

## Cultural Development on Peranakan Chinese a Thematic Review

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### Abstract

The Peranakan Chinese culture is a unique sample of multicultural amalgamation, and its intricate nature has spurred scholarly discussions for decades. As modern society evolves, opportunities and challenges arise for its cultural conservation. Nevertheless, However, there is a distinct lack of comprehensive review on this subject globally. To address this gap, utilizing the ATLAS.ti 23 software, this paper undertakes a thematic review of 30 articles related to Peranakan Chinese culture published between 2018 and August 2023. Through thematic analysis, five core themes emerge: Cultural Identity, Cultural Conservation, History and Society, Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Cultural Dissemination. While diversity is widely recognised as a hallmark of Peranakan Chinese culture, this study sheds further light on the nuances and complexities of cultural integration due to geographic, historical and social factors. The review observes that current research predominantly validates past perspectives on cultural identity by examining various cultural mediums across different branches. However, there is a gradual shift towards sustainable cultural development. Moreover, the study underscores the significance of exploring new technologies and concepts for cultural conservation. This research offers direction for researchers interested in Peranakan Chinese and provides insights for deeper investigations into the subject.

## 1. Introduction

Peranakan Chinese is a collective term used to identify the descendants of Chinese immigrants who married local Malay or Indonesian women in Southeast Asia since the 15th century. This term is often used interchangeably with "Peranakan," "Straits Chinese," and "Baba Nyonya," although there are subtle distinctions in the groups these terms refer to [1], [2]. This community cultivated a unique culture, amalgamating elements from Chinese, Malay, and other influences, including Javanese, Batak, Thai, and European [3]. While the Peranakan Chinese culture is most prominent in Malacca and Penang in Malaysia and Singapore, it also thrives in other parts of Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia and Thailand. This captivating culture has garnered attention from scholars across various disciplines, including history, anthropology, linguistics, sociology, and cultural studies.

Over the past few decades, scattered research has delved into various facets of the unique Southeast Asian cultural phenomenon of the Peranakan Chinese. This research includes their social standing, class differentiation, gender roles and relationships, origins and evolution of identity, and the ambiguity and diversity of their culture. During the colonial era, the Peranakan Chinese were often regarded as local elites with significant social influence, primarily because they dominated sectors like trade, administration, law, education, and philanthropy [4]. However, in the postcolonial period, they confronted challenges from new political systems, nationalist movements, and socio-economic structures, leading to shifts in their social status and class dynamics.

Peranakan Chinese women, often called Nyonyas, played pivotal roles in family and society, engaging in activities like cooking, sewing, childcare, weddings, festivals, and community events [5], [6]. Additionally, they expressed their identity through their attire, transitioning from local styles to a fusion of Eastern and Western elements [7]. The question of Peranakan Chinese identity and cultural affiliation has been a subject of academic debate for decades. Some scholars believe that the Peranakan Chinese culture emerged as a dynamic group influenced by colonial history, socio-economic structures, political systems, and cultural traditions, suggesting that their culture is a result of local assimilation [8],[10]. In contrast, others argue that the Peranakan Chinese culture is a result of "acculturation" rather than "assimilation," emphasizing their negotiation of identity and heritage with other ethnic groups and national narratives[1], [2], [11].

Peranakan Chinese show varying degrees of hybridity and creativity in language, religion, literature, art, music, and other cultural expressions, reflecting how they deal with the tensions and contradictions between different cultural influences and as a result of the influences and tears between different cultures [8], [11]-[13]. This paper posits that the Peranakan Chinese represent a multifaceted and intricate cultural phenomenon worthy of further exploration. Thus, one of the objectives of this article is to synthesize past research to understand the distinctive features of Peranakan Chinese culture.

Several scholars have explored the cultural manifestations of the Peranakan Chinese from the perspective of cultural mediums, primarily focusing on language and communication patterns, as well as the tangible culture and heritage conservation of the Peranakan Chinese. The Peranakan Chinese have been influenced by Chinese and Malay cultures, leading to their unique language, food, and art development. Baba Malay, a language, stands as a significant marker of Peranakan Chinese identity. However, it faces the threat of extinction, necessitating protective and revitalization measures [14], [15]. On the other hand, various aspects of Peranakan's tangible culture, such as furniture, ceramics, textiles, jewelry, and food, reflect the hybridity and creativity of their culture to varying degrees[16], [17].

This tangible culture is integral to the Peranakan Chinese cultural heritage and serves as a medium for dialogue and communication with other cultures. A concerning trend is the evident decline in the transmission of traditional culture to the younger generation due to the influences of modern society and lifestyles [15]. Many scholars [3] have expressed concerns about Peranakan Chinese culture's challenges. Although the influence of the TV series "Little Nyonya" and the attention given to the Peranakan Chinese culture by both the government and the public have grown, the direction of research on its preservation remains unclear. Therefore, it's essential to identify current trends in conserving Peranakan Chinese culture to support sustainable development. However, no review articles have attempted to discuss the preservation of Peranakan Chinese culture. Thus, this paper aims to synthesize past research by reviewing current literature to determine these trends.

In summary, while the Peranakan Chinese culture has garnered attention from numerous scholars, providing invaluable insights into this unique and diverse cultural phenomenon in Southeast Asia, there remains a divergence in many past studies regarding the social identity and cultural manifestations of the Peranakan Chinese. On the other hand, although researchers have initiated some studies on the preservation of Peranakan Chinese culture, they often focus on specific aspects or dimensions of the Peranakan Chinese culture, such as furniture [17], attire [7], cuisine [16], and language [14], [15]. However, they rarely explore the interrelationships or interactions among these dimensions. Therefore, there's a pressing need to adopt a more holistic and integrative perspective to understand how different elements of the Peranakan Chinese culture can interrelate and influence each other to form a sustainable cultural development system. Moreover, no review articles have discussed the two aspects above to date. Hence, this paper aims to systematically review the literature on the development of Peranakan Chinese culture from 2018 to August 2023, focusing on the cultural identification and characteristics of the Peranakan Chinese and the trends in cultural heritage development. We expect the findings to provide insights into the sustainability of Peranakan Chinese cultural development. Here are the research questions this paper will address:

1. What are the current Peranakan Chinese cultural heritage trends covered in the publication from 2018 to August 2023?
2. What are the cultural characteristics of Peranakan Chinese discussed in the publication from 2018 to August 2023?

## 2. Materials and Methods: Textual Analysis & Aesthetic IR Approach

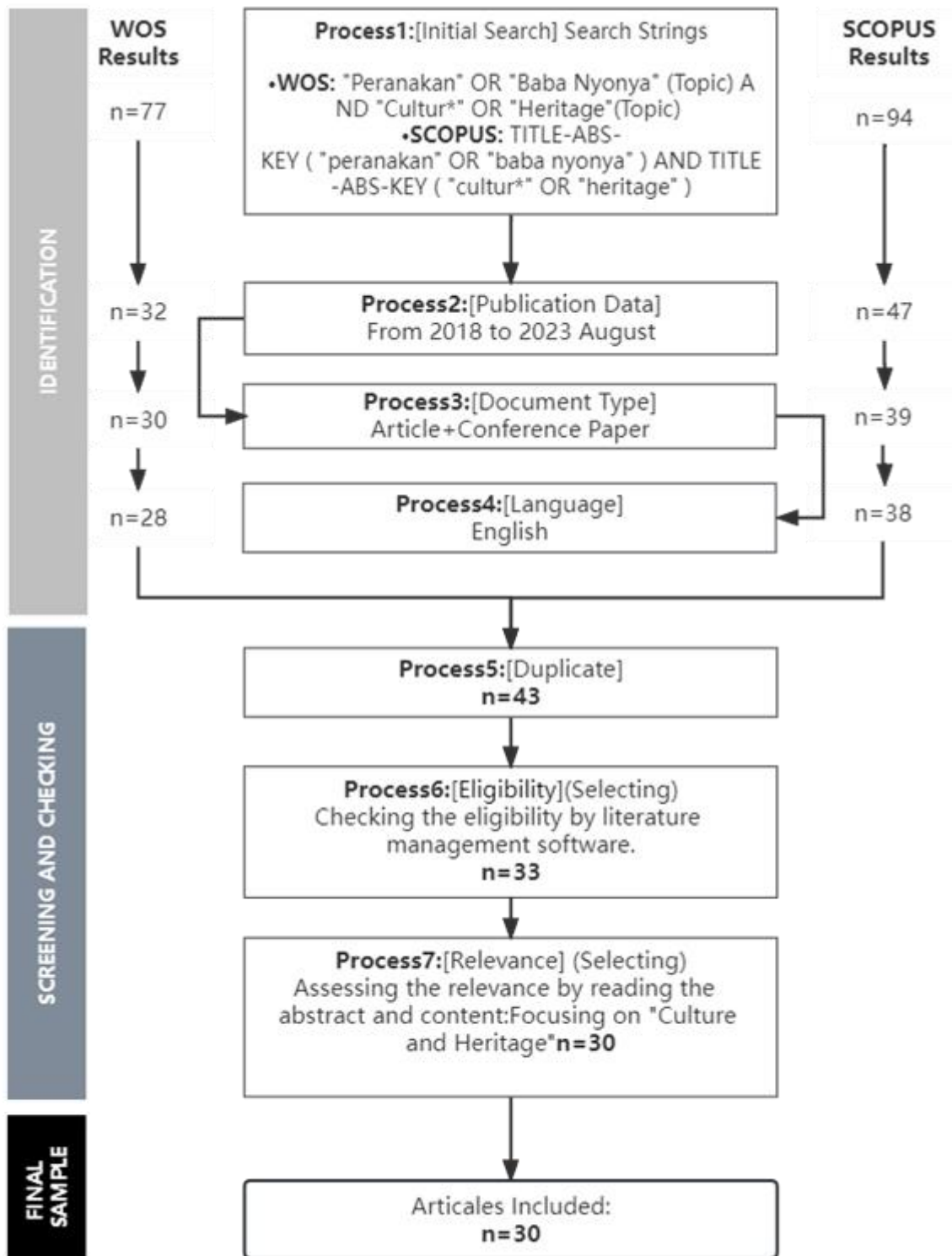
This paper employs a thematic review approach, which differs from a systematic review in that it aims to explore the existing literature on a specific topic rather than assessing the quality of previous research findings. This article aims to provide a literature review on the development of Peranakan Chinese culture. For this purpose, we adopt the thematic review method. This review model incorporates thematic analysis, a technique for identifying patterns and developing themes through an in-depth literature examination [18]. While there are numerous publications on Peranakan Chinese culture studies, the cultural development of Peranakan Chinese faces increasingly severe challenges. Researchers' focal points in this field have shifted, and there hasn't been a thematic review study explicitly focusing on Peranakan Chinese cultural conservation in the past five years.

The next step involves literature retrieval. Given the considerations of impact factor and publication quality, the databases chosen for the search are "Scopus" and "WoS" as they are comprehensive, and many articles overlap with other databases like Mendeley and Google Scholar. Based on this, the review design has explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria to select studies for evaluation and ensure the reliability and accuracy of the assessment. Firstly, after several attempts, we set the search criteria to include the keywords "Peranakan" or "baba nyonya" along with "cultur\*" OR "heritage" in the abstracts. Secondly, we limited the publication period from 2018 to August 2023. Thirdly, only peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers were considered to ensure research quality, excluding document types like book chapters. Fourthly, to ensure accuracy in understanding the content during thematic analysis, the language of the publications was set to English.

It should be noted that after executing the above search criteria, SCOPUS retrieved 38 articles. WOS yielded similar results with 28 articles (Table 1). After cross-checking for duplicates, the number of publications was reduced to 43. Lastly, by reading through the abstracts and content of these publications, those not aligned with the objective of this paper were excluded, leaving a total of 30 relevant publications (Figure 1).

**Table 1: Search Strings on SCOPUS and WOS.**

Database	Search Strings	Results
SCOPUS	( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Peranakan" OR "Baba Nyonya" ) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Cultur*" OR "Heritage" ) ) AND PUBYEAR > 2017 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "cp" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) )	38
Web of Science	"Peranakan" OR "Baba Nyonya" (Topic) AND "Cultur*" OR "Heritage" (Topic) and 2023 or 2022 or 2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 (Publication Year) and Papers or Conference Proceedings (Document Type) and English (language)	28

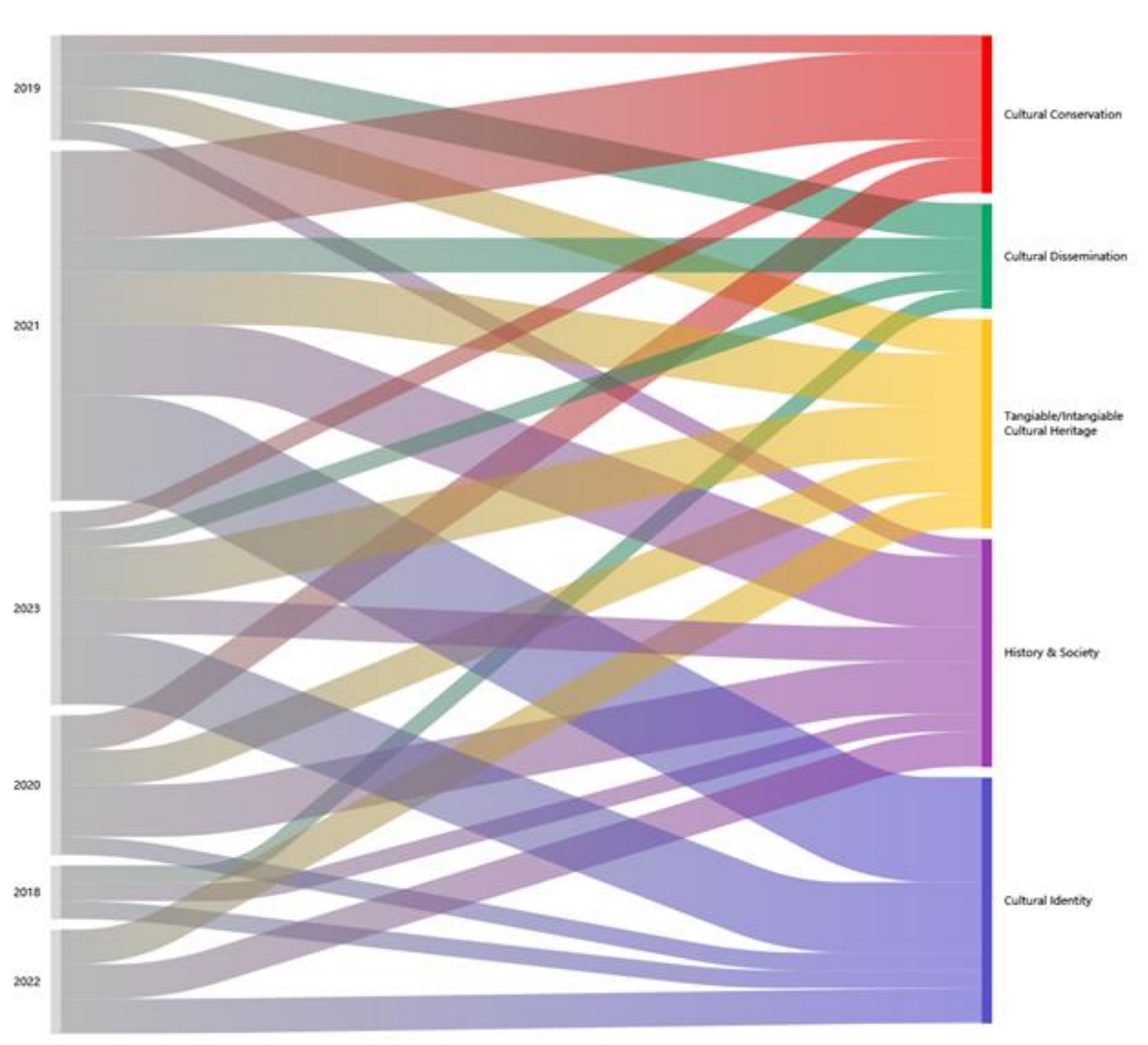


**Figure 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria and Process.**

For data processing and fundamental quantitative analysis, ATLAS.ti 23 software was utilized. Metadata for each paper, including the author, journal, publisher, publication year, and country/region, was coded using ATLAS. ti 23. This coding aids in examining trends based on the retrieved literature. ATLAS.ti 23 was also employed in the qualitative analysis section to code and summarize the identified literature. The software facilitated the qualitative analysis using the thematic analysis model proposed by Zairul [19], [20]. The aim is to identify patterns and construct themes to help understand the characteristics of Peranakan Chinese culture and the trends in Peranakan Chinese cultural and heritage development.



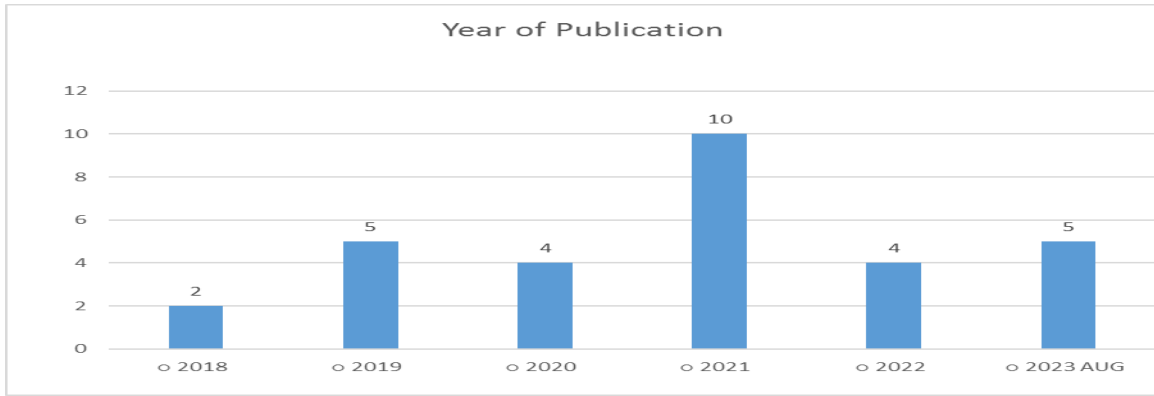




**Figure 3: Sankey of themes according to year of publication**

From Table 2, the national distribution of publications shows that the number of publications from Malaysia is significantly higher than that from other countries, accounting for nearly half of the total. Except for Malaysia, other countries are mainly from Southeast Asian countries where Peranakan Chinese is distributed, and the number is relatively evenly distributed. Countries outside the region have also participated in research in this field, but the number of publications is relatively tiny.

From a chronological perspective, the volume of studies in this field has remained relatively consistent in most countries over the past six years. However, since 2021, several Southeast Asian nations have intensified their research efforts, leading to a surge in published articles. This trend indicates a growing interest and engagement in the study of Peranakan Chinese Culture across these nations in recent years.

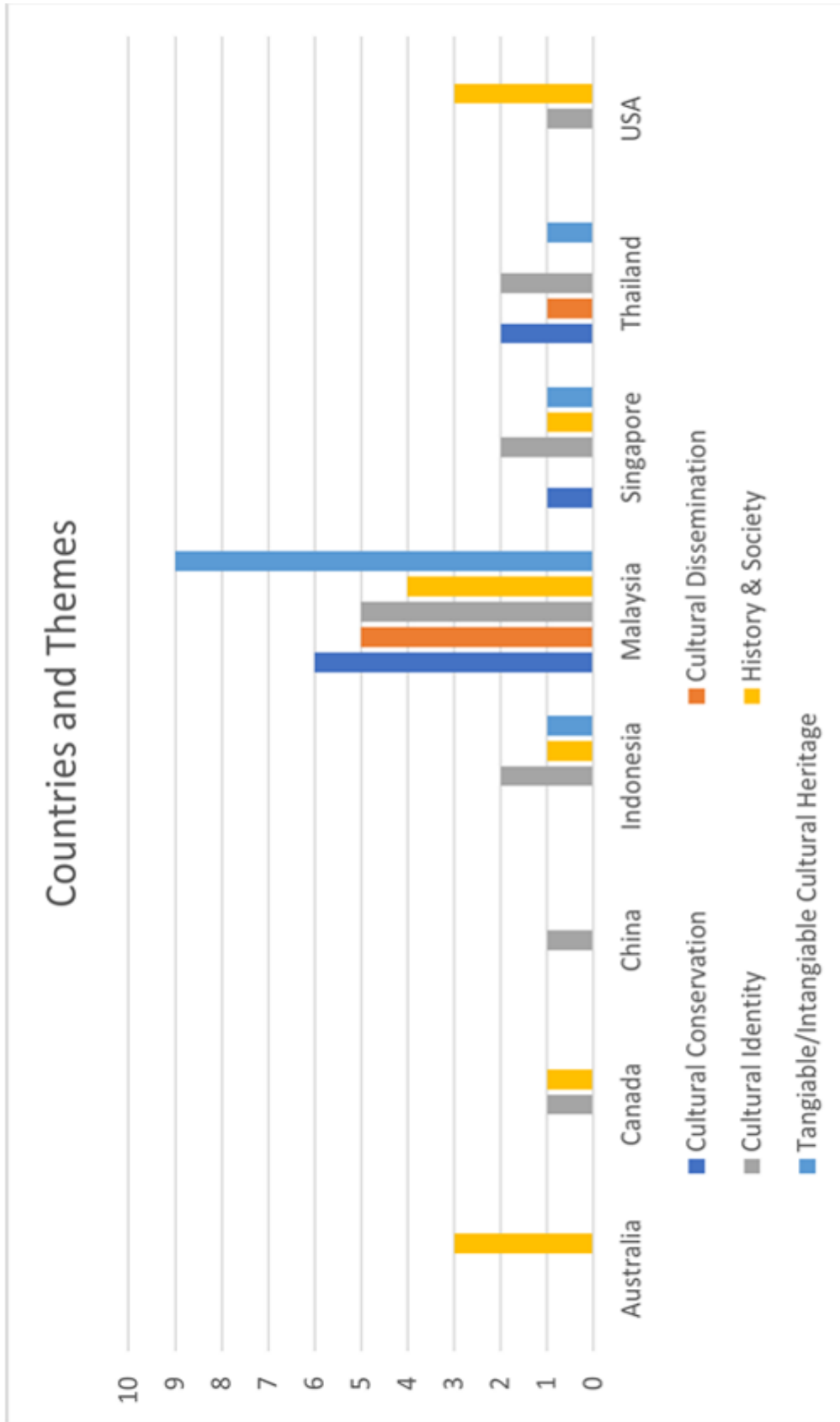


In the analysis presented in Table 3, which breaks down themes by country, the theme "Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage" emerges as the most prevalent. This theme is primarily associated with Malaysia but also appears in other Southeast Asian nations. The next dominant theme is "Cultural Conservation." Even though it ranks second in frequency, its distribution mirrors the "Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage" theme. Notably, neither of these two primary themes appears in countries outside of Southeast Asia. This pattern suggests that Southeast Asian nations place a strong emphasis on preserving and protecting their cultural heritage.

Interestingly, research from countries such as the United States, Australia, and Canada primarily addresses the "History and Society" theme and delves into specific facets of the "Cultural Identity" theme. This pattern suggests that scholars in these Western countries show a more substantial interest in the social and historical dimensions of the Peranakan Chinese ethnic group than in its prospective developments.

Analysis of the published sources (Table 4) revealed that the 30 articles under consideration originated from 24 distinct journals and four conference journals. Notably, seven of these journals belong to the arts and humanities category, while three are dedicated to ethnological research. Such a distribution indicates that researchers studying Peranakan Chinese Culture rely on documents from the humanities and arts to inform their investigations.

Table 4: Themes vs. Countries



In addition to design and art journals, researchers publish their work in various other subject areas, including highly specialized journals in linguistics, history, tourism, and museums. Even journals such as "MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AND EVOLUTION" involve interdisciplinary fields. This table shows that researchers actively integrate different perspectives from different disciplines and explore new research horizons in the Cultural Development of Peranakan Chinese.



**Table 5: Publication and Years**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023Aug
○ 1st International Conference on Humanities Design and Creativity	-	2	-	-	-	-
3L-LANGUAGE LINGUISTICS LITERATURE-THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES	-	-	-	-	1	-
AIP Conference Proceedings	-	-	-	1	-	-
Applied Linguistics	-	-	-	1	-	-
ASIAN ETHNICITY	-	-	-	-	1	-
BioSocieties	-	-	-	1	-	-
Cogent Arts & Humanities	-	-	-	-	-	1
ETHNICITIES	-	-	1	-	-	-
Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies	-	-	-	1	-	-
IDENTITIES-GLOBAL STUDIES IN CULTURE AND POWER	-	-	-	-	-	1
INTER-ASIA CULTURAL STUDIES	-	-	-	-	-	1
International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change	-	1	-	-	-	-
International Journal of the Inclusive Museum	-	-	-	2	-	-
International Transaction Journal of Engineering, Management, & Applied Sciences & Technologies	-	-	1	-	-	-
IOP Conf. Series Earth and Environmental Science	-	-	-	1	-	-
○ Journal of Media & Cultural Studies	-	-	1	-	-	-
Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements	-	-	1	-	-	1
JURNAL KOMUNIKASI-MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION	-	-	-	1	-	-
Kajian Malaysia	-	-	-	1	-	-
MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AND EVOLUTION	-	-	-	1	-	-
POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES	1	-	-	-	-	-
Proceedings of International Conference of the Learning Sciences, ICLS	1	-	-	-	-	-
The 6th International Conference on Eco Engineering Development 2022	-	-	-	-	1	-
Tourism Management Perspectives	-	1	-	-	-	-
Translocal Chinese	-	-	-	-	1	-
WIT Transactions on The Built Environment	-	1	-	-	-	-
YOUNG CONSUMERS	-	-	-	-	-	1

In short, this section partially answers RQ1 from a quantitative perspective. The research trend of literature related to Peranakan Chinese Culture in the last 5-6 years reflects the development of Peranakan Chinese culture to a certain extent. The review article discusses the history and various avenues of the development of Peranakan Chinese culture. The first is the historical and social factors of culture, which are concerned by countries outside the region, such as the United States and Australia. Correspondingly, countries with

Peranakan Chinese ethnic groups, such as Southeast Asia, are more concerned about the present and future of culture. They have obtained more research results under the two main themes of cultural identity and cultural conservation, which shows that they seem more eager to Clarify the identity of Peranakan Chinese and explore ways to preserve this culture in the future.

Regarding development trends, although the number of studies on cultural identity is the largest among all topics, it has declined. Correspondingly, the focus on Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage has been significantly increasing, showing that scholars may gradually shift from identity to studying specific cultural carriers. Perhaps due to the convenience of research, the research on these cultural carriers is limited to Southeast Asian countries, but they are independent of each other and lack connection. Finally, although most research on cultural conservation is still focused on cultural preservation, new research has emerged to explore the sustainable development of culture [21], [22].

### 3.2 Qualitative results

The previous article provided a quantitative discussion of the research trend of Peranakan Chinese Culture. However, it wasn't comprehensive. We must delve deeply into each topic in the qualitative analysis section for a more thorough understanding. Based on the five overarching themes identified earlier, we address the following research questions:

1. What are the current Peranakan Chinese cultural heritage trends covered in the publication from 2018 to August 2023?
2. What are the cultural characteristics of Peranakan Chinese discussed in the publication from 2018 to August 2023?

Based on a comprehensive literature review, five themes were summarized, providing a deeper understanding of the field. According to the research covered in the existing publications, each theme is further divided into 3-5 sub-themes (Figure 4). It should be clarified that although these 30 articles are categorized into five main themes, there is a solid logical relationship between the themes. They do not exist independently and often coexist in the same article. Consequently, many articles cover multiple themes simultaneously, and a few even encompass all four themes simultaneously. This interconnectedness of themes underscores the complexity and richness of the Peranakan Chinese culture. The overlapping nature of the themes in the articles suggests that the cultural, historical, and social aspects of the Peranakan Chinese are deeply intertwined, reflecting the multifaceted nature of their identity and heritage. This holistic approach to understanding the Peranakan Chinese culture is essential for a comprehensive grasp of its nuances and intricacies.

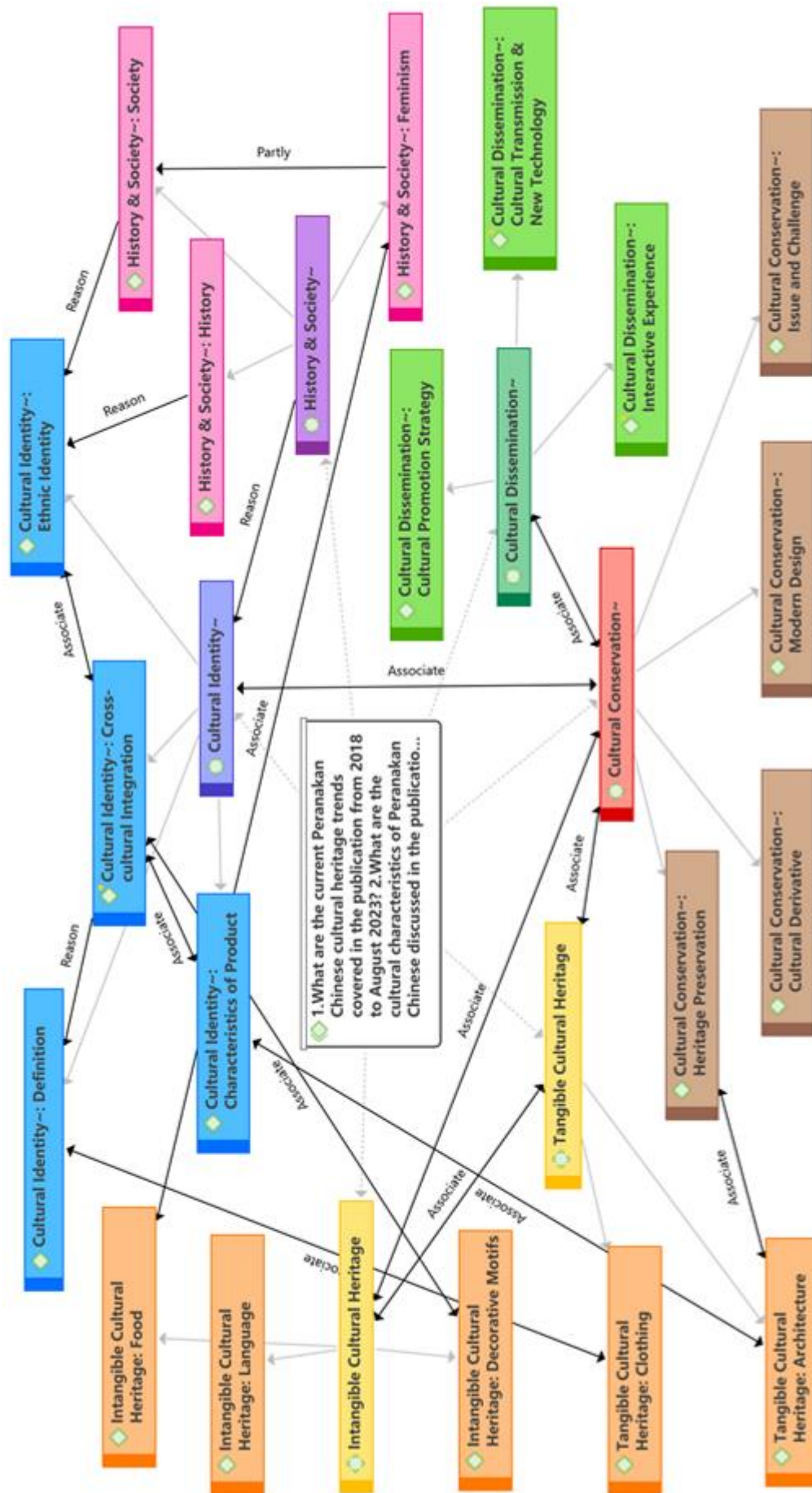


Figure 4: Themes for Research Questions

### 3.2.1 Theme 1: Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is the cornerstone of individual and collective self-understanding, representing the intricate interplay of shared beliefs, values, norms, and practices among a group of people. The Peranakan Chinese community has a complex background, influenced by various cultures, which gives their cultural identity a multifaceted and unique nature. During the 1970s and 1980s, cultural identity was a primary focus of academic discussions regarding the Peranakan Chinese. Scholars from both the East and West delved into the subject from perspectives such as ethnology, colonial history, and politics, each holding their own distinct viewpoints. However, decades later, the academic lens shifted significantly. Today, the topic remains of keen interest, with "Cultural Identity" being the most discussed among the five main themes in 14 articles (Figure 5). This review article explores the various dimensions presented in academic literature over the past six years.

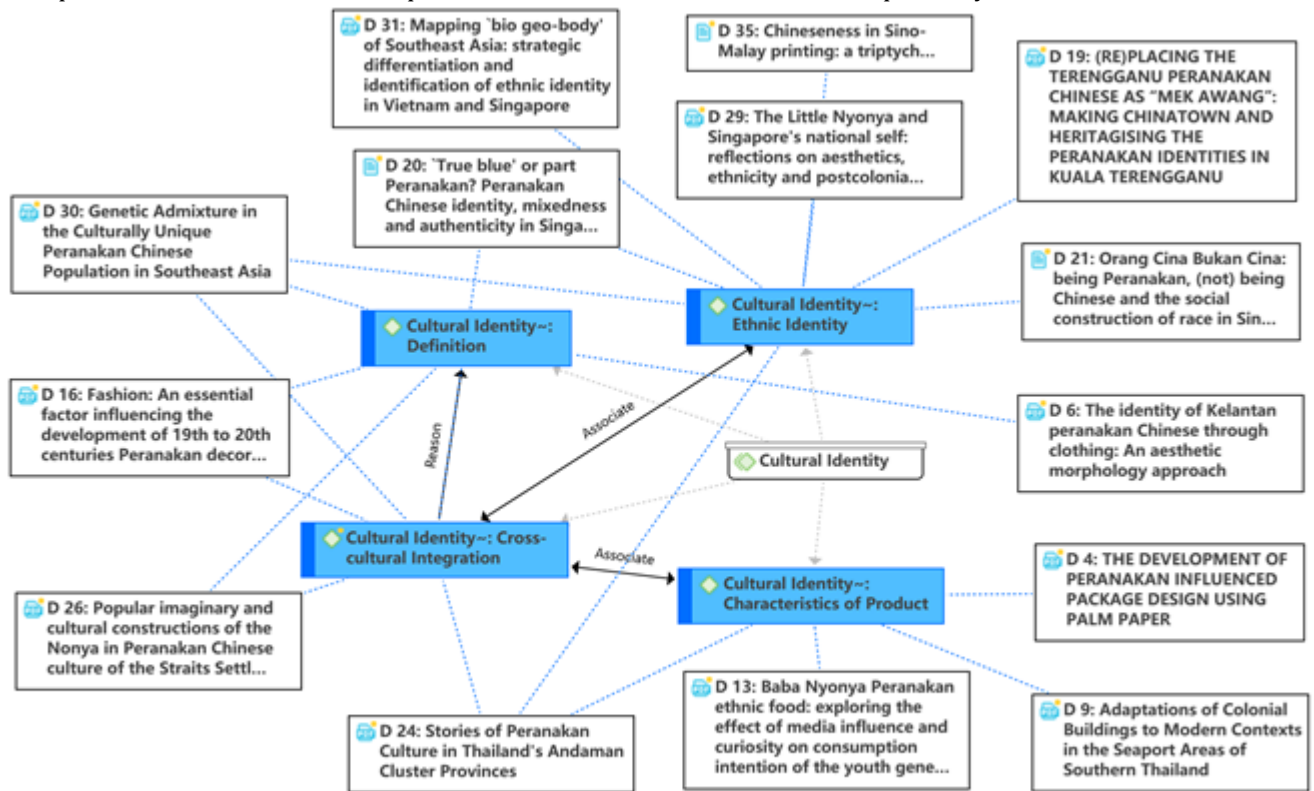


Figure 5: Cultural Identity

• Definition

The Peranakan Chinese community represents a unique diaspora, consistently at the forefront of discussions on cultural identity. Given the community's rich tapestry of cultural amalgamation and its intricate cultural identity backdrop, there hasn't been a universally accepted definition for this group. Four recent studies have shed light on the multifaceted nature of the cultural identity within the Peranakan Chinese community, aiming to redefine the group from distinct perspectives.

Scholars have approached the definition of Peranakan Chinese with caution. Despite extensive research on the Peranakan Chinese, past scholars have defined them based on historical, social, and political contexts. Some, like Tan [11], have defined them based on existing cultural characteristics and geographical distribution. Neo, Ngo, and Heng [23] also view the Peranakan Chinese as a dispersed Chinese community. This perspective has been contentious. To substantiate this claim, Wu, D. et al. [24] employed Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) to trace the unique ancestral lineage of the Peranakan Chinese, confirming them as descendants of Chinese immigrants who settled in the Malay Archipelago between 300 to 500 years ago. Hassan et al. [25] arrived at a similar conclusion from a localized context, suggesting that the "Peranakan" are a result of interactions (primarily marriages) between the Hoklo (Han Chinese) and the indigenous people of the Malay Peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago. They further propose that the branches of Peranakan encompass Baba-Nyonya, Chitty, Kristang, Jawi Peranakan, and Cina Peranakan Kelantan. While this review agrees with their definition, it believes their scope should be specific to "Peranakan," which goes beyond "Peranakan Chinese." Wang [26] also acknowledges the Peranakan Chinese as the mixed descendants of Chinese and Malays, but like many scholars, she believes that only the Baba-Nyonya are the authentic Peranakan Chinese. Although Neo et al. [23] did not explicitly support this view, their emphasis on the Peranakan Chinese being concentrated in the Straits Settlements of Malaya reveals their stance.

From a synthesis of these studies, it's evident that there's a consensus on the origins of the Peranakan Chinese community. However, the scope of defining this group, in both narrow and broad terms, remains a matter of debate. Research on the Peranakan Chinese continues to evolve amidst these controversies. Despite the divergent views, scholars collectively paint a comprehensive picture of the multifaceted cultural identity of the Peranakan Chinese community.

- **Ethnic Identity**

Born amidst the confluence of diverse cultures in Southeast Asia, the Peranakan Chinese have a multifaceted historical, social, and cultural heritage. This intricate background has often left them grappling with a sense of belonging. During tumultuous times, they felt adrift, and in more peaceful eras, they faced a gradual decline. As a result, the ethnic identity of the Peranakan Chinese is not only a pressing question for the Peranakans themselves but has also been a subject of extensive academic inquiry.

As early as 2018, Montsion and Parasram delved into the formation of Singapore as a postcolonial state through the lens of Peranakan Chinese identity, emphasizing its cultural revival. They highlighted the TV series "Little Nyonya" as a medium that leveraged the history of Peranakan Chinese for decolonization and reterritorialization of local identity, particularly in response to concerns about mainland Chinese identity. This series sparked interest in Peranakan Chinese culture across Southeast Asia and China. By 2021, a surge of research was directed towards the Peranakan Chinese domain, given its many branches.

Poomduang, Kheokao, and Wilainuch [27] explored the narratives of Peranakan Chinese culture in Thailand's Andaman province. Their study underscored the cultural identity of this region's Peranakan Chinese, emphasizing the assimilation of Chinese, Malay, European, and Thai cultures. Concurrently, Chuang, Hun, and Liu [28] sharply examined the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese community's struggle with the term "Mek Awang," which has been appropriated for tourism, leading to internal community disputes. Such conflicts, they argue, highlight broader global processes affecting minorities and their identities, underscoring the tension between cultural preservation and commodification in a heritage tourism context.

Similarly, Rocha and Yeoh [29] delved into the nuances of Peranakan Chinese identity in Singapore. Based on narrative interviews, their study revealed the evolving nature of Peranakan Chinese identity and the interplay between hybridity, purity, and authenticity. Another study by Rocha and Yeoh [30] further discussed the positioning of Peranakan Chinese identity within Singapore's multi-ethnic framework, emphasizing the complexity of being both Chinese and non-Chinese simultaneously.

In Indonesia, Hoogervorst [31] unveiled Indonesian Chinese writers' evolving sense of belonging and diasporic identity during the late colonial era. Two competing political ideologies emerged: one from the 1911 revolution, urging Indonesian Chinese, especially the culturally hybrid Peranakan Chinese, to dedicate themselves to the "motherland," and the other advocating integration into Indonesian society. Fusing Malay and Hokkien languages was pivotal in fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

Beyond social sciences, genomics offers a fresh perspective on understanding racial identity. Wu et al. [24] conducted a comprehensive study on the genetic admixture of Peranakan Chinese, revealing a significant Malay lineage compared to other Chinese groups in Singapore and China. Their findings provide deeper insights into the historical interactions between Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia and indigenous residents, unveiling the genetic basis for cultural assimilation. Hà and Bin Khidzer [32] further explored this theme by comparing the Vietnam Genome Project with the Singapore Peranakan Chinese Genome Project, emphasizing the strategic differentiation and negotiation of ethnic identity associated with Chinese identity and nationalism.

In summary, recent research on Peranakan Chinese identity has delved into the sense of identity and belonging in countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Through literary works, TV dramas and cultural narratives, these studies reveal the internal contradictions of the Peranakans and express concerns about ethnic divisions caused by social development. As Southeast Asia continues to evolve, understanding the complexities of ethnic identity remains critical to fostering harmony, understanding and appreciation of the region's rich culture.

- **Cross-cultural Integration**

The Peranakan Chinese culture boasts a rich history spanning several centuries, uniquely blending influences from China, Malay, and occasionally Europe, serving as a vivid testament to cross-cultural integration in Southeast Asia. The theme of cross-cultural fusion is pivotal in understanding the dynamics of cultural blending and interaction. Such interaction and fusion are hallmark traits of the Peranakan Chinese culture and are even regarded as a precious heritage [29]. A common thread in these studies is exploring how this fusion manifests in various aspects of Peranakan Chinese life, from food and fashion to architecture and genetics.

Various studies have demonstrated that cross-cultural fusion is evident in fields ranging from cooking to genetics. Zahari et al. [33] highlighted the culinary blending of Chinese and Malay traditions in the Malaccan Baba and Nyonya communities, extending to flavors, cooking techniques, and dining etiquette. This fusion is mirrored in architecture, with Susantio and Widyasari [34] emphasizing the amalgamation of Javanese and Chinese designs in the Kidang Mas Batik House. Poomduang et al. [27] delved into the narratives of the Peranakan Chinese culture in Thailand's Andaman province, underscoring the challenges of preserving a culture that



reflects influences from China, Malay, Europe, and Thailand. Wang[26] shifted the focus to fashion, examining how global 'Chinoiserie' trends have impacted Peranakan Chinese clothing patterns, pointing out the eclectic style of the Peranakan Chinese culture as a precious example of international cross-cultural fusion. Wu et al. [24] provided a genetic perspective, revealing the significant influence of Chinese traditions and Malay genetics on the Peranakan Chinese. Neo et al. [23] offered insights into the subtle gender dynamics within the Peranakan Chinese community, especially the duality of the Nyonya stance.

These studies elucidate the multifaceted nature of cross-cultural fusion within the Peranakan Chinese community. Whether it's the flavors of Baba Nyonya cuisine, the intricate designs of Peranakan Chinese attire, or the architectural marvels of Peranakan Chinese in Lasem, the experiences of the Peranakan Chinese exemplify both the beauty and complexity of cultural amalgamation.

- Characteristics of Product

The tangible manifestations of cultural identity are evident in various products, ranging from decorative arts and architectural structures to ethnic foods. The Peranakan Chinese community, a fusion of Chinese, Malay, and European influences, boasts a rich cultural heritage. This community has consistently been the focal point of numerous studies, especially in the realm of its cultural products. A hallmark of this culture is its ornate artistry, characterized by its luxury and intricacy. Yeoh, Vongphantuset, and Sirivesmas[22] highlighted the economic contributions of the Peranakan Chinese, particularly their pioneering trade endeavors with China and Europe. Central to their findings is the community's deep-rooted appreciation for decorative arts, which has given rise to embroidery crafts that blend Chinese, Malay, and European styles. The study also delved into the public's reception of palm paper in Peranakan Chinese-styled packaging, linking it to the community's historical engagement with commercial agriculture. The positive reception of palm paper suggests a sustainable and culturally relevant direction in product design.

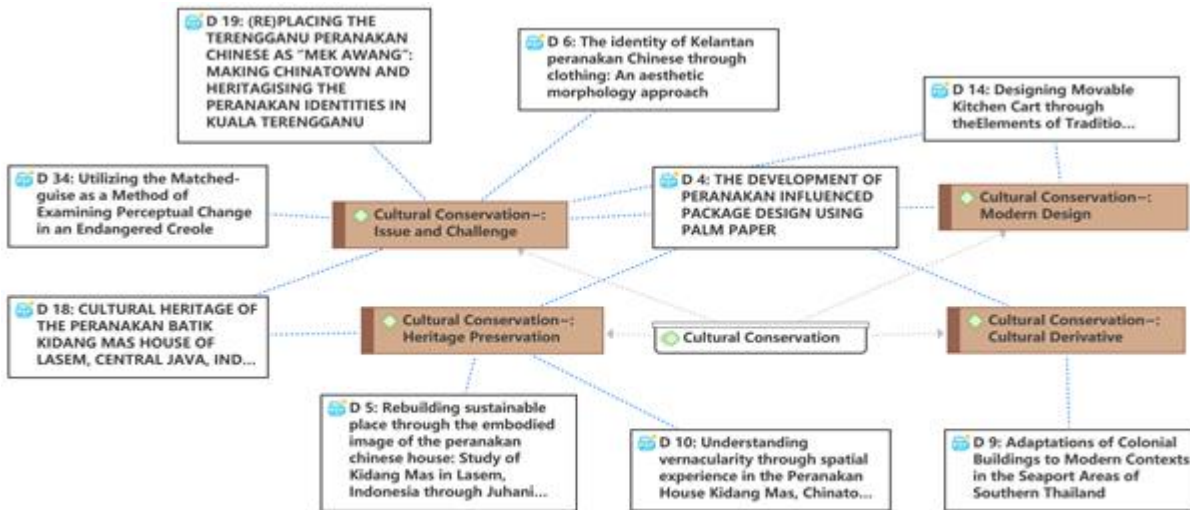
In the realm of cuisine, Poomduang et al.[27] narrated the story of the Peranakan Chinese culture in Thailand's Andaman province. They emphasized the fusion of Chinese, Malay, European, and Thai elements in Peranakan Chinese culinary and sartorial practices and their architectural and traditional expressions. Echoing this perspective, Zanzaizman, Sheikh Mohamed Safri, and Abdul Latip [35] delved into the consumption patterns of the younger generation regarding Baba Nyonya Peranakan Chinese cuisine. Their research elucidated the media's profound influence in shaping perceptions of ethnic food, highlighting the unique amalgamation of Malay and Chinese flavors in Baba Nyonya dishes. This suggests that strategic media engagement could be pivotal in preserving and advocating for this culinary heritage. Still in Thailand, Kingkad and Sawasdee[36] shifted their focus to architecture, examining colonial-era buildings in the southern port regions of Thailand, which once stood as melting pots of diverse cultures. These structures, heavily influenced by Chinese-European designs, testify to the architectural impact of the Peranakan Chinese. These historical edifices have been repurposed to cater to the burgeoning cultural tourism industry, transforming into boutique hotels, cafes, and cultural centers. This ensures the protection and celebration of the region's unique architectural legacy.

In summary, the absence of a clear ethnic and cultural definition has led to a sense of dislocation among the Peranakans. Cultural identity, with its intricate layers and dimensions, offers rich insights into the shared attributes of various communities. Geographical constraints, the influence of different cultures, and the varying degrees of such influences have resulted in diverse understandings of cultural identity among the Peranakan Chinese. This diversity has given rise to significant internal conflicts as nations and societies evolve, tearing the community apart and leading to its decline. The reviewed literature discusses the unique identity of the Peranakan Chinese community, which has been validated by genetic technology. This identity is a fusion of various cultural influences, most visibly manifested in their ornate and intricate cultural products. The theme encompasses the community's self-perception and how others perceive them. These studies offer a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of cultural identity, from its fundamental definition to its tangible manifestations in products and practices.

### 3.2.2 Theme 2 Cultural Conservation

Cultural conservation is a multifaceted endeavor aimed at safeguarding and promoting the rich tapestry of global cultures amidst the challenges and opportunities of modernity. Numerous studies have discussed the significance and challenges of preserving the Peranakan Chinese culture through attire, language, or other cultural artifacts. The emphasis on the decline or shift in culture, especially among the younger generation, underscores the imperative of preservation (Figure 6). Literature on this topic delves into various sub-themes, offering a comprehensive understanding of the nuances involved in protecting cultural identity and heritage.





**Figure 6: Cultural Conservation**

- Issue and Challenge

The Peranakan Chinese culture is on the brink of decline amidst the challenges of modernization and identity crises. Yeoh et al. [22] and Rakhim, Vermol, and Legino. [21] highlights the diminishing significance of Peranakan Chinese traditions, with the former emphasizing the potential of integrating cultural themes into modern designs (such as palm paper packaging) as a bridge between tradition and modernity. Hassan et al. [25] echo a similar sentiment, underscoring the declining cultural pride among the younger generation of Peranakan Chinese in Kelantan, leading to a waning sense of cultural identity, significantly as traditional attire gets overshadowed by contemporary clothing.

Chuang et al. [28] delve into the complexities of cultural appropriation, emphasizing the commercialization of the term "Mek Awang" in the tourism industry, highlighting the challenges minority groups face in preserving their cultural identity under global influences. N. H. Lee [37] further accentuates this concept of cultural erosion, discussing the linguistic shift of the endangered creole language, Baba Malay, spoken by the Peranakan Chinese. Due to changing societal dynamics, Darmayanti and Bahauddin [38] highlight the architectural dimension, underscoring the marginalization of Peranakan Chinese houses in Lasem, Central Java. In summary, these studies underscore the multifaceted challenges confronting the Peranakan Chinese culture, ranging from language and architecture to attire and contemporary design.

- Heritage Preservation

The preservation of cultural heritage, especially against challenges faced by the Peranakan Chinese community, is an increasingly significant topic in contemporary research. Heritage Preservation is a form of Cultural Conservation; however, the distinction lies in that Heritage Preservation places a stronger emphasis on static preservation.

Darmayanti and Bahauddin's research [38], [39] underscores the urgency of preserving this heritage, highlighting the tangible and intangible aspects of Peranakan Chinese culture at risk amidst the whirlwinds of modernization and societal change. Through the phenomenological lens of Juhani Pallasmaa, they explored the Peranakan Chinese house, Kidang Mas, in Lasem, emphasizing the intrinsic value of vernacular architecture and spatial experience. They advocate for preserving such heritage sites intimately linked with human memory and activity, ensuring the continuity of its cultural essence. Building on this, Yeoh et al. [22] delve deeper into the economic dimensions of Peranakan Chinese heritage, emphasizing its influence on sustainable packaging design using palm paper. By merging the ornate artistry of the Peranakan Chinese with eco-friendly packaging, they propose a forward-looking heritage preservation approach that intertwines cultural memory with sustainable practices. This innovative strategy aligns with Darmayanti & Bahauddin's vision of revitalizing sustainable spaces through cultural reminiscence and imagination, underscoring the importance of cherishing the past while innovating for the future [39]. However, the path to preserving this rich heritage is fraught with challenges. Darmayanti and Bahauddin [38] emphasize that faced with shifting societal identities and changing times, the cultural treasure trove of Peranakan Chinese houses is increasingly marginalized. Their subsequent research in 2021[39] delves deeper, stressing the need to maintain these architectural marvels for future generations, considering their role in shaping and reflecting cultural identity. These studies collectively sound an urgent call for action to protect the precious Peranakan Chinese heritage. Through a harmonious blend of phenomenological insights, sustainable innovation, and deep reverence for vernacular architecture, they chart a holistic path forward, ensuring the Peranakan Chinese heritage remains a beacon of cultural richness for generations to come.

In summary, the reviewed studies collectively emphasize the urgency of preserving the rich Peranakan Chinese heritage in the face of modern challenges. By integrating phenomenological research, sustainable practices, and an understanding of vernacular architecture, these studies offer a comprehensive roadmap to ensure the heritage of the Peranakan Chinese community continues to thrive for future generations.

- Cultural Derivative

The intricate tapestry of Southeast Asian culture, particularly the Peranakan Chinese heritage, has been a focal point of recent research, underscoring its profound influence on contemporary design and urban revitalization. Yeoh et al. [22] delved into the Peranakan Chinese culture, highlighting its rich decorative arts that have significantly impacted various ornamental arts, from furniture to jewelry design. Their study accentuates the potential of Peranakan Chinese elements in modern packaging design, especially with palm paper. This research reveals the Malaysian acceptance of such designs and emphasizes the broader implications of integrating cultural heritage into sustainable and eco-friendly materials. Such integration serves as a bridge between the past and present. Concurrently, Kingkad and Sawasdee [36] explored the adaptive reuse of colonial architecture, especially in the southern port regions of Thailand. These structures, heavily influenced by the Peranakan Chinese architectural style, stand as testaments to the region's multicultural history. The authors underline the economic impetus behind the modern transformations of these colonial edifices, particularly in cultural tourism. By repurposing these historical buildings into boutique hotels, cafes, art galleries, and other cultural spaces, the essence of Peranakan Chinese heritage is preserved while catering to tourists' contemporary tastes and preferences. Such adaptive reuse revitalizes urban spaces and ensures that cultural derivatives of the past remain relevant and cherished in the present.

Drawing insights from these two studies, it's evident that the Peranakan Chinese culture, with its rich artistic and architectural heritage, serves as a wellspring of inspiration for modern design and urban development. By intertwining heritage with contemporary needs in design aesthetics and urban revitalization, Peranakan Chinese culture's essence is preserved and amplified, ensuring its continued relevance and influence in an ever-evolving world.

- Modern Design

Over the years, there's been a growing trend in product design to merge historical elements with modern functionality for cultural preservation. This blend is especially pronounced in Southeast Asian culture, drawing heavily from its rich history. Notably, two studies underscore the influence of traditional elements, particularly from the Peranakan Chinese heritage, on contemporary design.

Rakhim et al. [21] embarked on a journey to integrate elements of Peranakan Chinese culture into product design. Their primary focus was creating a standalone kitchen influenced by Peranakan Chinese themes. Malaysia's rich multicultural heritage, a blend of Malay, Chinese, and Indian cultures, offers a vast reservoir of design inspiration. However, the researchers expressed concern over the gradual disappearance of ancient cultures like the Peranakan Chinese due to modernization. Their kitchen cart design, influenced by the Baba Nyonya tradition, is a tangible reminder of this rich heritage. Such products cater to modern design sensibilities and play a crucial role in heightening awareness of declining cultures, emphasizing the importance of cultural identity in design [21].

Similarly, Yeoh et al. [22] delved deep into the realm of packaging design, exploring the potential of palm paper as a sustainable packaging material influenced by Peranakan Chinese culture. Their study is rooted in the broader context of Southeast Asian Peranakan Chinese culture, underscoring its significance and noting its fading presence in the collective memory of newer generations. The Peranakan Chinese are renowned for their opulent lifestyle and rich decorative arts history, including unique embroidery techniques influenced by Chinese, Malay, and European styles. The researchers aimed to incorporate these traditional design elements into modern packaging using palm paper, representing a sustainable practice and a nod to cultural preservation. Integrating traditional cultural elements with modern design principles offers a unique avenue to craft products that resonate with contemporary audiences while preserving the essence of historical heritage. Both studies underscore the potential of this design approach, emphasizing the importance of cultural preservation in modern design. As the world evolves, such design philosophies ensure that our rich tapestry of the past is interwoven with our present and future constructs.

In conclusion, the literature on cultural preservation underscores the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in safeguarding and promoting cultural characteristics. From understanding the complexities of the Peranakan Chinese community to the interplay between tradition and modernity, cultural preservation emerges as a dynamic and evolving field. The features of products, be it decorative arts, architectural structures, or ethnic foods, serve as tangible manifestations of the rich cultural identity of the Peranakan Chinese. The reviewed studies emphasize the community's historical contributions, the protection and adaptation of its heritage in a modern context, and the potential role of media in promoting and safeguarding its unique cultural products.

### 3.2.3 Theme 3 History and Society

It can be seen from previous research that the formation and development of Peranakan Chinese culture is deeply influenced by "history and society". Divided into three sub-themes: History, Society, and Feminism (Figure 7), the theme explores in depth the social roles and historical context of the Peranakan Chinese community, aiming to consolidate insights from various scholarly inquiries.

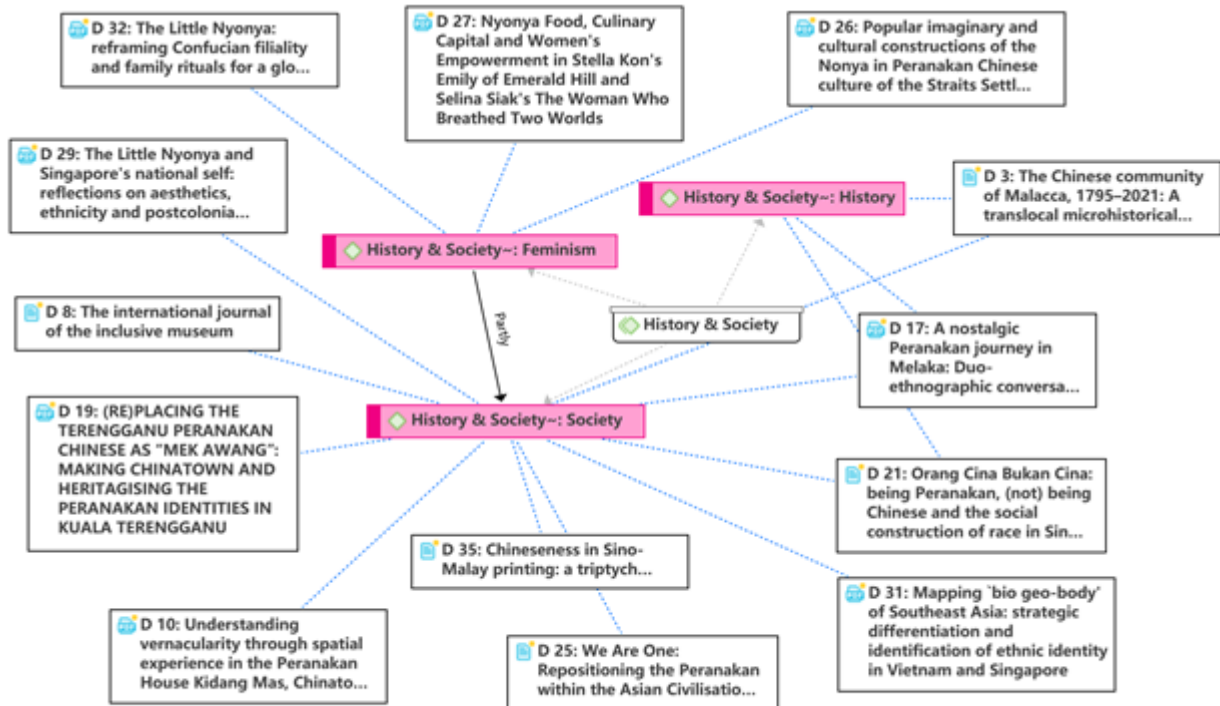


Figure 7: History and Society

#### • History

The intricate Peranakan Chinese culture, with its rich historical and sociocultural nuances, has long been a subject of extensive academic exploration. This review delves into three seminal works that shed light on the historical evolution, identity formation, and sociocultural dynamics of the Peranakan Chinese community, especially in the Straits colonial regions of Malacca and Singapore.

Dennerline [40] offers a meticulous study of the Malacca Chinese community, tracing this group's historical trajectory and emphasizing their adaptability across different eras, from British colonial rule to the postcolonial Malaysian period. The resilience of this community is evident in their adeptness at leveraging transregional kinship relations and commercial networks established as early as 1795 to navigate global challenges adeptly. By the mid-19th century, these networks expanded, strengthening ties with Singapore and broadening transregional engagement. Dennerline reveals the community's finesse in political mediation, ensuring harmony and integrating diverse sub-groups like Hakka miners and Fujian plantation owners into their sociocultural fabric.

Complementing this historical narrative, E. Tan & Teoh [41] embark on a profound exploration of Malacca's multi-ethnic heritage, with a particular focus on the Peranakan Chinese legacy. Through a dual ethnographic lens, they document the ancestral tourism journeys of two Peranakan Chinese individuals, delving deep into the interplay of nostalgia, authenticity, and diaspora in heritage tourism. Their narrative unveils profound connections to Southeast Asian roots, reflections on ancestral traditions, and a critical assessment of what represents Peranakan Chinese traditions, underscoring the multifaceted confluence of history and culture in Malacca.

Building on this, Rocha and Yeoh [30] probe the intricate nuances of Peranakan Chinese identity in Singapore, highlighting the challenges of navigating a hybrid identity within the nation's multi-ethnic framework. Their research underscores the complexity of the Peranakan Chinese identity, which, despite its distinctiveness, is often subsumed under the broader Chinese category. This exploration of the sentiment of "Orang Cina Bukan Cina" or "Chinese yet not Chinese" runs parallel to the revival of Peranakan Chinese material culture, offering profound insights into the multifaceted ways this identity is experienced daily.

In summary, the historical trajectory of the Peranakan Chinese community depicted in these works underscores their adaptability, resilience, and rich cultural heritage. From transregional networks in Malacca to

nostalgic journeys in Malacca and racial dynamics in Singapore, the history of the Peranakan Chinese community attests to its enduring legacy and capacity to navigate and negotiate complex sociocultural landscapes.

- Society

The social structure of the Peranakan Chinese community is intricate, and it has consistently been a subject of extensive academic exploration. Rocha and Yeoh [30] delve into the identity of the Peranakan Chinese in Singapore, emphasizing the challenges of navigating a hybrid identity encapsulated in the concept of "Orang Cina Bukan Cina" or "Chinese but not Chinese." Hà and Bin Khidzer [32] further elucidate this struggle with hybridity, conducting a profound study on the distinct genomic projects of the Vietnamese and Peranakan Chinese, revealing the delicate balance between genomics, local history, and politics. Hoogervorst [31] offers a literary perspective, examining the diasporic identity struggles of Chinese-Indonesian writers during the late colonial era, underscoring the fluidity and debates surrounding the notion of "Chinese." Dennerline's research on the Chinese community in Malacca resonates with the theme of adaptability and resilience in the face of societal challenges [40]. Galla and Bezzina [42] and Bezzina [43] highlight the role of institutions like museums in shaping and representing Peranakan Chinese narratives, emphasizing the evolution of the Peranakan Chinese community in Singapore's Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) from historical artifacts to vibrant, living culture. Chuang et al. [28] probe the societal implications of cultural terminologies, focusing on the debates surrounding the term "Mek Awang" in the Terengganu Peranakan Chinese community and its broader impact on minority identities. E. Tan & Teoh [41] provide a nostalgic lens, emphasizing the interplay of nostalgia, authenticity, and diaspora in Malacca's Peranakan Chinese heritage tourism. Montsion and Parasram [9] conclude this social exploration through a critical analysis of the television series *Little Nyonya*, arguing for its role in redefining national and ethnic markers and building a localized indigenous consciousness.

In conclusion, the literature on the sub-theme of "society" delves into various aspects of the Peranakan Chinese community's identity, cultural heritage, and societal positioning. At its core, these studies collectively portray a vivid narrative of the social trajectory of the Peranakan Chinese community, marked by challenges, adaptability, and the ongoing redefinition of identity against the broader backdrop of Southeast Asia. These works collectively emphasize the inherent challenges and opportunities in defining and representing hybrid identities in a rapidly evolving sociocultural environment.

- Feminism

The women of the Peranakan Chinese community, primarily known as Nyonyas, represent a unique and symbolic role within the Peranakan Chinese group and have been the focus of various academic disciplines. A central theme of these studies is the intricate interplay between traditional patriarchy and the empowerment of Nyonya within the Peranakan Chinese culture.

From a feminist perspective, the Peranakan Chinese culture offers a rich tapestry of experiences and narratives that challenge and redefine traditional gender roles. Neo et al. [23] delved into the construction of Nyonya culture, highlighting its multifaceted nature. While popular culture, as seen in "*Little Nyonya*," portrays Nyonyas as active and victimized, the authors argue that their oppression stems more from females than males. Drawing on Sylvia Walby's framework, they underscore the unique position of Nyonyas within Peranakan Chinese culture, enabling them to challenge and negotiate the boundaries of traditional Chinese patriarchy. This duality of privilege and oppression illuminates the intricacies of the Nyonya experience.

Similarly, Fauzi and Ahmad [44] explored the relationship between Peranakan Chinese women and Nyonya cuisine, furthering this feminist narrative. Contrary to traditional views linking Nyonya food with subservient roles, they posit that mastering this culinary art empowers Peranakan Chinese women. Through literary texts, they demonstrate that food and cooking skills offer women a unique form of capital, allowing them to challenge and redefine patriarchal norms. This culinary capital amplifies their societal influence and emphasizes food's transformative power in shaping gender dynamics. From a societal viewpoint, portraying the Peranakan Chinese community in media, especially in "*Little Nyonya*," provides insights into the evolving cultural and ideological structures. [23] examined the show's protagonist, Yueniang, whose life choices challenge the binary of traditional Confucian morals. Her breaking gender barriers and assuming ceremonial family leadership reflect a reformist interpretation of Confucian thought. Eng suggests that this dynamic portrayal mirrors Singapore's contemporary ideological shift towards modern "Asian values," indicating a departure from ancient Chinese discourse. The media's reconfiguration of Confucian thought highlights broader societal transformations and the evolution of cultural values within the Peranakan Chinese community.

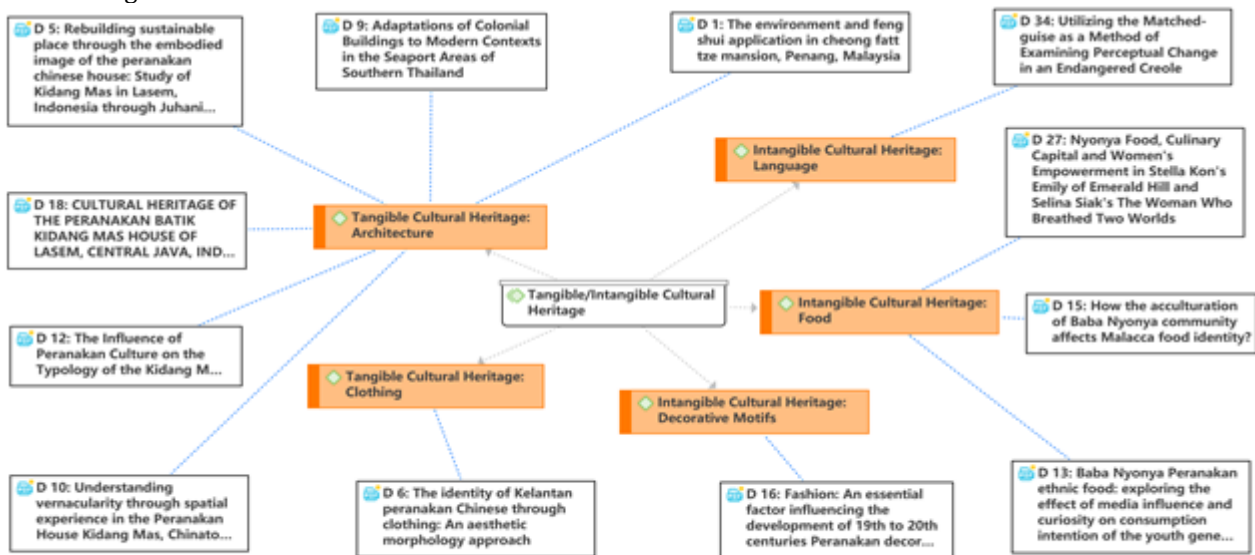
Literature on feminism within Peranakan Chinese culture showcases many female experiences, roles, and representations. While traditional patriarchy and Confucian values set the backdrop, Nyonya women, through various means, including culinary skills and cultural expressions, navigate, challenge, and negotiate their positions, reflecting the dynamic interplay between tradition and empowerment.

In summary, the works described above depict the historical trajectory, social interactions, and feminist perspectives of the Peranakan Chinese community, providing a comprehensive understanding of its enduring legacy and its navigation in the complex sociocultural domain. The integration of history, social norms, and

feminist views offers a holistic portrayal of the community's rich heritage, emphasizing its adaptability, resilience, and cultural significance.

### 3.2.4 Theme 4 Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Peranakan Chinese community has a rich cultural influence that offers a unique perspective on the interaction between material and intangible cultural heritage. Their history is a fusion of Chinese, Malay, and colonial legacy, reflected in various aspects of their daily life, from architecture and clothing to decorative patterns, food, and language. Much literature discusses the material (such as architecture, clothing, and design) and intangible (such as language, traditions, and customs) aspects of Peranakan Chinese culture (Figure 8). This theme captures the tangible artifacts and intangible traditions and values of the community through these studies and explores the unique and interrelated aspects of Peranakan Chinese cultural heritage. These works provide insights into the community's evolution, identity, and the challenges and opportunities in preserving their heritage.



**Figure 8: Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage**

- Architecture

Peranakan Chinese architecture is a harmonious fusion of tradition, uniqueness, and modern adaptability, showcasing Southeast Asia's rich cultural heritage. Darmayanti and Bahauddin [38] highlight the vernacular nature of Peranakan Chinese houses, especially the Kidang Mas house in Lasem, Indonesia, and emphasize its deep-rooted sociocultural dynamics and sustainable architectural solutions. They argue that this localized approach is evident in the brand's ability to promote intergenerational diversity activities. Building on this, Susantio and Widyasari [34] further explore this architectural narrative by studying the Kidang Mas Batik House and noting the cultural fusion of Javanese and Chinese influences in its design. This fusion is also apparent in the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang. Bahauddin and Soon [45] apply the traditional Chinese architectural theory of feng shui and seamlessly integrate it with Malay and colonial styles. Kingkad and Sawasdee [36] broaden this architectural discourse by pointing out the transformation of colonial port buildings in southern Thailand, influenced by Peranakan Chinese style, into modern boutique hotels and cafes, reflecting a balance between tradition and modern needs. As Darmayanti and Bahauddin [38] stress, the attention to preservation and adaptation highlights the importance of Peranakan Chinese architectural heritage in shaping architectural features and cultural narratives.

In conclusion, Peranakan Chinese houses are deeply rooted in cultural heritage and testify to the rich history and traditions of the Peranakan Chinese community. Cultural and architectural practices influence these structures and provide insights into the interactions between tradition, identity, and modern adaptation. The conservation and continued use of these houses emphasize their significance for understanding the cultural and architectural heritage of the Peranakan Chinese community.

- Food, Clothing, and Language

Food, clothing, and language are essential components of Peranakan Chinese material and intangible culture, respectively, and they are all essential elements of cultural identity. Peranakan Chinese culture has unique food, clothing, and language markers that reflect its distinctive traditions. Zanzaizman et al. [35] emphasize the role of media in stimulating the interest of the younger generation in Peranakan cuisine, highlighting its unique fusion



of Malay and Chinese flavors. Given the deep-rootedness of food in national food identity, this media-driven curiosity is crucial for promoting food heritage tourism. Zahari et al.[33] delve into its historical origins and trace the emergence of Peranakan cuisine to the 16th century when Chinese communities migrated to Malacca. This migration facilitated the fusion of cooking cultures, resulting in dishes that suited the Malay palate but retained the Chinese core. The study underscores the critical role of Peranakan cuisine in shaping Malacca's culinary characteristics and its potential as a food tourism hotspot. In the sociocultural aspect, Fauzi and Ahmad [44] examine the empowerment of Peranakan Chinese women through Peranakan food.

Contrary to the notion of reinforcing traditional gender roles, Peranakan food provides women with "cooking capital" that enables them to challenge patriarchal norms and exert their influence. Through literary analysis, the authors elucidate how food becomes a tool for transformation, reshaping individual and community identities. Hassan et al. [25] explore the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese clothing identity, emphasizing the blend of Malay, Chinese, and Thai influences. Their study, using the aesthetic morphology approach, reveals that the traditional clothing, notably the paired blouse and sarong, symbolizes the community's simple way of life and is distinct from other Peranakan groups in Malaysia. However, modern attire's allure has led to a decline in traditional clothing appreciation among the younger generation. On the linguistic front, H. Lee [37] examines perceptual changes in the endangered creole, Baba Malay, spoken by the Peranakans.

These studies underscore the importance of preserving and celebrating this unique food, clothing, and language heritage as evidence of intercultural interaction and as a tool for empowerment and identity assertion.

- Decorative Motifs

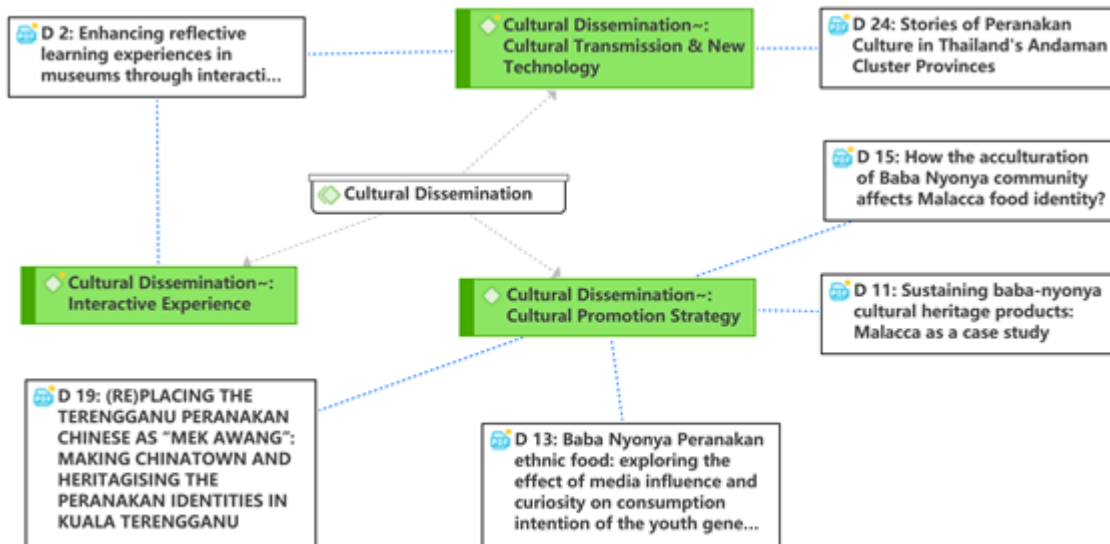
The decorative patterns of Peranakan Chinese culture vividly reflect their hybrid identity. Wang[26] investigates the influence of 19th and 20th-century fashion on the development of Peranakan Chinese decorative patterns. The study shows that although the mixed-blood identity of Peranakan Chinese played an important role in shaping their decorative patterns, the impact of Eurasian trade and fashion trends cannot be ignored. As Wang[26] emphasizes, the decorative patterns of Peranakan Chinese culture, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, were significantly influenced by global fashion trends. The eclectic style of Peranakan Chinese decorative patterns results from cross-cultural fusion, which was influenced not only by their mixed-blood identity but also by the flourishing Eurasian trade. For example, Chinese-style fashion events played a crucial role in the evolution of local Chinese decorative patterns during this period. Wang's study highlights the importance of external influences such as fashion in shaping the tangible aspects of Peranakan Chinese culture and stresses the dynamic nature of cultural heritage.

In summary, the literature on Peranakan Chinese material and intangible cultural heritage provides a multifaceted exploration of their unique identity, shaped by several centuries of cross-cultural interaction. Every aspect of their culture, from architecture and clothing to decorative patterns, food, and language, testifies to their rich history, values, and aspirations. These studies collectively emphasize preserving and promoting this heritage, ensuring its continuity and relevance for future generations.

### 3.2.5 Theme 5 Cultural Dissemination

The diversity of Peranakan Chinese culture provides a unique perspective on the wider spread of culture. With the development of society and the advancement of technology, there has been a major transformation in the way culture is promoted, experienced and disseminated. This review delves into the multifaceted strategies and approaches employed in Peranakan Chinese cultural dissemination, organized into three distinct subtopics: cultural promotion strategies, interactive experiences, and cultural dissemination and new technologies (Figure 9).





**Figure 9: Cultural Dissemination**

- Cultural Promotion Strategy

The analysis of relevant literature shows that preserving and promoting cultural heritage, especially in the context of Peranakan Chinese culture, requires a multifaceted approach. Ahmad et al. [46] stress the need to maintain the market for Malacca Peranakan cultural heritage products and advocate for promoting unique Peranakan items in museums, antique shops, and digital platforms. They also highlight the potential of traditional Peranakan celebrations supported by the Peranakan Association as an immersive promotional strategy that connects the past and the present. Zanzaizman et al. [35] focus on the culinary aspect and show that media, especially social platforms, can drive the participation of young people in Peranakan cuisine, thereby promoting national food heritage tourism. Zahari et al. [33] delve into the cooking culture of Malacca Peranakan and emphasize its role in destination branding. However, Chuang et al. [28] warn of the challenges in cultural promotion and cite the controversy over adopting local cultural terms for tourism in the Terengganu Peranakan community. These studies emphasize the complex balance needed to promote Peranakan culture, ensuring authenticity while adapting to modern promotional strategies.

In conclusion, Peranakan culture has a rich history and diverse influences that provide ample opportunities for cultural promotion. Strategic promotion is essential, whether by showcasing unique products, leveraging media influence in the culinary sphere, or understanding the nuances of cultural acculturation. As these studies indicate, a multifaceted approach that respects the past while embracing modern promotional strategies can ensure the continuous dissemination and appreciation of Peranakan culture in contemporary society.

- Interactive Experience

Some researchers have explored the cultural communication of Peranakan Chinese. Huang et al. [47] conducted a study at the Malacca Peranakan Heritage Museum, introducing interactive installations that use mixed reality and augmented reality technologies and gesture recognition. These installations aim to facilitate cross-cultural and intergenerational dialogue, provide visitors with a multisensory experience, and allow them to access traditionally restricted handicrafts. The results of the study emphasize the profound educational impact of these installations. Visitors showed significant learning gains after the interaction, and their attitudes reflected a high appreciation for bodily interaction. Qualitative analysis further emphasized the role of the installations in promoting reflective learning. Despite some challenges in usability brought by some interactive technologies, the overall view was clear: interactive experiences transformed passive exhibits into immersive personal experiences, significantly enhancing visitors' engagement, discussion, and reflection, especially among young audiences.

In conclusion, integrating interactive installations in museum environments provides a promising avenue for enhancing cultural communication. As Huang et al. [47] demonstrate, such installations can significantly improve visitor experience and promote deeper engagement, reflection, and learning if carefully designed and implemented. As museums evolve in the digital age, incorporating interactive experiences will undoubtedly play a key role in ensuring that new generations preserve, actively participate in, and appreciate cultural heritage.

- Cultural Transmission & New Technology

Integrating new technologies and cultural communication is increasingly prominent, especially in Peranakan Chinese culture. Huang et al. [47] demonstrate the power of technological tools such as mixed reality and augmented reality in enhancing the museum experience of the Peranakan Heritage Museum. These tools create interactive installations that facilitate rich dialogue on cultural identity and provide visitors with an

immersive multisensory journey. The result is increased engagement, especially among children, highlighting the role of technology in cultural participation. In contrast, Poomduang et al.[27] emphasize the intrinsic value of storytelling in conveying the essence of Peranakan Chinese culture. Their study on the Andaman cluster provinces of Thailand reveals the challenges faced by the continuity of Peranakan Chinese narratives, with a significant decline in authentic storytellers and a dilution of cultural stories. The dissemination channels of these stories are fragmented, leading to a reduced understanding of Peranakan Chinese heritage among people. Combining the insights of these two studies reveals an essential narrative: while technological innovation can enhance cultural experience, the core of cultural communication remains authentic storytelling. A harmonious fusion of modern technology and authentic narratives is imperative to make Peranakan Chinese culture resonate with future generations.

In summary, some studies have explored multiple dimensions for achieving more effective communication of Peranakan Chinese culture. These include strategic promotion, integrating new technologies for interactive experience, and preserving authentic narratives for effective cultural communication. Although technological advances provide innovative methods for cultural participation, the essence of Peranakan Chinese culture lies in its stories, which need to be communicated authentically to protect its rich heritage.

## 4. Conclusion

This research provides a comprehensive review of 30 articles on the cultural development of Peranakan Chinese from 2018 to August 2023. It uses a mixed method that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative part of the analysis uses ATLAS.ti 23 software for thematic analysis. The quantitative part presents the data obtained from ATLAS.ti 23 in a quantitative form, revealing to some extent the current research trends on the cultural development of Peranakan Chinese. At the same time, there is a great controversy over the previous studies on Peranakan Chinese cultural identity and characteristics, and it is necessary to clarify the tendency of academic research on this issue in recent years.

Despite scholars' growing interest in Peranakan Chinese, there is a lack of thematic review articles on this topic. Therefore, it is necessary to bridge the gap by synthesizing articles on Peranakan Chinese and cultural development and discussing relevant concepts. The qualitative analysis of this study divided the identified themes into five key areas: (1) Cultural Identity, (2) Cultural Conservation, (3) History and Society, (4) Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage, and (5) Cultural Dissemination. The research trend identified in this paper is to explore new dimensions of cultural conservation research around traditional Peranakan Chinese culture. It aims to explore new ways of cultural conservation and cultural transmission based on the existing consensus on cultural identity through the summarized cultural characteristics.

Improve the possibility of sustainable development of Peranakan Chinese culture, such as new design concepts and application exploration of new technologies. Overall, this article clarifies the dynamic multicultural characteristics of Peranakan Chinese that change with geography, reveals the current research landscape, and highlights emerging trends in Cultural Development of Peranakan Chinese for scholars, designers, and researchers in the field personnel provided valuable insights.

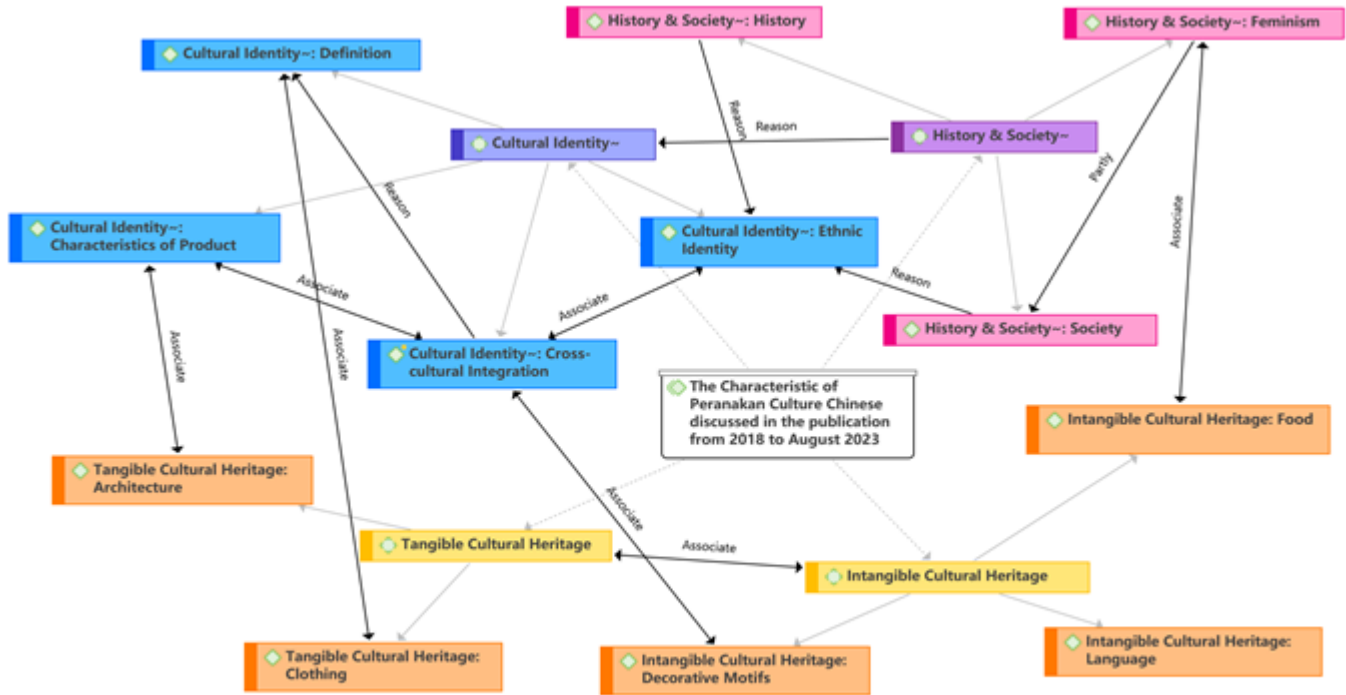
### 4.1 The Characteristics of Peranakan Culture Chinese

Based on the literature review in the last 5-6 years, it was found that the cultural characteristics of Peranakan Chinese mainly come from the three themes of "Cultural Identity", "History and Society", and "Tangible and intangible Cultural Heritage", which respectively represent the culture of Peranakan Chinese Sources, cultural factors and cultural patterns (Figure 10). Researchers generally tend to believe that the most typical feature of Peranakan Chinese culture is cross-cultural integration. The most intuitive evidence is the multicultural compromise (such as architecture, food, language, etc.) displayed by its cultural carrier. Furthermore,

The researchers further confirmed this statement through genetic technology. Correspondingly, different research directions have focused on different branches of Peranakan Chinese (such as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand) and have obtained different research results in terms of cultural identity. This is most likely due to geographical factors that lead to different combinations and degrees of cultural influences in different branches. For example, Singapore Peranakan Chinese culture incorporates Chinese, European, and Malay cultures, while Chinese and Thai cultures deeply influence Thai Peranakan Chinese.

This difference is difficult to quantify but subtly affects cultural identity. All branches are certainly influenced by Chinese culture but to varying degrees. This difference may mainly come from regions, followed by history and society. As for whether Chinese culture dominates in this context depends on the analysis of the above three factors. In summary, the review can deduce that the cultural characteristics of Peranakan Chinese are a multidimensional fusion of Chinese culture with Southeast Asian and European cultures, with a mixture of

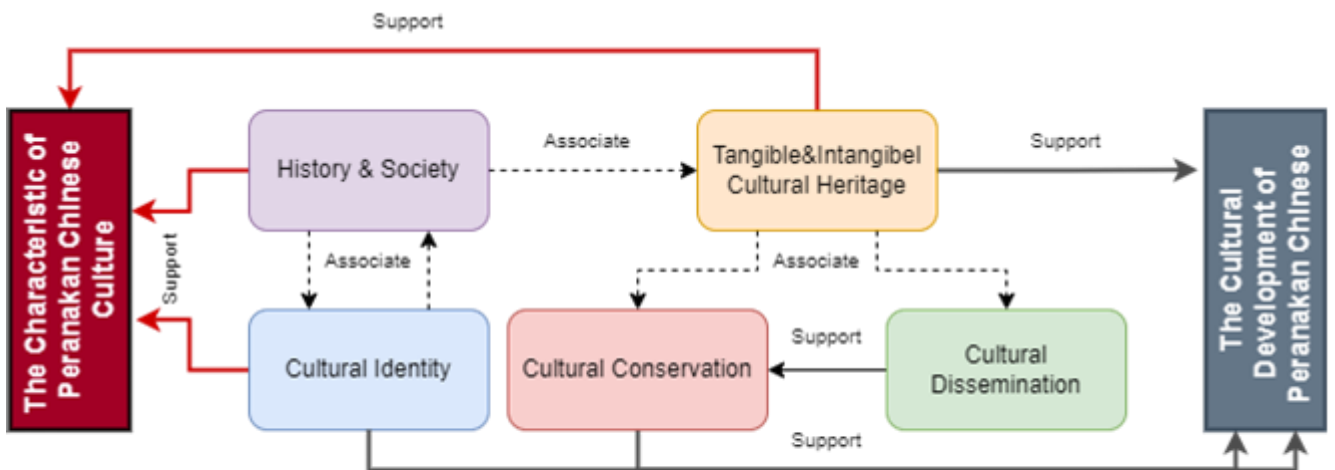
splendor and harmony, complexity and contradiction, tearing and tolerance. It provides a solid basis for the sustainable conservation of Peranakan Chinese culture.



**Figure 10: The Characteristic of Peranakan Culture Chinese discussed in the publication from 2018 to August 2023**

### 4.2 Future Research Directions

The thematic review generated new research suggestions to advance the knowledge of Peranakan Chinese. Based on the conceptual framework shown in Figure 11, five main research directions were identified to guide the implementation of Peranakan Chinese cultural research. These research directions aim to discover new research opportunities, stimulate new ideas for researchers, and contribute to successfully implementing cultural conservation strategies.



**Figure 11: A Conceptual Framework on Peranakan Chinese from Cultural Development**

Cultural Identity - Cultural identity has been a topic of discussion in Peranakan Chinese research for decades, where Eastern and Western scholars have obtained different results from perspectives such as ethnology, history, society, and colonial politics, and sparked intense debate. This is due to the unclear sense of belonging, which causes the current Peranakan Chinese group to sink under various issues and challenges. The number of studies in this field in the past 5-6 years is still the highest among all topics. Still, the research direction has shifted to explaining cultural identity from different branches of Peranakan Chinese or using technologies from

other disciplines, such as genetic technology, to confirm previous views. It can be expected that more such studies will gradually go deeper into each branch of Peranakan Chinese in the future, consolidating the consensus on cultural identity with more precise and substantial evidence.

**Cultural Conservation** - Peranakan Chinese culture is a unique result of multicultural fusion, which creates a contradiction between high value and low potential. Quantitative data show that improving the potential of cultural development and achieving cultural conservation is the most apparent research trend in recent years. Southeast Asian local countries are most concerned about the sustainable development of Peranakan Chinese culture. Regarding research direction, researchers have reached a consensus on exploring new forms and technologies of cultural development after clarifying issues and challenges.

**Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage** - Although there have been many studies on various forms of cultural carriers of Peranakan Chinese in recent years, many cultural heritages have been obliterated in history, waiting to be excavated as high-value and unique cultural forms. It can be foreseen that the emerging research results of Peranakan Chinese cultural heritage will become strong evidence for the consensus on cultural identity.

**History and Society** - Compared with the Southeast Asian local countries' thinking about the present and future of Peranakan Chinese, Western countries are immersed in the reflection on the past of Peranakan Chinese, especially the Nyonya group formed under a unique historical background, whose social form is pursued by many Western scholars.

This study makes several significant contributions to the field of Peranakan Chinese from a cultural development perspective. First of all, this paper summarizes the research on culture and heritage in literature in recent years, and finds that researchers tend to use Chinese and Malay, European, Thai Terms such as cultural eclectic and cross-cultural integration are used to describe cultural characteristics. On the basis of this consensus, this article also found that the complexity of this cultural mixture is manifested in the fact that the Peranakan Chinese culture of different countries and branches is actually a dynamic mixture of different cultural sources, varying degrees. The clarification of these characteristics lays the foundation for subsequent research on cultural identity and cultural conservation. Secondly, it explores new trends in cultural conservation of Peranakan Chinese, revealing more effective methods and strategies that contribute to sustainable cultural development. This provides researchers with valuable insights and guidance.

The review recognizes the dynamic nature of culture and affirms the exploration of new conservation concepts (such as interactive experience, modern design) and new technologies in cultural conservation. This perspective also emphasizes the importance of active participation in and development of traditional cultural elements. In summary, this article provides valuable insights into the future direction of Cultural Development of Peranakan Chinese, emphasizing the cultural characteristics of Peranakan Chinese, the importance of exploring cultural identity based on traditional cultural resources, and the significance of cultural dynamic conservation.

## Acknowledgement

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