Digital Steps, Traditional Roots: Evaluating Cultural Authenticity and Audience Response to AI-Generated Dance Imagery in the People's Bank Calendar 2025

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence has introduced new visual possibilities, generated an immense number of images and photographs each day, often without clear authorship or ownership. Dance, as a cultural form, represents the traditions of a country and plays a significant role in shaping society both aesthetically and as a form of entertainment. Dance photography is particularly important, as it preserves cultural authenticity and serves as a visual record for future generations. However, while AI-generated images offer new ways of representing cultural heritage, they also raise critical concerns regarding authenticity, ownership, and cultural responsibility. This study examines the cultural effectiveness and traditional authenticity of AI-generated dance imagery featured in the People's Bank Calendar 2025 of Sri Lanka. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates visual content analysis, audience evaluation, and expert insights to assess how these images represent the essence of Sri Lankan traditional dance forms. The visual analysis focuses on identifying key traditional elements such as costume, gestures, and symbolic motifs. A structured questionnaire is administered to a purposive sample of 20 respondents with prior knowledge or experience in traditional dance, in order to obtain informed evaluations of authenticity, aesthetic quality, and cultural appropriateness. In addition, semi-structured interviews with dance practitioners and cultural experts provide deeper insights into the accuracy and implications of AI-mediated cultural representation. Quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, qualitative findings are analyzed using thematic analysis. The study aims to examine how artificial intelligence interacts with traditional and cultural forms through the generation of dance imagery and photographs, and how these representations influence audience perceptions. It further seeks to evaluate whether AI-generated visuals can preserve and effectively communicate intangible cultural heritage without compromising its traditional integrity.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Traditional Dancing, Cultural Visualization*