process & KAP Model

The participatory communication process between the junior high school student sample group and the communication arts students changes the agent group in determining the narrative and how to tell the story through various media, resulting in content to reflect the main idea of "pride in the Southern identity." It reflected the content and media preferences of the active audience members, i.e., junior high school students, in communicating their story about the pride of the Southern identity on three issues: external appearance and identity of the Southerners, language and arts and culture of the Southern region, and the attractiveness of the Southern region; such participatory communication

process is similar to other research findings where transcultural identity highlight, encouraging people in the community to create spaces for negotiation and emphasize their own identity (Suleymanova, 2018; Bassiouney, 2018; Benítez, 2022; Srimulyani et al., 2018). It is consistent with the research findings that attitude is a variable that has a strong effect on reducing bullying in schools (Barbero et al., 2012)

The second world building session is the hands-on participatory communication process. The change agent student group applied the input based on the three stories to find patterns of storytelling methods that are consistent with the needs of the junior high school students. The study results found that using transmedia storytelling to create a world of "Many stories, Many forms, Many channels"- storytelling through multiple narrative methods (Hassan, 2019). Moreover, online and offline media channels, disseminated through multiple media channels, including video clips, podcasts, still life sets, posters, stickers, mascots, shirts, and tote bags to create a jigsaw-like media kit. This agrees with the goal of the transmedia storytelling process (Patrick et al., 2019). It is to share their own experiences and spent time on content. It allows the target audience to receive content about pride in their southern identity in a variety of ways. Until it can be a shield to create pride for the target group covering all aspects according to the objective of developing a prototype media kit to reduce violence this time.

The results are consistent with the findings of Eswari (2014) and Deuze (2006), who addressed the vital role of both mainstream and ethnic media in negotiating and rebuilding identity, including allowing the public to participate in media production (Beltrán, 2014). These results are also consistent with the findings of Promruksa (2021) about how the participatory media production process affects participants' pride and understanding of community value.

The conclusion of the research, which aims to respond to the issue of creating a participatory communication process for the target youth group, through the production of a prototype media kit and enhancing the pride of the target group's Southern identity, may be summarized as follows. The process begins with stereotype reflection from the data collected from focus group interviews, documents, and related research that discuss local identity in the south. It is a group of violent words that are often used in parody—insulting others from southern locality and southern identity to a stereotype that negatively stereotypes southern people. Moreover, bring these words into the audience index and focus group process with the target group of junior high school students.

The results of the study were although the mention of such words is not physical violence. However, it also affects and is psychologically violent for the sample as well. What is clearly seen is that although the messenger or the mocking speaker will not have malicious intent. However, when the recipient or listener feels the word, it can become emotionally intense as well.

The process of collecting information on the use of words that oppress Southern locality eventually led to the setting up of an entry point as the starting point to communicate the narrative for, "transforming pain points into proud points", to change negative experiences that are painful points and transform them into feelings of positive identification reinforcement and shifting their mindsets from forbidding others to mock them into an immunity against mockery (Evans et al., 2014).

The production of the prototype media kit reflected the participatory communication process at the stage of designing participatory communication strategies and implementing communication activities. It was a mutual exchange of experiences between the junior high school students and the change agent student group, proud of their growing Southern identity. Furthermore, the participatory communication process makes it possible to understand the media production process that determines the target audience's content issues and media formats. It has shown empathy and involvement in the issue of systematic bullying among children and adolescents (Van et al., 2015). It becomes a "young producer" based on the user-generated content concept (Brian, 2014) that can help others who are bullied and helping reducing bullying (Evans et al., 2015), and producing and replicating the process with the communication issue to reduce future violence.

In addition to the empirical results in building pride in the local Southern identity, this research has also resulted in developing participatory communication processes of local youth to understand pride in their Southern identity; and developing media kits and utilizing them to reduce abuse positively. The process can then be re-processed to the various issues of the participatory communication process, especially on building acceptance of diversity and pride in the future.

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