

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research and establishes the foundation for the entire study. It begins with the Background of the Study, which explains the context, significance, and rationale for the research topic. The chapter then presents the Research Questions and Research Aims, which guide the direction of the study. It continues with the Scope of the Study, defining the boundaries and limitations of the research, followed by the Significance of the Study, which explains the academic and practical contributions of the work. Finally, it outlines the Thesis Organization, describing the structure of the research from the first to the last chapter.

1.1 Background of the Studies

The idea of gender roles has changed dramatically in recent years to mirror larger society changes in views, beliefs, and expectations. Historically, gender roles are strictly defined with definite expectations for conduct, obligations, and possibilities depending on one's sex. While women were usually assigned to caring responsibilities marked by passivity, emotionality, and domesticity, males are commonly considered the main breadwinners, embodying attributes including strength, assertiveness, and reason (Daulay, 2017:2). These preconceptions do not only constrain personal possibilities, but also strengthened systematic inequities affecting many spheres of life, including family relations, job, and education.

According to Zimmerman (1987:126), gender roles are socially constructed expectations and norms assigned to individuals based on their perceived gender, rather than inherent biological traits. This is, thus, because gender roles developed as a means of organizing the required chores in early human civilization. Some would claim that because of the fact. Since conventional gender roles have been followed for so long, they should not be modified. Rather, they are now a major factor in human progress. When the conversation on gender roles moves to include a more comprehensive view of identity and expression, focusing especially on female gender roles becomes more crucial.

Typically, the ideology of a group of people fits their culture as ideology exists in a certain group that analyzes and explains the behavior of this group, which is, typically a clear reality. That is to say, even if the law ensures that men and women are legally equal, individuals in modern society, nevertheless, uphold an attitude that could lead to prejudices and limit women's activities. This sort of control conforms to society and thus enhances people's quality of living. Consequently, gender ideology in contemporary culture produces gender stereotypes, which mostly affect on women (Bai, 2022:179).

As the discourse around gender roles evolves, it is critical to remember that these interactions are not universally perceived throughout countries and societies. While larger social trends toward gender equality have created new opportunities for many people, the confluence of gender and cultural identity presents distinct obstacles and experiences, especially for Asian women. Asian female gender roles are often

shaped by a complex interplay of traditional cultural expectations and contemporary societal influences. In many Asian cultures, deeply rooted values regarding family, honor, and duty can create specific expectations for women by often emphasizing roles as caregivers and homemakers. However, as globalization and modernization are growing, these traditional roles are increasingly challenging and redefining (Andaya, 2025:2).

The representation of Asian female gender roles is evident in both real-life cultural contexts and current movies. One notable example is the American movie *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, which highlights various aspects of Asian female identity and societal expectations. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is a 2022 independent absurdist comedy-drama movie written and directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, and produced by Anthony and Joe Russo along with Jonathan Wang. The movie incorporates media from several genres and movie mediums, including surreal comedy, science fiction, fantasy, martial arts movies, immigrant narrative, and animation. This movie is about Evelyn's journey begins as she struggles with her failing laundromat, a strained marriage to Waymond, and a complicated relationship with her daughter Joy. During a critical meeting with IRS auditor Deirdre, Evelyn is thrust into a multiverse adventure when Alpha-Waymond reveals that she is the key to preventing the destruction of all realities.

Everything Everywhere All at Once presents a unique opportunity to explore how Asian female gender roles are represented through multiple female characters within a complex, multicultural narrative. The movie illustrates a range of experiences

and perspectives that reflect both adherence to and resistance against traditional gender expectations. These representations reveal how cultural, familial, and societal influences shape women's roles, responsibilities, and identities. The complexity of the narrative allows for an in-depth examination of how gender roles affect personal identity formation and interpersonal relationships, particularly within the context of generational and cultural tensions. This research thesis is especially relevant in today's global society, where traditional values often intersect with modern ideologies by creating challenges and negotiations in the lives of many Asian women.

Accordingly, this research thesis seeks to critically examine the representation of Asian female gender roles in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie, with a particular focus on identifying the underlying cultural and societal factors that shape these roles, as well as analyzing their implications on the construction of identity and interpersonal relationships among the movie's female characters. The writer, related to this research thesis, will describe the portrayal, analyze the factor, and analyze the effect of Asian Female Gender Roles in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie.

1.2 Research Question

To guide this study, the following research questions are formulated to address the main focus of the analysis:

1. How are Asian female gender roles portrayed in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie?
2. What are the factors that shape the gender roles of Asian females shown in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie?

3. How do these gender roles affect the identity and relationships of the female characters in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie?

1.3 Research Aims

These objectives provide a clear direction for analyzing the representation, influences, and consequences of Asian female gender roles as depicted in the movie:

1. To describe the portrayal of Asian female gender roles in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie.
2. To analyze the factors that shape the gender roles of Asian females in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie.
3. To analyze the effects of gender roles on the identity and relationships of the female characters in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research thesis explores how Asian female gender roles portrayed in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie, which cover intrinsic and extrinsic discussion. The intrinsic discussion includes narrative elements namely character and characterization, setting, and conflict. Meanwhile the extrinsic discussion covers portrayal of Asian female gender roles, factors that shape the gender roles, and effect of gender roles in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie.

1.5 Previous Studies

Several previous studies are relevant to this research as a theoretical and comparative basis for analyzing the Asian female gender roles, factors, and effects of

gender roles on the identity and relationship of the female characters in the *Everything Everywhere All at Once* movie.

The first previous study is an international article entitled “*Everything Everywhere All at Once*” *Through Mulvey’s Feminist Perspective* written by Lei & Azahari (2024). It applies Laura Mulvey's feminist movie theory to analyze feminist elements in the movie. The study reveals that the portrayal of female characters aligns with feminist ideologies, indicating a progressive shift in Hollywood’s representation of women. It emphasizes the movie’s success in challenging the male gaze and suggests further research into how multicultural narratives intersect with feminist perspectives in modern cinema.

The second previous study is an international article entitled *Chinese-American Liminality in Everything Everywhere All at Once* written by Wahyudiputra & Purnomo (2022). It focuses on the diasporic struggle experienced by Chinese-American characters. It argues that these characters exist in a liminal space—torn between native cultural values and external American norms. The study interprets the movie as an allegory of diasporic survival and cultural negotiation, highlighting themes like violence, symbolic resistance, and the pursuit of balance through non-violent philosophies like wu wei.

The third previous study is an international article entitled *Beyond Norms and Realities: Reading Queer in Everything Everywhere All at Once* written by Tri (2024). It investigates how the movie deconstructs heteronormative and gendered expectations through its narrative and characters. The research highlights how the movie uses queer

codes and symbolic expressions to challenge conventional gender roles and masculinity. It concludes that the movie pushes viewers to rethink identity and representation within Asian-American contexts, providing a layered queer reading that goes beyond surface-level storytelling.

The fourth previous study is an undergraduate thesis entitled *A Multidimensional Hero's Journey: Exploring the Plot of Everything Everywhere All at Once* by Ana Mariyah Ulfah (2024). Applying Joseph Campbell's hero's journey structure, this research maps Evelyn's transformation across key stages such as departure, initiation, and return. It shows how the movie blends comedic, action-oriented, and philosophical elements while following a classic narrative arc. The analysis also emphasizes how Evelyn's challenges in the multiverse mirror her personal struggles, portraying her growth from a reluctant participant to a confident decision-maker.

The fifth previous study is an undergraduate thesis entitled *Optimistic Nihilism in an Asian American Family Depicted by the Characters in the Movie Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022) by Asri Adistria (2025). This research applies existentialist philosophy to analyze how the characters confront the idea of meaninglessness. It argues that the movie promotes "optimistic nihilism," where the absence of inherent meaning is embraced as freedom to create personal purpose. The study focuses on how family bonds, love, and acceptance become guiding principles for the characters despite the chaotic and uncertain multiverse around them.

The sixth previous study is an national article entitled *The Analysis of Signs in the Movie Everything Everywhere All at Once by The Daniels* (2023). This semiotic study examines recurring visual symbols such as the black bagel, googly eyes, and multiverse portals, interpreting how they communicate themes of existentialism, chaos, and cultural conflict. The research details how each symbol contributes to character development and thematic depth, showing the interplay between visual storytelling and narrative meaning.

The seventh previous study is an international article entitled *Everything Everywhere All at Once: Competition Policy and Industrial Policy Choices in an Era of Structural Change* by Diane Coyle (2024). This article analyzes the movie's success from an economic and industry perspective, discussing how independent productions can compete in global markets while maintaining creative risk-taking. It also highlights how the movie's diverse cast and unique storytelling challenged conventional market expectations in the movie industry.

The eighth previous study is an international article entitled *Scripted Resonance or Lost in Translation? Storytelling and Chinese Reception of Everything Everywhere All at Once* by Wang, Whyke, and Lopez-Mugica (2024). This research explores why the movie received mixed responses in China, despite its international acclaim. It points to the reliance on Western narrative structures, especially the Hero's Journey, and the use of pop-culture references as factors that limited local cultural resonance. The study also notes differences in thematic interpretation between Western and Chinese audiences.

The ninth previous study is an international journal article entitled *Everything Everywhere All at Once and the Intimate Public of Asian American Cinema* by Coe (2023). Published in *Movie Quarterly*, this study frames the movie as an embodiment of the “intimate public,” a concept describing how shared emotional and cultural experiences unite specific audience communities—in this case, Asian Americans. Coe argues that Evelyn’s relatability stems from her imperfections, failures, and emotional struggles, which reflect lived immigrant experiences and resonate deeply with viewers from similar backgrounds. The study emphasizes how the movie’s genre blending—mixing action, comedy, melodrama, and science fiction—creates a platform for marginalized identities to be expressed and recognized.

The tenth previous study is a national journal article entitled *Pragmatic Meaning Analysis on Movie Everything Everywhere All at Once* by Astutik (2024). This research takes a linguistic approach, examining the pragmatic functions of utterances in the movie’s dialogue. It identifies patterns such as greetings, commands, warnings, sarcasm, and advice, with greetings and warnings emerging as the most frequently used. The study interprets these speech acts as reflective of the relational dynamics between characters, especially the tension and negotiation present in Evelyn and Joy’s conversations. By analyzing the pragmatic elements, the research reveals how language becomes a vehicle for expressing cultural expectations, emotional boundaries, and resistance.

Although several previous studies have examined *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022) from perspectives such as feminist theory, diasporic identity, queer

readings, narrative structures, existentialism, semiotics, economic analysis, and linguistic approaches, none have specifically focused on Asian female gender roles as the main theoretical framework. Most studies explore the characters, narrative, or cultural contexts in isolation, while this research integrates these aspects to examine how gender roles intersect with class, race, and immigration. By focusing on the portrayal, factors, and effects of Asian female gender roles, this study builds on existing literature while providing a more targeted analysis of how Evelyn and Joy Wang navigate identity, family expectations, and societal pressures within the movie. In this way, the research contributes a deeper understanding of the complexities of Asian-American women's experiences, complementing and extending the insights from previous studies.

1.6 Methods of the Study

This section explains the research methods applied in this study to analyze Asian female gender roles in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022). The study combines library research and a sociological approach to systematically collect and analyze data from the movie and relevant scholarly sources. This method allows the researcher to examine how gender roles are portrayed in the movie and how they are influenced by and reflect broader social, cultural, and familial contexts.

1.6.1 Methods of Collecting Data

In order to gather data, the writer conducts library research to gather information from both online and offline sources. Library research is a method of collecting data and information by systematically exploring and analyzing existing

literature and sources available in libraries. It involves identifying relevant books, journals, articles, and other scholarly materials to gather factual information, expert opinions, and previous research findings related to a specific research question or topic (George, 2008:23). Related to this library research, there are primary and secondary data. Primary data is refers to original data collected for the specific purpose of the research, while secondary data is refers to data that has already been collected and analyzed by other researchers (Creswell, 2014:56). The primary data of this research thesis is a movie titled *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, meanwhile the secondary data of this research includes books, journal articles, and other scholarly writings that provide theoretical frameworks and support the analysis of the movie.

1.6.2 Research Approach

Referring to the background of the study, which reveals Asian female gender roles in *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, the writer employs a sociological approach to analyze the phenomena depicted in the movie. A sociological approach is the study of social facts—the shared norms, values, and structures that exist outside individuals, but it has a significant influence on their behavior (Durkheim, 1895:59). This approach uses scientific methods to understand how society functions, maintains order, and shapes individual actions. By applying this framework, the writer aims to explore how gender roles in the movie are shaped by social structures, particularly those related to family, culture, and societal expectations of Asian-American women. Durkheim's approach allows for an investigation into how gender roles are influenced by the broader societal context, including cultural norms and familial obligations.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research thesis, including the background of the study, research problem, objectives, scope, previous studies, and methodology used in the research. It also outlines the structure of the research thesis to guide the reader through the flow of the analysis.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical frameworks used to analyze *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, integrating both intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. The intrinsic framework focuses on the movie's narrative elements such as characters, setting, and conflict—and examines how they work together to shape the story and convey meaning. The extrinsic framework considers sociocultural, historical, and ideological contexts that influence the movie's themes and character dynamics. By combining these perspectives, this chapter provides a comprehensive analytical foundation for understanding how gender roles are portrayed, shaped, and challenged within the movie.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a detailed analysis based on the research findings, focusing on the portrayal of Asian female gender roles, the factors that shape these roles, and the effects these roles have on the identities and relationships of the characters.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the research thesis, drawing general conclusions based on the data analysis. It highlights the significance of the research in understanding the portrayal of gender roles in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* and offers insights into the broader implications of the research thesis.