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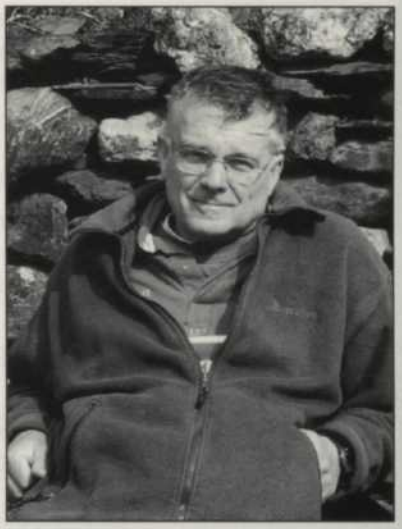
In Memoriam

Peter Martin, 1949-2009

Peter Martin, Professor of Education and Linguistics at the University of East London's Cass School of Education, died unexpectedly on Friday, 24th April 2009.



Peter Martin was born in Singapore, grew up in Bradford and read Environmental Studies at what was then Plymouth Polytechnic, where he was a keen rugby player. After graduating, he became a teacher, working at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in the UK and in Brunei, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Saudi Arabia. He read for his PhD at Lancaster University, and went on to work at the University of Brunei Darussalam (1985-1998), and at the University of Leicester (1998-2005). At UEL, he conducted research, supervised PhD candidates and led the Professional Doctorate in Education.

Peter Martin's research interests and publications were centred on the issue of multilingualism, and the relation between language, culture and identity. Since 1990, he has written and co-authored over 60 published papers, as well as several books and book chapters.

Professor Martin's research interests and publications focus on multilingualism, and the relation between language, culture and identity. This has included classroom interaction, especially bilingual classroom interaction, language policy, planning and practice, and new Englishes. The first of these studies investigated Gujarati complementary schools in Leicester, while the second extended to Bengali, Chinese, Turkish and Gujarati schools in Birmingham, Manchester, London, and Leicester respectively (and involved the University of Birmingham, Birkbeck College London, Kings College University and the University of East London).

His recent work focused on multilingual classroom ecologies and on complementary schools in England. A further strand of research is on the sociolinguistics of Austronesian language communities in Borneo, and the compilation of a dictionary of Kelabit, a minority unwritten language, spoken by around 5000 people in the uplands of Borneo.

Peter was an Advisory Board Member of Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Fellow of the Borneo Research Council, Advisory Panel Member of Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity, and a member of organisations including

the Foundation of Endangered Languages, the Association of Southeast Asian Studies in the United Kingdom (ASEASUK), the National Association of Language Development in the Curriculum, UK (NALDIC), the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL).

He loved hill-walking, particularly in the Lake District, and he was walking there around Buttermere and Blacksail a few days before he died of a stroke. He loved classical music particularly Mahler and Richard Strauss and would often go to the Royal Opera House and the ENO. He was also a great rugby and football fan and supported the Leicester Tigers and West Ham United.

He is survived by his wife Ubong and four children, Anis, Lian, Supang and Sarah. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends and colleagues.

A funeral service was held on Friday, 8th May 2009 at Gilroes Crematorium, Groby Road, Leicester, LE3 9QG, and a service of remembrance was held at University of East London on 27th June 2009.

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden death of Peter Martin, an associate, who made an important contribution to our journal.

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Review Article

Assessing the Efficacy of Writing Centres: A Review of Selected Evaluation Studies

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ABSTRACT

Writing practitioners, especially those in North America, have been reporting positive results from using writing centres in supporting students' writing processes. Yet the question of how efficacious a writing centre can be is seldom seriously considered. In view of this gap, this paper attempts to examine several important evaluation studies of writing centre efficacy from the limited literature of empirical research, and presents evidence from both qualitative and quantitative measurements. While the formal qualitative studies affirmed the effectiveness of writing centre in reducing students' writing apprehension and promoting positive affects to writing, the quantitative studies found that writing centre tutorials improved students' writing competence and overall grades. Nevertheless, further research is required to establish the relationship between students' satisfaction levels and the number of writing centre tutorials they received.

Keywords: Efficacy, writing centre, evaluation, qualitative and quantitative evidence

INTRODUCTION

The importance of writing ability cannot be overstated, be it writing in the first or second language. Yet, students' lack of writing skills remains a constant complaint, especially in the context of English as a second language (ESL). In the quest for an intervening mechanism, the writing centre and its virtual counterpart, the online writing laboratory (OWL) originating in North America, have been found to produce encouraging results. As the writing centre is new to this part of Asia especially Malaysia, a description and definitions of writing centre are presented before its efficacy in supporting students in writing processes is assessed.

Defining Writing Centres

The long history of writing centre development since the last century has seen the creation of more than a thousand writing centres in North America (Harris, 2004). The revolution and evolution of writing centres have resulted in writing centres taking various roles and functions at different institutions. Due to such diversity, writing centre literature has often discussed the difficulty of establishing a generic definition or a common description to represent writing centres (see for example, Harris, 2004).

Indeed, writing centres in North America can be viewed in various contexts and specifications. To begin with, there are writing centres for different levels of education. The IWCA website

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(www.writingcenters.org) shows writing centre hyperlinks to secondary schools, community colleges, and universities. Secondly, a writing centre can be located in various places such as a library, a learning centre, an English Department, or a residential hall, and it may be centralized at just one location or may have several satellite centres, which can usually be found in universities with branch campuses (Haviland *et al*., 2001). Thirdly, a writing centre may be used to support various programmes, for example, first year composition, writing across the curriculum or intensive writing courses. Fourthly, funding for a writing centre may come from student fees, an English Department, a provost office or an external organization/ foundation. Writing centres also serve various clienteles such as undergraduates, postgraduates, ESL learners, the learning disabled, faculties, and local or global communities.

Furthermore, writing tutors serving at a writing centre can be peers, graduate students, faculty members, retirees, or professional consultants. The tutoring mode can be face-to-face, online, individual, small group, hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous, or telephone. The size of a writing centre also varies. It can be as big as a building complex, or just a single room. The services offered by a writing centre are also different across institutions; for example, it can provide one or all the following services such as reference resources, writing consultation, or writing workshops. A writing centre can also have various statuses; it may be adjunct to a department/discipline or free-standing, a remedial center, or a center of excellence for writing. The mission or philosophy can be biased toward supporting various types of writers or promoting writing centre pedagogy (Carino, 2001; Harris, 2004; Kinkead and Harris, 2000). Therefore, given this multifaceted and multifarious nature of a writing centre, it is indeed difficult to establish a generic definition that is acceptable to all.

The vast diversity of writing centres has somewhat limited its generalisability. Most directors of writing centre adapt the theory and practice of writing centre according to the mission of the institutions and the needs and demands of the clientele they serve. Nonetheless, despite the multiplicity and diversity, writing centres do have some common traits that distinguish them as writing centres that are either part of a learning centre or a writing programme (Harris, 2004; Waller, 2002).

The most prominent feature or function of a writing centre is the practice of tutoring to its clientele. This tutoring is one-to-one, individualized, student-centred, non-judgmental, non-directive, and non-threatening, be it face-to-face or online (Harris, 1995). The facilitative tutor plays the role of a coach or a collaborator in helping the student writer find his or her own voice in his or her writing. The tutor achieves this purpose by providing feedback as a reader and by asking probing questions very much resembling Socratic questioning. The tutorial is student-centred as it focuses solely on the student's needs. Generally, the tutors are the students' peers, advanced or graduate students, professionals who are writing consultants, retirees, or volunteers who have been trained, but rarely the instructor who sets the writing assignment (Harris, 2004; Waller, 2002). Student writers are encouraged to experiment with different strategies of writing. They are free to work on any writing task for any course or any purpose, for example, lab reports, term papers, job application letters, resumes, dissertations, essays, and creative writing. Writing centres are generally open to all students, and tutors work with students at various levels of proficiency (Harris, 2004; Waller, 2002).

Another common function of most writing centres is the provision of reference materials for their clientele such as guidebooks, dictionaries, thesauri, grammar references, style guides, encyclopedias, worksheets on specific skills, and essay models. Writing centres are usually equipped with computers and printers for writers to refine their drafts. Certain writing centres also provide coffee and cookies to foster a relaxed and inviting atmosphere (Harris, 2004; Waller, 2002).

Evaluating Writing Centres

Many practitioners at writing centres have discussed the usefulness of writing centres in the context of Writing across the Curriculum (WAC), and have affirmed the contributions of writing centres to students' writing processes. Yet, a hard question has often been asked regarding the efficacy of a writing centre: Does writing centre tutoring improve students' writing ability? In times of budget cut and shrinking institution finance, writing centre directors are often confronted with the imperative to produce concrete evidence in justifying the continued existence of such a service. Despite the long history of writing centre praxis, there has been a serious lack of empirical or formal research that employed statistical analyses or quantifiable data (Bell, 2000; Jones, 2001; Lerner, 2003; Thompson, 2006). A review of writing centre assessment literature found that research in this area has been limited. Most research conducted on writing centre tends to be qualitative, comprising mostly reflections of the practitioners such as writing centre directors or tutors, surveys on writing centre and OWL usage, and "speculations about the theoretical possibilities of writing centers" (Jones, 2001, p.6).

The limited empirical evidence on the efficacy of writing centre might be due to the academic background of directors of writing centres who are mostly experts in language and rhetoric, and not mathematics and statistics (Bell, 2000). In addition, the very fact of the proliferation of writing centres, since the inception of the first writing centre in North America in 1934, and persistent existence of writing centres through the thick and thin of different eras, may have been thought of as testimonials to effectiveness of writing centres in writing instruction – the so-called "evidence speaks for itself." Hence, no urgency was felt by many writing centre directors to empirically assess writing centre effectiveness especially when they were constrained by servicing growing student populations (Boquet, 2002). As a result, very limited amount of qualitative and quantitative data have been produced to examine the efficacy of writing centres.

Qualitative Evidence

Qualitative assessment of effectiveness of writing centre has often been published as reflections from writing centre directors as they appraised the centres' challenges and attainment, and not so much as formal empirical research studies (see, for example, *Writing Centers in Context: Twelve Case Studies* by Harris and Kinkead, 1993). Data were usually collected through tutors' narratives of the tutorial experience, and evaluative feedback forms filled up by students immediately after a one-to-one writing tutorial (Masiello, 1992). The student feedback forms usually elicit demographic details such as first year or senior and the majoring discipline, first time or repeated tutorial, and the purpose of the writing centre tutorial. Students are given some options or a Likert scale to rate if the tutorial is helpful (or not) (Harris and Kinkead, 1993). Certain writing centres also list rhetorical areas such as invention, development, grammar, syntax, and mechanics for students to tick areas that have been attended to during the tutorial (Masiello, 1992). This kind of data collection will shed some light on the specific writing concerns students perceive as helpful.

Meanwhile, qualitative assessment has often been used to gauge the affects of the student clientele. Due to the limited literature in formal research, only two qualitative studies are discussed in this paper. The first is a case study on writing apprehension of a group of first-year tertiary students. The study found that students' anxiety about writing was remarkably reduced after attending writing centre tutorials (Taylor-Escoffery, 1992). The purpose of this case study was to find out the relationship between the use of writing centre and the perception of the functions of written language. The focus group comprised ten first year students who were randomly selected from among those enrolled in a Basic Writing course. All students taking Basic Writing were required to attend writing centre tutorials. The case study was conducted in an urban university whose students were predominantly black.

The research methodology consisted of a pre- and post-writing apprehension test, and

interviews to elicit the students' perceptions on the functions of writing. On the students' first visit to the writing centre at the beginning of the semester and prior to attending a writing centre tutorial, they were asked to respond to the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test. By the end of the semester and after the respondents had attended several writing centre tutorials, they were asked to respond to the same writing apprehension test. The results showed that the writing centre experience had helped to reduce the writing apprehension level of these students. The writing centre experience was also found to have improved their perceptions and understanding of the use of written language, especially in the domains of expressive and transactional writing.

The above finding is supported by two anecdotal evidences. The first reported that students were found to become more confident writers and perceived the writing centre service more positively than students who did not attend writing centre tutorials (Matthews, 1994), while the second affirmed students' use of the writing centre had resulted in them producing writing that was "easier to read, better organized, and had fewer of the typical writing mistakes" (Jones, 2001, p.12).

In another study conducted by Paul Ady (1988) in Rhode Island College, 96 students from four English classes were required to seek help at the college writing centre in improving their assigned essay drafts. About 66% of the respondents were first semester students and the rest were second or third year who had postponed the completion of the English requirement. Of the 96 students, only one had used the writing centre before.

After the first writing centre tutorial, the students were required to describe their tutorial experience in writing. Based on the students' descriptions, the researcher compared the students' perceptions before and after the writing centre experience. It was found that the students did not know about the writing centre or how a writing centre tutorial was conducted. Before attending the first tutorial, they held negative feelings about the tutorials. In fact, many were frightened and worried that the writing centre tutors would laugh at their drafts. They also thought that the tutors would command them to change their writing or to rewrite for them. However, after just one tutorial session, their writing apprehension disappeared when they met face-to-face with the supportive and non-judgmental tutors. More than 80% of the students felt that the writing tutorials were useful and they would like to continue using the facility. They also liked the collaborative approach practiced by the tutors.

However, a small number (about 20%) of the students reported that the writing centre tutorials did not help them at all. They expected the tutors to give them more direction and more specific criticism, and they did not find the non-directive tutoring helpful. The non-directive tutoring was also resented by an ESL student who commented that the tutor did not want to tell him what was wrong with a specific sentence.

Based on the students' feedback, the researcher recommended that any tutor training programme must attend to the affective aspect of tutoring. Moreover, tutors should apply either the directive or the collaborative approach, depending on the needs of the students, and not using the non-directive approach as a blanket rule as students are different. Similarly, based on the students' generally positive perceptions, improved attitudes and feelings towards the writing centre (i.e. after only one session of tutorial), the researcher urged the teaching faculty to explain the virtues of the writing centre to their classes, and to encourage more students to use the centre.

The qualitative evidence from these cases suggests that there is effectiveness of writing centre intervention, in the form of one-to-one tutorial, in improving students' perception, attitudes, motivation, and confidence towards writing. These findings have strengthened the application of writing centre as an effective form of affective support in assisting students' writing processes, in addition to cognitive support, especially for ESL learners. The intangible gain in the affective domain has also been found to have led to measurable gain in students' grades

(Clark, 1993; Harris, 1995). When compared to native or English as First-Language students, ESL students tend to have higher apprehension when they are required to write in English (Cornwell and Mckay, 2000). The qualitative evidence should be able to persuade the establishment of a writing centre in any learning institution to support ESL learners.

Quantitative Evidence

Quantitative evidence for the effectiveness of writing centre can be gleaned from four strongly designed statistical research studies.

The research by Bell (2000) was designed to investigate four research concerns: 1) the student's satisfaction level in the writing centre tutorials they participated in; 2) the objectives set at the tutorials; 3) if students applied the knowledge and skills they had gained from the tutorials to their assignments; and 4) If they perceived the learning experienced in the tutorials as helpful in future. The research questionnaire employed a six-point Likert scale to measure students' responses. The purpose of the research was to ascertain "if students learned something during conferences, were able to use that knowledge in writing independently, and thought they had gained something of long-term value" (Bell, 2000, p. 18).

Three different groups of respondents of 45 students each were randomly selected from the writing centre student clientele. One group was given the printed questionnaire to tick their responses immediately after they had attended a 45-minute one-to-one tutorial. The second group was telephone-interviewed using the same questionnaire two weeks after they had attended a writing centre tutorial, and the third group was also telephone-interviewed two months after they had attended a tutorial.

The survey results showed that 100% of the students who responded to the questionnaire immediately after the tutorial (the Immediate Group) were satisfied with the writing tutorial and the tutorial objectives, and they were able to apply what they had learned at the tutorial in their assignments. For the group of students who were interviewed two weeks after the tutorial (the Two-Week Group), more than 80% agreed or strongly agreed that they could apply what they had learned from the writing centre tutorial to their assignments, and they believed that the learning would continue to be useful in future. For those who were telephone-interviewed two months after the tutorial (the Two-Month Group), 75% said that they could apply what they had learned from the tutorial to their academic work, and about 66% agreed or strongly agreed that the learning from the tutorial would continue to be useful in the future. The responses from the three groups were positively convincing, especially that from the Two-Month Group, as by then, the effects of the tutorial would be assumed to have evaporated.

A shortcoming of the research might be that the data were collected by a writing centre peer tutor whom the respondents might have acquainted with, and therefore might have given supportive rating. In view of the shortcoming, the researcher replicated the survey using a student interviewer who was not associated with the writing centre. The results of the second survey were not as positive as the first one, but were still very positive overall. The contributing factor to the reduced positive percentages might be due to the shortened tutorial time from 45 minutes in the first survey to only 30 minutes in the second survey. Overall, the findings yielded some concrete data in proving the usefulness of writing centre tutorials, whether immediate, short or long terms (Bell, 2000).

A statistical study by Carino and Enders (2001) was designed to correlate the frequency of writing centre visits to students' satisfaction. The questionnaire asked the number of times the student visited the writing centre in the semester, if the consultant was courteous and interested in the student's work, if the consultant helped the student do his/her own work or did the work for the student, if the confidence of the student in completing assignments was enhanced, if the student's visits to the writing centre contributed to improved writing, and if the student would recommend the writing centre to his/her peers. Each question was followed by a

five-point Likert scale. The course instructors of English 101, English 105, and English 305 were requested to administer the questionnaires at the end of the semester. A total of 399 respondents over two semesters completed the survey questionnaires.

Overall, the findings of the survey suggested that the frequency of visits to the writing centre did not significantly correlate to the satisfaction level of the students with their writing centre tutorials. The frequency of visits also did not have any impact on the students' perceptions of the consultants' ability in helping them with the writing assignments. However, the frequency of visits did significantly improve students' confidence in writing and the perception that their writing ability had improved. Similarly, the frequency of visits did influence students in recommending the writing centre to their peers.

Contrary to the popular belief that "the more students visit a writing centre, the more s/he will like it", the results of the survey study showed that no significant correlation existed between the frequency of visits and students' satisfaction. In fact, return or repeated visits to the writing centre can be a cause of concern too as compared to zero or few visits. Too many repeated visits might indicate that the student has become over-dependent on the writing centre, when s/he should have built up the confidence and competence to be able to work independently. Nevertheless, exactly how many repeats are considered optimal or problematic? This is perhaps an area awaiting further research.

The third statistical research conducted by Lerner (2003), on a total of 488 First Year students over four academic years, was aimed to find out the relationship between writing centre use and non-use to First Year Composition (FYC) and First Year (FY) Grade-Point Averages (GPAs). The research design used was an improvement over a similar study by the same researcher in 1997. Table 1 shows that all the differences between the users and the non-users were statistically significant, except for the mean Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) verbal scores that the researcher used to establish a similar entry point between the two groups. The research design had considered the experimental group (writing centre users) and the control group (non writing centre users), and the implication of teacher's effects that would have been balanced off by the use of a large pool of respondents. The researcher argued that by triangulating data collected from multiple years and a large sample of students and teachers on the single variable of writing centre usage, he could convincingly say that writing centre use did contribute to improved First Year Composition and First Year GPAs.

It is true that Lerner (2003) employed improved design in this study, and the conclusion that writing centre visit was indeed effective is convincing enough to be accepted. Nevertheless, the design could have been improved further if Lerner had engaged the same number of non-users to match that of the users (see Table 1), as sample size could implicate the statistical significance and the reliability of measurement (Carino and Enders, 2001).

While the preceding quantitative studies investigated the impact of writing centre visits on students' writing ability, either through self-perception or GPAs, the following study investigated the efficacy of the writing centre from a slightly different aspect, that of the improvement in drafts in terms of global and local concerns, written by students before and after they consulted a tutor at the writing centre.

TABLE 1
The effects of writing centre use on FYC and FY GPAs

	SAT Verbal Mean Score	FYC Mean GPA	FY Mean GPA
Writing centre users (n=307)	487	3.07	2.73
Writing centre non-users (n=181)	490	2.78	2.42

Source: Adapted from Lerner (2003, p.68)

In a recent statistical study on the outcomes of a writing centre, Niiler (2005) aimed to gauge the extent of writing centre intervention that had impacted on the global (also known as rhetorical or higher order) and local (also syntactical or lower order) concerns of students' essays. He also set to find out the consistency of three expert raters in evaluating these students' essays. The study employed an improved research design over his 2003 study (Niiler, 2003). The students involved in the study were from two History and Political classes, and two FYC classes. The researcher had the co-operation of the class instructors to write the grade of each essay on a separate card. The grade cards were given to the students for them to decide if they want to have their essay grades improved through a 36-minute writing centre tutorial. The essay and the grade were returned to the students who chose not to attend a writing centre tutorial. For students who wanted to improve their grades, their original clean-copy essays were returned to them for them to consult a writing centre tutor. Another clean copy, with the name removed, was given to the researcher. Through this method, a total of 38 students had actually self-selected themselves as subjects of the study. After the writing centre tutorial, the students involved rewrote their drafts accordingly, and a clean copy with the name removed was given to the researcher. The researcher then duplicated three sets of the two stacks of pre- and post-writing centre drafts, and gave the blind copies at random to three faculty members who evaluated the drafts independently. The evaluators were not connected in any way to the writing centre, and they had vast experience in evaluating essays. There was no way for them to know if each draft was written during pre- or post-writing centre tutorials. Both the global and local aspects of each draft were assigned a score from one to five.

The results showed that the global and local ratings of pre-writing centre drafts were below the median of 3, while those of the post-writing centre drafts were above the median. This result was strengthened by the positive inter-rater correlation of two expert raters. The third rater did not produce similar strong correlation with the other two colleagues, and the researcher suggested the need for evaluation training. In comparing the improvement on both global and local concerns, the global concerns had a mean improvement of 1.03, while that of the local concerns was only 0.6. The findings provided the concrete evidence that the writing centre tutorials were able to significantly improve students' writing ability through just one 36-minute tutorial, and the improvement achieved was more global than local. This finding is in line with the fundamental practice of writing centre in giving priority to global concerns in students' drafts over local concerns. It would be interesting to replicate the study in an ESL setting to find out if similar findings could be achieved.

The quantitative evidence from the four empirical research studies affirms that the tutorial support provided by writing centres is efficacious in improving students' overall grades and writing competence, although further research is still required to establish the positive relationship between the number of visits to the writing centre and students' satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

In summing up the efficacy of writing centre, both qualitative and quantitative evidences in the writing centre scholarship have suggested the effectiveness and usefulness of the writing centre as a support service in complementing classroom efforts. The tutorial support of the writing centre is especially useful for ESL students in Malaysia who generally find writing in English a challenge. This is because writing in English requires a culmination of multiple abilities such as linguistic, cognitive, rhetorical and social skills, in addition to positive attitudes to writing (Tan *et al*., 2006). Nevertheless, it is difficult to predict if similar results could be achieved if the studies were conducted in the Malaysian contexts when writing centres are set up, given the differences in variables such as the target users, culture, and education setting. Therefore, research and development should be two inseparable activities that must go full circle in any innovation transfer: research,

develop, and more research to improve the implementation and development. As a final note, further research in determining efficacy of writing centres should include investigating the effectiveness of various tutoring techniques and tutor training.

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Women in Accounting Information Systems Research: An Account from Self-Reflection

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ABSTRACT

Very little evidence exists to explain why only a few women have undertaken career as academic researcher in information systems. John Lucas (1973) suggests that the feminist debate may lead to the application of certain concepts of justice, equality, and humanity. This being so, a central question for this paper is "Why is the academic management industry far from being gender neutral?" The author perceives that society as it stands, is still unfair to women, and that this unfairness should be addressed. This paper also deals with and brings up unanswered questions as to whether discrimination against suitably qualified women for such positions could ever be defended according to the current principles of social justice. On the other hand, there are explanations of the phenomena premise on Maccoby's (1998) findings on same sex aggregation, and the latest research of Robert Munroe and Kimball Romney indicate (2006) that Maccoby's findings are not challenged by cross-cultural results. Hence, the same sex preference is a universal phenomenon.

Keywords: Academic research, gender, distributive justice, reflective practice, women's education, practitioner professional development

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this paper is to examine the lack of women in the academic management industry performing information systems research. It discusses the feminist debate through the author's collective and respective self-reflective accounts. To that end, the application of certain concepts of social justice, equality, and humanity is discussed, not as an insight, but from an analysis and evaluation metaphor of these phenomena. Using his self-reflection, the author asserts that there has been an increased controversy in recent years regarding the role of women in the academic research arena. Should the fact that the potential researcher is a woman create a presupposition that she is unsuited to senior academic research management? Since this genre of academic research tends to have a quantitative focus, using mathematical forms of judgment, the dearth of women in this sector might have something to do with the fact that apparently more opportunities exist for men to study higher mathematics than for women. Surely, women who like to solve differential equations ought not to be prevented from doing so on the basis of their sex (Panteli *et al*., 1998; Margolis, Fisher and Miller, 1999). Even though there are very few senior female academic researchers, there is no reason why any particular woman should not be employed in academic research. In this paper, the importance of relevant femininity issues is explored.

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The author is also of the view that this phenomenon may lend support to Maccoby's findings that both sexes were expected to display the same sex aggregation. Furthermore, the controversy may be sourced from the effect of societal sex roles, stereotypes, and the failure to make a distinction of the issues of relevancy and base values to justify the actual or implied exclusion of women. For example, Sherman (1983) examined the intellectual development of females in comparison with males, and stated 'data indicate that intellectual excellence is still enmeshed in a pattern of sex role expectations contrary to the feminine sex role.' Although in their earlier studies Maccoby and Jacklin (1988) argue that during adolescence, boys appear to have an advantage over girls on tests of arithmetic reasoning, and interestingly, Feingold (1992) who supported this also found that more boys than girls were exceptionally poor at Maths. Meanwhile, Byrnes and Takahira (1993) found that girls exceeded boys in computational skills.

The issues of the role of women in the academic fields and in corporate management, within accounting information systems research, are becoming a major subject, and it is important that the argument is properly addressed.

The rules of effort and contribution to society scored high on the differentiation scale in the studies of Clara Sabagh (2005) because these rules share most attributes with ability. It is admitted by Sabagh that effort is less differentiating than contribution and ability, as resource allocation is based on the willingness to make sacrifices, which demands from the donor, and a high moral responsibility.

Thus, discrimination results in unjust resource distribution, regardless of whether or not it is intentional. Unjust resource distribution creates inequality, and inequality may lead to social exclusion in opportunities, even in voluntary social exclusion.

Discrimination on the ground of sex is counting sex as relevant in contexts where it is not, and leads to the rejection of suitable women. It is not discrimination on the ground of sex to reject women, who are not suitable, even if being a woman causes their unsuitability. When that happens, it is their unsuitability and not their sex that has caused their rejection, e.g. when someone is rejected because she will be away to have children (Personal reflection, May 2007).

The author also expands on this by stating that selection discrimination occurs if the rejection of suitable women does not base on relevant differences affecting the field of information systems research or that particular field in the information systems research. If someone is away to have children, it does not impede the end product, but only the timing of the product. In any event, solution could be found in the present technology sophistication on timing and distance. Same sex aggregation theory could result in social exclusion by societal forces itself, and this is a dilution of social capital, if any, which leads to disengagement of human capital towards a sustainable economy.

The right to selective discrimination, from the analogy of the women being away to have children, could therefore be argued on ground of practical reasonableness. More so, in sex role stereotype and same sex aggregation theory displayed in males, the rebuttable presumption of unfairness needs to be discharged in spirit of justice, and distributive justice. In principal, it is about the base values and relevancy to practical reasonableness.

As argued by leading feminist advocate J. Lucas (1973):

> "Should the fact-'the mere fact'- of a person's being a woman disqualifies her from being the Bench of Bishops or the House of Lords, or from obtaining a mortgage, owning property, having a vote or going to heaven? Is it not, the feminists are saying, just as irrational and inequitable as disqualifying a man on the grounds of the colour of his hair? Should we come to enunciate the formal platitude that women are the same as men in some respects, different from them in others, just as men are the same in some respects, and different in others? Even if women are different from men, a feminist might argue, why should

> this be enough to debar them from being a member of the Bench of Bishops, when, apparently, there is no case of sexual abuse from women clergyman?"
>
> (Lucas, J., 1973, p. 162)

Stanworth (2000) argues that the research management industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of the world's economy, and in theory it should be gender neutral, and the industry should be accessible to both men and women at all employment levels. As stated by Panteli, Stack, Atkinson and Ramsay (1998, p.171):

> "In many occupations, the sexual division of labour has been established through an historical sedimentation of role allocation such as the clerical (female-dominated) and engineering sectors (male-dominated). Computing, which has only come into existence during World War II (Kraf, 1997), might be seen as potentially less bound by traditions, for example, as men's work or women's work, and therefore as a gender-neutral occupation offering opportunities to both men and women to enter and progress."

In similar vein of Stanworth, and the first author agrees, while the second author argues that the world of computing would benefit from the presence of women and their enhancing role. If males are mathematically inclined, females are intuitively inclined. Her argument shall be set forth in later paragraph, based on requisites in Yair Levy and Thomas Ellis' (2006) framework in conducting and writing an effective literature review.

Embedded in the research by Williams and Colombo (2003) is that it must be noted that there is an element of 'warrants' in the argumentation theory other than having the problem, i.e. subject or object of research being addressed by a claim, supported by a reason to such claim. There is within the web of research, the argument processes that anchor the proposed problem. A proper argument process has been claimed by Yair Levy and Timothy Ellis that should follow the sequence of "[claim] because of [reason] based on [evidence]", whereas a warrant serves to "connect a claim and its supporting reason."

The author self-reflectively shares similar views with Richard's philosophy (1984), in that that the feminist claim of injustice would be established if totally unisex societies sprang up and flourished, or if there were as many societies in which the roles of men and women were reversed as there were traditional ones. He also agrees with Richard's idea that the existence of any successful and stable society in which the roles of the sexes are reversed is evidence in favour of the claim of feminism (Richard, 1984).

The question that arises in this paper is how to explore the way in which a non-stereotypical woman thinks and acts, and what are the feminist perceptions of the issues within the research management industry. Thus, the focus of the question will be from the perspective of educational development in the higher education research management industry:

> Are the patterns of senior academic research management employment among men and women different in our society?

Examining the individual's interests and desires is paramount in the determination of career choices, even if there are very few female senior academic researchers, are there reasons why any particular woman could not become an academic researcher, even if it is a male-dominated field or not a same sex aggregation environment?

The first section of this paper introduces the literature, which outlines some of the ways that a person's sex may impact and determine the attitudes towards selection, perception, involvement, and assessment of an academic researcher. The next section discusses the shortage in academic research skills, and the participation of each sex within the industry as social capital being an enlargement of human capital towards a sustainable economy. The third

section discusses a case study from the author's self-reflective perspective, while the last section identifies areas for future improvements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women and IS

Data gathered from the US and UK suggest that there is a serious shortage of skills in the IT industry (O'Neill and Walker, 2001).

As Gaudin (1999, p.53) states:

> "The IT worker shortage is fast becoming a crisis that could threaten this country's global technology leadership and economic strength, according to industry observers and government officials."

Australia appears to be following the US and UK in the aspects of industry skills shortages. Barnard (2000, p.3) points out that,

> "Almost half the nation's employers are being forced to hire information personnel from overseas because of a shortage at home."

As mentioned by O'Neill and Walker (2001), there is a shortage of skilled personnel within the industry, and the problem has become more complex and it involves the information systems management industry itself, particularly in terms of its image and more so in the gender ratios of the current staff.

Hence, it is useful to estimate the total stock of trained personnel. With regard to skill level: skill level = initial level+ improvement– deterioration. Here, the view of Harold D. Lasswell and Myres S. McDougal, i.e. the skill level means all who are capable of achieving a given state of proficiency, is adopted. Levels are affected by available opportunities and by incentive structure. Skill exercise = desired employment (by individual) – undesired employment (by individual) – unemployment – coerced employment. Hence, if the exercise for skills from the standpoint of gender neutral is considered, it is possible to arrive at first approximation of employment opportunities (and their evaluation), the volume of employment, and the number of those who are engaged in both desired and coerced employment. Thus, unemployment is presumably as mostly undesired if it is relatively of large scale.

Women's Participation in the Accounting Information Systems Management Industry

Very little evidence exists on the reason that there are very few women employed or acting as Information Systems (IS) researchers. In relation to this, Joshi and Kuhn (2001) found that women are not entering the industry at the same rate as men. One school of thought suggests that the prevailing reason is that the pre-requisites of computer-related careers are school subjects such as maths and science, and these are the areas which traditionally do not attract young women (Panteli *et al*., 1998 c.f. O'Neill and Walker, 2001). They believe that these lead to fewer women going into computer science courses at universities, and therefore, there are fewer women qualified to enter into the information systems management industry. Cromie (1999), in her study of high school children in Canadian states, states that "computers are still perceived as being a male domain by both girls and boys, and these perceptions are developed early. More boys play with computer games, and the games are clearly designed to appeal to boys." As an example, computer games are often of a pseudo-military nature, which may not be appealing to young girls.

As Cole-Gomolski (1998, p.4) states:

> Compared to 10 years ago, women make up a smaller percentage of information systems management graduates, and the percentage of women in information systems management has shrunk from 35% in the early 1990s to 29% today, according to recent data from the U.S. Department of Labour.

Gunter, in her review of the 'information revolution', relates how information systems

management industries in the 1960's had almost a 50:50 male to female ratio (Gunter, 1994 c.f. O'Neill and Walker, 2001). One of her interviewees put this down to the newness of the industry and the fact that men had not 'wised up' to the industry's potential, therefore women were still 'allowed' in.

This change over time parallels the change in perception of the gender-based use of computers evolves from being associated with routine clerical tasks to becoming an integral part of the overall working environment and IS also becoming an essential management tool, and therefore the domain of men.

Men's Participation in the Accounting Information Systems Management Industry

According to O'Neill and Walker (2001), the culture of maleness and stereotypical gender roles prevails within the information systems management industry. In their paper, they highlighted an interesting analysis of this stereotyping. Michaelson (1994), in his review of cartoons featuring women, men, and computers, identified that women were generally less represented and were mostly drawn in subservient stereotyped employment positions.

The author agrees with O'Neill *et al.* (2001) that the innocent portrayal of women in non-authoritarian positions simply perpetuates the notion of women not being 'capable' of doing the technical research aspects of information systems management. Hence, to deny people the fruits of their examination success or deprive them of their right of choice is wrong. As Ben *et al*. (1959) state:

> Unfortunately what frequently happens is that we see what sort of facts would bring what sort of principles to bear upon our individual decisions and the general structure of our laws and institutions. We need to know not only whether there are differences, but whether these differences are integrally or only contingently connected with a person's sex. Hence, the more integrally and the more invariably a difference is concerned with a person's sex, the more we are entitled to insist that the mere fact of being male or female can constitute a conclusive reason against being allowed to do something. We believe the arguments from Justice and Humanity must come into play as requiring us to pay respect to the interests and inclinations of each individual person, and to weight her actual interests, as against those of the community at large, on the basis of her actual situation and actual and reasonable desires (Benn *et al.*, 1953).

The author agrees with O'Neill *et al*. (2001) that to overcome some of the problems and barriers women as a whole have encountered in the information systems management industry, governments in all countries need to develop supportive programs and initiatives. As mentioned by O'Neill *et al*. (2001), most government's policies do not actually address the core problem, which in this case is "encultured" masculinity within the role-play of who works at what type of job. As Stanwort (2000), cited in O'Neill *et al*. (2001), points out when referring to UK policies:

> Such initiatives tend to emphasise the changes that women themselves have to make in order to relate more successfully to technology and enjoy successful careers in technological work. The male is treated as the norm, and the women are supposed to adopt masculine ways of relating to technology (Stanwort, 2000, p. 22).

METHODOLOGY

This study involves social and organisational contexts, with hermeneutical dimensions (i.e. the process of mimetic or imitation through reconstructions of facts by the understanding of its meanings and intentions rather than by deductive explanation) and hence, an ethnographic reflection on professional practitioner case study methodology is most appropriate in this case.

The following flow chart (replicated in *Fig. 1*) presents the ethnographic reflection on the professional practitioner case study methodology used in this study. Here, the author previews his research method.

In phase one, the philosophical perspective, either the interpretivist or the positivist or both, influences the methodology. The ethnographic-reflective-practitioner-practice paradigm employing critical social theory narrows the interpretive approach. Then, the qualitative ethnographic reflection, which adopts the critical social theory perspective, is performed.

The selection of research instruments that include both face-to-face interviews and documentation is outlined in phase two. The establishment of data collection procedures then takes place through the recall of the reflective practitioner data. After that, the hermeneutic approach is applied in interpreting interview transcripts.

In phase three, the analyses of data were carried out using an ethnographic interpretative approach through a data meta-matrix. The processes of discovery, observation, documentation, and assessment were integral aspects of the methods employed at this stage of the study.

Finally, the presentation of the recorded summaries of the interpreted findings, which includes the reflections of the principal researcher, draws the necessary warranted conclusions.

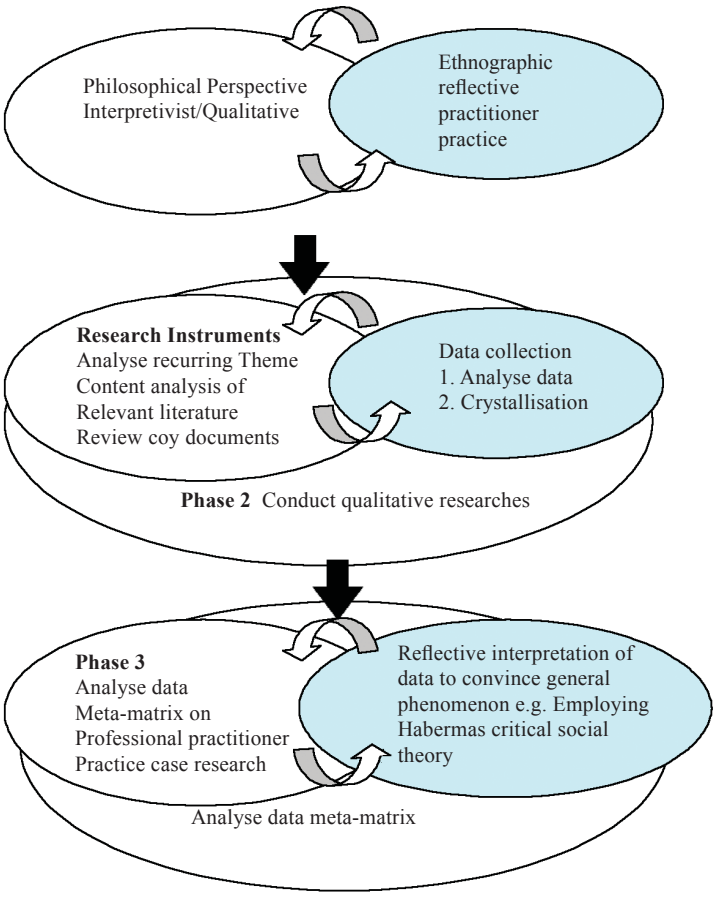

Fig. 1: A diagram illustrating the methodology used as flow-charts showing the progression of the research

The methodology chosen for this pilot study was qualitative in nature, and it included Moustakas' (1990) notion of validity in heuristic research. Based mainly on Moustakas's (1990, pp. 32-34) notion of validity in heuristic research, the first author began to seriously investigate Schon's (1983) admonition to be a reflective practitioner. This was in line with Habermas', Moustakas' and Tesch's emphasis on the importance of self-reflection, and it is also in line with the thrust in the qualitative research literature on researcher's voice and signature, researcher bias, and managing subjectivity (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 424).

The following section illustrates a pilot study in which the first author investigated the possibilities of femininity's issues of women as IS researchers, in the hope of providing a catalyst for the development of egalitarianism.

SELF-REFLECTION ACCOUNT ON A CASE STUDY

The author describes an experiment, illustrating the dominating methodological issues in the conduct of an information systems seminar. Six doctoral students were divided into two groups and asked to think about how they, and others, might react to the differences in the intellectual achievements and typical behaviour between men and women.

The two groups believe that women were prevented from exercising their talents to the full or given rein in their natural inclinations (Personal case study No 1, June 2007). As group one feminist doctoral participant summarised:

> "In ancient Greece, for example, when the advocate of male supremacy marshalled his masses of major poets against a solitary 'Sappho', the women were so confined by domestic pressures and so inhibited by convention that those few [women] with real poetic talent never had opportunity to bring it to flower. Male poets might have been poor, but at least they could listen to the 'Muse' undistracted by baby's cries: whereas potential women poets, unless they lived on 'Lesbos' were married off and made to think of clothes and nappies to the exclusion of all higher thoughts. Perhaps women feel more strongly about their homes than men do, so that although we ought not, on grounds of humanity, to hurt either men or women, deprivation of her home would constitute a greater hurt to a woman than to a man. In some ways, then, women might be seen as more sensitive than men, but this does not mean that women are not capable of performing the technical aspects of information systems management."

In addition, it has been shown through some studies that women are by nature less competitive and aggressive than men are, and therefore have little interest in pushing against the "glass ceiling", as they do not want to expend energy in competing with their colleagues.

When dealing with contentious issues, such as the roles of women in any given area of expertise, it is essential, that the researcher uses reflection to identify and distance himself from his own assumptions and conditioning (Personal interviews, June 2007).

The author conducted another experiment; this time to try and find evidence either for or against the issues about feminine abilities and attitudes, particularly in information systems management (Personal case study No 2, July 2007). As group two feminist doctoral students summarised:

> "With sufficient care we may be able to disentangle what is true in the feminists' contention from what is false. At least we should be able to avoid the dilemma, which seems to be taken for granted by most participants in the debate, that we must say that women either are in all respects exactly the same as men or else are in all respects different from, and inferior to them, and not members of the same universe of discourse at all. We do not share Socrates' feeling about gender. I think the sexes are different, and incomparable. No doubt, women are

> not quite as good as men, in some respects are, but since men are not nearly as good as women in others, this carries with it no derogatory implication of uniform inferiority. What angers us most is the de-personalisation of women in society and one cannot but sympathise with their protest against women being treated as mere objects of sexual gratification by men. Given the fact that women have demonstrated that they are equally capable of succeeding in all industries, allowing encouragement, it would be short-sighted not to employ women, in any field of endeavour, including information systems research." (Personal interviews, July 2007).

CONCLUSION – SELF REFLECTION ACCOUNT

On reflection the author realised that he had agreed with the above participants' point of view, yet found it rather difficult to understand the reason for such a close agreement with them. Evidence for and against deprivation of women's rights is hard to find in an IS research context. Therefore, the author concluded that social pressure is the main cause of discrimination in these areas.

Few people deny that social pressures have a considerable bearing on our behaviour and capacities. Some people argue from the analogy with other animals whose behaviours are indubitably determined genetically and differed according to their sex, or by extrapolation from purely physical features. Humans are animals, but unlike other animals, our behaviours are mostly socially and culturally determined. It seems likely that much of our behaviour is learned, and although recent studies seem to indicate that some behaviour may be inherited, humans are unlike other animals in so many ways; for example, very few of our actions can definitely be attributed to instinct. So here again, we are obliged to allot women's apparent lack of interest and ability in the mathematical field to learn behaviour and condition. For instance, the would-be numerate "Sappho" is penalised by society that denies women the opportunity to engage in all facets of information systems management and treats the male as norm, expecting women to adopt masculine ways of relating to technology. This would be unjust as handicapping a talented youthful entrepreneur on the basis of his lack of years and inability to enter into legal contracts because he has not attained the age of majority.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this pilot study pertain to the information gathered through the interviews with the participants. The historical construction of the data gathered rests on the integrity and knowledge of the interviewed participants.

Future Research

The following issue may therefore need to be further investigated:
Can women succeed in those areas in which their gender makes them less similar than men for the work, e.g. forensic accounting?

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Connecting Language Needs in the Workplace to the Learning of English at Tertiary Level

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ABSTRACT

Fresh graduates, it seems, lack confidence and have poor communication and English proficiency skills that could affect their employability (JobStreet.com, 2005). This paper investigates the relevance of the tertiary English language proficiency curriculum to the workplace. It is to find out if the respondents, who were mostly in the final year of their studies, are adequately prepared to use English at the workplace. This study involved four public tertiary institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. A total of 86 final year students, who were involved in industry-linkage programmes that lasted between four and six months, agreed to participate in this exercise. They came from diverse academic fields such as computer science, engineering, architecture, accounting, science, economics, communication, business, and ICT. Structured interview sessions were carried out and analysed based on content analysis. Brief descriptions about the English programmes offered at the respective tertiary institutions and comments by the respondents about the courses were also considered. Ideally, the desired outcome of any English proficiency programme is a student who can perform adequately in English in the workplace environment and is able to carry out minimum office routines such as writing brief reports, taking minutes, as well as performing formal and informal oral interactions.

Keywords: English proficiency, workplace, communication skills, employment, graduate, tertiary English

INTRODUCTION

Tertiary education is often viewed as a guaranteed pathway to employment. The university is perceived now as 'an engine of change in the economy and as a means of effecting social change, especially in the field of developing human capital' (Learning Curve, *New Sunday Times*, November 25, 2007, p.H2). Meanwhile, competency factors which are related to knowledge and skills are seen as empowering undergraduates. The main vehicle for the acquisition of these competencies is language, in particular, English, as it is a dominant language in the global context, especially in business communication (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 2006). The development of a global market and global developments in the fields of science, technology, culture, and media, which are based on what Brutt-Griffler terms as 'econcultural' grounds, lead to the increased importance of the English language (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Given this premium on the use of English language, there is the urgency to ensure that all graduates are competently trained to meet the language needs of the workplace.

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Currently, there seems to be a growing mismatch between the requirements of the industry and the quality of graduates produced in Malaysia (NEAC, 2004, p. 19). While universities are more knowledge-based, the job market is more productivity-based. As the mismatch grows, employers are expected to continuously provide knowledge and skills to new employees through in-service training or retraining programmes. Therefore, job relevancy is crucial and universities need to reciprocate by having content relevancy.

This study serves as a response to the current focus on employability of graduates from public universities. Fresh graduates, it seems, lack confidence and have poor communication and English proficiency skills. It has been generally recognised that many graduates are disadvantaged as they lack appropriate skills to function effectively and efficiently at the workplace.

One of the main problems in English language teaching at the tertiary level is the lack of information on students' future careers and the language skills needed at work. As a result, most courses tend to concentrate on the 'common core' of the workplace to help instructors plan their lessons to cater to students' from many different disciplines (Lehtonen and Karjalainen, 2008).

OBJECTIVES

This paper is part of a larger study that aims to identify the various positioning of the English language and the communicative competencies required by both employers and employees in the workplace. It also provides a strategy to match tertiary level language and communication training with specific employment sector needs in order to improve the quality and opportunity of graduates for gainful employment.

Specifically, the main concern of this paper is to identify the relevance of tertiary level English language proficiency curriculum to the workplace. It investigates if the respondents, who are mostly in the final year of their studies, are adequately prepared to use English in their working environment.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This exploratory study involves four selected public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. It investigates the relevance of the English language proficiency programmes at the selected institutions to the workplace. The findings are discussed within the sample population of 86 randomly selected final-year students from the four institutions. Generalisations or extrapolations on the findings can only be made under similar circumstances. In spite of the limitations, the discussions and findings may provide insights into tertiary English language proficiency programmes being offered. A more comprehensive study with a bigger sample population could be considered for future studies. It is also important to realise that it is a general practice that English proficiency programmes are normally reviewed every three to five years.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Personal benefits to education are clear and are associated with higher income, prestige, better working conditions, and potential for promotion. A recent survey of public opinion in the United States found that the top-ranked role for a college to perform significantly is to prepare undergraduate students for a career (*Arnone*, 2003, p.11). As for societal benefits, human capital theory holds that knowledge education provided by tertiary institutions contribute to economic growth through the creation of new knowledge and increasing the stock of citizens who are able to implement new processes and technologies in the economy. Researchers estimate that increases in education levels account for 15 to 20 percent of the annual growth in the output for the United States (Mortenson, 1999).

Similarly, this value attached to higher education is also apparent in Malaysia. In fact, the fast-paced development in her economy is reflected in the rapid changes in the education system. This calls for greater accountability and improved attention to quality in education. Improving the tertiary education system should therefore be high on Malaysia's development agenda. The Malaysian tertiary institutions and policy makers must ensure that the workforce acquires the skills to compete, innovate, and respond to complex social, environmental, and economic situations.

What Malaysia needs today are higher education initiatives with a reactive agenda that can take on the challenges of strengthening human potential. Therefore, in addition to the traditional role of universities as a place to foster academic knowledge, they must also provide diversified educational resources so that students can acquire practical specialist knowledge and skills relevant to the needs of workplace. In public universities, English predominates as the language for reference and is also gaining grounds in academic tasks. In the workplace, however, the preferred language for communication is English (Ting, 2002). The parameters in language use involved can range from general to specific. Nevertheless, general English is often criticised to be inadequate for efficient functioning at the workplace. This view is linked to language use as being genre-specific, an approach that has garnered interest leading to a massive development in ESP studies. ESP involves the notion of discourse community which implies specific use of language in specific contexts.

Curriculum planning is, therefore, essential for setting educational goals, in line with preparing students for the workplace. Employability connotes the development of attributes that involve competency factors which encompass knowledge skills and competencies of doing the job in question, and other factors such as attitude, values, aspirations and ambitions, schooling, personal and life experiences (Brenan and Shah, 2003, p.20-21). Unchecked rising unemployment among graduates is currently a national concern. A study, *The Unemployment Situation in Malaysia* (NEAC, 2004, p. 19), revealed high unemployment rates amongst Malaysian graduates which reached a number of 40,400 in November 2001. The increasing number of university graduates includes those in the 19-22 years age group. According to the NEAC report, about 8.8% of the unemployed had tertiary education in the first quarter of 2001, and by the fourth quarter, this number was substantially found to reach 13.1%. Subsequently, the rate of unemployment went up from 3.1% to 4.0%. It is estimated that this figure would rise in years to come. A reason cited for this problem is the graduates' lack of language competence. There seems to be a language mismatch between what the graduates have learned at tertiary level and the target language competencies required in the workplace.

Educational systems should create a broad understanding of the world of work, which requires a closer interaction between tertiary institutions and the workplace in curriculum development and provide packages for transition from higher public institutions to work. This not only improves the matching of knowledge skills with emerging new jobs but enhances the competitiveness of enterprises and the economy as a whole. Improving the performance of the educational system along these lines is a necessary condition for a successful delivery of vocational training and the other components of human resources development.

METHODOLOGY

This study involves four public tertiary institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. The identity of the institutions, however, could not be revealed here. Posters were put up at all academic faculties involved in industrial training in each tertiary institution to invite respondents to participate on a voluntary basis. The period of industrial attachment was between four and six months. A total of 86 students from various disciplines had agreed to participate

in this exercise and were briefed on what was expected of them. They came from both science (N=42) and social science (N=44) academic disciplines.

The research design of this study was developed to accommodate the gathering of qualitative data. The data collection involved formal interview sessions carried out with all the respondents after they had completed their attachment at their workplace. This was to ensure that they were fully aware of the activities or routines that required the use of English at their workplace before participating in the interview. The respondents agreed to be audio-taped during the interviews. In addition, the respondents were also asked to write brief responses to the interview questions. The audio recordings were later transcribed. Field notes were also taken by the researchers and these were used for a thorough description of the interview sessions. Among others, the respondents were asked the following questions during the interview sessions:

> What is the general nature of your work during the industrial training attachment?; During your industrial training, what work-related activities did you use English for?; Do you think the English language courses you attended at the university adequately prepare you for the workplace?; and, What specific areas of English language use do you feel you need to improve on in order to function well at the workplace?

In the final analysis, the respondents' feedback was discussed in relation to the English proficiency curriculum offered at their respective tertiary institutions. The feedback also provide an overview of the relevance of the curriculum in relation to the use of English in the working environment.

DISCUSSION

There are two parts in this section. Part A presents the data on interview sessions based on the four questions posed. Part B traces the relevance of the English programmes offered by the universities to the workplace, as indicated by the respondents.

Part A: Discussion on Specific Interview Questions

Q1: What is the general nature of your work during your industrial attachment?

Generally, the respondents mentioned that they were given tasks that were related to their studies. None of them commented about being asked to do things that were not related to their areas of study. Among the tasks allocated to the respondents by their respective employers during their industrial attachment were developing systems or programs, visiting sites, quantity surveying, designing plans, preparing reports, conducting research and development activities, and providing customer service. In addition, they were also required to help with clerical work, develop multimedia presentations, audit accounts, analyse samples, assist in the planning of events and promotions, conduct QC tests, translate and edit documents. Interestingly, one of the respondents claimed that his main task was to chase after debtors.

Q2: During your industrial training what work-related activities did you use English for?

In this section, the respondents were asked to write a list of activities at the workplace that required them to use English. There was no limit given as to the number of activities to be listed.

When asked to list work-related activities during their industrial linkage that required the use of English, the respondents, in varying degrees, stated several tasks that were fully conducted in English. A total of 14% of the respondents said that all of the work-related activities in their workplace were conducted in English. The others listed several tasks that required them to use English. However, 5.8% of the respondents claimed that English was not used in their workplace at all. Incidentally, these respondents were attached to government-

TABLE 1
Work-related activities conducted in English at the workplace

%	Item	No.
72.1	Communicating/ socialising with superiors, clients, and colleagues	1
61.6	Writing reports/ reviews/ proposals/ minutes of meeting/ correspondence/ manuals	2
37.2	Documentation/ preparing working papers/ reading, researching, keying in data	3
34.9	Developing presentations	4
34.9	Meetings/ discussions/ negotiations/ interviews	5
14	Everything work-related is in English	6
11.6	System development	7
9.3	Using computer and Internet	8
5.8	Did not use English at all	9

linked establishments. Based on Table 1, English seems to be needed most to communicate with various people at the office. A majority of the respondents (72.1%) wrote that they had to use English to communicate and socialise with their superiors, clients, and colleagues. The second activity that required the respondents (61.6%) to use English was when they were asked to write official documents such as reports, proposals, reviews, and minutes of meeting. In addition, English was also widely used by the respondents (37.2%) when they were researching and documenting.

A total of 34.9% of the respondents also listed that English was normally used when they were preparing for presentations as most of the resource materials were in English and the presentations themselves needed to be done in English. Other activities that tended to be conducted in English were meetings, discussions, negotiations, and interviews. The table clearly illustrates that English is needed in order for one to be able to function at both formal and informal situations at the workplace. A large majority of the respondents indicated that productive skills, such as speaking (72.1%) and writing (61.6%) were important and favoured at their workplace over other skills.

Q3: Do the English courses at the university adequately prepare you for the workplace?

In this section, the respondents were asked to give their opinions on the adequacy of the English language courses provided by their respective universities in preparing them for the workplace. The term 'adequate' here means that the skills and knowledge that they have gained from these courses are useful and relevant for them to function well at the workplace.

Table 2 shows that 60.5% of the respondents in this research felt that the English language courses offered during their studies at the university level had adequately prepared them for the workplace. While the figure may seem to be rather satisfactory, upon a closer look at the responses, it is clear that there were other factors stated by the respondents that contributed to this outlook. Some of them said 'yes' but added that the fact that their major courses

TABLE 2
The adequacy of English courses in catering to workplace needs

	U1	U2	U3	U4	Total	%
Adequate	9	12	9	22	52	60.5
Inadequate	13	9	12	0	34	39.5
Grand total					86	100

were also conducted in English could have contributed towards their ability to use English at their workplace. Only five respondents agreed that the English language courses alone helped them to function better at their workplace in English. Several respondents (N=12) felt that the language courses taken during their studies had provided adequate practices in conversation skills, while a small number (N=6) stated that the report writing and presentation courses were very important and provided practical value.

There were also other factors that assisted them to converse in English at the workplace. These include reading materials and course books that are in English, the realization that English is an important language to master in order to survive in their respective working environment, and personal encouragements from their lecturers. Several respondents (N=11), however, felt that the language courses were only helpful where very basic conversational and written English language skills were needed.

A total of 39.5% of the respondents stated that the language courses they attended at the university did not adequately prepare them for the workplace. One of the reasons given was that the level of the courses was too low and almost similar to the secondary school level. Hence, the courses did not help them much. Another reason given tells a different story. Most respondents (N=21) felt the courses were inadequate since they were only allowed to take a few courses. In addition, some respondents (N=7) also complained that the amount of practice time spent in class was too little because most of the time was used up by their lecturers. It was also reported that some of these instructors did not use English throughout the lessons, which led to the students not having good language models to emulate.

Another reason provided by the respondents concerns the lack of focus given by the courses offered. It seems that there was too much focus on reading comprehension, role playing, and spontaneous speaking while not enough attention was given to speaking skills and practice. In addition, English language courses are not compulsory in some institutions. For instance, two institutions even prevented students whom they classified as being good enough in English from taking English classes, and this was probably due to the lack of financial allocation and staffing. This decision, however, may have a detrimental effect on the students' performance in the language at the workplace.

Q4: What specific areas do you feel you need to improve on to function well at the workplace?

The following discussion focuses on the respondents' feedback on the English language skills that they felt they needed to improve on to be able to perform better at their workplace.

Table 3 shows that 86% of the respondents indicated that they need to work on their speaking skills more now that they have experienced the training stint at the workplace. In this case, they mentioned that the public speaking skills were paramount in instilling confidence to deliver an effective oral presentation. In a similar vein, negotiation and discussion skills were also seen as the areas that they would like to improve on before embarking on a real work experience after their graduation. These responses could be an indication to institutions of higher learning to provide some focus on speaking skills rather than on other skills. However, this does not mean that the other skills are less important or should be neglected.

TABLE 3
English language skills that need to be improved on

%	Item	No.
86	Speaking	1
43	Writing	2
40.7	Grammar	3

A total of 43% felt that they needed to improve on their writing skills as they realized that there were quite a number of writing tasks involved in their day-to-day routines at their respective places of work.

Another point of contention is grammar, where 40.7% of the respondents believed that a better grasp of the English grammar rules would have made their industrial- linkage experience a better one. Furthermore, they felt that a sound knowledge of grammar would have provided them with the confidence boost that they needed as a new addition to the establishment.

Interestingly, a few respondents commented that more exposure to the actual office environment would have helped them to improve their English ability as they would have the opportunity to use English in a real environment.

Part B: The Relevance of English Language Programmes

This section discusses the relevance of English language programmes offered at four selected Malaysian tertiary institutions. As noted earlier in the section on scope and limitations, the following discussion merely provides some indications of the relevance of the English language programmes. A more comprehensive and in-depth study is still needed to be undertaken so that the results can be further extrapolated. Generally, English language proficiency courses conducted at all public tertiary institutions follow the 14-week semester system. The average class size for an English language proficiency course is between 20 and 30 students and the types of English language proficiency courses offered include General English, ESP (English for Special Purposes), EAP (English for Academic Purposes), and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes).

Some of the more common courses for each type include: (1) *EAP* – Academic Writing, Report Writing, Reading for Academic Purposes, Presentation Skills; (2) *ESP* – Business Correspondence, Technical Writing, English for Legal Purposes; (3) *EOP* – Spoken English for Professionals, Interview Skills, Professional Correspondence, and Public Speaking.

University 1 (U1)

At U1, two English language courses are designated as the university core courses of three credits each (total 6 credits) and they must be taken by all undergraduates, after which they do their elective courses. The two core courses are Oral Interaction Skills and General Writing Skills. In addition to these two courses, faculties may also require and designate their students to take other English language courses. These courses could be any of the courses listed as follows: English for Academic Purposes, Skills in Grammar, Reading and Discussion Skills, Writing for Academic Purposes, English for Workplace, Interactive Speaking, Report Writing, Business English, and Public Speaking.

The courses at U1 also focus on both the writing and speaking skills, i.e. the productive skills. Different faculties have different requirements, for example, the medical school insists on their students to take English courses although these students may not need them. The English requirements, therefore, are not instituted across the board. The university policy states that students must take two compulsory courses.

Adequacy Report

Table 4 discusses the respondents' feedback on the adequacy of English courses at University 1.

TABLE 4
Adequacy of English courses at U1

Total	Inadequate	Adequate
22 (100%)	13 (60%)	9 (40%)

Generally, a slight majority of the respondents (60%) did not agree that the language courses offered by U1 had adequately prepared them for the workplace. Some stated that other English language experiences during their studies. For example, more contact hours

with the English language as the medium of instruction for some major courses were more influential in giving them the practices they needed to prepare themselves for the industrial-linkage. Others felt that the contents covered in these courses were too basic, for instance, one of the respondents mentioned that the 'Skills in Grammar' course did not prepare him for the 'real world,' when he realised that his English 'is really broken' when he conversed in English at the workplace.

Forty percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that the language courses offered by U1 had adequately prepared them for the workplace. Some of them commented that the courses had helped by exposing them to the different speaking and writing tasks that were needed to be done at the workplace. One respondent said that the 'Interactive Speaking' and 'Writing for Academic Purposes' courses provided him the opportunity to apply what had been learnt in these courses to the day-to-day running of his training session. Nevertheless, several respondents still felt that although the courses were adequate, there were still certain areas of the language that could be improved further. There seemed to be a consensus among all the respondents at U1 that they themselves needed to take their own initiatives to improve themselves further as the courses could not prepare them for everything.

Skills Needed

Table 5 shows an overwhelming majority (77.3%) of the respondents expressing their desire to improve on their speaking skills. The skills mentioned include the ability to hold a conversation with colleagues, superiors, and clients more fluently. Some respondents expressed their embarrassment for not being able to speak in a concise and clear manner when dealing with their superiors. In addition, presentation skills were also a great concern among these respondents. They believed that they needed to work on their confidence level when standing in front of an audience. Other examples of the areas that the respondents felt needed to be improved on before entering the job market at the end of their studies were grammar (22.8%), writing (27.3%), and vocabulary (9.1%).

TABLE 5
Skills needed at U1

%	Skills	No.
77.3	Speaking	1
27.3	Writing	2
22.8	Grammar	3

University 2 (U2)

At U2, the English language courses are faculty-specific, where each faculty designates courses relevant for their students. The students are not required to register for any specified general English courses. The range of English proficiency courses offered includes English for Business, English for Social Sciences, English for Science and Technology, English for Information Technology, English for Law, English for Life Sciences, English for Engineering, English for Nursing, English for Islamic Studies, Speech Communication, Public Speaking, Interactive Reading Skills, Technical Report Writing, Critical Reading, and English for Hospitality Purposes.

Adequacy Report

Table 6 discusses the respondents' feedback on the adequacy of English courses at University 2.

TABLE 6
Adequacy of English courses at U2

Total	Inadequate	Adequate
21 (100%)	9 (42.9%)	12 (57.1%)

Based on the survey done on U2 industrial linkage programme, it can be seen that 57.1% of the respondents claimed that they were satisfied with the English language courses

provided by the university as a preparation for their workplace experience. All of them felt that the courses provided the right type of contents, especially the public speaking module that allowed them to function fairly well at the workplace. Nevertheless, the respondents collectively agreed that more still needed to be done to prepare themselves for working life as far as English language ability was concerned because whatever that were provided might be right but not adequate enough for them to operate efficiently and fluently in an English working environment.

Still, 42.9% of the respondents claimed that the courses were not adequate at all. One respondent gave a resounding 'absolutely no' when asked whether the courses adequately prepared him for the workplace. The respondent cited two courses, 'English for Science and Technology' and 'Speech Communication', as being 'rather disappointing' because of their low standard of English and their lack of focus on certain skills. Another respondent presented a totally new dilemma when he claimed that the courses were not useful at all to him as his workplace did not use English at all. Instead, a Malay dialect was constantly used which made the respondent's life quite miserable as he did not have a working knowledge of that particular dialect.

Skills Needed

Table 7 indicates that, just like U1, the respondents from U2 also needed speaking skills in order to function well at the workplace. Even though their experience during their industrial linkage was relatively short, 90.5% of the respondents expressed the desire to improve their communication skills to communicate with their superiors, colleagues, and clients. A total of 47.6% also pointed out that report writing was one of the major writing tasks that they needed to perform during their training stints. The other skills which were also mentioned include grammar skills, and negotiation and discussion skills.

TABLE 7
Skills needed at U2

%	Skills	No.
90.5	Speaking	1
47.6	Writing	2
23.8	Grammar	3

University 3 (U3)

When the data was being collected for this study in late 2007, U3 offered intensive generic English courses (integrated skills) as electives to all students. The enrolment into proficiency English courses in U3 was neither compulsory nor encouraged by the faculty and this was most probably due to inadequate staffing and funding. Nevertheless, the university acknowledged the importance of these courses and attempted to compensate for this need by providing extra activities at the colleges during weekends and also introducing formal programmes during the longer holidays. These activities, however, were not part of the students' curriculum and graduation requirements.

However, starting from the 2008/09 session, U3 has offered English for communication programme. Although the courses are not compulsory for all registered students at U3, they are encouraged to register for these courses as electives. Some of the new elective courses are Academic Reading in English, Business and Professional Correspondence in English, Report Writing for Business and Professional Purposes, Vocabulary for the Social Sciences, Academic Writing in English, Communication for Employment Purposes, Speaking English with Confidence, and Spoken English for Professionals.

U3 also provides faculty-tailored English proficiency courses. The courses include Professional Writing for Computer Sciences, English for Biomedical Sciences, English for Pharmacist, English for Nurses, and English Proficiency for Law. In addition, a course called English for Enhancement that focuses on grammar is compulsory for all first year students. At the end of the 14-week semester, students

will sit for an English language proficiency test, whereby those who obtain lower than a C grade must repeat the programme.

Adequacy Report

Table 8 discusses the respondents' feedback on the adequacy of English courses at University 3.

TABLE 8
Adequacy of English courses at U3

Total	Inadequate	Adequate
21 (100%)	12 (57.2%)	9 (42.8%)

A total of 42.8% of the respondents stated that the English language courses at their university provided adequate preparation for the workplace. However, more than half of them (57.2%) stated otherwise. Some of them even lamented the fact that they were denied the opportunity to take an English course prior to their training stint as the courses would only be offered in their final year at the institution. This, they said, was a case of too little too late. Nonetheless, the introduction of the new programme at the start of 2008/2009 academic year as mentioned above may yield a more positive response.

Skills Needed

Table 9 illustrates the skills that the respondents needed in order to operate better at the workplace. A total of 72.2% respondents mentioned that courses which could help them to improve their speaking skills would be very welcomed.

TABLE 9
Skills needed at U3

%	Skills	No.
72.2	Speaking	1
42.9	Writing	2
23.8	Grammar	3

Similarly, the respondents from U3, like the respondents from U1 and U2, also ranked writing skills (42.9%) and grammar skills (23.8%) respectively as the second and third skills that they most wanted to improve on after experiencing the working environment provided by their industrial linkage outing. Interestingly, only 4.8% of the respondents felt that they needed to work on their listening and reading skills.

University 4 (U4)

U4 diploma students are required to take three levels of English courses by the end of their second year of study. These proficiency courses emphasize the integration of grammar and the four language skills. Each level comprises six credit hours per week, taught over 14 weeks. In total, the students are required to take 18 credit hours of English. All students must obtain a minimum grade C in order to proceed to the next level. Those who fail to obtain a C grade are required to repeat the course. If a student fails any of the English courses three times, his candidacy could be terminated.

Those in the degree programmes have to take skill- or content-based courses (ESP) which range from 2 to 4 credit hours per week. Each faculty determines the type of courses and the number of hours that the students have to take during the course of their studies. Officially, the students have to take two levels of the courses as stipulated.

Adequacy Report

Table 10 discusses the respondents' feedback on the adequacy of English courses at University 4.

TABLE 10
Adequacy of the English courses at U4

Total	Inadequate	Adequate
22 (100%)	0 (0%)	22 (100%)

Data from U4 gave an interesting reading as all of the respondents interviewed were satisfied with the English language courses offered at their institution. Many of them gave positive remarks about how the courses had prepared them for the workplace. This phenomenon at U4 could be due to several reasons. Firstly, U4 students were exposed to more contact hours with English compared to the students from other institutions involved in this study. Secondly, since English is, unofficially, the medium of instruction at this institution, most of the courses were conducted in English. This naturally increased the number of contact hours the students have with English.

Skills Needed

While the respondents at U4 were appreciative of the English courses provided by their institution, they also agreed that more could still be done to improve their skills. Their confidence in using English during the interview sessions was also noted. However, upon a closer scrutiny, accuracy in terms of the knowledge of grammar rules and word choice was still a major obstacle. Table 11 shows that 87.6% of the respondents needed to improve their speaking skills. A total of 54.2% placed grammar as an area that they were still lacking in and therefore needed to be worked on before entering the job market. As much as 45.4% of the respondents felt that they needed more ESP courses to provide them with the necessary vocabulary to function effectively at the workplace. Writing skills, however, did not seem to feature highly for these respondents.

TABLE 11
Skills needed at U3

%	Skills	No.
87.6	Speaking	1
54.2	Grammar	2
45.4	Vocabulary	3
20.8	Writing	4

IMPLICATIONS FOR LINGUISTIC INITIATIVES

The data from this study clearly indicate that a 'gap' exists between the workplace and pedagogical resources. Forey (2004), for example, discovered that students' interpretations of workplace materials often diverged substantially from the researcher/ teacher's and from those of the material writers. The language and communication training programmes at tertiary institutions, thus, remain to be shaped, and there are many actions and initiatives that can help to shape them into a meaningful and positive direction, especially, in terms of preparing graduates for the workplace.

Clusters of language and communication activities may be derived together with the importance of the different language skills used for the execution of the different activities. The patterning of the activities and the language skills will allow a further match for informed decisions that will help the graduates to realise their needs. For example, those entering the financial service sector must recognise negotiation skills which include making proposals, making counter arguments, making concessions, bargaining, and making small talk.

The content analysis of the interview sessions highlights the relevance, adequacy, and efficiency of the courses offered in selected tertiary institutions that reflect the current practice in English language training and preparation of graduates for gainful employment. Currently, tertiary institutions do not follow rigid guidelines as to how their English language programmes are designed to meet and match industry needs. Much of the design could be described as intuitive and independent of the market desires for graduate employability.

Therefore, those responsible for the planning of English language training should be open to new design approaches. Changes in the employment sector will also have a direct impact on higher education, and vice-versa, so the symbiotic cooperation between the two sectors still needs to be explored and strengthened. The

main concern here is to prepare students for the twenty-first century workplace by developing strong speaking and writing skills. Instructional considerations may include the following:

- discussing topical issues in a classroom debate format
- providing opportunities for formal and informal oral interactions
- implementing strategies for writing for specific audience that is required of the workplace
- developing writing fluency and individual writing styles through frequent journal writing
- providing a grammar programme which emphasizes standardised or formal English

CONCLUSION

It seems that no pre-packaged language course can sufficiently prepare tertiary level students for diverse communicative competence in the workplace. This diversity is associated with the challenges involved in providing a more focused development of language skills that are appropriate for specific workplace communities. The data in this study obviously provide support for the need for a focused development of workplace specific competency-based language skills. Findings of the study point towards the development of a context-sensitive model of communicative competence that relates to the real world of work.

Similarly, the data clearly indicate that speaking skills are the skills which are mostly needed to enable graduates to perform effectively and efficiently at the workplace. An overwhelming majority of the tasks being performed at workplaces require a high degree of speaking ability. At the same time, writing ability is also rated highly.

While most of the respondents claimed that the English language courses offered by their respective universities had adequately prepared them for the workplace, some of them felt that more still needed to be done. Some suggestions include increasing the number of contact hours, lengthening the period of industrial linkage, including more challenging tasks and activities in the language courses to match the workplace environment, and ensuring that only qualified instructors are engaged to teach these courses.

In conclusion, there is a great need to address the problem of employability, specifically the lack of English language skills among Malaysian public university graduates. Language is a crucial element of workplace communication and must be defined as a key competence area. A programme that helps promote language and communication training linked to job-related workplace designed to help students meet their future employment must be in place. This training project should especially target those who need to improve their language skills in order to increase their chances of employability.

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A Case Study of the Audience at Three Art Music Concerts in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The development of art music and the construction of acoustically designed concert halls in Malaysia have provided more opportunities for live performances of various genres of art music. Generally, full attention is given to performers and their performances at a live concert, however it should be noted and emphasized that a live concert will not take place without the existence of its spectators. Unlike pop concerts, the size of audience at art music concerts is often small and this has become a key concern among organizers. The present study was carried out to identify the characteristics of the Malaysian audience at eight performances of three selected art music concerts: a concert version opera, a symphony concert, and a musical. A survey was used and interviewers intercepted potential respondents after each concert. Respondents were either interviewed or requested to complete the same survey questions themselves. A total of 660 samples were gathered. Based on the analysis on the respondents' occupations, it was found that they were mostly students and were generally below 30 years old. There was a balance between those with and without music background among the respondents. Musical was found to be the most preferred genre among the seven music genres given to the respondents. The results of this survey could function as a preliminary examination for future research to trace the changing characteristic of audience over time.

Keywords: Audience, art music, concert, musical, Opera, performance, Western Classical

INTRODUCTION

Live public performances of various art music genres such as Western classical, Musical, Opera, traditional and others are held in Malaysia, especially in major cities like Kuala Lumpur and Penang. The number of concerts has tremendously increased in the recent years, showing that this developing country has given emphasis to enhance culture and arts. The construction of acoustically designed concert halls such as *Istana Budaya* (IB), *Dewan Filharmonik* (MPO) and the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac) has provided more opportunities for not only foreign but also local performers to be involved in the music platform, and has thus indirectly offered the society with the experience of wider range of music genres.

Art and pop music can hardly be compared due to the different nature and cultural background they have, as explained by Johnson on the classical music, 'like art more generally, cannot be understood in the terms of popular culture' (Johnson, 2002, p. 46). However, in terms of publicity, a clear distinction between these art music and pop concerts is apparent, as the pressure of marketing Western classical or art music concert do not exist only in the West

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(Schiff, 1997; Maleshefski, 2006; *New York Times*, 25 June 2005; 24 June 2007; 28 October 2008), but also locally (Markovitz, 2003). Indeed, individual preferences and the low rates of attendance at some art music concerts may be explained by the less immediate entertainment value, as Fineberg (2006, p. 29) suggested:

> Whether we call art and culture high or low, those things that cannot support themselves in the marketplace are threatened. We must decide whether in some cases artistic or aesthetic value ought to override economic value and popular preference in the allocation of society's resources. In other words, we need to ask, 'Why should I pay (or help to pay) for something that I don't like?' The first step towards answering this question is to address the underlying paradox: If it's really better in a meaningful way, why don't I prefer it? Unless I can satisfactorily answer this first question, it will be very hard to continue onward to the benefits, other than sheer satisfaction or diversion that might justify continued support.

Another important aspect to consider is the fundamental setting of art music concerts. The contrast with pop concerts, where crowds and noise feature prominently, is obvious. Spectators at popular concerts are free to respond to the music through gestures, movement, shouting, singing, and many other expressive acts and emotions. However, an art music concert presents a totally contrasting atmosphere, where quietness throughout the whole performance is obligatory, with even coughing and sneezing are minimized.

A more direct description is provided by Pitts (2005, p. 257), 'the traditional practices of the Western Concert hall assume a relatively passive role for listeners, leaving them able to respond to decisions made by performers and promoters only to the extent of their applause and their future attendance.' These are the basic reactions of the art concert audience in general. Malaysian audience, at such concerts, resemble these descriptions, but little research has been carried out to find out the way in which Malaysian audience respond during an art music performance, and who these attendees are, particularly in relation to the history of the Western Classical music in this country, which is not extensive.

In addition, the declining audience of the art music concerts has always been a challenge, not only for the organizer but also for the artistes (Schiff, 1997; Botstein, 1999; Maleshefski, 2006; *NYT*, 24 June 2007). Thus, to survive in the competitive world and struggle with the economic crisis, organizers and performers could hardly depend on the conventional performance setting in this modern day (Maleshefki, 2006). Therefore, organizers and performers often need to find ways to ease the seriousness of the conventional concert format in marketing their product, with the aim that the music sounds less remote to the public (*NYT*, 3 June 2007). Aside from those who are musically trained and those who are actively involved in art performances, there is an uncertainty as to which other groups of people are interested in them. Hence, identifying the characteristics of the audiences and gaining a better understanding of their responses to art music concerts will provide useful information for artists when choosing their programme, for organizers seeking to develop the scope of art music, and to give context to requests or complaints from the audience.

CONCERT BACKGROUND AND VENUES

In this study, the targeted respondents were those attended three concerts held in Kuala Lumpur between the end of 2006 and mid 2007. In other words, all respondents were attendees of the chosen concerts. Meanwhile, observations and surveys were conducted at a total of eight performances from the three concerts:

- Three performances of the musical *Butterfly Lovers*, produced by Dama Orchestra at the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac), held from 6 to 8 September 2006.

- Two performances of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9, 'The Choral'*, performed by the National Symphony Orchestra at Istana Budaya, on 16 and 17 March 2007.
- Three performances of the concert version of Mozart's *Magic Flute*, performed by the KLPac Sinfoniette and soloists at the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac) on the 23 and 24 March 2007 (including a matinee performance).

A total of 660 respondents were gathered from the eight performances (213 respondents for the *Butterfly Lovers*, 225 respondents for *Magic Flute* and 222 for Beethoven's Symphony). Members of the audience were approached immediately at the end of each performance, with the intention of acquiring responses while memories regarding that particular performance were still fresh. Those who agreed to respond to the survey were either interviewed by the enumerators according to the questionnaire, or completed the same questionnaire on their own. After an art music concert, it was observed that the audience could generally be divided into two groups: those who hurry out to either the car-park or to catch public transport, as evening concerts usually end rather late; and those who seemingly show much more appreciation of the social aspect, mingling among other attendees despite lateness of the event. Moreover, family members, colleagues or friends apparently gathered in groups to discuss, comment, or to simply have conversation. The availability of this second group meant they undoubtedly formed the majority of the respondents, who provided replies and suggestions with much willingness and sincerity.

Although these concerts were either derived from or in the form of Western genres, all of them were completely produced by locals. In particular, the musical *Butterfly Lovers* was based on the film *The Love Eterne*, which was produced by the Shaw Brothers in 1963. The story, a historical legend set in the period of the Eastern Jin dynasty (265-420AD), is well-known in the Mandarin-speaking world, even forty years after its debut, and is reputed to be one of the finest works of the Chinese Folk literature. The music and songs (*huangmei*) of this musical were arranged and composed in different styles, including traditional and Western Classical forms. Mozart's famous opera *The Magic Flute* was also adapted to include visual projection and narration, with the aim of reaching a wider audience. Among the three concerts, the one that closely resembles a conventional Western Classical performance was Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9, 'The Choral'*.

Apart from the Beethoven, the aim of the other two concerts was clear; their adaptation was intended to deliver those particular productions in a more 'user-friendly' manner, especially for those of the public without any musical background. For instance, although the *Magic Flute* is a famous work amongst the Western Classical musicians, not much is known about it in Malaysia. Similarly, the classical Mandarin language used in the performances of the musical *Butterfly Lovers* assimilates exactly the version in *The Love Eterne*, which is difficult for an audience without any Chinese education background to understand. Thus, the English narration has helped the audience to fully understand the Musical than merely relying on the singing, music, or acting to guide them.

The concert venues were strategically located at the centre of Kuala Lumpur. Each venue possesses distinctive and individual architectural features with acoustic properties appropriate for a concert hall, and these halls also provide an ambience which is ideal for social events. The KLPac was founded in May 2004, and its auditorium 'Pentas 1' accommodates 504 seats. Istana Budaya or better known as *The Palace of Culture* was founded in September 1999, and the hall can accommodate up to 1412 spectators at a time.

BASIC PROFILE OF THE MALAYSIAN AUDIENCE

With the development and the increasing number of art music concerts in Malaysia, such as the consistency of the performances by the

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, and events held at KLPac, it is crucial to identify the characteristics of this small group and what the functions of the concert is to them. Furthermore, the question of how to increase potential audience in Malaysia should not be neglected as this will affect the development of the local productions and the acceptance of the artistes' performances by the general public.

Tertiary music education, which is provided either by the government or private institutions, seems to represent a noteworthy source of spectators at the art music concerts. Similarly, the development of music education and co-curriculum in both primary and secondary schools has contributed to the growing interest in such performances. The emergence of student orchestra, wind bands, and Chinese orchestra in some schools in major cities has no doubt showed a direct involvement of students in art music. This provides a possible reason why the survey of the eight performances outlined above indicated that a relatively large number of respondents (33.2%) were students. Another reason why students represented the largest group of attendees is no doubt due to the role of the performers as teachers or co-students. The social interaction between the teacher and students after each performance was clearly evident, particularly for Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*.

This is in comparison to the West, where the problem of an aging audience has become an issue (*NYT*, 25 June 2005). A research from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the United States revealed the aging population of attendees for several music genres, especially for the Western Classical and Opera (Peterson, Hull and Kern, 2000). Although the comparison between Malaysia and foreign countries in regards to the age profile is not feasible, organizers of local productions definitely wish to avoid this problem in their future performances. For these reasons, three local concerts, in which the overall respondents aged between 21 and 30 and below 20 year old were ranked the highest and second highest populations (*Fig. 1*). The age range of the respondents could explain why a large number was recorded for 'students'. For example, over 50 % of the respondents for both the symphony (Beethoven) and the opera (Mozart) were below the age of 30. In contrast, the respondents for the musical *Butterfly Lovers* were evenly distributed between the age groups and these were from 21 to 60 year old, as shown in *Fig. 2*.

The reasons for such results are clear. Music education, as mentioned in the earlier section, has indirectly encouraged younger attendees, especially for the Western music genre, whereas the older generation (particularly those aged 50 and above) tend to be less involved with this particular genre. However, in the particular case of *Butterfly Lovers*, the Chinese folk-orientated musical based on the famous legend of *Liang* and *Zhu*, the older generation became the target audience. In a discussion with Khor Seng Chew, the music director of this production regarded that the *huangmei* tunes used in this Musical are especially familiar to the older Chinese-educated generation. Although the music was completely modernized in this production, the fact that it depicted a story from a 1960s movie is likely to be what attracted this age group to a Western form of the musical.

On the other hand, the modified opera and the symphony paint another picture. The educational value may generate another group of attendees, namely parents, from their companionship or their support towards their children performing at these concerts. Through the responses from the open-ended questions, the relationship between parents and children was significantly shown among the attendees and the performers, especially in the case of the concert version opera. Among other, the responses from this particular group of audience are such as 'the narrator and graphic are very easy for children to relate to […]', 'Overall, it was a good concert and my 11 year old son enjoyed it', 'for children, well adapted'. Nevertheless, if the opera had been performed in its original format, it was unlikely that the responses and groups of spectators would have been the same; this indicates that both the narration and animation have eased the

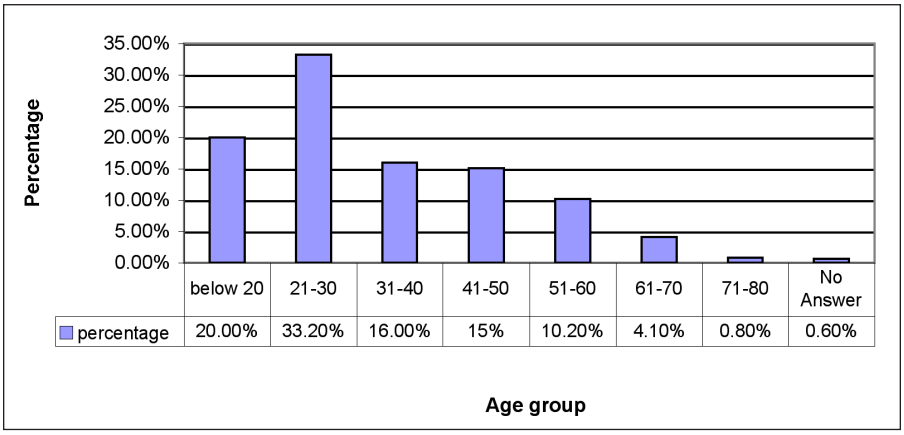

Fig. 1: Age groups of the respondents

rigidity of the traditional opera setting. The main concern is that the quality of the performance may affect the attendees or future attendees for a concert. Although this issue was not the focus of the present study, the open-ended question did draw some negative responses about the quality of the performances. Among the common issues raised by the respondents are the quality of the orchestra, voice projection, the sound system, and the venue.

However, it is important to emphasize that apart from these deficiencies in the current performance, the aims of such productions are mainly to promote interest, educate and encourage future attendance, particularly of those who have less involvement with the art music. In terms of performance, the KLPac symphoniette has certainly provided a platform for young musicians to perform publicly and this has indirectly generated support through a parent-teacher-student relationship. The choice of performing Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* by the National Symphony Orchestra, which involved a choir and four vocalists, had also

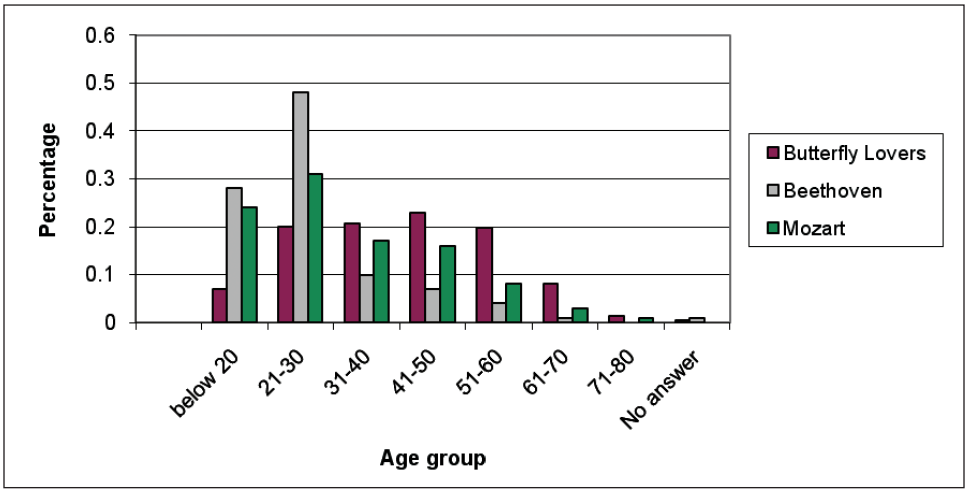

Fig. 2: Comparison of different age groups at three different concerts

guaranteed a similar group of spectators. As noticed, members of the choir were mostly teenagers. Identified by their white tops, they were seen chatting with parents, teachers, and of course their peers after the concerts.

Other categories such as marital status and ethnic group also reflect the age cohorts and audience's occupations. With the largest group of the respondents being students, it is not surprising that the number who are 'not married' (65%) is correspondingly high; in fact, it is found to be double the number of the married respondents (32%). In a multicultural country like Malaysia, it is quite interesting to identify how different ethnic groups respond to local art music concerts. In this study, the Chinese were found as significantly more prominent among the overall respondents. The fact that the musical performance was based on a Chinese legend has no doubt explained the high percentage of the Chinese attendees. Even if the results for the musical were excluded, the Chinese would still represent the largest ethnic category of the respondents (56%) for both the classical concerts. Overall, the recorded ethnic groups from the survey were Chinese (68%), Malay (17.1%), Indian (5%) and others (9.6%), as shown in *Fig. 3*. One possible reason for this is the involvement of more Chinese in the Western classical genre, which is also evident in the tertiary institutions or various classical music activities such as competitions, orchestra, and so forth, although more future research is needed to clarify on this issue.

As mentioned in the earlier section, students formed the largest occupational group among the various attendees. Apart from students (33%), the predominant theme of the occupation data is human service, though in comparison they are not significant. The most common occupation was teaching (6.2%), followed by homemakers (6%), managers (5.6%), and various arts-related jobs (4.5%). It could be argued that relying solely on the attendance of students, music educators and parents is not an effective means of promoting art music, and that one way to generate support for concert performances and increase the audience from the general public is to target a wider range of occupations.

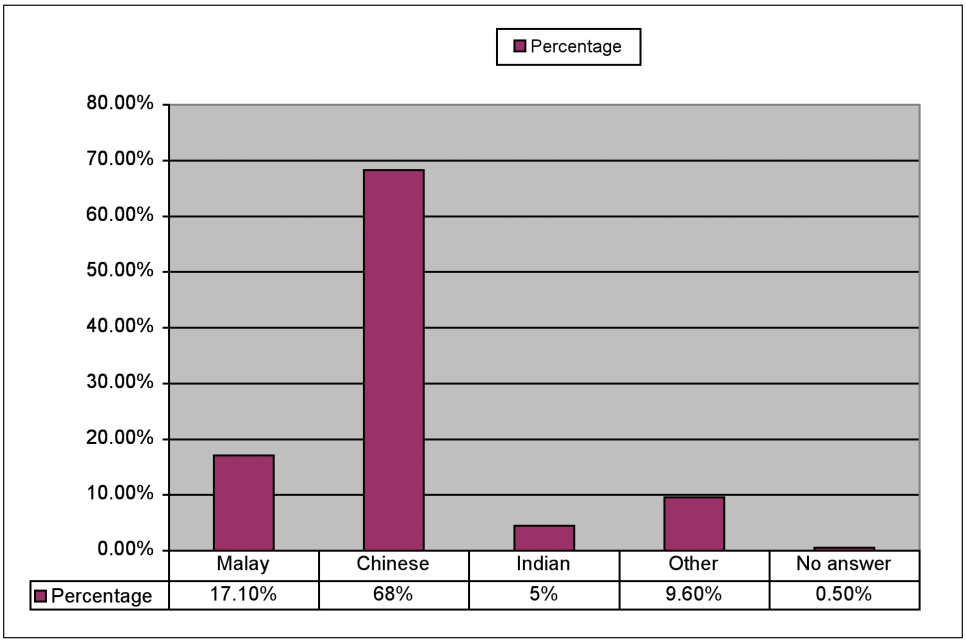

Fig. 3: Ethnical groups of the respondents

In terms of the practical aspects, although the aim of an art concert performance is not commercial gain, financial support is still important, especially for large-scale productions held in public venues. Due to the smaller market for art music, one particular problem faced by organizers and performers is whether to compromise audiences' preferred programmes or genres at the risk of restricting creativity. The programme of an art music concert should not be limited to target a selected audience only, but it should ideally be accessible to anyone regardless of their background, ethnic group or age. This explains the efforts made in making art performances more 'user-friendly', such as in the Mozart's *Magic Flute*. Ironically, the same practice may gradually lower the standard of the genre in the eyes of locals, and thus result in expressions of dissatisfaction ('I thought I was coming to an opera'), and the possibility that these spectators would not attend future performances by the same production company.

After giving a general profile of these respondents, another common question was the reason of the respondents to attend these concerts. Generally, the fundamental reasons for their attendance include the interest on a particular programme, the type of music or because of the particular performers. For this question, the respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer among the eight choices given, which include interest, performer, type of concert, review, venue, accompanying friends and family, 'do not know', and 'others'. The result was very much predicted. 'Interest' (37.8%) recorded the most important factor that encouraged the respondents to attend these concerts. This is followed by the other reasons such as the 'performer' and the 'type of music', which recorded the second and third highest ratings, i.e. at a rather close records of 23.3% and 22.3%, respectively (*Fig. 4*). The predicted results could be due to the reason of the samples who were also the attendees of the chosen concert. The preliminary study of this issue may be followed by a future study in search for the audience's reasons for attending a specific genre of art music.

RESPONDENTS' MUSICAL BACKGROUND

The question of whether art music can only be appreciated by listeners who have formal musical training is complex and it can lead to a long discussion or study. However, one of the aims in this study was to discover how the two

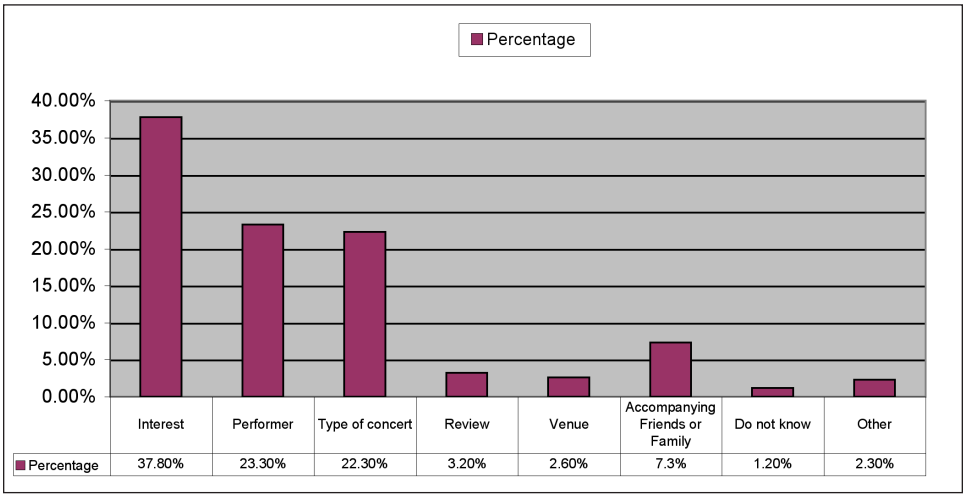

Fig. 4: Respondents' reasons to attend a concert

different groups (i.e. those with and without formal music training) made up the attendees of the chosen performances. For this purpose, the respondents were asked to indicate if they had any formal musical background or training; an open question as to the kind of qualification or training they have achieved, or the current training they are undergoing, followed for those answering in the positive. For this study, attendees in the category of those who have had formal musical training include various music professions, those who have experienced music lessons (for example, leading to graded examination from various professional bodies), or those who are currently pursuing music courses, diploma, degree or higher degrees.

On the contrary to what was expected, the proportion of the respondents without music training was found to be slightly higher, although the figure is not much larger (about 8% more), giving a ratio of approximately 1:1 (*Fig. 5*). Looking at each concert individually (*Fig. 6*), the opera achieved quite balanced numbers of respondents (i.e. both with and without musical background), while the *Symphony* and the *Musical* contributed to the discrepancy between the groups. It is important to note that the unusually high proportion (70%) of the non-musically trained attendees at the *Musical* was not surprising. As discussed earlier, the *Musical* revolved around a famous Chinese legend and it had therefore attracted many members of the public, particularly the older generation to whom it is most familiar. The audience might have not anticipated how this folk legend would be portrayed, but the title of the *Musical* performance itself would have been sufficient enough to attract their attention, particularly amongst those from the Chinese community.

On the other end of the spectrum, almost twice as many respondents were musically trained as those without any musical background (64% and 35%, respectively) at the *Symphony*. The reason is apparent; the Western Classical music has often been categorized as boring, dull, and unexciting for the non-classical listeners, and therefore the greater number of the respondents who are musically trained is not surprising (Johnson, 2002; Blacking, 1995; Bayles, 1999; *The Guardian*, 22 August 2005).

Older respondents also tended to less likely have a musical background, while the musically trained spectators were largely under the age of 30 years old (69%). The respondents below the age of 40 years old were more likely to be musically trained but this trend was reversed among older attendees (*Fig. 7*). As stated in the earlier section, the fact that young people are more exposed to this genre of music may explain the existence of a larger group of young attendees in Malaysia.

Meanwhile, the attendees who claimed they had no musical background could probably have a different appreciation of the art music

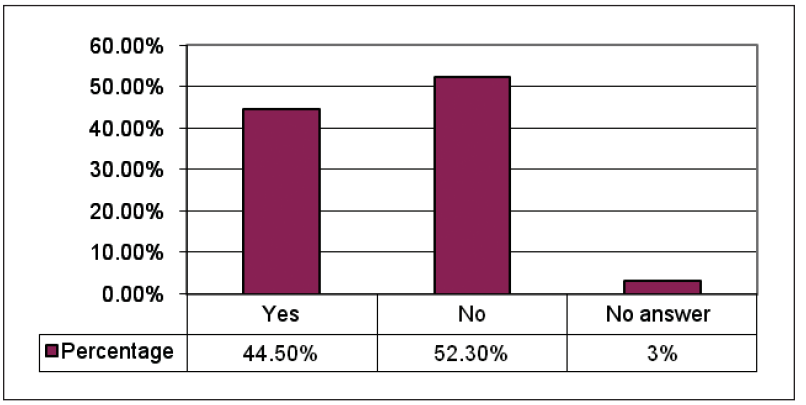

Fig. 5: The percentages of the audience with and without formal musical training

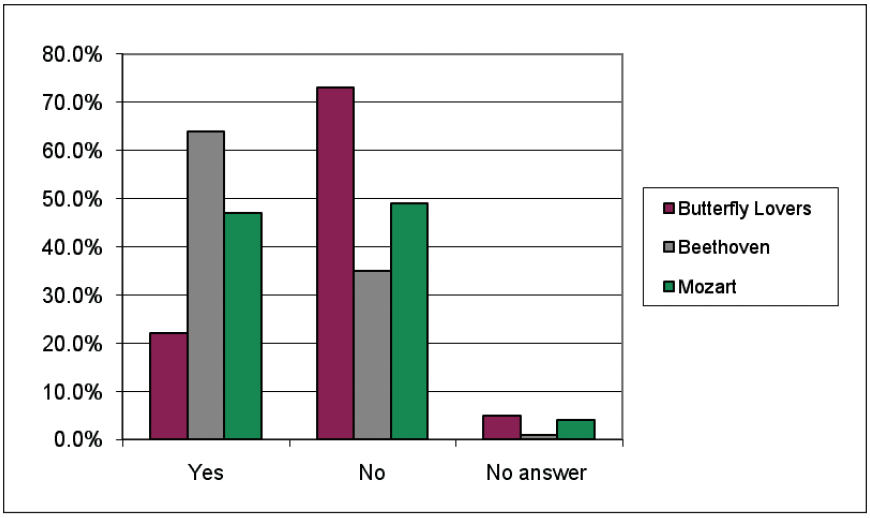

Fig. 6: The percentages of the audience with and without formal training at three different selected concerts

compared to those who are musically trained. For this group, entertainment may not be the sole reason for attending an art music concert. Other factors, such as social interaction, could gradually lead to increased knowledge about the genre and thus encourage future attendance at such events. From a different point of view, a rather similar reception from both groups of respondents is encouraging, and this could imply that the potential for audience without formal music training to attend art music concerts does exist.

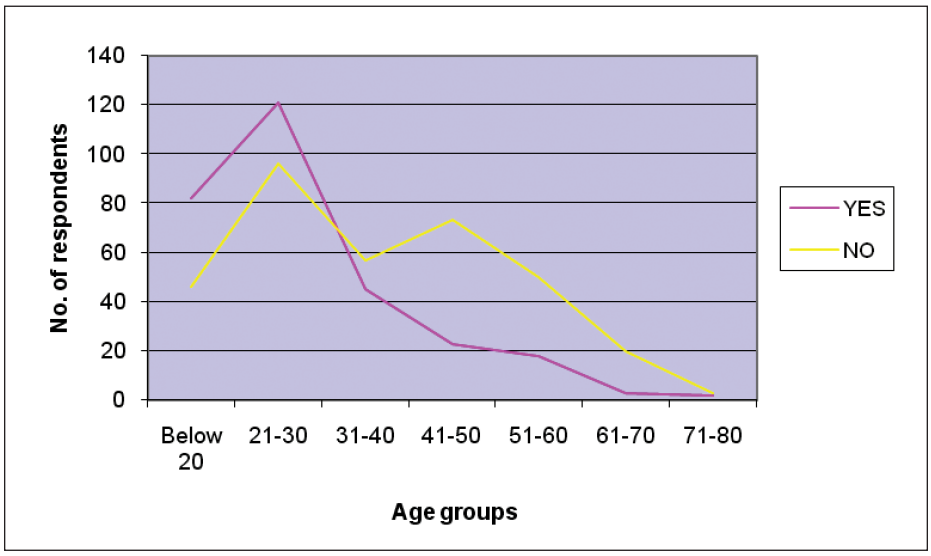

Fig. 7: Correlation between the age and music background among the members of audience

AUDIENCE'S PREFERENCES

Much research has been carried out on the preferences of an audience with regards to various types of art music, i.e. the information that organizers will definitely find useful. However, the preferences of each individual may depend on his/her education or family background, as well as the influences of the society, the media, and other life experiences. Therefore, the exact reasons for the preferences of people towards certain kinds of music, especially art music genres, are rather complex. As Fineberg (2002, p. 92) wrote:

> It is very easy to explain semantically why the sunset produces colours (perhaps not for me, but certainly for any physicist who understands the light emitted by the sun and its interaction with the atmosphere). However, it is completely impossible to explain why it is beautiful or why watching it is pleasurable.

A study entitled, 'How Americans relate to Classical Music and their Local Orchestra' revealed that 'consumers have a unique relationship with classical music as an art form, which is distinct from other art forms. Some people have diverse cultural interests while others choose to focus exclusively on one particular form of art' (Knight, 2002, p. 30). A survey on the public participation in the arts from the National Endowment for the Arts (Bradshaw and Nichols, 2004) carried out in 2002 revealed that 23% of adults preferred visiting an art museum, while attending a musical performance was the next most common response. In this study, the respondents were given the freedom to choose from a selection of seven music genres which are performed in the country. Given the fact that the data were collected at the art music concerts and that the respondents were likely to be attending the performances of their preferred genre, it is perhaps unsurprising that Musical, Classical, and Opera received the highest number of votes (*Fig. 8*).

Famous musical productions from abroad which were performed in Malaysia have indirectly introduced the genre(s) to the local audience and perhaps encouraged more local productions. The first popular and major local musical, *Puteri Gunung Ledang*, was produced in 2006, and this was later followed by *M!Opera (2006)*, *Butterfly Lovers (2006)*, *Broken Bridges (2006)*, *Tunku (2007)* (celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Malaysian independence), *P.Ramlee (2007)*, *Jewel of Tibet (2008), Ismail (2008)*, *Impak Maksima* (2008), *Prince Siddharta (2009)*, and many others. The demand for some of the well-received large-scale productions

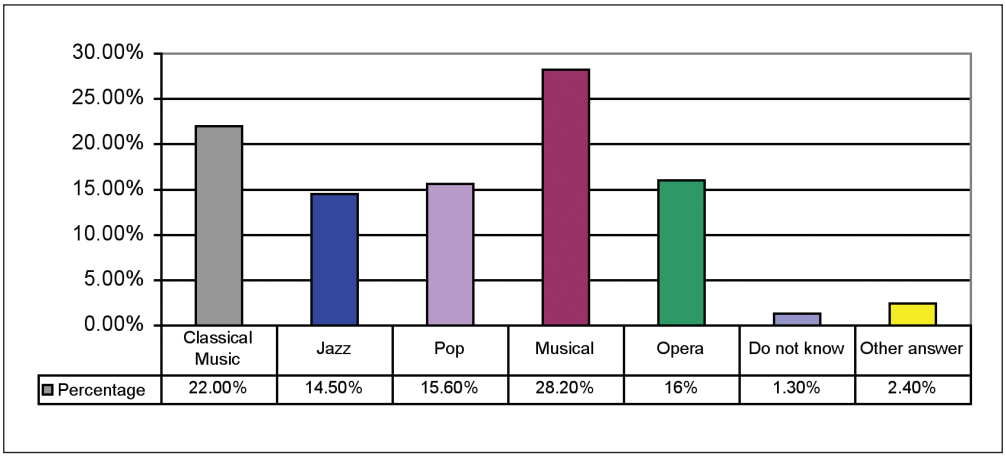

Fig. 8: Respondents' music preferences

is evident with these performances being re-staged (the so-called second or third seasons), and the invitation to perform abroad (*The Star*, 3 April 2007; December 2008; 10 February 2009; 22 May 2009). The success of the recent musical performances is undoubtedly due to the fact that the content of these productions is well-known to all and this has attracted the attention of the public, even those with little or no knowledge of the this musical genre. The contents include popular literature, well-known people or historical events, and this familiarity has also encouraged artistic creativity in many associated aspects of the production, not just in terms of the music. By encouraging this trend within the genre, it is hoped that more members of the public who are without any musical background will be involved in the art music events through a variety of programmes that they can easily understand. This might be an effective way of introducing or leading them to more formal, serious art music. Le Cocq (2002, p. 11) reflects Adorno's view on the perceptions towards contemporary new music when he states that 'the public by and at large prefers and will pay for only the familiar and unchallenging.'

Another aspect that should be taken into account is what makes the musical performance the most popular genre. In general, the music itself is not the only element of this genre. A musical performance is not complete without many other theatrical aspects such as acting, props, costumes, choreography, and so forth, while the impact of these visual elements on the spectators is an important consideration. Unlike a Western classical concert which depends solely on the serious music of the performance, all other artistic aspects may contribute to the success of a production. More importantly though, unless it is a contemporary, modern, avant-garde musical, a direct and explicit form of a musical seems to be more acceptable to audience of all ages.

A few other figures worth highlighting are the respondents' age groups and their music preferences (*Fig. 9*). The musical performance is found to be the most popular across all ages (excluding the age range of 61-80 years due to the small sample size of this particular group in this study). For the younger generation aged below 21 years, popular music came a close second after Musicals. However, the preference for popular music dropped to fourth and fifth places in other age groups. Another notable genre is Opera, which was less favoured by the respondents under 30 years, but was voted the second or third most popular among the older

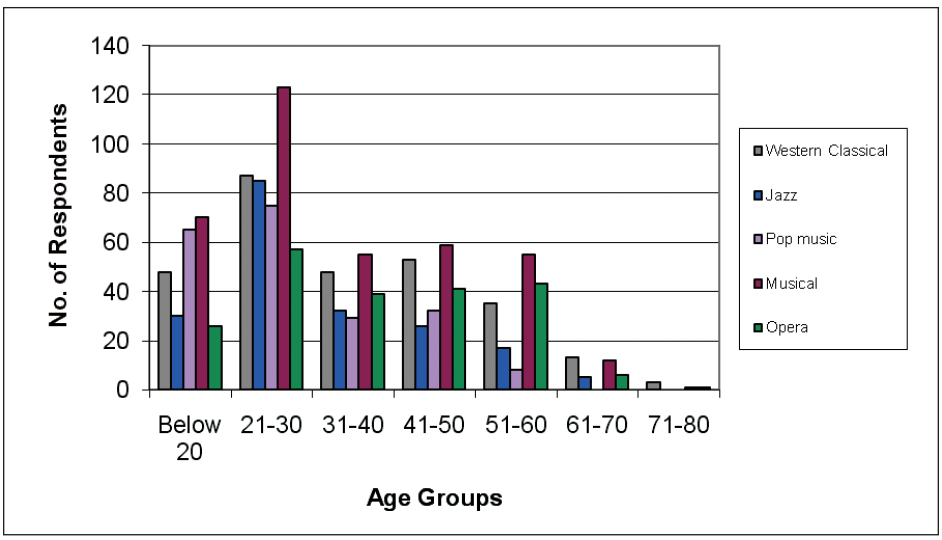

Fig. 9: Age groups and their music preferences

age groups. In this study, the Opera refers to the Western Classical Opera which is rarely performed in Malaysia (although certain arias and songs are sometimes included in recitals or concert programmes). The different languages used in many famous operas, especially Italian and German, are probably the main barriers to the genre being easily accepted by the general public, particularly by those who do not have any direct involvement with it.

Meanwhile, the Western classical music occupied the second place across the three age groups, namely 21-30, 31-40, and 41-50 year old. However, the margin of the preference for the musical over other genres is greater in the age group of 21-30 years than in other age groups. Apart from Musical, the same age group showed an even preference for Western Classical, Jazz, and Pop music. Jazz shows a stable performance, and it became the fifth choice for most age groups, except for the attendees aged 21-30 and 41-50 year old.

CONCLUSION

The development of art music in Malaysia is no doubt accelerating, as can be observed from the current frequency of art music concerts held, the construction of music halls, and particularly the educational aspects. It is worth highlighting that due to the multicultural ethnic profiles of the Malaysian audience, the complex issue of their preferences towards a particular music genre cannot be avoided.

Based on the survey conducted following eight performances of three different art music concerts between September 2006 and March 2007, two significant audience profiles were identified, namely those below 30 years old, while those who identified themselves as students clearly represented the majority of the respondents in this study. Music education is an important predictor for attendance at the two Western classical concerts, the Symphony and Opera, but not for the Musical. This correlates with the majority of the respondents below the age of 30 years old with a music background, though the level of music qualifications among these respondents was not determined at this point. On the contrary, more respondents without any musical background turned out at the musical *Butterfly Lovers* in which a more balanced profile of age groups was noted, probably due to the nature of the genre and its well-known story among the Chinese community.

In addition, the development of music education at local schools and tertiary institutions in the recent years has also resulted in higher number of younger people attending these music concerts. The existence of music education also provides a greater opportunity for the younger generation, particularly students at tertiary institutions, to be involved in and exposed to various music activities. In particular, music students at various levels form the main target of many art music concerts, whether they are indirectly involved in the performance or participating as members of the audience. The availability of students indirectly secures a certain number of attendees for many local art music concerts. Apart from interest, another possible reason for students attending these concert performances is their involvement in the subject (for example, as a student with a project or an assignment for the subject) and the intention to acquire experience of listening to live art music concert.

However, depending on this small audience alone is obviously not effective for the future development of concert productions and the quality of local performances. The need for local art music performances and performers to gain public recognition, which seems to lack in the country, is therefore important. Through conversations with musicians and music directors in this study, there are members of the audience who were reluctant to spend more on local productions and who have complained that tickets were expensive (even though they were priced at lower rates as compared to production abroad). A similar finding was also indicated for the Peking Opera performances in China, in which 'even free shows have failed to attract a full house' (*Asia Times*, 19 July 2008). This could be a major problem faced by most organizers of art music concerts, with the

exception of those who are fully sponsored. The setting and effort of the art performances may seem simple for the general public, and most are not aware of the preparation required before a performance. Fineberg (2002, p. 67) explains this by stating:

> Classical music is not very expensive to write (even the most famous composer's commission fees are relatively modest) as long as we don't expect composers to live off the commissions and royalties they receive for their music. It is outrageously expensive to rehearse and perform, however. The amount of infrastructure used to create scores and parts, rehearse pieces, rent concert halls and percussion instruments (because percussionists play such a variety of instruments, they don't usually own them all, and so they are rented for concerts), tune pianos, make recordings, and so on, is enormous. I have spent a lot of time organizing concerts, and while the best of them are amazing experiences, a certain suspension of disbelief is required to justify such an expense for something that exists so briefly. This is a real disadvantage the performing arts have relative to the plastic arts.

Therefore, there is a need to expand the types of audience and the awareness of the public towards the various types of art music in order to support local performers and production. One of the reasons why productions such as Mozart's *Magic Flute* was staged in a concert version was probably to attract and educate a wider public to this kind of music in the hope of gaining future attendance from this audience. However, productions in this manner may lose another category of audience, i.e. those who wish to attend a more serious, conventional opera.

In this study, the Musical which involves many aspects beyond the music is the preferred genre and this probably explains the recent frequency of the local musical productions. Looking at the various musicals performed, the many aspects of these productions have brought significant changes to the genre. Future research regarding the hybridisation of the music, settings, designs, and most of all, the identity of the current local musicals is very much needed. The flexibility of this genre to incorporate various art subjects could be one of the important factors why it is easily accepted by the public. Similarly, this also applies to the productions where the genre allows room to showcase creativity in different aspects of performing arts.

In conclusion, although the art music performances in Malaysia are presently being focussed in research, the nature of their reception should not be neglected. In particular, the audience's profiles may not be of concern to performers, but any performance needs the support of an audience, not least by their attendance per se. If the pressure of targeting audience in art music becomes worsen, it may gradually affect the quality of the performers, particularly the potential of the future generations. Even though the aim of art music performances is not for commercial purposes, they can hardly sustain themselves without a certain amount of return. In more specific, it is not practical to aim for a large audience such as those at the commercial concerts since the function of both types of music is completely different, but it would be encouraging if these performances were embraced more by the public, at least to alleviate concerns about the number attendees. Moreover, the development of music education plays a vital role, while the continuous support from different aspects is also important to guarantee the future of art music in Malaysia.

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"Yes…er…ok…": Linguistic and Turn-Taking Strategies in Negotiation

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how unacquainted interlocutors negotiate meaning, which is realized via turn-taking, and contributes to the sequence and organization of the entire negotiation process in the context of the sale and purchase of second-hand property. The study argues that even though interlocutors are unacquainted with no set agenda as in business meetings, they demonstrated the negotiation of organized turns and that negotiation is an ordered activity. The theoretical approach adopted for this study is based on Conversational Analysis (CA) as provided by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), where the turn-taking features that determine people's use of language are explored. Two out of twelve audio recordings gathered are used for this study. The interlocutors are non-native speakers of English who use English as their lingua franca and are involved in the context of sales and purchase of property. Data analysis is focused on the sequential emergence of turns, while the use of a standardized transcription notation system, adapted from Jefferson's conventions (1978), is used to capture the details of the conversational production. The findings of this study show that organized, sequential turn-taking strategies are used in negotiations.

Keywords: **Turn-taking, conversation analysis, naturally-occurring, negotiation, meaning, second-hand property, Malaysia**

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates how unacquainted interlocutors conduct negotiation in the context of the sale and purchase of second-hand property. The study intends to reveal how the process of negotiation can be realized via the co-construction of turns and how these turns form a sequence that eventually make up the entire process of negotiation between the potential buyers and real estate agents (REA hereafter). The goal of the interlocutors involved in this particular kind of negotiation requires that they come to a consensus and decide whether to purchase the property, and this study focuses on establishing the manner in which the turn-taking sequence contributes towards the co-construction of the negotiation process.

Unlike meetings where negotiation is the focus, the unacquainted interlocutors from both sides come to the meeting with pre-arranged agenda. However, in the case of the current study, the interlocutors have no set agenda, instead co-construct each agenda as they take turns with no written rules. It is this co-construction of the process of negotiation that makes this study significant.

The interactions between the interlocutors in the study are naturally-occurring and as Stubbs (1983, p. 33) notes "the importance of naturally-occurring discourse derives from the interest in

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describing how interlocutors create, negotiate and structure social reality for some stretch of time," in response to immediate situational demands, which characterizes most spoken language including everyday conversations. Jariah Mohd. Jan (1999, p. 20) further reiterates that "naturally-occurring discourse may also be termed as formal goal-oriented spoken discourse."

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY / OBJECTIVES

As studies in the past have mostly been concerned with simulated negotiation situations where native speakers of English were asked to role-play, the purpose of this study is to show how unacquainted interlocutors who are non-native speakers of English co-construct a sequential organization of turns and manage the naturally-occurring negotiation in the context of sales and purchase of Malaysian real-estate property.

The study also aims to show that the phases of negotiation make up the entire construction of a negotiation event and reveal how the unacquainted interlocutors construct spontaneous strategies in the negotiation process that emerge as the interlocutors co-construct a particular phase.

WHY NEGOTIATION?

Negotiation is almost always associated with conflicts and crises that need immediate action. Previous research on negotiation has mostly focused on conflict resolutions (e.g. Menkel-Meadow, 1984; Tribe, 1994; Baguley, 2000; Barnes, 2004). However, negotiation does not need to deal with high profile cases where there is conflict or the need for highly-skilled negotiators or mediators (Shanmuganathan, 2008). Negotiation is almost always associated with conflicts and crises that need immediate action. This study argues that negotiation does not necessarily include disagreement or conflict and this supports Firth's (1995, p. 7) view that:

> 'Although disagreements and various other forms of conflict *may and often do arise* during negotiation activity, these are neither pre-conditions nor obligatory reasons for the activity.'

Negotiation is ubiquitous and could take place at any common locations such as at the workplace, marketplace, shops, property sites, clinics, and on the telephone.

In this study, negotiation refers to the effort taken by interlocutors as they co-construct turns and negotiate the meaning of prior utterance to produce a feedback or response. The continuous negotiation of meaning ensures the progress of the interaction, indicated by the use of certain features of turn-taking such as the turn construction unit, transition relevance place, backchannels, overlaps, and interruptions.

The emergence of the sequence of turns and the negotiation of meanings all contribute towards the construction and reconstruction of a set of phases which make up the negotiation process in this study. Although the phases in this study may differ from other types of negotiation, interlocutors would be able to recognize and identify the unfolding patterns according to the type of negotiations that they would have to deal with in future. This recognizing and identifying abilities, as well as spontaneous strategizing, are evident from the analysis of data in the current study.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study uses a qualitative approach to discuss how the turn-by-turn construction of the negotiation phases is constructed, while the Conversation Analysis is used as a basis for the analysis. It is the Conversation Analysis that enables the study to establish common patterns that in turn provide the avenue to determine where the phases of negotiation emerge. It is therefore necessary to discuss the emergent turn-taking sequence for a better understanding of the construction.

Research on spontaneous or naturally-occurring interaction has always been concerned

with the features of speech or the patterns of turn-taking (e.g. Fairclough, 1992; Sacks *et al*., 1974; Jariah Mohd Jan, 1999; Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2002). This research is part of a larger Ph.D study (Shanmuganathan, 2008) which looks at how interlocutors construct phases of negotiation via patterns of turn-taking.

The patterns of turn-taking are based on the Conversation Analysis which is concerned with the detailed transcript analysis of audio-recorded utterances. The following sections discuss some of the features that are of concern for the current study.

Turn-Taking

When an interlocutor initiates a conversation by constructing a particular word or utterance (also known as *Turn Construction Unit* or TCU), the interlocutor expects a form of feedback or response. When the recipient of the message negotiates the meaning intended by the interlocutor and responds in any form of either a word or a sound, a turn has then been taken and this pair makes up what is known as an 'adjacency pair' of for example, question-response or tactic-counter-tactic.

In the entire conversation, many adjacency pairs are constructed where turns are constantly exchanged and the interlocutors take turns at being interlocutor and recipient (Shanmuganathan, 2008). However, how do the interlocutors recognize the point where the turn is supposed to be taken? Through experience, interlocutors are able to recognize a rising intonation in an utterance as a question form or doubt and a falling intonation as the end of sentence at the point where the recipient can take a turn, and this is also known as the *Transition Relevance Place* (TRP) (see Sacks *et al*., 1974).

The way in which the turns are organized with the counter response, and how tactics are drawn on and the counter-tactic used by the interlocutors display a highly synchronized organization of turns, even though all this happens in split seconds within each utterance (Shanmuganathan, 2008). In fact, the exchange has many occurrences of "overlaps minus gaps between the turn allocations indicate the spontaneity in which interlocutors managed the turn-taking system" (ibid., p. 240).

Overlaps and Interruption

Overlaps and interruptions occur when one interlocutor fails to recognize the point where the utterance ends (TRP), therefore constructing his/her own utterance (TCU) which results in overlaps. The difference between overlaps and interruptions is in the outcome of the TCU, i.e. if the interaction continues on the same issues discussed prior to the TCU, it would then be an overlap, and if the issue discussed prior to the TCU was no longer pursued or another topic was introduced, it would then be an interruption in the conversation (Sacks *et al*., 1974).

The study recognizes these overlaps as acts of solidarity and not as interruptions that intend to disrupt interaction. The framework of the analysis in this study is based on the conversation analysis since it is perceived to be most significant in uncovering and documenting all kinds of systematic organisations of talk in verbal interactions as they take place in real life. The conversation analysts also attempt to describe and explain the ways in which conversations work. Their prime concern is to examine the manner in which conversational participants are able to produce intelligible utterances, and in turn successfully interpret the utterances of others, negotiate and exchange meanings as well (Sacks *et al.*, 1974).

Backchannel

Schegloff (1972, p. 379) suggests that recipients of a conversation signal their understanding of and show attentiveness using assent terms such as 'mmhm, uh-huh, yeah, yes, er, ok, and right' which are also called minimal responses or backchannels (Zimmerman and West, 1975). These backchannels ensure the continued flow of interaction and in the case of the current study the flow of the negotiation process.

Backchannels could be overlapping talk but this feature exhibits agreement, solidarity

and co-operation, more than what interruptions would. In fact, studies have raised the awareness that the absence of backchannel support can make the speaker think that his/her recipient is uninterested in what s/he is saying, or disagrees with his/her utterance (Zimmerman and West, 1975). Jariah Mohd Jan (1999, p. 68), in her study on *Power and Solidarity in Inter-gender Verbal Interaction*, suggests "delayed backchannel support produces signs of anxiety in the speaker."

Although these are not competitive uses of the feature, they should be seen as an intended response albeit minus the active input towards conversation. Nevertheless, it is possible that "backchannel support may have a competitive variant, in the event that a speaker exploits the backchannel to claim the main channel" (ibid.).

In sum, the co-construction of this organized sequence of negotiation is achieved through the turn-taking procedures constructed by the interlocutors, the awareness of the overlap and interruption features in the conversations, as well as the responsibility of the interlocutors to constantly negotiate meaning from prior utterances and provide backchannel support-all contributing towards a well-choreographed, organized negotiation process.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The data gathered for this study were obtained from two audio recordings of the negotiation between five potential buyers and two REAs in the states of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. With the help of acquaintances known to the researcher, prior consent was obtained from either one of the interlocutors for audio-recording purposes (Shanmuganathan, 2008). The justification for gaining consent from either one party is discussed at length in Shanmuganathan (2005).

A total of 12 audio recordings were obtained with each recording lasting between 20 to 45 minutes. For the purpose of analysis, the current study only dealt with two data for in-depth discussions and comparisons. The details of the interlocutors (self-explanatory) are shown in Table 1.

In the first data, there were one REA (S) and two potential buyers (P and Y) at the site, while in the second data, there were one REA (R) and three potential buyers (A, J, and E). Their conversations were audio-recorded and later transcribed and coded using an adapted version of Jefferson's (1978) transcript conventions (see *transcript notation below* Table 1). This set of conventions show the distribution of turns between the speakers, allowing readers to see the relative length (number of words) and frequency of a speaker's turn. In addition, this convention also provides information about the occurrences of overlaps or interruptions. More importantly, the study reveals the sequential emergence of the turn-by-turn talk in the negotiation of sales and purchase of property.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings show interlocutors co-constructed a well-choreographed, organized turn-by-turn

TABLE 1
Demographic details of the interlocutors for Data 1 and 2

Data	Real Estate Agent (REA)	Potential Buyers
Data 1	R - Eurasian male, 15 years experience	E – Malay male (early 30s) A – Malay female, E's fiancée (mid 20s) J – Malay female, A's sister (mid 30s)
Data 2	S - Chinese male, house owner, who is also a freelance REA	P – Indian male (early 50s) Y – Indian female, P's wife (early 50s)

sequence of negotiation in the context of the sale and purchase of second-hand property. The interlocutors were able to recognize and identify the unfolding patterns in the process of negotiation while taking turns and negotiating meaning throughout the interaction. The interlocutors also used the following spontaneous strategies to negotiate meaning:

- Confirmations,
- Backchannels,
- Repetitions,
- Evaluation.

This recognizing and identifying abilities, as well as spontaneous strategizing, are especially of interest in this study since both unacquainted parties worked towards negotiating meaning with the sole purpose of achieving individual goals. The REA wanted to sell at the highest possible price to get a higher commission, while the potential buyers wanted to buy at the lowest possible price.

The findings for selected phases of negotiation that emerged as a result of the co-construction of turns by the interlocutors are summarized in the form of tables. The selection is necessary as it enables thorough discussion of the phases and to list the types of spontaneous strategies that emerge as the interlocutors co-constructed a particular phase. For this purpose, the phases of interest would be the opening phase (i.e. Phase 1), which is the phase where introductions of self and others are made and social niceties exchanged. As this is their very first meeting, it is important to establish how interlocutors break the ice and help make the first meeting more comfortable.

Phases 3 and 4 are also discussed next. In these phases, interlocutors pose certain tactics that need counter-response to the tactics. In the current data, both interlocutors employ the fault finding tactic, referring to the potential buyers finding fault with the property with the purpose of reducing the price of the property. This is a common tactic used by all potential buyers in the current study, and as such warrants in-depth investigation of how the interlocutors posed tactics, negotiated the actual meaning of the prior utterance, and then counter-responded.

Finally, Phase 6 is also discussed as this is the phase where the interlocutors ended the negotiation process. In this final phase, the interlocutors had to make decisions or non-decisions, and in this study, this phase appeared to be just as challenging as the opening phase.

Phase 1 – Introductions

This is the phase where the interlocutors meet for the first time and exchange greetings. In Data 1 and 2, the potential buyers had called the REAs before coming to the property site. Although they have talked before, they do not know how the other looks like, and thus the general introductions where the interlocutors introduced themselves and others are generally what make up this phase. Table 2 presents a summary of the first phase and the strategies used in the short exchange.

The first interlocutor S, an REA began with a minimal greeting form 'Hi, hi Mr. P/' in Data 1. This minimal greeting is the usual social nicety that people accord those they meet even if they are strangers. However, S moved immediately into posing a query within the same sentence to confirm whether he was addressing the correct recipient. In this sentence, S posed a query in a rising intonation 'Mr. P /' (line 1) which was intended as a question that required a response. P responded and confirmed that it was he (line 2), 'uh, yes, yes' and proceeded to remind S that he had 'called just [now]' (line 3).

As P drew towards the end of his Turn Construction Unit (TCU), S pre-empted a possible Transition Relevance Place (TRP) with P's rising intonation and proceeding to overlap at the word 'now' to show agreement. The first strategy used in this data was the repetition 'yes, yes' in line 2 by the potential buyer P to emphasize his confirmation.

In lines 4 – 5, the REA posed another query which was still in the introductory phase, 'so you live round here?' as a form of ice-breaker. In negotiating the direction and meaning behind the line of S's questions, P provided answers to

TABLE 2
Summary of Phase 1 and strategies of turn-taking

Data 1	Strategies	Data 2	Strategies
1. S: Hi, hi Mr P / ←{P1}	Greeting-confirm	1. E: Hi are you (.) R?	Greeting-confirm
2. P: Uh, yes, yes I called	(BC) Confirmation	←{P1}	Query
3. just [now] This is Y	Confirmation-	2. R: E is it?	Confirmation
4. S: [yah] yah hi. So you	Query	3. E: ye[s]	Confirmation
5. live around here?	Disagreement-	4. R: [R F] her[e]	Agreement
6. P: No, uh in Subang	Repair Clarification	5. E: ok, [ok]	Greetings-social niceties
7. S: which part?	Giving facts	6. R: [hi] hi (w*hile*	
8. P: USJ 9	(BC) Clarification	7. *nodding to the*	
9. S: oh, Taipan [there-]lah?	(BC)	8. *ladies)* nice to see	
10. P: [uh..ah]	Disagreement-	9. you	Others-introduction
11. Taipan is 10, USJ 10	Clarification	10. E: ok, this is my sister-	
12. we are in 9	(BC) Confirmation	11. in-law, J[am]	Greetings
13. S: ah ya ya I know, I		12. R: [hi]	Greetings
14. work in Taipan. I have		13. J: [hi]	Others-introduction
15. a restaurant there, I am	Agreement	14. E: [an]d this	
16. in the food business		15. is my ah (.9) ah	
17. Y: oh [I see I see]		16. *tunang*[*-lah*]	Clarification - other
	PHASE 2	17. R: [oh,oh] fiancee'	repair
18. P: [so can we] see the house?		18. [ah]	Repetition
←{P2}		19. E: [A, m]y	
		20. fianc[ée]	Backchannel
		21. R: [ah a]h ok	Greeting
		22. A: [hi]	
			PHASE 2
		23. E: so we want to view,	
		24. which one is it?	
		←{P2}	

Legend
P – Potential buyer, Indian male
Y – Potential buyer, Indian female
S – REA
E – Potential buyer, Malay male
J – Potential buyer, Malay female
A – Potential buyer, Malay female
R – REA

Transcript Convention
[- onset of overlap
] - end of overlap
/ - rising intonation
(.9) - .9 seconds pause
← **{P1}** – Phase 1 starts
← **{P2}** – Phase 2 starts

the question (in line 6) in which he disagreed to the suggestion that he lived near that particular residential area. In fact, P proceeded to offer a repair and gave a general location, 'Subang' (line 6). S seemed to know that 'Subang' is a really large residential zone and so pursued by asking P, 'which part?' (line 7) which required a more specific answer.

S was curious to know the exact location of P's current home, while P did not seem too eager to provide the answers from all the backchannels that he had posed as strategies to show his reluctance. P was indirectly negotiating with S to not pry too much into his personal details but S did not seem to understand the reluctance, one-word answers or deliberately ignored them.

However, P still proceeded and offered to give more information by stating 'USJ 9' (line 8) and S sought even more clarification on whether the possible location was 'Taipan there-lah' (line 9). The fact that 'Taipan' is a particular location in Subang allowed P to now pre-empt that S was

moving towards a TRP thus overlapping on S's 'there' (line 10) to initiate his TCU. This overlap is not unusual as the pronoun 'there' is redundant and it does not contribute much in terms of providing extra information and the fact that P did not want S to ask too many questions.

P overlapped with a brief backchannel 'uh, ah' (line 10) that suggested a reluctant answer indicating that the location stated by S was not exactly 'Taipan'. The next part of the response by S appeared a bit strange as he agreed that 'ah, yah yah I know I work in Taipan' (in line 13). This response suggested that S was actually using the strategy of evaluation to see if P was really being truthful in telling S that he is living in USJ 9 Subang.

From this exchange, it is clear how the interlocutors P and S negotiated meaning using the strategy of backchannel to show reluctance and the strategy of evaluation to check for genuine buyers from those who were merely 'browsing' for good deals. S did stop querying after P made a stressed statement that 'Taipan is USJ 10, we are in USJ9' (lines 11-12), and S finally relented with a 'oh, I see' in line 17 which is an indication to that he was done with the introductions.

In Data 2, the potential buyer E greeted R, the REA and wanted to confirm if he was addressing the right person (line 1). This data provide a slightly different form of adjacency pair of question-response, in that there is a second adjacency pair inserted into the main sequence, was clearly shown in *Fig. 1*.

This type of insertion sequence is common in naturally-occurring interaction, which does not replicate any textbook type of linear-sequenced question-response adjacency pairs. In fact, there are many recurrences of insertion sequences and adjacency pairs that have occurred earlier in the conversation. In adjacency pair 1 (line 1), E posed a query whether the person he was addressing is R, the REA. However, instead of answering the question, R posed another question (line 2), which opened up the second adjacency pair of question-response. In this second adjacency pair, the response is found in line 3, where E answered to confirm R's question in line 2. When R accepted E's answer, he moved on to answer E's question (in line 1) by confirming that indeed it was him, R (line 4).

In this insertion sequence, E overlapped with R (line 3) as R had already presupposed that E recognized his name, and as such R must then be talking to E, making the question redundant. Therefore, R's introduction of himself (RF) (line 4) overlapped with the ending part of E's possible TRP. The second part of R's utterance, 'he [re]' seemed to suggest that R was engaged in a telephone conversation more than he being involved in a face-to-face interaction. The preposition/ pronoun 'here' does not provide additional information or in any way contribute towards meaning in the conversation, thus E's overlapping with an 'oh' (in line 5) suggested that E was in acceptance of R's self-introduction.

After the initial introduction of self, the potential buyer E introduced his (future) sister-in-law first before introducing his fiancée. E appeared embarrassed at introducing his fiancée from the long pause after the backchannel 'ah' (lines 14 – 16) 'and this is my ah (.9) ah *tunang*[-*lah'* where another backchannel 'ah' after the pause indicated that E was not embarrassed but was actually unsure of the English word for '*tunang*' (fiancée) (line 16) when he said

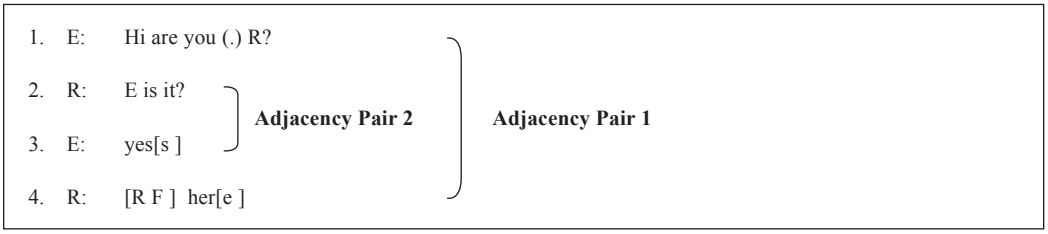

Fig. 1: Insertion sequence

'*tunang'[lah]'*. R recognized E's problem at translating the word and negotiated by offering to give the correct word in English (lines 17 -18).

R's repetitive 'oh, oh fiancée' suggested that the first 'oh' refers to the recognition of E's problem while the second 'oh' refers to R knowing the word and pronouncing the word fiancée for E showed a full co-operation in the negotiation of meaning, where R did not ridicule E's difficulty in finding the right word, but offered in a subtle way his repair strategy. In his response, E also showed co-operation in accepting R's offer of help (lines 19 – 20), where he introduced 'A' as 'my fiancée' as a form of acceptance and confirmation of R's suggestion. Another important feature of this show of camaraderie is the turn taken by A, who had waited patiently for her turn to say her greetings while the men E and R were negotiating meaning and building solidarity and camaraderie.

In both data, the interlocutors contributed towards the turn-by-turn construction of the sequence of negotiation while negotiating meaning. Even in this opening phase, it took both parties to co-operate and negotiate meaning before proceeding to the next phase using the strategies of repetition, clarification, confirmation, and backchannels.

Phases 3 and 4 – Tactic –Counter-Tactic

These phases exhibit the interplay of tactics, where Phase 3 shows how interlocutors identify and posit a negotiation tactic, while Phase 4 involves the counter-response to the negotiation tactic. Both these phases are closely linked and when one party identifies a tactic in Phase 3, the next phase is the response from the recipient. Table 3 summarizes these phases and lists the strategies used by the interlocutors.

Y, the potential buyer commented on how 'the top floor is better than the [ground]' (lines 371-372) when her talk overlapped towards the end by the REA, S's who provided with a backchannel 'yes, yes' (line 376), indicating his agreement albeit in a nonchalant way. S's response caught Y by surprise and she volunteered a backchannel '[huh]' in line 377, which overlapped with S's 'yes'. S responded with yet another backchannel '[uh]' which preceded S's attempt to give a reason for the condition of the lower ground of the house, 'there's more wear and tear' (lines 379 – 380).

However, P decided to add some humour to S's attempt at giving a reason and overlapped at the word 'tear' by initiating his TCU and overlapped with the word 'you' (line 381) indicating that P was really not concerned about the reason for the condition of the house. In fact, P joked that perhaps S 'seldom comes up' (as shown in line 382) before he burst with a laugh. S overlapped with a backchannel denial 'not' at P's laugh and offered, '[not] like that- *lah* we come up and sleep only (.)' (lines 386 – 387), in order to justify S's previous comment about the reason for the wear and tear. The exchange shows a series of backchannels and overlaps that occurred in a rapid succession as the interlocutors co-operate in negotiating meaning.

In Data 2, the REA (R) explained about the locality of the property (line 47) when J interrupted at a possible TRP 'here-lah' (line 51). J's 'but' (line 52) acts as an interruption more than an overlap as R failed to continue his commentary on the property instead and moved to co-operate with J in a topic shift which dealt with the view from the property.

J commented 'on the good view from the property (lines 52-53) and when R was prompted to comment with J's 'yah?' (line 50) that required confirmation, R seemed to be caught off-guard as he struggled to give an appropriate response. Although R's response appeared spontaneous, the lengthening of the vowels, 'ye::s, (.) e::r (.) ok and the multiple timed pauses (.3) from lines 56 - 60 indicate that R was formulating his thoughts as he cautiously volunteered word after word to J's query.

As R proceeded to explain that 'although it's (the property) the fourth storey' (line 62), he briefly paused to get his words in order and offered 'but er (.) it's quite near to vicinities-*[lah*]' (lines 63 – 64). R's '*lah'* was interrupted by E's backchannel '[w*ah*]' (line 65) to show his surprised discovery of the fact that the property

TABLE 3
Summary of Phases 3 and 4 and turn-taking strategies

Data 1		Strategies	Data 2		Strategies
370	beautiful] in fact		47R:	ok, this this area	
371Y:	[perfe]ct (.)		48	is quite er heavy	
372	I notice that the top		49	traffic-*lah* I mean it's	
373	floor is better		50	about 900 to (muffled)	
374	(.) than the		51	reach around here-[*lah*	
375	[ground] one		52J:	[but	
376S:	[yes yes] sure		53	you you've got quite a	
377Y:	[huh]		54	good view from here	
378S:	[uh]		55	yah?	
379	there's more wear		56R:	ye:::s, er, ok	
380	and te[ar]		57	(.3) considered (.3)its	
381P:	[yo]u		58	one of the (.2) best	
382	seldom come up?		59	unit around here-	
383	(lau[ghs)]		60	*lah*, top floor	
384S:	[not] like that-		61	although it's the	
385	*lah* we come		62	fourth storey but er(.)	
386	up and sleep only (.)		63	it's quite near to	
387	downstairs more		64	vicinities[*lah]*	
388	thin[gs]		65E :	[wah!]	
389Y:	[hmm]		66	Block 4, 4th storey,	
			67	er four- [four],	
			68J:	[4]er?	
			69E:	[Chinese]	
			70	say '*si*'uh 'si' I a bit	
			71	*pantang[lah*]	
			72R:	[Oh] is it? I	
			73	thought Malays don't	
			74	have anything?	

Legend
P – Potential buyer, Indian male
Y – Potential buyer, Indian female
S – REA
E – Potential buyer, Malay male
J – Potential buyer, Malay female
A – Potential buyer, Malay female
R – REA

Transcript Convention
[– onset of overlap
] – end of overlap
/ – rising intonation
(.9) – .9 seconds pause
← **{P1}** – Phase 1 starts
← **{P2}** – Phase 2 starts

is on 'Block 4, 4th storey' (line 66) and this is yet another fault-finding tactic that was used by E to discredit the house. E's backchannel 'er four- [four]' (line 67) emphasized the point that E was apprehensive about too many coincidental number fours appearing in the property viewed, fourth storey, fourth block. E was backed by J who also exclaimed '[four] er?' (line 68) to show she too has a problem with that particular number.

Associating numbers with the property is a usual practice by the Chinese community who believe in the art and science of *feng shui.* How a number is pronounced in Mandarin or any Chinese dialect is the criteria for determining a 'good' number from a 'bad' number. In this case, the number four (4) is pronounced as '*si'* (or pronounced as the letter 'c' in English) which means 'dead'. Therefore, this number is usually avoided as the house number and numbers that

total up to four is also to be avoided. This explains the reason why many housing estate projects omit the numbers 4, 13, and 44 as the house numbers replacing them with 3A, 12A, and 43A instead. As for Data 2 in the current study, E the potential buyer had raised the issue of number four being a problem to him.

E states that the '[Chinese] say '*si*'uh 'si' I a bit *pantang[lah*]' in lines 69 – 71. In his TCU, E overlapped with the J's repetition of the number four and presented his reasons by code-switching first into Mandarin 'si' to imitate the pronunciation of the word which he assumed R understood since it was quite commonly used by Malaysians. This negotiation of meaning is the best example of co-operation between these unacquainted interlocutors as E did not offer to translate the meaning of 'si' for R or the ladies. In fact, E proceeded to code-switch into Malay with 'I a bit *pantang-lah*' (line 71) which meant superstitious. Again, E presupposed that the word *pantang* is commonly used among Malaysians and as such there was no attempt on E's part to explain himself.

R was definitely caught by surprise as he exclaimed '[Oh] is it?' (line 72) because he 'thought Malays don't have anything?' (line 73). When E suggested he was superstitious of the number four, R was seen to draw upon his past knowledge as an REA to offer a backchannel 'oh' first prior to issuing a confirmation marker 'is it?' Since R had only known the Chinese to be superstitious he wondered why E being Malay was concerned about numbers as the Malays generally do not believe in such things.

As discussed in Phases 3 and 4, there are many features of turn-taking that came into play and these include backchannels, overlaps and interruptions. While interruptions cause the prior interlocutor to abandon his speech, there is a show of solidarity and co-operation through the shared negotiation of meaning.

Phase 6 – Making Decisions

The last phase usually ends with the potential buyers making decisions. In this current study, both data revealed that the final phase is a phase where the potential buyers postponed making a final decision.

In Data 1, S gave a final commentary on a particular feature of the property before P indicated that he was going to come to an end of viewing the property through his 'ok' (line 643) and proceeded to say that they 'will get back to you about this' (lines 644 – 645). S agreed with him and asked P to 'Let me know' (line 646). He went on to confirm if P (you) had any number (line 648) and further persuaded P to make a quick decision in 'one two days because the other person from (.) from Sarawak is really interested' (lines 649 – 655). S repeated the word 'from' after a brief untimed pause indicating that he either forgot the place of the origin of the other potential buyer or he was just making it up as a sales gimmick. P did not seem to be bothered about S's attempt at persuading him and just offered a backchannel 'yeah' (line 656) and assured S that 'we'll call you' and left. In this last phase, there is no longer any indication of overlaps or interruptions as one at a time turn was taken before the interlocutors left.

In Data 2, the final phase took a much longer time to end as the potential buyer moved back and forth in a circular sequence asking the REA to confirm the final price of the property and expressing his doubts and alternating between the two issues. In line 203, R was seen using the repetitive backchannel [yeah] yeah yeah' (line 203) as if to emphasize and confirm that 'as what we agreed, what you see is what you get (line 204 – 206). Then, E decided that he 'can't make an offer now' (lines 207 – 208) as he 'have to discuss with my fian[cée]' (lines 209 – 210), to which R agreed and as if to show that he understood the decision taken by E, R overlapped towards the tail end of E's TCU, as shown in line 211, '[can], can'.

R then sought to confirm whether E had 'my number, rite?' (line 212) and even before E had the opportunity to respond, R seemed to be in a hurry and provided another backchannel 'ok [ok]' (line 213), where E made an attempt at the tail-end of R's 'ok' to overlap and show that no E did not have R's card with a '[I] need your card' (lines 214 – 215), and this time E volunteered

TABLE 4
Summary of Phase 6 and turn-taking strategies

Data 1	Strategies	Data 2	Strategies
638S: [(*muffled)*		203R: [yeah] yeah yeah,	
639 this type very		204 as what we agreed,	
640 popular and a lot		205 what you see is what	
641 of people go for this		206 you get	
642 type		207E: I can't make an	
643P: ok, we will get		208 offer now, I have	
← **{P6}**		209 to discuss with my	
644 back to you about		210 fian[cée]	
645 this		211R: [can] can, you	
646S: Let me		212 have my number rite,	
647 know, you have		213 ok [ok]	
648 my number, make		214E: [I] need your	
649 it in one two		215 card but, You all ok	
650 days because the		216 *tak, suka tak*. You	
651 other person from		217 *rasa macam mana*	
652 from Sarawak is		^^^^^^^^^^	
653 really interested.		222E: How much do you	
654P: yeah we'll call you		223 think the owner will	
		224 let go, sincerely	
		225 ah (.) since you	
		226 [have] been	
		227R: [as I say] *lah*, I am	
		228 just an agent but ah(.)	
		229 I will relay	
		23 whatever your	
		231 quotation (.) [to him]	
		232E: [hmm]=	
		233R: [may] be if	
		234 you can give me a	
		235 good quotation(.)	
		236 actually the	
		237 owner is looking at	
		238 250,000 ringgit, ah so	
		239 (.) as you	
		^^^^^^^^^^	
		245E: let me discuss	
		246 (*muffed)*	
		247R: ok, th[anks]	
		248E: [so the]n	
		249 how? (*muffed)*	
		250J: you have the	
		251 number rite	
		252R: ok, see you all	

Legend
P – Potential buyer, Indian male
Y– Potential buyer, Indian female
S – REA
E – Potential buyer, Malay male
J – Potential buyer, Malay female
A – Potential buyer, Malay female
R – REA

Transcript Convention
[– onset of overlap
] – end of overlap
/ – rising intonation
(.9) – .9 seconds pause
← **{P1}** – Phase 1 starts
← **{P2}** – Phase 2 starts

a backchannel 'but' indicating that he was not waiting for R's response but was interested to know how the ladies felt about the property and asked 'You all ok *tak, suka tak* (no, don't like). You *rasa macam mana* (how do you feel)' (lines 216 – 217). E's deliberate code-switch into Malay indicated that he was putting on an act of talking to the ladies in private although knowing well that R was within a hearing distance.

When R did not show any indication of being taunted, E proceeded to address R and asked 'How much do you think the owner will let go' (lines 222 – 224). E further sought to try and persuade R to relent by asking him to state 'sincerely (the amount thought fair by R)' before he stopped to think with a brief backchannel 'ah and pause (.)' to say that R had been in, since R has 'been either in the business or as an agent before R interrupts him to cut E's rambling short and states '[as I say] lah' (line 227), indicating that E had not got his point that the price was not negotiable since he is 'just an agent' (line 228).

However, R showed reluctance as to whether the owner would change his mind and so he put on a backchannel 'but ah' before pausing briefly. (line 228) to demonstrate his doubts. R was willing though to 'relay whatever your (E's) quotation (.) [to him]' the owner (lines 229 – 231) to which E as only a backchannel '[hmm]' which he overlapped with R's to him as given in line 232.

E did not appear to have correctly understood R's need for E to give a quotation and so negotiated the meaning of his prior utterance by overlapping on E's 'hmm'. R attempted to make his prior utterance clearer and more direct (lines 233 – 235) '[may] be if you can give me a good quotation(.)' but changed his mind when E still did not offer to give a quotation. R then reaffirmed that 'actually the owner is looking at 250,000 ringgit' (236 – 239).

After a few more exchanges, E restated his earlier decision to 'let me discuss' (line 245) before R abruptly finished an overlap over E's muffled utterance 'ok, th[anks]' (line 247) as if waiting to take leave, but E did not stop as he went back to the ladies, and still in the presence of R, he pursued by interrupting R's 'thanks' and asked '[so the]n how?' (lines 248 – 249). J did not take E's offer to respond to his question but sought to confirm whether E had 'the number rite' (lines 250 – 251). R was also not interested in continuing with the conversation and took on after J, by announcing 'ok, see you all' (line 252).

In brief, this last phase appeared to be filled with backchannels, repetition, overlaps and interruptions, as the interlocutors moved on to negotiate a closing of the phase. Whether it was an overlap or interruption, the conversation progressed as the interlocutors demonstrated co-operation throughout the process of the interaction.

CONCLUSION

The sequential emergence of turn-taking and construction of the features of backchannels, repetitions, confirmation checks, and evaluation and clarification show that interlocutors seek to co-operate and negotiate meaning in an interaction. This study demonstrates an organized turn-by-turn co-construction of negotiated meanings that made up the entire process of negotiation in the context of the sale and purchase of a second-hand property.

The overlaps that appeared in the course of the interaction occurred at the TRPs but more frequently they also appeared as interruptions. The adjacency pair of question-response indicates clear turn management and organization, and by being aware of the nature of the questions and responses, interlocutors are able to strategise their utterances in negotiations in future interactions. In conclusion, this study has shown that there is planning, organisation, and order that is co-constructed by interlocutors and it is hoped that this study will prompt future research in other types of negotiations.

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Discourse Structure of Telephone Enquiries in Malaysian Business Context

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the discourse structure of telephone enquiries used by Malaysian English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers in simulated service encounters in the business context. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the structure of the opening and closing exchanges of the telephone conversation and the structure of the service encounters. Oral interaction data were collected from 28 ESL speakers from an English for Professional Purposes course participating in paired role play situations involving restaurant reservation, hotel holiday package and products. The results showed that only three out of 14 interactions had the obligatory Sale Request ^ Sale Compliance ^ Sale ^ Purchase ^ Purchase Closure structure of service encounters found by Halliday and Hassan (1985). For the telephone conversation, only half of the openings followed the Greeting, Identification and Statement of Availability sequence but 12 out of 14 closings had the Preclosing ^ Leave-taking sequence taught in the course. The discourse structure of the telephone-mediated service encounter in the business context was found to be difficult to master for most participants in the study.

Keywords: Discourse structure, service encounter, transactional domain, telephone enquiries, Malaysian business discourse

INTRODUCTION

Language is a resource for making meaning in the social context in which the language is used (Halliday, 1975). We use language "to represent the world as we experience it" and "to influence how things happen in the world, specifically in our relations with other people" (Thornbury, 1999, p. 5). To put it broadly, the representational and interpersonal functions are manifested in different registers of language use.

The different functions of communication are achieved through the use of linguistic features and discourse structure. For example, when the purpose of communication is to provide an explanation of why or how a phenomenon such as earthquake happens, this usually begins with an identification of the phenomenon to be explained, followed by a series of sequenced steps (see Derewianka, 1990). The explanation is characterised by the use of present tense to show the timelessness of the phenomenon. Passive voice and nominalisations are also used to focus attention on the actions taking place. The explanation may appear in science textbooks, television documentaries, and children picture books, where there would be adaptations of form to suit the audience and the media but the distinguishing structure and linguistic features of the explanation genre would still be evident. According to Swales (1990), a genre is a set of recognisable communicative events each with

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a similar purpose and a conventionalised social and schematic structure. The schematic structure consists of stages (obligatory and optional) which lead to the realisation of the communicative purpose in the discourse community in which the language is used.

In the business context, Mitchell (1957) found the structure of a typical buying and selling market transaction was Salutation ^ Enquiry as to Object of Sale ^ Investigation ^ Bargaining ^ Conclusion (cited in Eggins and Slade, 1997, p. 54). Based on this early framework, Halliday and Hassan's (1985) analysis of service encounters yielded the following generic structure with obligatory and optional elements (with an asterisk):

Vendor:	Who's next?	*Sale Initiation**
Customer:	I think I am.	
	I'll have ten oranges and a kilo of bananas, please.	*Sale Request*
Vendor:	Yes, anything else?	*Sale Compliance*
Customer:	Yes.	
	I wanted some strawberries but these don't look very ripe.	*Sale Enquiry**
Vendor:	O they're ripe all right. They're just that colour kind a' greeny pink.	
Customer:	Mm, I see.	
	Will they be OK for this evening?	*Sale Enquiry**
Vendor:	O yeah, they'll be fine; I had some yesterday and they're good very sweet and fresh.	
Customer:	O al right then, I'll take two.	*Sale Request*
Vendor:	You'll like them cos they're good.	*Sale Enquiry**
	Will that be all?	*Sale Compliance*
Customer:	Yeah, thank you.	
Vendor:	That'll be two dollars sixty nine please.	*Sale*
Customer:	I can give you nine cents.	*Purchase*
Vendor:	Yeah OK thanks eighty, three dollars and two is fine. Thank you.	*Purchase Closure*
	Have a nice day.	*Finis**
Customer:	See ya'.	

(in Halliday and Hassan, 1985, p. 61)

In this service encounter, the salutation or greeting stage is optional. The transaction opens with the customer's Sale Request for oranges and bananas, followed by an optional Sale Compliance stage where the vendor shows interest in providing the service and informs the customer of the availability or non-availability of the service. This is followed by a Sale Enquiry whereby the customer asks about various features of the product or service. When the vendor senses the customer's satisfaction with the product or service, he/she presents the deal with the price (Sale) and the customer confirms the Purchase. The obligatory Sale, Purchase, and Purchase Closure may be verbalised as shown in this excerpt or indicated by paralinguistic cues and other signs. For example, Jong's (2004) study of ordering food and drink in fast food restaurants in Kuching, Sarawak showed that the order is confirmed by the cashier before the amount to be paid is stated (Sale), and the transaction is closed with the customer handing over the money (Purchase) and the cashier giving back the change (Purchase Closure), sometimes without a single word being exchanged. However, Jong found the expression of thanks by the cashier to be obligatory for completing the transaction.

Other forms of service encounters such as enquiries about hotel accommodation and lodging of complaints are more complex as there may be recurring stages, particularly in the Sale Enquiry stage where the service provider may find out various aspects of the customer's needs and provide information to address these needs before moving to the Sale.

For service encounters mediated by the telephone, the encounter also shows the opening and closing characteristics of telephone conversations. Openings are used to exchange greetings and to perform a basic process of identification and recognition. Research has shown that opening sequences include greeting and identification (Douglas-Cowie and Cowie, 1998; Pantahachart, 2003), but Palloti and Varcasia (2006) have identified the presence of the availability stage as well. For example, "Good evening. X Hotel. How can I help you?" (Blue and Harun, 2003, p. 80).

Studies on telephone closings have shown that pre-closing and leave taking stages are compulsory stages (Douglas-Cowie and Cowie, 1998). Words used to signal pre-closing of a telephone conversation are "well" (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Takami, 2002) and "ok" (Colonel-Molina, 1998; Halmari, 1993; Pantahachart, 2003; Steuten, 1997). Leave-taking is characterised by the use of "thank you" (Douglas-Cowie and Cowie, 1998; Halmari, 1993; Takami, 2002) and "bye-bye" (Douglas-Cowie and Cowie, 1998; Pantahachart, 2003). These findings in different settings showed that the linguistic features, for the compulsory pre-closing (e.g. well, ok) and leave-taking (e.g. thank you, bye-bye), stage do not vary much. Meanwhile, the optional closing sequences are new topic initiation (Colonel-Molina, 1998) and recapitulation (Halmari, 1993).

Service encounters are considered complex enough for some organisations to provide explicit training for their staff, for example, international hotel chains. Tertiary institutions often include professional telephone etiquette as part of English for Professional Purposes or Business Communication courses. The aim of this study was to examine the discourse structure of telephone enquiries used by Malaysian English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers in simulated service encounters in the business context. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the structure of the opening and closing exchanges of the telephone conversation, as well as the structure of the service encounters.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study took place at a public university in Malaysia. The participants were 28 ESL learners, aged 30-40. The four who were found to be more proficient were older and had more exposure to English. The participants were enrolled in an English for Professional Purposes (ESP) course, with a maximum of 30 students per class. In the course, they were taught professional telephone etiquette, preparing curriculum vitae, writing memos, letters and reports, as well as conducting meetings and writing minutes of meetings. For telephone conversations involving service encounters, participants were taught to begin the conversation with greetings and an identification of the organisation and themselves, followed by a statement of Availability (e.g. Good morning. May Hotel. Laura speaking. How can I help you?). For the closing exchange, the participants were taught to ask "Is there anything else?" as a pre-closing cue, and to say both "Thank You" and "Good-bye" in the leave-taking.

The oral data for this study were collected from participants who were participating in role play situations involving telephone enquiries about tour packages, restaurant reservations, and products. The task required pairs of participants to act as a client and vendor in one situation chosen by casting lots. The participants were required to make enquiries and desicions whether to confirm booking or purchase goods. Participants were given 3 minutes to prepare for the role-play and they could make notes. Before the discussion began, the participants were reminded of the principles of turn-taking to minimise monopoly of conversation. The participants were informed that the role-plays would be audio-taped for research purposes. The 14 service encounters included in this study comprised enquiry on travel (8), restaurant booking (5), and hand-phone purchase (1) (see Appendix 1). The interaction is considered successful if the client has obtained enough information to make a purchase decision and the vendor is able to provide relevant information to the customer and clinch the deal.

The role-plays took place in the quietness of the instructor's office in the first researcher's presence. Admittedly, this was not the best situation to generate natural talk for the purpose of research, as the participants might have been affected by the presence of the audiotape, either raising their level of anxiety and thus lowering their performance or greatly heightening their impetus to perform better. As video recording was not used, contextual information such as body language, facial expression, and hand gestures was not taken into consideration. Fillers (e.g. ah, eh) and pauses (e.g. ...) captured by the audio-recording were noted in the transcription, but since the paper is on discourse structure, these features of spoken language were not analysed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, both the quantitative and qualitative results on the opening and closing sequences and the discourse structure of telephone enquiries of 14 pairs of participants are presented. The participants are referred to Vendor 1 and Client 1 for Situation 1, and so on.

Openings of Telephone Enquiries

The opening of a telephone enquiry includes the Greeting ^ Identification ^ Statement of Availability. In the analysis of the opening exchange, the situations where the vendor produced the sequence in whole or in part upon prompting by the client are classified as "None" as professional telephone etiquette requires the vendor to answer the call with the sequence before the client speaks (e.g. Brieger, Comfort, Hughes and West, 1987; Palstra, 1987).

The results showed that 7 out of 14 pairs demonstrated the use of the Greeting-Identification-Statement of Availability sequence taught as a part of the professional telephone practice in the course (see Table 1). For example, "Hello, Santubong Beach Resort. Hapsah speaking. How can I help you?" (Vendor 14). This was the only case with both organisational and personal identification in the data set. Also considered acceptable is the perfunctory telephone greeting "hello" followed by the organisational identification (Vendors 11 and 13) which affirmed to the client that he/she had reached the correct number. In the same light, an organisational identification followed by an offer to help is also acceptable, but this was not found in the data set. In the absence of the organisational identification, the caller has to confirm this before proceeding to the reason for the call, which is what happened in five of the telephone enquiries examined in this study, as illustrated in Excerpt 1:

Excerpt 1

Client 2 : Hello, good afternoon. I am Ursula and I am calling from Kuching. Is this Kohan Agency?

Vendor 2 : Yes?

Client 2 : I come … ah … come across your advertisement about the tour to Niah Caves and I am interested to go …

TABLE 1
Patterns of openings of telephone enquiries

Opening Sequences	Frequency
Greeting ^ Identification ^ Availability	7
Greeting ^ Identification	2
Greeting	1
None	4
Total	14

Note that in this interaction, Client 2 identified herself first and had to ask *"Is this Kohan Agency?"* to check if she had reached the correct number before proceeding to the business of the call. Lee's (2006) analysis of a corpus of Korean telephone openings revealed that there was a second summon for inviting recognition in the second turn of the opening sequence – underscoring the importance of self-identification for facilitating recognition. The absence of organisational identification in the opening exchange is a matter of some concern, as about one-third of the participants playing the role of the vendor did not include this despite being taught in the course.

Further analysis on the caller identification showed that 10 of the participants playing the role of the client identified themselves at the beginning whereas four did not. For these 10 interactions, four vendors remembered the client's name and used it during the conversation, and four vendors asked for the client's name again before closing the conversation, while two other vendors waited for the client to volunteer their name again. In the four interactions where the clients did not mention their names in the opening exchange, three of the conversations ended with the vendor not knowing the caller's identity but one vendor asked for it towards the end. The good practice of using the client's name during the telephone conversation was a rare occurrence, but at least one-third of the vendors remembered to ask for the caller's name and contact details in the closing of the telephone enquiry.

Closing Sequences of Telephone Enquiries

The analysis of the closing exchange of the 14 simulated telephone enquiries showed that 12 had the Preclosing ^ Leave-taking sequence, with two intercepted by topic initiation (see Table 2). Out of these 12 closing exchanges, the clients were found to have initiated five of the pre-closing and six of the leave-taking sequences, indicating that when the clients had received adequate information to decide whether to make a purchase, they took steps to terminate the service encounter. Similarly, when the vendors felt that they had provided enough information to make a sale, they signalled the pre-closing stage with "OK" (9 participants) and "Alright" (3 participants), before requesting payment (e.g. OK, what about the payment, Sir?) or the client's contact details (e.g. May I have your contact details?). Excerpt 2 shows how the service provider (Vendor 7) indicated that the service encounter was coming to a close with the use of the word "OK" before asking for contact details.

Excerpt 2

Vendor 7 : If you want, we can bring you to the shopping complex. You can shop for very good things. OK. May I know your name, address and the phone number?

Client 7 : I am Ms Chow from Kuching and my phone number is 082-622-3881. And my address is 63 Jalan Setia, 94300 Kuching. When can I collect my voucher?

TABLE 2
Patterns of closing sequences of telephone enquiries

Closing Sequences	Frequency
Preclosing ^ Leave-taking	10
Preclosing ^ Topic Initiation ^ Leave-taking	2
Preclosing	1
None	1
Total	14

Vendor 7 : Two months from … now er … three weeks from now.

Client 7 : Three weeks from now [mumbling]

Vendor 7 : Let me just … your name is Ms Chow and you want to make reservation at … from 15 to 20 January for 3 persons, your phone number is 082-622-3881, your address is 63 Jalan Setia, 94000 Kuching. Is it correct?

Client 7 : [No response]. I think that's all for now. If I need any enquiry, I will call you again. *Thank you*.

Vendor 7 : You're welcome. *Bye-Bye, Thank you.*

Following that, Vendor 7 also verified whether she had correctly taken down the important details of the transaction. Client 7 took leave with a "Thank You" which was reciprocated with "You're welcome, Bye-Bye, Thank You." The results on the common usage of the word "OK" to signal pre-closing and "Thank you" for leave-taking concurred with some other studies (e.g. Colonel-Molina, 1998; Halmari, 1993; Pantahachart, 2003; Steuten, 1997). Similarly, Bangerter, Clark and Katz (2004) in their study of the entry, body and exit of 2500 switchboard telephone conversations and 756 directory enquiries also found that "when *okay* and *all right were* used, it was to move out of the body [of the call] to the exit phase, or event to end the call" (p. 19). However, the usage of the word "well" for pre-closing was not found in this study.

In this data set, two service encounters were ended without the customary leave-taking. For example, Vendor 5 said "you can come to my agency for the more detail and deposit and for the reservation for the package" and Vendor 6 said "complete with the confirmation." These utterances brought the service encounter to an abrupt end, and are usually not reflective of the real-life situations.

When the results on the openings and closings of the simulated telephone enquiries were compared, it seemed that the ESL learners in this study were better at handling closings than the openings. The opening exchange of the telephone conversations could have been more difficult as it is remarkably different from personal calls, where the caller asks to speak to the person upon hearing a "hello" from the recipient of the call. Moreover, shifting from an interpersonal to a professional context was not easy for the participants.

Discourse Structure of the Service Encounters

For the analysis of the discourse structure of service encounters, Halliday and Hassan's (1985) framework for the generic structure of service encounters was used. Table 3 shows that only three out of the 14 interactions exhibited the obligatory Sale Request ^ Sale Compliance ^ Sale ^ Purchase ^ Purchase Closure structure, whereas six others had the Sale Request, Sale Compliance without the Sale and Purchases stages before the Purchase Closure. The Purchase took place after the Sale, but there were only three service encounters ending

TABLE 3
Obligatory elements in simulated service encounters

Patterns of Stages in Service Encounter	Frequency
Sale Request ^ Sale Compliance ^ Sale ^ Purchase ^ Purchase Closure	3
Sale Request ^ Sale Compliance ^ Purchase Closure	6
Sale Request ^ Purchase Closure	1
Sale Request ^ Sale Compliance ^ Sale	1
Sale Request ^ Sale Compliance	3
Total	14

with purchases, not unexpected given that the situation was presented as an enquiry.

The results also showed that the Sale Request and Sale Compliance were iterative stages with repeated Sale Enquiries before and after the Sale. This is because there were many features of the product or service which needed to be discussed. For example, in the interaction between Vendor 14 and Client 14 on a hotel holiday package, there were 13 Sale Enquiries revolving around the price of the package, the number of adults and children included in the package, hotel complimentary breakfast, check-in and check-out time, jungle-trekking, and other activities. However, an extensive Sale Enquiry stage did not necessarily result in the client agreeing to purchase the product or service.

The analysis also revealed that interactions with a greater number of Sale Enquiries were more authentic, whereas those with fewer turns were characterised by the participants playing the role of the vendor giving huge chunks of information in monologue style. Such scripted dialogues tended to be shown by the participants who were less proficient in English. Although they were not allowed to refer to the notes they made prior to the role-play, they had more or less rehearsed what they wanted to say and were set on saying their piece. In addition, there was little joint-construction of meaning as shown in the interaction between Vendor 9 and Client 9 (Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3

Client 9 : … So can I know the cost of the package to Niah Caves?

Vendor 9 : Our agency has offered a package to Niah Caves from Kuching which ah … the package is … ah … the flight ah … the flight from Kuching to Miri. Ah … it costs seven hundred ringgit excluding food but eight hundred ah … if you need … ah … we to provide food … ah it cost you eight hundred fifty ringgit. Do you need … do you have any question?

Client 9 : Ah … about the cost of the flight. Seven hundred ringgit is for two ways or one way only?

Vendor 9 : Seven hundred is for two ways.

Client 9 : For two ways only. I hope, I … I … I take the flight to Miri. So you can jot down my … do you really book my flight number?

Vendor 9 : Ah … hold on Miss. Ah … what about the accommodation? Are you really interested in it?

Vendor 9 was talking about the cost of the tour package with and without food, but Client 9 missed the point and asked whether the flight was for one way or two ways. Client 9 continued to ask about the flight booking but this query was ignored. Instead, Vendor 9 wanted to know about the client's accommodation arrangements when the type of tour package and flight were not settled. The situation of Client 11 and Vendor 11 was similar to that described above, but in other cases the less proficient participants were able to ask for information and respond appropriately. This excerpt of Situation 9 also illustrates the implicit Sale Compliance found in this study in that the vendor did not explicit state interest in providing the service but immediately moved into describing features of the service. This happened in six interactions but the other eight had an explicit Sale Compliance stage (e.g. *"Is there any tour package available now or in the new year?" "Yes, there is"*).

To sum up, the proficient participants (Vendor 4, Client 4, Vendor 8, Client 8) successfully achieved the purpose of the telephone enquiry in that they used the complete opening and closing exchanges as well as the compulsory stages of the service encounter identified by Halliday and Hassan (1985). In brief, they were able to use the discourse structure of the telephone-mediated service encounter taught in the course.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the discourse structure of telephone enquiries in the Malaysian business

context, as reflected in ESL learners' role plays in an English for Professional Purposes course at a Malaysian university. The findings on the telephone openings indicated that only half of the participants demonstrated the Greetings ^ Identification ^ Statement of Availability sequence, whereas almost all of them had the Pre-closing and Leave-taking stages of a telephone closing. The findings on the service encounter indicated that about 20 per cent of the participants exhibited the Sale Request ^ Sale Compliance ^ Sale ^ Purchase ^ Purchase Closure which represented the obligatory elements of a service encounter (Halliday and Hassan, 1985). Although generalisation of findings may be somewhat limited due to the use of learner data, the study has revealed that the opening exchange is a difficult aspect of service encounters mediated by the telephone. Telephone openings produced by a portion of the participants in the study did not comply with conventions taught in the course and those found by studies conducted in other settings (e.g. Palloti and Varcasia, 2006; Steuten, 1997). In view of these findings, it is therefore suggested that extensive training be conducted to inculcate the professional practice of opening and conducting a telephone-mediated service encounter in the business context, be it in professional communication courses at college and university or staff training courses in organisations.

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APPENDIX

ROLE PLAY SITUATION 1 – RESTAURANT RESERVATION

Caller

Your boss has asked you to book a private room in a restaurant for dinner in order to celebrate his birthday with his family. Call the restaurant manager to make queries for any information you need to obtain, and inform him/her of the following details:

- Date for reservation
- Number of people attending the dinner
- Menu preferred
- Entertainment
- Payment
- Contact information

Decide whether to book a private room in the restaurant.

Receiver

You are the manager of Rasa Sedap Restaurant. You receive a call from someone who wants to make a reservation for dinner. Entertain the caller and supply him/her with necessary details about your restaurant.

- Popular menu: Steamed Crabs, Deep Fried Prawns with Thai sauce, Lemon Chicken, Salted Fish Kailan, and Mushroom Soup.
- Special order (customer can give their own menu)-(a week before the special event plus RM100 for deposit).
- Types of rooms:
- Private rooms: can accommodate 2-4 people.
- Family rooms: can accommodate 6-10 people.
- Dine & karaoke rooms: can accommodate 10-20 people.
- Payment: Cash & Credit Card.
- If the customer agrees to book a room at your restaurant, get the relevant information from him/her.

ROLE PLAY SITUATION 2 – ENQUIRY ON TOUR PACKAGE

Caller

You plan to take your family on a tour to the Niah Caves. You came across an advertisement put up by Kohan Tour Agency in the newspaper. Call the travel agent and find out more about the tour package.

- Cost of package
- Accommodation
- Food – provided or not?
- Places of interest included in tour
- Date of departure

Decide whether to go on the tour.

Receiver

Your company recently put up this advertisement in the local newspaper and you received a call from an interested customer.

Tour Packages to Niah Caves
Good deals! Too good to miss!

- 3 days, 2 nights tour from Kuching to Miri.
- Places included in the tour: Niah Caves, Iban longhouses, jungle trekking, Lambir Waterfall Park.
- Beautiful chalets at RM100/night.
- Canteens and food stalls nearby.
- RM700/person excluding food. RM850/person including food.
- Two tours per month: 1st-5th and 15th-20th.

Call us to find out more!

Kohan Tour Agency
123 Gajus Road
93150 Kuching
Sarawak
Tel: 082-451323

ROLE PLAY SITUATION 3 – ENQUIRY ON HANDPHONE

Caller

You came across an advertisement in the newspaper about the latest model of a Nokia 101 handphone. Call the shop and find out more.

- Cost of handphone
- Special features
- Money back guarantee

Decide whether to buy the handphone.

Receiver

Your company recently put up this advertisement in the local newspaper and you received a call from an interested customer.

Nokia 101
Special Offer

- Normal price RM699
- Special offer RM550 – while stock lasts
- Special features: miniature size, crystal buttons.
- Good after sales service

Call us to find out more!

Cellular Sdn Bhd

Tel: 019-8551323, 016-8094346

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Motivational Orientations and Self-determination Theory in Learning Arabic as a Second Language

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Arabic learners' motivation towards learning Arabic at the Academy of Islamic Studies, Nilam Puri, University Malaya. A total of 265 first and second year students, comprising of 99 males and 166 females, were randomly selected. A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed to categorize the questionnaire into latent factors. The analysis yielded six interpretable factors with eigenvalues greater than one, which accounted for 55.1% of proportion variance in Students' Motivation of Language Learning scores (SMLA). Regression analysis examined the direction, weight, and predictive ability for each predictor extracted from the PCA. The overall model was statistically significant, [F (7, 229) = 20.10, MSE = 31.02, p=. 001], and the set of the predictors accounted for 56% of the total variance explained by the model. Religious motivation, introjected regulation, and external regulation were found to be significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, demotivation, motivation, gender, and age were found to be statistically insignificant. In conclusion, the study found that religious motivation was the main determinant in learning Arabic, although other factors such as introjected regulation and external regulation were also found to be significant factors.

Keywords: Motivational orientation, self-determination, religious motivation, introjected regulation, external regulation

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, non-cognitive factors have been widely accepted today as the active determinants in the success of students' learning activities (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan, 1991; Ryan and Deci, 2000a; 2000b). Historically, educational psychologists concentrated on cognitive factors of learning (such as intelligence, memory, and information processing etc) as the only predictors of achievement in learning processes. In a previous study, researchers asserted that the cognitive aspects explained up to 50% of the variance in achievement (see Schiefele, Krapp and Winteler, 1992).

Many studies have examined students' incentives toward learning activities in general and toward language learning in particular, in order to investigate why equally intelligent students are divergent in academic performance and language proficiency (Hidi and Harackiewicz, 2000; Hidi, 2000; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Dornyei, 1990). In general, however, researchers have underestimated the significant role of non-cognitive elements in language learning and this is largely due to the belief that cognitive factors are the only determinants of success in the academic arena (Horwitz, 1995).

The revolution against the traditional perception of learning processes, in which

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cognitive factors are believed to account for the success or the failure of learning activities in second language learning, started as early as 1970 when Gardner and Lambert showed theoretically and empirically that attitudes and students' feelings towards a target language (motivation) are positively correlated with the level of proficiency in the foreign language. Almost two decades later, Oxford and Nyinkes (1989) asserted that motivation is the most influential factor affecting language-learning strategies. These findings are supported by Oxford and Ehrman (1997) who found a strong correlation between intrinsic motivation and the intention to use the language outside the classroom (rho = 0.31, $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, the overall use of language learning strategies is strongly correlated with strong motivation and interest, especially intrinsic interest to use the language outside the classroom.

Motivation (as one of the non-cognitive elements) is defined as "the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of efforts they will exert in that respect" (Keller, 1983, p. 389). Keller (1983) also divides the determinants of motivation into four categories, namely interest, relevance, expectancy, and outcomes. This is in contrast to the language-learning context, which has generally been categorized into two categories based on the sources and types of incentives.

Generally, researchers consider motivation crucial to the success of learning activities. Two types of motivation have been identified by scholars; these are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Vallerand, Pelletier, Blais, Briere, Senecal and Vallieres, 1992; Noels, Pelletier and Vallerand, 2000; Reiss, 2004; 2005). The first type refers to a learner's desire to engage in learning activities without being compelled to do so or getting any payoff. This means that he/she is personally involved with a "full sense of wanting, choosing and personal endorsement" (Deci, 1992, p. 44). Psychologists believe that this kind of orientation directs attention and helps in energizing students' mood into action (Hidi, 2000). Moreover, intrinsic motivation may lead to the increase of knowledge, value, and positive emotions. This also means that through persistence of engagement, which is the major characteristic of intrinsic motivation, a learner will develop knowledge structures, experience positive effects, and is highly devoted for the objects fall into his/her mind (Hidi, 2000; Hidi and Harackiewicz, 2000; Reiss, 2004; 2005). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation means an engagement in learning activities as a means to an end. The engagement may not be fully interesting to the learner, but since it is a channel to a targeted goal, the learner will devote some effort to achieve it.

However, Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest that, although extrinsic or instrumental motivation is an involvement in activities for reward or outside forces, "it is possible, through the developmental processes of internalization and integration, for an extrinsic regulatory process to become a part of the self and thus to be the basis for self-determined" (p. 45). According to self determination theory, students' motivation for academic struggle varies in both magnitude and quality and both variations predict learning, achievement, and continuation of academic exercises and learning activities (Deci and Ryan, 2002; Reeve, Deci and Ryan, 2004). Hence, intrinsic motivation emerges from the learner's personal needs and rooted inner desires towards target goal(s), rather than from outside pressures or tangible rewards (Deci, Ryan, Hardre, Chen, Huang, Chiang, Jen and Warden, 2006). An abundance of research has asserted that instrumental orientation usually undermines intrinsic motivation, and as a result, diminishes the outcomes of learning activities. However, there are many studies which have found the usefulness and fruitfulness of the integration of both orientations to enhance learning processes (Ryan, Mims and Koestner, 1993). On the other hand, Deci and Ryan (2002), Reeve, Deci and Ryan (2004), Deci *et al*. (2006) and Reiss (2004; 2005) contended that intrinsic motivation facilitates learning acquisition, promotes deep information processing, and empowers students' memories and recall. It was also found that

intrinsically motivated students reported more involvement, curiosity, persistence, and eagerly participating in their tasks (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Hidi, 2000; Hidi and Harackiewicz, 2000; Reeve, Nix and Hamm, 2003; Reiss, 2004; 2005).

Thus, the relationship between the two orientations is complex because of the convergence of some extrinsic motivation factors with intrinsic motivation factors. This adds more ambiguity to the issue of motivation in general.

In second language learning, numerous theoretical studies have also concentrated on the role of motivation in learning. In the early work on the impact of motivation on language learning, Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two types of orientation in second language learning, namely integrative and instrumental orientations. As the terms connote, the first refers to the engagement in language learning activities for the purpose of assimilation and identification or at least a desire to meet and integrate with members of the target language group. A learner studies the target language in order to master the language or perhaps to have contact with the second language community. On the other hand, instrumental orientation denotes involvement in language learning as a tool to achieve a specific materialistic or pragmatic goal. These two orientations are widely accepted and their validity has been confirmed by some studies (Dornyei, 1990).

In fact, after much of criticisms of his model, Gardner (1988) agreed that integrative motivation is not the only element that contributes to language learning acquisition and it cannot account for all variances in second language achievement. Nevertheless, Gardner still maintains that integrative orientation is more important in determining the outcomes of language learning processes than instrumental orientation (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991). He emphasizes that learners with integrative motivation will become deeply involved in the target language, have positive feelings towards that language and community, evaluate the learning processes positively, and struggle to practice the language. These features, according to Gardner (1988), are sufficiently logical evidences to claim and predict that the learner will probably become more successful in second language learning than a learner who is instrumentally motivated.

McDonough (1981) divided the integrative concept into two aspects: (1) a general motive to communicate and associate with the entire second language society, and (2) an interest to belong to a certain community by adapting psychological features of the group. However, it should not necessarily be concluded that the desire to contact and communicate with members of the target second language is the only motive behind adopting the integrative orientation since learners of a second language usually have little or no contact with members of that language community (Clement, Dornyei and Noels, 1994). The ultimate aim of foreign language learning is to be able to communicate with others who learn the language as a second language rather than to have direct contact with native speakers (Dornyei, 1990). Moreover, other studies advocate a combined approach in which both orientations are to be adopted holistically by learners as steps toward proficiency in learning the target language. This approach suggests that a learner will become more successful in learning when both orientations are adopted. As in the issues of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, researchers conclude that both integrative and instrumental goals are not contradictory; rather, they are compatible and positively correlated phenomena (Dornyei, 1990). However, a study by Clement and Kruidenier (1983) revealed that the integrative orientation is effective only in multicultural contexts among an obviously dominant group.

In contrast to Gardner and Lambert's (1972) study, Noels, Pelletier and Vallerand (2000) in their study conducted in both bilingual and multilingual environments, involving French, English, and Spanish found four major orientations to be common among all the learners who had participated in the study. These orientations are the willingness to travel, seeking friendship among other communities, knowledge, and instrumental orientation. They

argued that inclination to communicate and identify with members of the target second language may be very important to arouse motivational orientation in learning a foreign language in a specific socio-cultural context, but it is not necessarily sufficient to energize learners to engage in language learning activities.

However, their four motivational orientations cannot be fully applied to learning Arabic in Islamic society or among Muslims. The reason is that the majority of Muslim non-Arabic speakers are learning Arabic for the sake of their religion. Therefore, any investigation about Arabic learners' motivational orientation, in addition to these orientations, should also include the element of belief. Researchers should not simply conclude that orientation is a cross-cultural goal because second language learners' orientations are conventionally lumped with the socio-cultural setting where they live and that research findings should automatically reflect the reality where the data are collected (Clement, Dornyei and Noels, 1994). Furthermore, Dornyei (1990) hints that the integrative approach has been found to predominate among learners whenever language learning is undertaken for knowledge and professionalism. This means that the learner is beyond the intermediate level and is moving to a more advanced level in which intrinsic motivation plays a major role in language proficiency. On the other hand, he argues that the nature of motivational orientation will definitely reflect the milieu where learning takes place. This also indicates that although motivational dimensions by Gardner and Lambert's might be cross-cultural components, social contexts and culture could also significantly contribute to the formulation and shaping of learners' orientation.

Nevertheless, in their self-developed items designed to assess students' desire to learn a second language, Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994) employed Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and retained five interpretable and meaningful factors which accounted for 41.5% of the variance in the study. These factors are Xenophilic, (friendship) identification, sociocultural, instrumental-knowledge, and English media with the eigenvalues of 5.97, 1.53, 1.62, 1.17, and 0.92, respectively. Moreover, when they identified the cultural, friendship, and identification dimensions as integrative orientations, they associated factor four, i.e. learning language for the purpose of knowledge with instrumental orientation, based on the findings by Clement and Kruidenier (1983).

On the other hand, it is generally accepted that the overwhelming majority of Muslim Arabic language learners in Islamic non-Arabic speaking countries are learning Arabic as an instrument of knowledge in order to understand Islam better. Although the elements of friendship and brotherhood among the learners and Arabic native speakers cannot be totally ruled out as affective factors energizing their motivational orientation, "affective predispositions towards the target language community are unlikely to explain a great proportion of the variance in language attainment" (Dornyei, 1990, p. 49).

Hence, the main objective of the present study was to investigate Arabic language learners' motivational orientations towards learning Arabic language as a second language, and whether Clement and Kruidenier's findings (1983) were held when learning Arabic. Moreover, since social context and culture have influence on students' orientations, this study also investigated the Academy of Islamic Studies students' orientation towards learning Arabic as a second language and the possibility of a religious factor influencing their intrinsic motivation toward learning Arabic.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 265 first and second year students (age 18-20) from the Academy of Islamic Studies, Nilam Puri participated in this study. They were randomly selected and voluntarily accepted to answer the questionnaires. These students were learning Arabic as a second language in order to pursue degrees in various fields of Islamic Studies. The Academy of Islamic Studies in Nilam Puri is a pre-university centre which is affiliated with the University of

Malaya, where students are introduced to basic courses, particularly in Arabic language and bachelor degree prerequisites which qualify them to undertake undergraduate programmes in various specializations in the Islamic Studies. The sample comprised 99 (37.4%) males and 166 (62.6%) females. These students were from various types of schools such as Arabic schools (SAR), National Islamic schools (SMKA), and National Secondary schools (SMK). The respondents had spent a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 11 years learning Arabic, but none of them had lived in or visited any Arabic countries.

Instrument

A students' Motivation in Learning Arabic (SMLA) inventory, developed by Kaseh and Nil Farakh (2003), was used in this study. This inventory consisted of 63 items measuring different societal and psychological factors that motivate students to have better performance in learning Arabic. The factors were intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their sub-sections included factors such as accomplishments, stimulation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, amotivation, and demotivation.

The questionnaire was derived from the pattern of motivational orientation and self-determination theory survey (Noels *et al*., 2000). Noels *et al*. (2000) also asked about the different types of motivational orientation toward second language learning based on the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985). Meanwhile, Kaseh and Nil Farakh (2003) included an element of religious factor that was not available in the instrument by Noels *et al*. (2000). The instrument ranged from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree on a 7-interval scale.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

All the participants completed the questionnaires providing brief demographic variables regarding age, gender, previous school, year of the study, and CGPA. Each item of the questionnaire asked the students how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statements. However, CGPA could not be included in the final analyses because it was unavailable for the first year students.

Moreover, to evaluate the internal consistency of the items, Crobanch's alpha was examined and it was found to range between .85 to .86. Furthermore, an examination of the means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis values for the final earned factors suggested that an assumption of normal distribution was held. When a further test was done using the Kolmogorov-Smironov test, the results indicated that the test was statistically insignificant ($p > .05$), except for the minor cases, while $p > .05$ meant that the normality assumption was held. Moreover, the Shapiro-Wilk test also supported the assumption of normality. Based on these results, it could be concluded that normality assumptions were tenable and the parametric data analyses were justifiable. On the other hand, the linearity assumption means that there is a straight-line relationship between two variables. Linearity is very important in a practical sense because Pearson's r only captures the linear relationship (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). According to Schumacker and Lomax (1996), the extent to which one or both variables deviate from the assumption of a linear relationship will affect the size of the correlation coefficient. The researcher had conducted a series of multiple regressions using a studentized (SRED) residual pilot against each of the predicted dependent variables to examine the linearity. Visual inspection of the residual plots showed that the scores were randomly scattered, with no distinct pattern, and thus, suggesting that this assumption was reasonably met. Finally, lack of evidence of serious violations of the assumptions provided justification for the researcher to continue with the analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

RESULTS

A Principal Component Factor Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed on the data obtained from the respondents. The method

was used mainly to summarize the number of items into latent variables. The analysis strategy involved an iterative process, whereby the items that did not contribute significantly (i.e. those with loading <|.40| or those with factorial complexity) were automatically eliminated from the list and the Principle Component Analyses were reanalyzed. These processes were repeated several times before the satisfactory factors were retracted and obtained. Hence, the initial pool of 63 items was then reduced to 31 items as a result of PCA, while items that did not significantly contribute to the analysis or redundant items were eventually discarded. Based on the rule of thumb, the only factors with the eigenvalue of 1 or greater were considered as good factors and were therefore retained. These processes enhanced the reliability and interpretability of the factors.

The analysis yielded a total of six interpretable factors with eigenvalues greater than one (see Table 1), and these accounted for 55.1% of the proportion variance in the students' motivation of language learning scores (SMLA). Furthermore, the degree of intercorrelation among the items also reached the acceptable level, with the Barlett's test of Sphericity was statistically significant, $\chi 2$ (465)= 2765.444, p= 001, indicating that the co-efficient in the correlaton matrix was different from zero and did not occur as a result of chance (Edgar and Shields, 1999). The overall MSA, which is an index of the extent to which correlation co-efficients conform to zero, was also fulfilled.

The root-greater-than-one criterion was used to extract the factors and eventually six meaningful and interpretable factors were obtained (Table 1). The first factor contained nine items that reflected the students' inner feelings toward learning Arabic primarily as a tool of exploring and gaining knowledge and was labelled as intrinsic motivation – knowledge. The second factor included seven statements that generally described demotivation in learning Arabic. Meanwhile, the third factor consisted of four items pertaining to the feelings associated with religion as a motive to learn Arabic and was characterized as religious motivation. The fourth factor was represented by four items and was labelled as extrinsic motivation–introjected regulation. Introjected motivation means motive emerges within the individual (self); it is not a part of the integrated self but rather emerges as a result of internal control. Thus, it is closer to the external than the internal (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan, 1991). The fifth factor consisted of four items and was loaded in a factor named as extrinsic motivation–external regulation. The locus of causality is external regulation because it is totally determined by outside forces and coercion whether seeking praise or avoiding punishment and it represents the least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation (Deci *et al*., 1991). The sixth factor contained three items and labelled as amotivation.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the direction, weight and predictive ability for each predictor in this study. The correlation among the variables is presented in Table 3. Both predictors or independent variables (Demotivation, Religious motivation, Introjected, Regulation, Amotivation) and criterion or dependent variable (Intrinsic Motivation) were extracted from the PCA and combined with gender and age. A number of significant correlations were obtained. The overall model was statistically significant, (F (7, 229) = 20.10, MSE = 31.02, p=. 001), and the set of the predictors accounted for 56% of the total variance explained by the model. The adjusted coefficient of determination (adjusted R^2) was .53, with an estimated standard error of 10.1. This indicated that the model was appropriate and there were relationships between the criterion and predictors. Further analysis of the predictive power of the individual predictors found three predictors to be significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation (criterion). For example, religious motivation was found to be the major predictor of students' intrinsic motivation for learning Arabic: F (7, 229), 20.10, MSE = 31.02, p = .001 (ß = .340). This finding

TABLE 1
Distribution of factor loading and anti image

Item no	Items	Factor loading						Anti image
		Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	
Item1	I want to understand the content of the Quran and Hadith better.			.655				.838a
Item2	For the pleasure I get when I can comprehend some words in the Quran.			.730				.882a
Item3	For the high feeling that I experience when hearing the Quran recited.			.802				.859a
Item4	For the pleasure I get when deciphering the beauty of the Quranic verses.			.703				.908a
Item5	For the pleasure in knowing what the Arabic writers write.	.548						.862a
Item6	For the satisfied feeling I got in finding out new things.	.656						.881a
Item7	For the enjoyment I experience when I grasp the complexity of the Arabic grammar.	.711						842a
Item8	For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises in the Arabic language.	.664						.826a
Item9	For the satisfaction I feel when I am able to acquire a second language.	.657						.856a
Item10	For the pleasure I feel when I can engage in conversation with a native Arabic speaker.	.653						.859a
Item11	For the enjoyment I feel when I can understand some TV or radio programs in Arabic.	.568						.934a
Item12	For the high feeling that I experience while speaking in Arabic.	.619						.888a
Item13	For the pleasure I get from hearing the Arabic spoken by native Arabs or those fluent in the language.	.713						.859a
Item14	In order to get a more prestigious job later on.					.742		.699a
Item15	Because it is a university requirement.					.573		.792a
Item16	Because I need it to undertake studies in Islamic sciences.					.599		.697a

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Item17	Because I might need to travel to Arabic countries some day.					.676		.789a
Item18	Because I believe that all Muslims should make the effort to learn Arabic.				.558			.864a
Item19	Because I would feel guilty if I did not know the language of Islam, which is my religion.				.573			.878a
Item20	Because I choose to speak the language of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).				.741			.850a
Item21	Because I choose to speak the language of paradise.				.727			.815a
Item22	I do not need Arabic in order to understand Islam better.						.800	.827a
Item23	I do not care if I do not pass my Arabic.						.725	.847a
Item24	Learning Arabic is irrelevant to my life in this country.						.583	.864a
Item25	I just do not know how to learn Arabic effectively.		.683					.870a
Item26	Arabic is simply too difficult for me to learn.		.614					.873a
Item27	I have never done well in my Arabic tests.		.599					.835a
Item28	The materials that are used for Arabic courses are not interesting.		.493					.819a
Item29	I have only been taught rules of the language but not how to use the language.		.739					.723a
Item30	The goals and expectations of learning Arabic are not clearly communicated to me.		.699					.793a
Item31	Beyond the classroom, I do not have the opportunities to practice Arabic.		.685					
Eigenvalue		7.586	3.522	1.895	1.607	1.294	1.178	
Reliability		.89	.86	.81	.72	.69	.57	

TABLE 2
Means, standard deviation and correlation of SMLA items

Items No.	SMLA Items in Brief	Means	Std. Deviation	Correlation
1	I want to understand the content of the Quran and Hadith better.	6.62	.87	.74
2	For the pleasure in knowing what the Arabic writers write.	5.61	1.10	.73
3	For the satisfied feeling I got in finding out new things.	5.60	.99	.73
4	For the pleasure I get when I can comprehend some words in the Quran.	6.14	1.10	.73
5	For the enjoyment I experience when I grasp the complexity of the Arabic grammar.	5.51	1.13	.73
6	For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises in the Arabic language.	5.20	1.20	.73
7	For the satisfaction I feel when I am able to acquire a second language.	5.60	1.20	.73
8	For the pleasure I feel when I can engage in conversation with a native Arabic speaker.	5.40	1.15	.73
9	For the enjoyment I feel when I can understand some TV or radio programs in Arabic.	5.60	1.30	.73
10	For the high feeling that I experience when hearing the Quran recited.	6.24	1.01	.74
11	For the pleasure I get when deciphering the beauty of the Quranic verses.	6.10	1.06	.74
12	For the high feeling that I experience while speaking in Arabic.	5.75	1.12	.73
13	For the pleasure I get from hearing the Arabic spoken by native Arabs or those fluent in the language.	5.40	1.13	.72
14	In order to get a more prestigious job later on.	4.52	1.42	.73
15	Because it is a university requirement.	4.22	1.70	.73
16	Because I need it to undertake studies in Islamic sciences.	4.84	1.54	.73
17	Because I might need to travel to Arabic countries some day.	5.01	1.34	.73
18	Because I believe that all Muslims should make the effort to learn Arabic.	5.82	1.22	.73
19	Because I would feel guilty if I did not know the language of Islam, which is my religion.	5.60	1.40	.74
20	Because I choose to speak the language of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).	5.83	1.15	.74
21	Because I choose to speak the language of paradise.	2.90	1.85	.75
22	I do not need Arabic in order to understand Islam better.	2.22	1.62	.75

Table 2 (*Continued*)

23	I do not care if I do not pass my Arabic.	2.41	1.63	.74
24	Learning Arabic is irrelevant to my life in this country.	3.76	1.64	.74
25	I just do not know how to learn Arabic effectively.	3.42	1.51	.74
26	Arabic is simply too difficult for me to learn.	3.30	1.56	.74
27	I have never done well in my Arabic tests.	3.30	1.43	.74
28	The materials that are used for Arabic courses are not interesting.	3.99	1.45	.73
29	I have only been taught rules of the language but not how to use the language.	3.73	1.40	.73
30	The goals and expectations of learning Arabic are not clearly communicated to me.	3.50	1.53	.74
31	Beyond the classroom, I do not have the opportunities to practice Arabic.	6.62	.87	.74

suggests that religion is the main factor that motivates Muslims in Malaysia and other Islamic non-Arabic countries to learn Arabic (Al-attas, 1980; Wan Daud, 1988; Rosnani, 1996). Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation-introjected regulation was the second predictor which was found to correlate statistically with intrinsic motivation: F (7, 229), 20.10, MSE = 31.02, p = .001 (ß = .257), and it accounted for almost 26% of the variance of the model. This indicated that although learning Arabic was internal to the person, it might also have more "resemblance to external control than to self-determined forms of regulation because it involved coercion and seduction and did not entail true choice" (Deci *et al*., 1991, p. 329). Similarly, the extrinsic motivation-external regulation was another major determinant of intrinsic motivation: F (7, 229), 20.10, MSE = 31.02, p = .001 (ß = .180). This denoted that learning Arabic could be perceived as a way of living, because many were learning Arabic in addition to religious motivation to get a prestigious job, or as a university requirement, or because they were going to take some courses in Arabic in their future academic endeavour. However, demotivation, amotivation, gender, and age were found to be statistically insignificant: ß -.055, p = .193, ß -.012, p. = .389, ß .009, p. = .818, and ß -.079, p = .873, respectively.

On the other hand, religious motivation and extrinsic motivation (introjected and external regulations) were positively correlated with intrinsic motivation (.528, .506, .202) respectively, while demotivation and amotivation were negatively correlated with religion motivation (-.218, -.285), respectively. This finding suggests that although instrumental orientations might be considered as another reason for learning a second language, they could be a self-determined reason for engaging in the second language learning task (Noels *et al*., 2000). Interojected regulation was highly correlated with religious motivation (.541) while amotivation was negatively correlated with it (-.421).

Not surprisingly, amotivation was positively correlated with demotivation (.460) and external regulation (.177), but it was negatively correlated with introjected regulation (-.312). Meanwhile, gender was positively associated with religious motivation (.144), but was negatively correlated with demotivation and amotivation at -.110 and -.179, respectively (Table 3). However, age was only negatively correlated with demotivation (-.115) and moderately correlated with introjected regulation (.087).

In multiple regression equations, the partial coefficient for each variable signifies how much the value of a dependent variable changes when the value of the particular independent variable increases by one unit, while other independent variables are kept constant (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

TABLE 3
Correlations among the variables

Factor	IMK	Demotiv	R.motiv	EMIR	EMER	AMOT	Gender	Age
IMK								
Demotiv	-.218							
R.motiv	.528	-.267						
EMIR	.506	-.230	.541					
EMER	.202	.200	.016	.167				
AMOT	-.285	.460	-.421	-.312	.177			
Gender	.088	-.110	.144	.062	-.041	-.179		
Age	.003	-.115	-.046	.087	-.019	.026	.076	

Note: IMK = Intrinsic motivation – knowledge, Demotiv = Demotivation, R.motiv = Religious motivation, EMIR = Extrinsic motivation – introjected regulation, EMER = Extrinsic motivation – external regulation, AMOT = Amotivation, Gender, Age

TABLE 4
Coefficient table

	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	17.29	4.44	-.079	3.90	.001
Demotivation	.0078	.060	-.055	-1.30	.193
Religious motivation	.723	.140	.340	5.16	.001
EM. Introjected	.478	.120	.257	3.97	.001
EM. Regulation	.309	.095	.180	3.26	.001
Amotivation	.0093	.107	.012	-.86	.389
Gender	.176	.767	-.009	.230	.818
Age	-.213	1.33	-.079	-.160	.873

DISCUSSION

The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) indicates that the structural factor of the language learning orientation scale is generally congruent with the previous factor analytic work conducted by Noels *et al*. (2000) on English language learning. It also suggests that the Arabic learners' motivation could be accurately evaluated using the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation subtypes outlined by Deci and Ryan (1985) and Noels, Pelletier, Clement and Vallerand (2000). However, the element of religious motivation must also be highlighted in order to encompass all the aspects that contribute to students' motivation towards learning Arabic.

On contrary to Noels *et al*.'s (2000) extracted factors, this analysis combined both intrinsic motivation–knowledge and accomplishment to form one factor labelled as intrinsic motivation-knowledge. Similarly, both extrinsic motivation (introjected regulation) and identified regulation were joined to form a dimension characterized as introjected regulation. It is worth mentioning that Noels *et al*. (2000) had analyzed their data separately due to what they called a large number of variables. However, the analysis in this study did not separate the intrinsic and extrinsic sub-scales in order to avoid the cross loading (factorial complexity) that had occurred in Noels' analysis.

Thus, the mixing up of some subtypes might result from that analysis which had been carried out together without separating the intrinsic and extrinsic orientation subscales. It was found that religious motivation was the major predictor of Arabic learners' intrinsic motivation. Moreover, interojected regulation and external regulation were statistically significant as well. This means that although religious motivation might be the main determinant in learning Arabic, it was not the only element, i.e. other elements should not be totally ruled out. Although the correlations between criterion and predictors did not necessarily connote causality, the correlational pattern was consistent with the theoretical prediction that religion, introjected, and external regulation might be related to more self-determined forms of motivation. Therefore, instructors should use all the factors that motivate students.

Based on their personal experience, many Academy of Islamic Studies' students at Nilam Puri were prepared to learn if there was an instructor who is well-prepared, ready to give knowledge, and care for the students' psychological aspects. It is suggested that more attention should be paid to Nilam Puri and meaningful training should be periodically conducted to enhance their academic staff's abilities especially on psychological aspects, methods of teaching, and unfortunately on the body of knowledge as well. It is worth noticing that the majority of the students blame the methods and ability of their instructors. For example, it is rare to find an instructor who speaks Arabic in the classroom, an action that violates the rules of the institution and the procedures of second language learning and teaching. Thus,

it is suggested that the administration should devote more efforts and attentions, not only at the Academy of Islamic Studies, but also at University of Malaya as a whole, in order to overcome the problem of poor performance of the students in learning Arabic.

Another noteworthy finding was that, neither gender nor age was significant in this study. Thus, gender and age did not determine the intrinsic motivation towards learning Arabic. Although this study examined the psychological factors that contributed to students' motivation in learning Arabic, the study did not assign a causal relationship between the predictors and intrinsic motivation. Therefore, an experimental design may be necessary to prove the causality between the criterion and predictors of this study. Moreover, it should be mentioned that all the subjects of this study were Malay Muslims. Therefore, if the study was conducted in other settings or in a broader socio-cultural context, the results might not be the same. Thus, it is suggested that this study be replicated in a wider setting in the future.

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Customer-expected Quality in Organic Products: Evidence from Sarawak

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present the customer-expected quality attributes and examine the relationships among product quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. In addition, the possible influences of customers' demographics on the quality expectation were also investigated to provide insights for effective market segmentation and targeting. The survey data obtained from the customers were quantitatively analysed and the exploratory factor analysis suggested four key quality expectations, namely authenticity, price, nutritional, and emotional values. All these dimensions are significantly and positively associated with the customer satisfaction and loyalty, with nutritional value being the most important dimension followed by the relative price. The findings also indicate that there are significant attitudinal differences among the customers whose levels of green knowledge are different.

Keywords: Customer-expected quality, product quality, customer satisfaction, organic products

INTRODUCTION

There has been an increasing consumer demand for agricultural produce obtained by means of processes which have less impact on the environment, especially for organic produce. The trading of organic agriculture products in the world increases by 20-30 per cent every year (Reyer-Cantos, 2008). In fact, environmental and health protections have been emphasized since the 1960s and 1980s in USA and Europe, respectively (Klonsky and Tourte, 1998; Greenan *et al*., 1997), and these have led to the rise and advancement of green marketing. The increasing consumers' concern over the quality of organic product and the protection of the environment are among the key factors stimulating the demand and marketing of these products (e.g. Tsakiridou *et al*., 2008).

Though organic product is one of the fastest growing areas of the food market in Europe, Northern America, Australia and Japan (Makatouni, 2002), as well as other advanced and emerging economies, the market potential for organic products in Sarawak is still at the introduction stage. Consumers need more knowledge and exposure. It is undeniable that consumers have become more concerned about the nutrition, health, and quality of the food they eat (e.g. Tsakiridou *et al.*, 2008). As such, there are more and more organic products retailers found in the major cities and towns in Sarawak such as Kuching. For instance, a few modern

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organic product stores are found just in the BDC area (very near to Kuching International Airport). The retailers and marketing managers have acknowledged the fact that there is increasing number of health conscious consumers and their requirements need to be met or exceeded for their maximum loyalty and profitability. As such, the customers' expectations and attitudes towards organic products need to be understood and managed accordingly. Their impacts on purchasing behaviours should be investigated for achieving and sustaining organic marketing excellence. It is the aims of this paper aims to present the quality attributes of organic products from the customer's perspective and their probable effects on their customer and behavioural intentions/loyalty.

CUSTOMER ATTITUDES AND ORGANIC PRODUCT MARKETING

Consumer attitudes include both the opinions and feelings that the consumers usually have towards something. These include perceptions, expectations, and interests. Their attitudes may differ across different products, including the organic product categories (Tsakiridou *et al*., 2008).

Consumer interest in organically grown vegetables has increased rapidly in the recent years due largely to the concerns they have on food safety, health, and the environment. It is important that organic products are perceived as food without the use of chemicals or growth hormones, and are grown or produced naturally. Besides, marketers should know the contributing factors in order to maintain the high market share of organic products. It is also necessary to analyze the consumers' beliefs and values which are related to increased consumer demand for organic products. Notably, price and availability are considered as barriers on the pattern of purchasing behaviour and consumption (e.g. Lockie *et al*., 2002).

In food service industry, personal values are among the potential factors influencing food choices and service expectation (Kueh and Voon, 2007), and organic products may not be an exception. These influence attitude formation, cognition, and behaviours of the people through the mediation of beliefs and attitudes (e.g. Feather, 1982). There are also some potential socio-demographic differences in the belief and consumption behaviour towards organic products (Lockie *et al*., 2002; Lea and Worsley, 2005). Research shows that organic food consumers tend to be more highly educated and are younger (Jolly, 1991) than non-organic consumers. On the other hand, organic product purchases are mainly attributed to consumers' concerns towards the environment and the quality of food they consume. Thus, the willingness to pay for organic products is one of the factors that influence customers to purchase these products. There are also consumers who are willing to pay for environmental friendliness, quality, and safety in food production. Therefore, price may be secondary to them.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In view of the attitudinal nature of customer-defined quality, it was hypothesized that there are numerous dimensions of quality expectations for organic products from the customers' perspective. The theoretical framework (*Fig. 1*) illustrates that quality expectations consist of Authenticity, Price, Nutritional, and Inner/ Emotional. The related marketing literature and organic product research indicate that what the customers are mostly concerned with the originality and authenticity of the products (i.e. whether they are indeed organic in nature). Besides, customers would like to get good value for the money they spend on organic products which are nutritional as well (e.g. Tsakiridou *et al.*, 2008). Price plays an important role as a quality proxy (Cicia *et al.*, 2002). Organic products are also expected to provide them with emotional value such as assuring them stress relief. The customers' knowledge on environment was hypothesized to influence the quality-satisfaction/loyalty relationships, respectively.

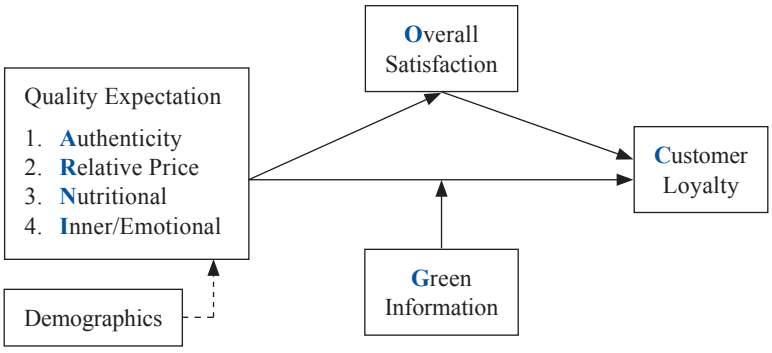

Fig. 1: Theoretical framework for the ORGANIC Model

METHODOLOGY

This paper presents the findings from an exploratory survey research carried out in Kuching, Sarawak. The questionnaire survey was carried out to understand the quality expectation towards organic products and its relationships with customers' satisfaction and loyalty. The customers are believed to be the most qualified and informed 'judges' for the quality of organic products. Related marketing theories and research literature were referred to in order to understand the marketing and measurement of organic products. More than 20 statements were used to measure the users' expectation of organic products (e.g. Fotopoulos and Krystallis, 2002). For this reason, the questionnaire was carefully designed and the items were measured using 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree). Meanwhile, the customers' information on environmental issues (hereby named Green Information) was measured using six items which are mainly related to pollution. The overall satisfaction was a single-item measure, whereas customers' loyalty comprised of five items (Table 1).

The data collection was done after the duly designed questionnaire was validated and pre-tested. A total of 300 structured questionnaires were distributed to the customers who had knowledge about and experience with organic products. They were also students from other parts of Sarawak. Quota sampling was used with the demographic factors as the controlled characteristics (i.e. gender, age, and residence). Though the personal-contact data collection method yielded a 100% response rate after the questionnaire checking process, only 263 questionnaires were found to be usable for the analysis. The respondents who participated in the survey (Table 3) were mainly female customers (i.e. 71%) and most of them (55%) were young adults (21 years old or below). About 75% of them were degree holders and 66% had a monthly family income of RM2,000 or less. Almost half of the respondents were staying in the urban area.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As shown Table 1, the results of the exploratory factor analysis (using principal component analysis with varimax rotation) show that the quality expectation measure consists of four dimensions, namely Authenticity, Price, Nutritional, and Emotional. The four factors (each with Eigenvalue more than 1) explain 70.1% of the total variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure stood at 0.901, indicating a good sampling adequacy. The results from the reliability analysis indicate that all the variables were reliable measures, with satisfactory levels of internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients met the mandatory level of 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The corrected item-total correlations for the items within the dimensions also portray a good internal consistency (i.e. higher than 0.40).

TABLE 1
Quality expectations, green information, satisfaction, and loyalty

Dimensions and Items		Alpha (Mean)	Item-to-Total correlation	Factor Loadings	Mean	Std. Deviation
Authenticity	1. Production method	0.85 (4.32)	0.558	0.643	4.03	0.875
	2. Taste		0.491	0.532	4.14	0.958
	3. Freshness		0.710	0.742	4.46	0.872
	4. Healthiness		0.771	0.800	4.57	0.816
	5. Naturalness		0.796	0.826	4.52	0.795
	6. Environmental		0.571	0.705	4.20	0.944
Price	7. Not expensive	0.82 (3.95)	0.660	0.835	3.93	1.014
	8. Relatively cheaper		0.681	0.861	3.88	1.040
	9. Value for money		0.639	0.692	3.99	0.955
	10. Relatively better price		0.592	0.605	4.02	0.897
Nutritional	11. Rich in vitamin	0.93 (4.45)	0.858	0.795	4.52	0.800
	12. Rich in protein		0.845	0.808	4.44	0.822
	13. Rich in fibre		0.803	0.762	4.36	0.858
	14. Overall nutritional value		0.819	0.717	4.46	0.794
Emotional	15. Help to control stress	0.90 (4.11)	0.695	0.706	4.26	1.001
	16. Help in my day		0.770	0.761	4.18	0.987
	17. Help me to relax		0.847	0.818	4.18	0.986
	18. Keep me awake		0.720	0.833	3.95	1.073
	19. Make me feel good		0.736	0.813	3.96	1.091
	Overall	0.92			4.21	
Green information	About acid rain problem	0.89 (3.46)	0.658	NA	3.40	0.959
	About water pollution		0.720	NA	3.52	0.956
	About ozone problem		0.756	NA	3.42	1.015
	About nuclear wastes		0.788	NA	3.27	1.019
	About world over-population		0.723	NA	3.36	0.986
	About world pollution		0.568	NA	3.73	0.964
Overall satisfaction	Overall satisfaction on the organic products	NA	NA	NA	3.58	0.878
Customer loyalty	Usually purchase	0.80 (3.45)	0.616	NA	3.43	0.970
	Usually spend		0.655	NA	3.27	0.972
	Will spend more		0.630	NA	3.23	0.904
	Like to be customer again		0.492	NA	3.65	0.868
	Will recommend to others		0.543	NA	3.66	0.931

Besides, the validity of measure was also assessed. The correlation coefficients (Table 2) were found to range from 0.42 to 0.66, indicating that they were not highly correlated. Hence, there was discriminant validity among the four dimensions. On the other hand, the dimensions were moderately or strongly correlated with the overall quality (0.74 to 0.85) which was evidenced as a convergent validity of the measure. Meanwhile, the correlations with the overall satisfaction ranged from 0.24 to 0.32, whereas customer loyalty ranged from 0.19 to 0.24. All the associations were found to be significant at 0.01 level.

The results indicated that customers were expecting the organic products to be authentic,

TABLE 2
Correlations among quality expectation dimensions and variables

Dimensions/Variables		Authenticity	Price	Nutritional	Emotional	Quality	Satisfaction
Price	Correlation	0.42*					
Nutritional	Correlation	0.66*	0.45*				
Emotional	Correlation	0.42*	0.44*	0.60*			
Quality	Correlation	0.77*	0.74*	0.85*	0.80*		
Satisfaction	Correlation	0.24*	0.24*	0.30*	0.24*	0.32*	
Loyalty	Correlation	0.19*	0.21*	0.24*	0.19*	0.26*	0.62*

* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

typically on the healthiness, naturalness, and freshness. This suggests that customers have to be consistently assured of the authenticity of organic products and the certification of authenticity is definitely necessary for effective marketing of organic products. Nevertheless, farmers are still facing certification challenges (Ong and Jumat, 2008). Thus, their awareness on the importance of certification needs to be enhanced. Besides, all organic products should be nutritional (e.g. rich in vitamins) in order to attract buyers.

The findings also indicate that the average expectations on price and emotional value are relatively lower (Table 3). On the contrary, the analysis of mean difference indicated that most of the customer demographic information (i.e. gender, age, and income) generally did not exert any significant influence on their quality expectations of organic products. However,

TABLE 3
Respondents' demographic variables and difference in quality expectations

Demographic Variables	N	%	Mean	Sig.	Difference
Gender					
Male	76	29	4.14	0.26	No
Female	187	71	4.23		
Age (Years)					
≤18	45	17	4.15	0.48	No
19-21	100	38	4.17		
>21	118	45	4.26		
Education					
SPM	29	11	4.23		
Diploma	37	14	4.13	0.10	No
Degree and above	197	75	4.30		
Monthly family income (RM)					
≤2000	173	66	4.19		
2001-3000	43	16	4.24	0.82	No
>3000	47	18	4.24		
Residence					
Rural	72	27	4.12		
Suburbs	74	28	4.36	0.04	Yes
Urban	117	45	4.11		

place of residence (at α=0.05 level) and education (at α=0.10 level) might have influence on their expectations. These are in line with Tsakiridou *et al.* (2008) who also found that educational level had influence on the customers' attitude towards organic products.

Multiple regression analysis was used to explore the relative importance of the quality dimensions (using the standardized beta coefficient values) in determining the customers' satisfaction and loyalty, respectively. Thus, VIF values were used to check the existence of collinearity. The VIF values were found to range from 1.375 to 2.310, indicating that there was no collinearity problem among the independent variables. The results shown in Table 4 indicate that the customer-perceived nutritional value and price (value for money) were among the potentially important determinants which influenced their satisfaction and loyalty to organic products. This is similar to the findings by Tsakiridou *et al.* (2008) also found that health and pricing issues were among the key concerns for the customers. Nevertheless, the nutritional dimension was found to be the most important (with the ranking of 1) in this study, and this was followed by price.

The influence of customers' knowledge on environmental issues (green knowledge) and thus on the quality expectations, customer satisfaction, and loyalty were also explored. The customers were categorized into two groups, namely with low and high levels of green knowledge. The results (Table 5) indicate that there are significant attitudinal differences among those customers.

The results suggest that the participating customers with higher level of green knowledge tend to have relatively higher expectations of quality. This was also found to be true across the four dimensions of quality expectations (except for price which was significant only at 0.10 level), satisfaction, and loyalty. This implies that the provision of environmental information and promotion via appropriate green marketing strategies is necessary.

Regression models were done to carry out further investigation so as to explore the influence of customers' knowledge of environmental issues on the quality-satisfaction and quality-loyalty relationships. The findings indicate that their green knowledge positively moderates (slightly) the relationship between the customer-perceived quality expectations and their loyalty. On the contrary, the green knowledge negatively moderates (slightly) the relationship between the customer-perceived quality expectations and customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This survey-based exploratory study found that the probable quality dimensions of the organic products as expected by the customers include authenticity, price, nutritional, and emotional values. All these dimensions were found to be significantly and positively associated with the

TABLE 4
Relative importance of quality attributes in determining customers' satisfaction and loyalty

Dimensions	Customer Satisfaction			Customer Loyalty		
	Standardized Coefficients	VIF	Rank	Standardized Coefficients	VIF	Rank
Authenticity	0.04	1.835	4	0.03	1.835	3
Price	0.12*	1.375	2	0.11	1.375	2
Nutritional	0.18**	2.310	1	0.14	2.310	1
Emotional	0.06	1.640	3	0.05	1.640	4

* Significant at α = 0.10, ** Significant at α = 0.05

TABLE 5
Attitudinal differences according to the levels of green knowledge

	Green Knowledge	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Outcome
Quality	Low	4.13	0.622	0.000	Supported
	High	4.44	0.490		
i. Authenticity	Low	4.25	0.702	0.003	Supported
	High	4.52	0.528		
ii. Price	Low	3.90	0.781	0.053*	Supported
	High	4.11	0.793		
iii. Nutritional	Low	4.36	0.785	0.002	Supported
	High	4.68	0.559		
iv. Emotional	Low	3.98	0.857	0.000	Supported
	High	4.45	0.813		
Satisfaction	Low	3.45	0.839	0.000	Supported
	High	3.92	0.894		
Loyalty	Low	3.32	0.633	0.000	Supported
	High	3.78	0.741		

* Significant at $\alpha = 0.10$

customers' satisfaction and loyalty. However, the expected nutritional value of the organic product was among the most important dimensions in influencing customers' satisfaction and loyalty, followed by the relative price. The findings also suggested that customers' satisfaction was positively and significantly associated with customers' loyalty. Meanwhile, the customers' knowledge of environmental issues was found to have significant influences on their quality expectations, as well as satisfaction and loyalty on organic products.

On the contrary, the expected quality-satisfaction, and loyalty relationships were found to be relatively weak compared to the findings from other studies on perceptions and customers' experience. Hence, empirical investigations on perceived quality of organic products and its impacts on behavioural intentions are useful for effective marketing of organic products and customer relationship management. The role of retailing service quality in affecting the customer-perceived quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty should also be examined for more holistic organic product marketing. The focus of this exploratory investigation was mainly on the Generation Y, as the young customers could be the potential target market in the future. However, the inclusion of adults and more elderly customer samples in future would probably provide a more representative perspective of customer-defined qualities for organic products. Besides, with the more comprehensive measure of quality, conclusive causal relationships could therefore be obtained and applied.

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Loading and Distribution of the 2000 High Frequency Words in Malaysian English Language Textbooks for Form 1 to Form 5

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ABSTRACT

Textbooks are important tools used by teachers in teaching. Today, thanks to corpus-based research and the use of concordance software to analyze language, entire textbooks can be scanned to form what we call a corpus of the language of English language textbooks. Concordance software is used to perform automated and semi-automated analyses in terms of loading and distribution of words in textbooks. In this study, the researchers studied patterns of loading, distribution and repetition, and investigated cases of words missing in books, all based on the 2000 high frequency word list. Results of the study reveal that while most of the 2000 high frequency words (93.1%) are used in the secondary school textbooks, repetition and recycling are not efficient. The research also revealed that there are 139 (6.9%) words in the 2000 high frequency word list which are not used at all in Malaysian English language textbooks. The results also caution material developers that high coverage of the 2000 high frequency words does not ensure effective learning, especially when the words are poorly distributed within and across textbooks.

Keywords: Concordance-based evaluation, textbooks, 2000 high frequency word list, recycling, repetition

INTRODUCTION

There are now many questions asked about textbooks for the teaching of languages. While research shows that the 2000 high frequency words in the English language cover 87% of running words in a text, material developers are wondering how textbooks are crowded with words (the Form 1 book in this study used 4730 different words!) while missing out on many words from the 2000 high frequency word list. On the other hand, while words from the 2000 high frequency list do appear, they are usually not repeated and this is against the perspective of language learning as Thornbury (2002) claims that students remember words which are repeated seven times over spaced intervals.

In previous research using corpus-based procedures, the researchers worked on dead textbooks from the previous cycle and the forensic study (Mukundan and Aziz, 2008) revealed for the first time weaknesses in the development of textbooks, chief amongst which were in the area of lexical loading and distribution patterns. In this present study, the researchers attempted to analyze the load and distribution efficiency of the 2000 high frequency words in the textbooks.

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Second language learners need to know the 3,000 high frequency words of the language (Waring and Nation, 1997), as knowing these words enables them to begin reading authentic texts (Nation, 1990; Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham, 2001). However, knowledge of the first 2000 most frequent words in the language is sufficient enough to allow learners to access to approximately 87% of any ordinary text (Nation, 1990).

High frequency words are generally the most familiar words and they make up the majority of tokens in any discourse (Schmitt, 2000). Higher frequency words tend to be short and learners are likely to meet these words more frequently (Thornbury, 2002). It is important for language learners to know these words in order to function effectively in English. Once the high frequency words are acquired, learners can then independently learn the less frequent words through a combination of intentional and incidental learning (Schmitt, 2000). Using these words, learners are also able to "make accurate guesses about meanings of the remaining less frequent words which are likely to be unknown" (Schmitt, 2000).

The most frequent 2,000 headwords from West's General Service List (GSL) seem to be the most cited initial goal for second language learners as it accounts for at least 80%-85% of the words on any page of any book on any subject matter (Waring and Nation, 1997; Nation and Newton, 1997; Schmitt, 2000). The GSL is "a set of 2,000 words selected to be the greatest general service to learners of English" (http://jbauman.com). However, the list does not contain the most common 2000 words although during the selection, frequency count was one of the factors considered (Nation, 2004). Each of these words is headword representing a word family, which was loosely defined in West (http://jbauman.com). This list has served as the basis for graded readers and other material for many years (Nation, 1993).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study was to investigate patterns of loading, distribution, and repetition of the 2000 high frequency words in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5). The study also attempted to identify words in the 2000 high frequency list which are not used in the entire English Language textbooks.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions this study seeks to answer are as follows:

- What are the general characteristics of vocabulary loading in Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5)?
- To what extent are words in the 2000 high frequency list covered in Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5)?
- How often are words in the 2000 high frequency list being recycled in Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5)?
- Which words in the 2000 high frequency list are not being used in the entire Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5)?
- How often are randomly selected words from the 2000 high frequency list being distributed within and across the entire Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5)?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will benefit textbook developers in the following ways:

- Material developers will develop a greater awareness of vocabulary load and distribution patterns and have greater control of words and how they should be presented using concordance software. This will benefit the writing of new textbooks in the future.
- Materials developers will know that books written in an ad hoc manner will not even

take into consideration some important aspects such as the existence of the 2000 high frequency word list. Future textbook developers will also have a greater awareness with regards to this.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a purposive sampling method. The English language textbooks for Form 1 to Form 5 from the Klang Valley schools (Central Zone) were chosen for the study. These books are from the newest cycle of textbooks which were introduced in 2003, and are still used at the present time. All pages in the textbooks were scanned and saved as image files. These image files were converted to text files to enable WordSmith 4.0 to analyze the vocabulary used in these textbooks. Two WordSmith tools, WordList and Concord tools, were mainly used in this study. The study used West's GSL as a reference for the 2000 most frequent words in analyzing the patterns of loading, distribution, and repetition of these words in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation and discussion in this section are based on the research questions stated earlier. The first part deals with the general statistics of vocabulary loading in Malaysian Secondary School English language textbooks for Forms 1-5. The second part deals with the coverage of the 2000 high frequency words in Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5). The third part deals with the repetition of the 2000 high frequency words in Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5), while the fourth part deals with words in the 2000 high frequency list which are not used in the entire Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5). The final part deals with the distribution of 10 randomly selected words from the 2000 high frequency list within and across the entire Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5).

Part 1: General Characteristics of Vocabulary Loading in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

Table 1 shows the total number of running words (tokens) and the total number of different words (types) found in the textbooks. There is a gradual increase in the total number of tokens from the Form 1 textbook to Form 5 textbook. There is also a gradual increase in the total number of types found in the Forms 1-3 textbooks. However, a notable increase is seen in the total number of types in the Form 4 textbook compared to the Form 3 textbook. The Standardized Type/Token Ratio (STTR) was used to measure the density level of textbooks. Textbooks with higher percentage of STTR indicate that the textbooks have more types being introduced for every 1000 tokens in the textbooks. The results presented in Table 1 show that Form 5 textbook has the highest density level compared to the other four English language textbooks. At this level, students are assumed to be ready to handle a larger number of words, therefore more types are introduced. However, the Form 1 textbook does not have the lowest density level. In fact, its density level is higher than the textbooks for Forms 2 and 3. The finding also shows that the Form 1 textbook introduces more types than the Form 2 and Form 3 textbooks, making it relatively more difficult than the other two textbooks in terms of the vocabulary load in the textbooks. Form 1 students have to handle more vocabulary load than the Form 2 and Form 3 students, which should not be the case. Apparently, the Form 2 textbook has the lowest density level, making it the least difficult textbook in terms of the vocabulary load in the textbook.

Part 2: The Coverage of the 2000 High Frequency Words in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

A passive knowledge of these words provides familiarity of nearly nine out of ten words in most written texts (Thornbury, 2002), while Nation (1990) claims that the 2000 high frequency

TABLE 1
The total number of tokens and types in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	Form 5	All Textbooks
Tokens in the Textbooks	45,105	49,497	60,038	75,154	81,420	322,787
Types in the Textbooks	4,730	4,738	5,309	7,788	7,994	14,732
Standardized Type/Token Ratio (STTR)	40.11	39.67	39.94	42.58	42.21	41.38

words cover 87% of the running words in a text. Results of the analysis show that 27.0% of the types in Form 1 textbook (1278 out of 4730 types) appear in the 2000 high frequency list. This covers 63.9% of the words in the list. Meanwhile, 26.7% of the types in Form 2 textbook (1264 out of 4738 types) appear in the 2000 high frequency list. This covers 63.2% of the words in the list. 25.8% of the types in Form 3 textbook (1369 out of 5308 types) appear in the 2000 high frequency list. It covers 68.5% of the words in the list. 19.9% of the types in Form 4 textbook (1549 out of 7788 types) appears in the 2000 high frequency list, and this covers 77.5% of the words in the list. 19.4% of the types in Form 5 textbook (1553 out of 7994 types) appear in the 2000 high frequency list. It covers 77.7% of the words in the list. 12.6% of the types in the entire secondary school textbook (1861 out of 14 732 types) appear in the 2000 high frequency list. It covers 93.1% of the words in the list. Having been exposed to 93.1% of the 2000 high frequency words at the end of Form 5, students are assumed to be able to comprehend 81.0% of texts on any general topics.

Table 2 shows the number and percentages of the 2000 high frequency words in Malaysian Secondary School English Language textbooks (Forms 1-5). It can be concluded that the textbooks have prepared the students with the knowledge of all the 2000 high frequency words in the high frequency list as this would show awareness on the part of material developers that learners who leave school after five years of secondary education have to be exposed to the entire list of 2000 high frequency words.

Part 3: Repetition of the 2000 High-frequency Words in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

Thornbury (2002) claims that students remember words which are repeated at least seven times over a spaced interval. The results show that

TABLE 2
The number and percentage of the 2000 high frequency words in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	Form 5	All Textbooks
Total number of types in the textbooks	4730	4738	5309	7788	7994	14732
Number of words found in the 2000 high frequency word list	1278	1264	1369	1549	1553	1861
Percentage of words appearing in the 2000 high frequency word list	63.9%	63.2%	68.5%	77.5%	77.7%	93.1%
Percentage of types in textbook appearing in the 2000 high frequency words	27.0%	26.7%	25.8%	19.9%	19.4%	12.6%

71.9% of the words in the list (1438) are repeated at least seven times in the entire textbooks, 21.2% of the words (423 words) are recycled less than seven times, while 6.9% of the words (139 words) are not found in any of the textbooks. Table 3 displays the number of words being repeated in the entire set of textbooks.

These results also show that although the coverage of the words in the high frequency list is 93.1% (1861 out of 2000 words), the textbooks only recycle 71.9% of the words in the list effectively. Table 4 displays the list of words repeated less than seven times in the entire set of textbooks.

Part 4: Words in the 2000 High Frequency List Which Are Not Used in the Entire Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

About 6.9% of the words in the high frequency list (139 words) are not used in the textbooks. Table 5 presents the words in the 2000 high frequency list which are not used in any of the textbooks.

However, derivatives and inflections of some of the words in Table 4 are found in the textbooks. Although these words are not found in the textbooks, teachers may have taught these words in order to teach the students the derivative and inflectional forms of the words. Table 6 shows words (their derivatives and inflectional forms included) which are not used in any of the textbooks. There are 45 (2.3%) words (including their derivatives and inflections), in the 2000 high frequency list, which are not used in the entire set of Malaysian Secondary School English Textbooks (Forms 1-5).

Part 5: Distribution of 10 Randomly Selected Words from the 2000 High Frequency List within and across the Entire Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

Ten words were randomly selected using random number generator at GraphPad Software (www.graphpad.com/quickcalcs/randomN1.cfm). These words are used as examples to illustrate the distribution patterns of words within and across textbooks and not as examples of problematic words for students to learn. The words and their ranking in the 2000 high frequency list are presented in Table 7. The word "much" is the 94th highest frequency word in the list, while "yellow" is ranked 1277th rank in the 2000 high frequency list. The Concord Tool of WordSmith 4.0 was used to plot the distribution patterns of the selected words.

Table 8 shows how frequent the words are being used in the textbooks. As a whole, students encounter these words more than seven times within the five years of schooling. There are, however, some problems with regards to the repetition of these words across the entire period of secondary school education. For instance, the word 'art' which is ranked 277th in the 2000 high frequency list, is rarely used in the Forms 1, 2, 3, and 5 textbooks. The word is recycled well only in the Form 4 textbook. The word 'yellow' is ranked 1277th in the list. This word has not been recycled well in the entire set of textbooks. In fact, it is not being used at all in the Form 3 textbook. These results show that although more than 90% of the 2000 high frequency words are covered in the textbooks, not all the words are recycled effectively within the textbooks to ensure learning.

TABLE 3
The number of words that are repeated fewer than seven times in the entire set of Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks

No. of Occurrence in Form 1-5 Textbooks (times)	No. of Words	Percentage
7 times and more	1438 words	71.9%
Less than 7 times	423words	21.2%
Zero	139 words	6.9%

TABLE 4
Words that are repeated fewer than seven times in the entire set of Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks

abroad	cheer	eager	gray	miserable	Prove	sincere	tend
absolute	chief	ease	grind	misery	pump	skirt	tent
actor	Christmas	eastern	guard	modest	punish	slavery	thorough
admission	church	efficiency	guilt	motion	pupil	slide	thread
admit	circular	elder	hang	multiply	pure	slight	threaten
advance	clay	elect	haste	murder	push	slip	thunder
advertise	clever	election	heaven	musician	qualify	slope	ticket
affair	coal	enemy	hesitate	mystery	quarrel	snow	tie
agent	coat	entertain	holy	nail	quarter	soap	tight
airplane	commerce	envelope	hunt	neglect	queen	solemn	toe
alike	compete	envy	ideal	nest	railroad	somehow	ton
allowance	completion	equal	imaginary	noble	recognition	soul	tool
altogether	confuse	essence	inch	northern	reflection	soup	toward
amuse	confusion	everybody	inquire	nowhere	refresh	spare	towel
annoy	connection	examine	insect	operate	relation	spell	trade
apart	conscience	exception	instant	operator	relieve	spin	translate
appoint	convenience	excessive	instrument	oppose	remark	spirit	translation
approve	corn	excite	insurance	opposition	remedy	spit	trap
arise	cottage	excuse	intention	organ	representative	spite	treasury
arrest	cow	expense	interference	ought	reproduce	stair	tremble
arrow	crack	explosion	interrupt	package	reputation	stamp	trial
attempt	crash	extend	jaw	pad	reserve	steady	tribe
attraction	creep	extension	joint	pan	resign	steam	trick
autumn	criminal	extensive	jump	parent	resist	steep	tune
avenue	crop	extraordinary	justice	passenger	retire	steer	twist
awake	crown	fade	knee	pattern	reward	stem	union
axe	curtain	faint	knock	pause	roar	stir	unite
bargain	curve	faith	ladder	permanent	roast	stock	universe
bathe	custom	fan	lamp	pet	rob	stomach	urge
beam	customary	fancy	lean	pink	root	stove	urgent
beard	damp	fasten	lessen	pipe	royal	straw	veil
bedroom	dare	fault	lid	pity	rub	strengthen	vessel
beg	debt	feather	lip	plain	ruin	stretch	violence
bend	declare	fence	load	pleasure	rust	strike	virtue
bind	defeat	fix	loan	polish	sacred	stroke	voyage
bite	delay	flame	lock	political	sake	stuff	wage
blame	delight	flesh	loose	politician	salary	stupid	waiter
bleed	deliver	float	lord	politics	salesman	substance	wander
boast	dependence	fold	lump	possess	scarce	suit	warmth
border	descend	fool	male	postpone	scenery	summer	wax
branch	deserve	forgive	mankind	pound	scratch	supper	weapon
brass	destructive	fork	manufacture	powder	screw	surround	west
brick	dig	forth	marriage	praise	seed	suspect	whip
broad	dip	fortune	mass	pray	seize	swallow	whistle
bunch	disappoint	frequency	mechanic	preference	seldom	sweat	width
bundle	distant	friendship	mechanism	prejudice	servant	sweep	wine
businessman	distinguish	frighten	melt	prevention	sew	swell	wing
cape	disturb	gay	merchant	print	shell	swing	winter
caution	dive	gentleman	mercy	probable	shield	sympathetic	wisdom
cautious	dot	govern	mere	profession	shine	sympathy	wreck
cave	dozen	hay	mild	program	shoot	tax	yard
century	dull	heap	mile	prompt	shower	taxi	yield
charm	duty	grave	mineral	proposal	shut	telegraph	

TABLE 5
Words in the 2000 high frequency list that are not used in the entire set of Malaysian Secondary School English Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

accord	confess	flavor	lodge	scatter
accuse	confession	fond	membership	scrape
accustom	critic	forbid	moderate	separation
adopt	crush	freeze	neighbor	shave
angle	cultivate	funeral	neighborhood	simplicity
anyhow	curl	furnish	nut	soften
arch	curse	garage	objection	stain
astonish	decisive	governor	omit	straighten
awkward	decrease	grease	owe	suck
backward	defendant	guest	ownership	suspicion
barrel	defense	harbor	particle	swear
basis	depth	hatred	peculiar	tempt
behavior	desire	heal	plaster	tender
blade	devil	hire	plow	theater
boundary	dine	honor	preach	theatrical
calculation	disapprove	idle	propose	thumb
carriage	dismiss	imitation	qualification	tire
center	dollar	immense	rabbit	tray
certainty	drum	inquiry	rail	tube
civilize	earnest	insult	reduction	victory
classification	educator	insure	religion	weaken
classify	elsewhere	interfere	republic	weave
clothe	empire	joke	ribbon	widow
collar	employee	kick	rival	wipe
collector	explosive	kiss	rug	witness
colony	favor	kneel	saddle	worship
color	favorite	latter	satisfactory	wrist
complicate	fellowship	liberty	satisfy	

TABLE 6
Words (their derivatives and inflectional forms included) which are not used in the entire Malaysian Secondary School English Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

accustom	colony	governor	ownership	scrape
angle	curse	grease	peculiar	simplicity
anyhow	decisive	idle	plaster	swear
astonish	devil	immense	plow	tempt
awkward	earnest	latter	preach	theatrical
barrel	elsewhere	liberty	republic	tray
basis	empire	membership nut	rival	tube
civilize	fellowship	objection	saddle	widow
collar	garage	owe	scatter	wrist

TABLE 7
Ten randomly selected words and their ranking within the 2000 high frequency list

No.	Words	Ranking in the 2000 High Frequency List (1-2000)
1	much	94
2	country	217
3	study	231
4	art	277
5	quite	405
6	black	586
7	science	653
8	discussion	832
9	article	976
10	yellow	1277

TABLE 8
Distribution of words within Malaysian Secondary School English Textbooks (Forms 1-5)

	Words	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	Form 5	Total
1	much	30	33	48	38	38	187
2	country	12	24	7	37	18	98
3	study	16	13	23	11	29	92
4	art	4	3	4	12	5	28
5	quite	7	9	13	6	4	39
6	black	7	7	10	6	7	37
7	science	33	3	9	22	12	79
8	discussion	4	X	10	2	10	26
9	article	19	7	37	15	30	108
10	yellow	2	2	x	3	3	10

Figs. 1-10 show the dispersion plots of the selected words within the entire set of textbooks. Words like *much, study, country,* and *article* are distributed well within and across the textbooks. Nevertheless, words like *quite, black*, *science,* and *discussion* are distributed well only in certain textbooks. Meanwhile, words like *art* and *yellow* are the most poorly distributed words within and across the textbooks.

CONCLUSION

Generally, the textbooks have large loads of vocabulary for each Form based on the results of the analysis. The results also conclude that the textbooks have not adequately prepared the students with the knowledge of the 2000 high frequency words effectively, as only 71.9% (1438) of the high frequency words are effectively introduced and repeated, despite the high coverage of 93.1% (1861 out of 2000 words). Meanwhile, about 6.9% of the words in the high frequency list (139 words) are not at all used in the textbooks. However, derivatives and inflections of some of these words are found in the textbooks. 2.3% of the 2000 high frequency words (46 words that take into account their derivatives and inflections) are never used at all in the entire set of Malaysian Secondary School English Textbooks (Forms 1-5). In terms of the distribution patterns of 10 randomly selected words from the 2000 high-frequency list, the

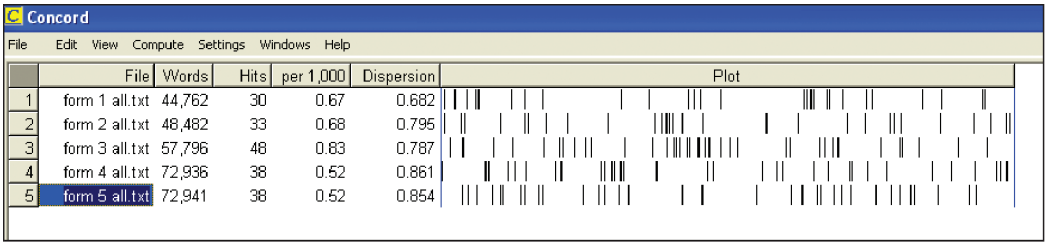

Fig. 1: The use of 'MUCH' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

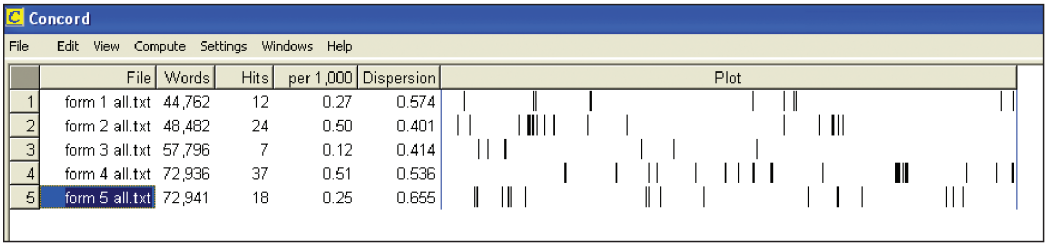

Fig. 2: The use of 'COUNTRY' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

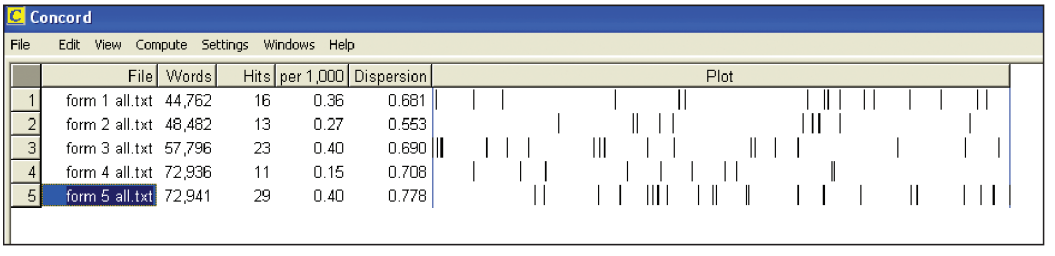

Fig. 3: The use of 'STUDY' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

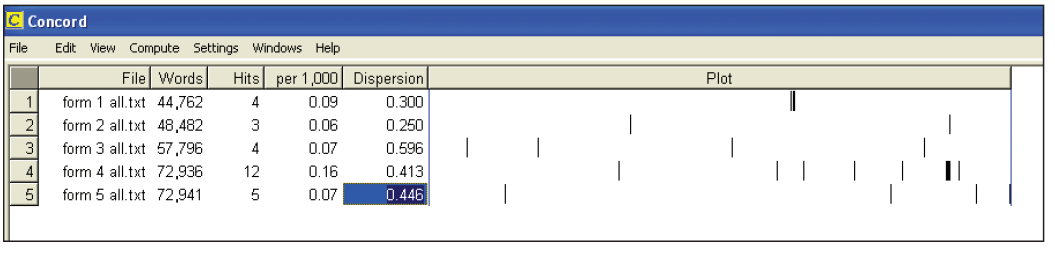

Fig. 4: The use of 'ART' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

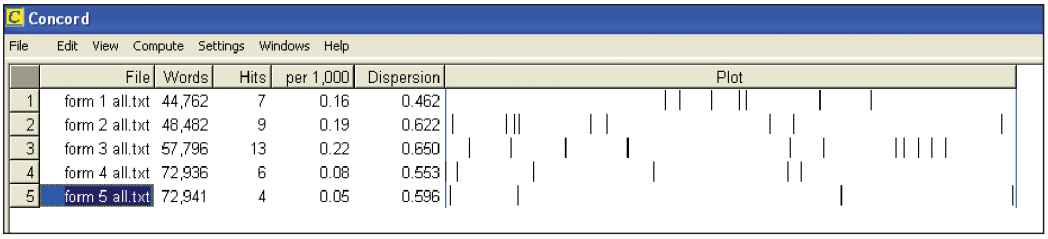

Fig. 5: The use of 'QUITE' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

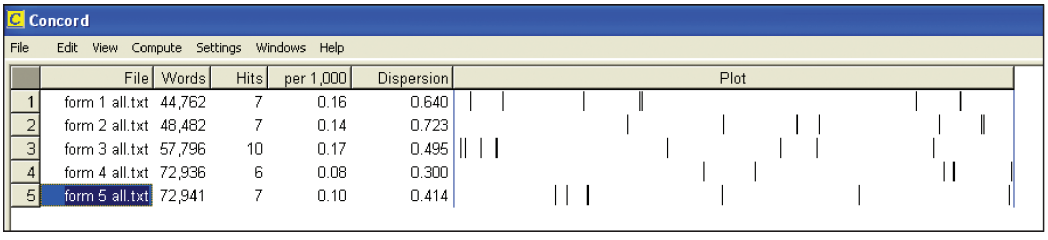

Fig. 6: The use of 'BLACK' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

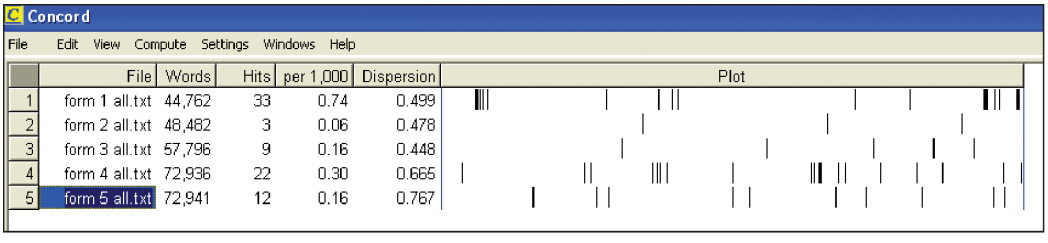

Fig. 7: The use of 'SCIENCE' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

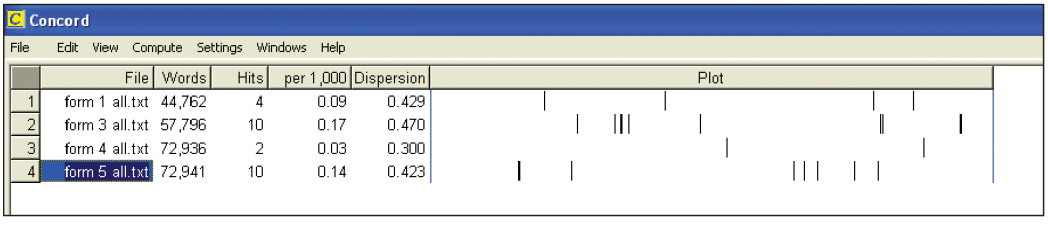

Fig. 8: The use of 'DISCUSSION' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

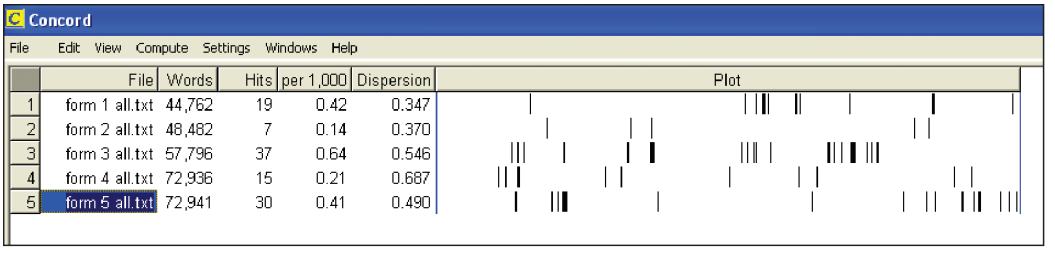

Fig. 9: The use of 'ARTICLE' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

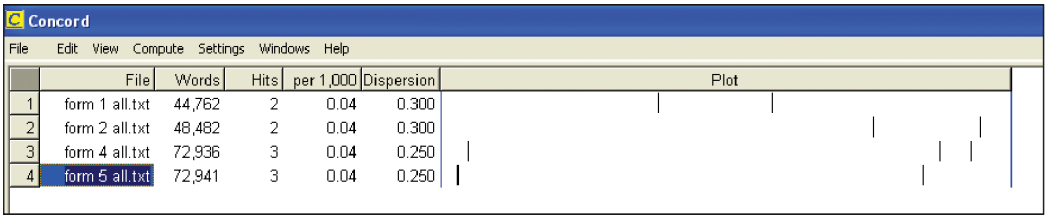

Fig. 10: The use of 'YELLOW' in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks for Forms 1-5

results show that although more than 90% of the 2000 high frequency words are covered in the textbooks, not all the words are distributed effectively within the textbooks to ensure learning. Therefore, material developers need to be cautioned that high coverage of the 2000 high frequency words does not ensure effective learning especially when the words are poorly distributed within and across textbooks.

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Relationships between Satisfaction of Muslim Women on Financial Supports After Divorce and Ex-Husbands' Compliance to the Supports with Post-Divorce Welfare

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to assess the welfare of divorced women in relation to financial supports after divorce, i.e. *iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, arrears of maintenance, and child maintenance. The specific objectives were to determine the divorced women's satisfaction with the amount of financial supports, the ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered financial supports, their satisfaction with post-divorce welfare (levels of economic strain and depression), the relationships between satisfaction with the amount of financial supports and post-divorce welfare, as well as the relationships between ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered financial supports and post-divorce welfare. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The sample comprised of 201 divorced women selected from the cases recorded in the year 2003 till 2005 at the Shariah Subordinate Courts of Hulu Langat and Gombak Timur, Selangor. Pearson correlation showed that two factors were negatively correlated with the economic welfare of the divorced women, i.e. the dissatisfaction with the amount of *iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, and child maintenance and the ex-husbands' none or partial compliance to the court-ordered *iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, and child maintenance. However, on the contrary to the expectation, the divorced women's satisfaction with the amount of all types of financial supports provided by the ex-husbands and their ex-husbands' none or partial compliance to all types of financial supports was found to have no significant relationships with depression. The findings also indicated that the assessment of a reasonable sum of financial supports and the effective enforcement of court order were significant factors that might augment the welfare of women after divorce.

Keywords: Arrears of maintenance, child maintenance, compliance to court order, depression, economic strain, *iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

The impact of single parenting on women and children has long been a concern. In Malaysia, statistics showed that there were more than 10,000 divorce cases involving Muslims reported each year for the last decade (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*, 2008). The State of Selangor has the highest reported divorce cases since 2006 with 3,295 cases. Due to the indisputably high divorce rates which result in the increase in the number of mother-only families, numerous researchers found that the end of marriages was correlated with higher poverty rates (e.g. Weiss, 1984; Morgan, 1989; Eshleman, 2000; McKenry and McKelvey, 2003; Gadalla, 2008).

Therefore, the first and foremost challenge which a divorced woman will face after divorce is the economic challenge, for which various studies have revealed that stress would increase, particularly for the custodial mothers (Duncan, 1994; Peterson, 1996; Steiner, 2007). According to the mid-term review of the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005), the incidence of poverty among female-headed households, including divorced women in 2002 was 12.5% which constituted 33,487 households (*Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat*, 2003). Research also found the connection between marital disruption and depression (Pearlin and Johnson, 1977; McKenry and McKelvey, 2003; Peden *et al*., 2004; Wickrama *et al*., 2006; Turner, 2006).

Studies have also found various factors that may enhance the well-being of divorced women such as earning capacity, job opportunity, adequate enforcement of child support, higher educational attainment, and social support (e.g. McLanahan and Booth, 1989; Rocha, 1997; Zhan and Pandey, 2004; Nor 'Asyikin, 2006; Turner, 2006).

However, studies in Australia, Malaysia, and India indicated that there were very low levels of payment and receipt of financial supports, inadequate enforcement of the court orders, insufficient amount of financial supports received from the ex-husbands such as the amount of spousal support (for non Muslims) or *iddah* maintenance (for Muslim divorced women) and child maintenance, as well as non-compliance of the ex-husbands to court-ordered financial supports (Parker, Parkinson and Behrens, 1994; Siddiqi, 1996; Behrens and Smyth, 1999; Maznah, 1999). Therefore, the identified problems might have contributed to the small number of cases on claims for financial supports after divorce, particularly the claims made by the divorced Muslim women, which had been highlighted in the previous studies by Raihanah (2001) and Salleh (2003).

In addition, the statistics of the Selangor Shariah Courts conducted in 2003 (*Jabatan Kehakiman Shariah Selangor*, 2003) revealed that out of 3,005 divorce cases registered with the court, only 108 cases were on *mut'ah*, 72 cases on *iddah* maintenance, 30 cases on arrears of maintenance, and 180 cases on child maintenance. Evidently, the records also showed that though thousands of women were being divorced every year, they were not getting their due share of maintenance, *mut'ah*, and also child maintenance, although these rights are granted to them under the Islamic family law.

Islamic law protects the rights of women and their children in the event of divorce, whereby the ex-husbands are obliged to provide *iddah* maintenance, arrears of maintenance, *mut'ah*, and child maintenance as a form of financial protection for the ex-wives and children after divorce (Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 233, 236-237, 241-242; Al-Shaukani, 1938; Al-Jaziri, 1950; Abu Zahra, 1955; Al-Marghinani, 1975; Al-Shirazi, 1976; Al-Qurtubi, 2002; Al-Sharbini, 2003; Kharofa, 2004). *Iddah* maintenance refers to the maintenance payable by the ex-husbands to the divorced wives during the waiting period following a divorce which is either three monthly menstruations or three months (Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 228; At-Talaq: 4). Meanwhile, *mut'ah* is a compensation payable to the divorced women to remove any cause of accusation or shame due to divorce and to lessen the financial burden caused by the separation from the husband whom she might have been depending on for maintenance (Al-Zuhayli, 1998).

In addition, arrears of maintenance refer to the women's right to claim maintenance for the period which is already expired, in which it is considered as a debt due from the ex-husbands (Al-Jaziri, 1950). Child maintenance refers to the fathers' responsibility in maintaining their children during the subsistence of the marriage and it continues after its dissolution regardless of whom the custody of the child is given to (Al-Zuhayli, 1998). As such, all the financial rights after divorce may be seen as characterizing the Islamic law approach to protect the welfare of every individual in a broken family in terms of minimizing the effects of economic strain and psychological distress. In Malaysia, the Islamic law principles regarding the financial supports after divorce have been codified into the Islamic Family Law Act/Enactments. For example, the Islamic Family Law (State of Selangor) Enactment No. 2 of 2003 provides several provisions on financial rights such as Section 60 (*iddah* maintenance), Section 58 (*mut'ah*), Section 70 (arrears of maintenance), and Section 73 (child maintenance).

From the literature reviewed, it was found that the Islamic law has theoretically provided protection to the women and children in the event of divorce, but in practical, a different situation may occur in the society. The literature on the welfare of women during their post-divorce and the sufficiency of financial supports after divorce is scarce, particularly on the divorced Muslim women. Some previous research highlights the problems faced by divorced women in claiming their rights to financial supports after divorce. The current study extended this by examining the divorced Muslim women's satisfaction in terms of the amount of financial supports specifically on the *iddah* maintenance, arrears of maintenance, *mut'ah* and child maintenance, as well as assessing the level of the ex-husbands' compliance to the court-ordered financial supports.

Furthermore, it is also unknown whether the satisfaction with amount of financial supports received and the compliance of the ex-husbands with the court order correlates with the welfare of the divorced Muslim women in terms of minimizing the economic strains and depression. Hence, the current study attempted to explore the key variables which could be useful to be used in improving the policies of the Islamic family law and increasing the literature on the socio-legal subject in the Malaysian context as socio-legal enterprise is still new in this country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were: (i) to describe the respondents' satisfaction with the amount of financial support after divorce; (ii) to describe the ex-husbands' compliance to the court-ordered financial support after divorce; (iii) to determine the respondents' post-divorce welfare (economic strains and depression); (iv) to determine the relationship between the respondents' satisfaction with the amount of financial supports and post-divorce welfare; and (v) to determine the relationship between the ex-husbands' compliance to the court-ordered financial supports and post-divorce welfare.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 983 divorced Muslim women who had claimed for financial supports after divorce. They were selected from the cases recorded from 2003 to 2005 at two Shariah Subordinate Courts in Selangor. In more specific, there were 421 divorced women enlisted from the Shariah Subordinate Court of Hulu Langat while the rest (562 divorced women) were enlisted from the Shariah Subordinate Court of Gombak Timur. For the purpose of this study, 20% of the respondents were randomly selected from the list of names with complete addresses and 201 of them were accessible and agreed to be recruited for the study. The sample is considered to be within the upper and lower limits of the practical sample size suggested by Alreck and Settle (2004).

Instrumentation

All the measurements used in this study were either translated into or designed in the native language, i.e. *Bahasa Malaysia*.

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics were obtained by asking the respondents to report on their age, level of education, employment status, monthly income, and the number of dependent children.

Divorce Context

Divorce context was obtained by asking the respondents to report on the types of financial supports claimed after divorce (e.g. *iddah* maintenance, arrears of maintenance, *mut'ah*, and child maintenance), as well as the amount they received on each type of the financial supports stated/claimed.

Satisfaction with the Amount of Financial Supports Received after Divorce

The satisfaction with the amount of financial supports in terms of *iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, arrears of maintenance, and child maintenance (four items) was measured by asking the respondents to respond to a four-point scale (1 = Not very satisfied; 2 = Not satisfied; 3 = Satisfied; 4= Very satisfied), in relation to the extent of the respondents' satisfaction with the amount of financial supports received from the ex-husbands. Each item was measured separately. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.67.

Compliance of the Ex-Husband to Court-ordered Financial Supports after Divorce

Compliance of the ex-husbands to court-ordered financial supports in terms of *iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, arrears of maintenance, and child maintenance (four items) were measured on a four-point scale (1 = Never comply; 2 = Comply but sometimes default; 3 = Comply but with a reduced amount; 4 = Always comply). Each item was measured separately. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale in this study was 0.91.

Post-divorce Welfare

The welfare of the divorced women was measured in terms of the levels of economic strains and depression.

Economic Strain

Economic strain was assessed using a translated version of the economic strain scale (Mills *et al*., 1992). The level of economic strain was used to measure the respondents' perceptions of financial inadequacy, as well as financial concerns and worries, based on the four-point scale (1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree somewhat; 3= Agree somewhat; 4= Strongly Agree). The higher the total score, the higher the economic strain faced by the respondents would be. The possible cumulative minimum and maximum scores were 4 and 16, respectively. Based on the calculated median, those who scored from 4 to 10 were considered as having low economic strains and those who scored from 11 to 16 were facing higher economic strains. The Cronbach's alpha for the economic strain scale in this study was 0.86.

Depression

Depression was assessed using the Centre for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) (Radloff, 1997; Peden *et al*., 2004). The CES-D contains 20-item measures based on a four-point scale (0= Rarely or none of the time; 1= Some or a little of the time; 2= Occasionally or a moderate amount of the time; 3=Most or all of the time). The CES-D was chosen over other depression inventories in this study because it was developed to be used in community rather than in a psychiatric population (Clark *et al*., 2002). In this study, the respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of depressive symptoms experienced by them during the period of divorce. The scores for items 4, 8, 12, and 16 were reversed before summing up

all the items to yield a total score. The total score ranged from 0 to 60, with higher scores indicating greater symptoms of depression. A score below 16 indicated that the respondent was not depressed. Meanwhile, the score of 16 to 21 means that the respondent was less depressed. The respondent was regarded as depressed if the score was 22 or higher. The Cronbach's alpha for the CES-D in this study was 0.80.

Data Collection

The data were collected using the self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed personally to the respondents based on their residences' addresses.

Data Analysis

In this study, two statistical procedures were used to analyze the data and these include descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics computed were the frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation of the variables, while the inferential statistical analysis conducted was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Age

The age of the respondents was found to range from 23 to 70 years old (Mean=36.68, SD=8.75), as shown in Table 1. More than two-third of the respondents (68%) completed their secondary school, i.e. either at *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran* (SRP) or *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) level. Although the majority (80%) of the respondents were employed, their monthly incomes were slightly low (Mean=RM1707.21, SD=1797.21). In addition, they seemed to have an average family size (Mean=2.72, SD=1.46).

Divorce context

Majority of the respondents (89%) had claimed for *iddah* maintenance from their ex-husbands (Table 2). Unfortunately, 44% of them did not receive anything from their ex-husbands (Mean=RM823.10, SD=690.26). More than half of the respondents (55%) claimed for *mut'ah*. However, more than two-third (67%) did not receive anything from their ex-husbands (Mean=RM2279.17, SD=2794.93). Only 20% of the respondents claimed for arrears of maintenance and more than half (58%) received nothing from their ex-husbands (Mean=RM1811.76, SD=RM1288.35). Almost three quarter of the respondents (74%) claimed for the child maintenance and 10% of the number did not receive anything from their ex-husbands (Mean=RM271.75, SD=230.48).

Satisfaction with the Amount of Financial Supports

The results revealed that the respondents were obviously dissatisfied with the financial supports received from their ex-husbands in varying amount (Table 3). More than two-third of the respondents (69%) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the amount of *iddah* maintenance that they received from their ex-husbands, while the majority of them (81%) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the amount of *mut'ah* they received. Meanwhile, more than three quarter of the respondents (78%) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the amount of arrears of maintenance. Less than two-third of the respondents (64%) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the amount of child maintenance they received from the children's fathers.

Ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered financial supports

More than two-fifth of the respondents (44%) claimed that their ex-husbands had never complied to the order for *iddah* maintenance, while two-third (67%) stated that their ex-husbands had never complied to the *mut'ah* order (Table 4). More than half of the respondents (58%) claimed that their ex-husbands had never complied with order for arrears of maintenance. On the contrary, only 10% of the

TABLE 1
Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years):		
<30	41	20.4
31 - 40	80	39.8
41 - 50	61	30.3
>51	19	9.5
Total	201	100.0
Mean = 38.68, SD = 8.75		
Level of education:		
No formal education	1	0.5
Primary education	13	6.5
SRP	29	14.4
SPM	107	53.2
STPM	11	5.5
Diploma	27	13.4
Bachelor's degree	11	5.5
Master's degree	2	1.0
Total	201	100.0
Employment status:		
Working	160	79.6
Not working	41	20.4
Total	201	100.0
Monthly income:		
RM0	37	18.4
RM1 – RM1,000	57	28.4
RM1,001 – RM3,000	93	46.2
RM3,001 – RM5,000	12	6.0
RM5,001 – RM7,000	1	0.5
>RM7,001	1	0.5
Total	164	81.6
Mean = 1707.21, SD = 1797.21		
Dependant (Children):		
0	33	16.4
1 – 2	115	57.2
3 – 4	44	21.9
5	9	4.5
Total	186	83.6
Mean = 2.72, SD = 1.46		

respondents indicated that their ex-husbands never complied with the child maintenance order. The results also revealed that there were a few respondents who claimed that their ex-husbands had always complied with the court-ordered *iddah* maintenance (21%), *mut'ah* (5%), arrears of maintenance (10%), and child maintenance (25%). In relation to child maintenance order, it was found that a small percentage of the fathers had never complied with the court order, while some had partially complied with the order.

TABLE 2
Divorce context of the respondents

Divorce Context	Frequency	Percentage
Claims for *Iddah* maintenance:		
Yes	179	89.1
No	22	10.9
Total	201	100.0
Amount of *Iddah* maintenance:		
RM0	79	44.1
RM1 – RM1,000	82	45.8
RM1,001 – RM2,000	13	7.3
RM2,001 – RM3,000	4	2.2
>RM3,001	1	0.6
Total	100	55.9
Mean = 832.10, SD = 690.26		
Claims for *Mut'ah:*		
Yes	110	54.7
No	91	45.3
Total	201	100.0
Amount of *Mut'ah*:		
RM0	74	67.3
RM1 – RM1,000	15	13.6
RM1,001 – RM2,000	10	9.1
RM2,001 – RM3,000	6	5.5
>RM3,001	5	4.5
Total	36	32.7
Mean = 2279.17, SD = 2794.92		
Claims for arrears of maintenance:		
Yes	40	19.9
No	161	80.1
Total	201	100.0
Amount of arrears of maintenance:		
RM0	23	57.5
RM1 – RM1,000	7	17.5
RM1,001 – RM2000	5	12.5
RM2,001 – RM3,000	3	7.5
>RM3,001	2	5
Total	17	42.5
Mean = 1811.76, SD = 1288.35		
Claims for child maintenance:		
Yes	148	73.6
No	53	26.4
Total	201	100.0
Amount of child maintenance:		
RM0	14	9.5
RM1 – RM500	122	82.4
RM501 – RM1,000	10	6.7
>RM1001	2	1.4
Total	134	90.5
Mean = 271.75, SD = 230.48		

TABLE 3
Respondents' satisfaction with the amount of financial supports

Financial Supports	Satisfaction with the Amount of Financial Supports (%)				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Iddah maintenance	(93) 52.0	(30) 16.7	(53) 29.6	(3) 1.7	179
Mut'ah	(85) 77.3	(4) 3.6	(19) 17.3	(2) 1.8	110
Arrears of maintenance	(24) 60.0	(7) 17.5	(5) 12.5	(4) 10.0	40
Child maintenance	(51) 34.2	(44) 29.6	(52) 34.9	(2) 1.3	148

Note: 1- Not very satisfied, 2- Not satisfied, 3- Satisfied, 4- Very satisfied

TABLE 4
Ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered financial supports

Financial Supports	Ex-husbands' Compliance to Court Order (%)				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Iddah maintenance	(79) 44.1	(8) 4.5	(55) 30.7	(37) 20.7	179
Mut'ah	(74) 67.3	(9) 8.2	(22) 20.0	(5) 4.5	110
Arrears of maintenance	(23) 57.5	(5) 12.5	(8) 20.0	(4) 10.0	40
Child maintenance	(14) 9.5	(52) 35.1	(45) 30.4	(37) 25.0	148

Note: 1- Never comply, 2- Comply (sometimes default), 3- Comply (reduced amount), 4- Always comply

Post-Divorce Welfare

The level of economic strain

72% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they did experience financial problems after divorce (Table 5). In more specific, more than two-third (71%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were worried about financial matters. Based on the cumulative score of the respondents' level of economic strain given in Table 6, the result indicated that about two-fifth of the respondents (41%) were facing with a slightly high level of economic strain (Mean=10.06, SD=2.90).

Level of depression

Less than one quarter of the respondents experienced the twenty-symptoms of depression for most or all of the time after the divorce,

TABLE 5
Respondents' level of economic strain (N=201)

Economic Strain Items	Economic Strain (%)			
	1	2	3	4
I experience money problems	(7) 3.5	(49) 24.4	(100) 49.7	(45) 22.4
Financial problems interfere my work and daily routines	(43)21.4	(70) 34.8	(66) 32.9	(22) 10.9
I worry about financial matters	(7) 3.5	(51) 25.4	(84) 41.7	(59) 29.4
Financial problems interfere my relationships with others	(92) 45.8	(57) 28.4	(43) 21.4	(9) 4.5

Note: 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Agree, 4- Strongly agree

TABLE 6
Categories of the respondents' economic strain

Economic Strain	Frequency	Percentage
High economic strain (11 – 16)	83	41.3
Low economic strain (4 – 10)	118	58.7
Total	201	100.0
Mean = 10.06 , SD = 2.90		

whereby the percentages were found to range from 3% to 25% (Table 7). Based on the cumulative score of the respondents' depressive symptoms (Table 8), the results also showed that the majority of the respondents (83%) experienced depression after their divorce (Mean=28.94, SD=7.59).

The Relationships between Satisfaction with the Amount of Financial Supports and Post-divorce Welfare

Relationship between respondents' satisfaction with the amount of financial supports and economic strain

Generally, it was found that there were weak negative significant correlations between the respondents' satisfaction with the amount of financial supports after divorce and their level of economic strain, particularly for the *iddah* maintenance (r=-0.211, p=0.005), *mut'ah* (r=-0.210, p=0.028), and child maintenance (r=-0.278, p=0.001) (Table 9). However, no significant correlation was found between the respondents' satisfaction with the amount of arrears of maintenance and economic strain (r=-0.293, p=0.067).

The relationship between the respondents' satisfaction with the amount of financial supports and depression

The results showed that there were no significant relationships between the respondents' satisfaction with the amounts of all types of financial support after divorce and their level of depression (Table 9).

The Relationships between the Ex-Husbands' Compliance to Court-Ordered Financial Supports and Post-divorce Welfare

The relationship between the ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered financial supports and economic strain

The results (Table 10) showed that there were weak negative significant relationships between the ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered financial supports after divorce and the respondents' level of economic strain, particularly for the *iddah* maintenance (r=-0.249, p=0.001), *mut'ah* (r=-0.273, p=0.004), and child maintenance (r=-0.249, p=0.0001). However, no significant correlation was found between the ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered arrears of maintenance and the respondents' level of depression (r=-0.310, p=0.052).

The relationship between the ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered financial supports and depression

The results (Table 10) showed that there were no significant relationships between the ex-husbands' compliance to all court-ordered financial supports after divorce and the respondents' level of depression.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the respondents were generally dissatisfied with the amounts of all types of financial support they received from the ex-husbands. Since the Selangor Islamic Family Law Enactment provides only general guidelines

TABLE 7
Respondents' level of depression (N=201)

Depression Items	Depression Symptoms (%)			
	0	1	2	3
Negative Effects				
I felt hopeless about future*	(12)6.0	(88)43.8	(50)24.8	(51)25.4
I thought my life had been a failure	(53)26.4	(61)30.3	(77)38.3	(10)5.0
I felt that everything that I did was an effort	(35)17.4	(78)38.8	(72)35.8	(16)8.0
I felt that I could not shake off the blues	(34)16.9	(87)43.3	(69)34.3	(11)5.5
I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing	(27)13.4	(66)32.8	(97)48.3	(11)5.5
I could not get "going"	(34)16.9	(89)44.3	(68)33.8	(10)5.0
I felt fearful	(37)18.4	(69)34.3	(84)41.8	(11)5.5
I felt that I was not as good as other people*	(17)8.5	(113)56.2	(47)23.4	(24)11.9
Depressed Effects				
I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me	(14)7.0	(60)29.9	(105)52.2	(22)10.9
I had crying spells	(19)9.5	(61)30.3	(97)48.3	(24)11.9
I felt sad	(18)9.0	(57)28.4	(103)51.2	(23)11.4
I felt depressed	(16)8.0	(51)25.4	(105)52.2	(29)14.4
I felt lonely	(16)8.0	(36)17.9	(124)61.7	(25)12.4
Interpersonal				
People were unfriendly	(63)31.3	(72)35.8	(58)28.9	(8)4.0
I felt that people disliked me	(66)32.8	(78)38.8	(52)25.9	(5)2.5
I did not enjoy life*	(10)5.0	(84)41.8	(60)29.9	(47)23.4
Somatic				
I did not feel like eating	(28)13.9	(50)24.9	(110)54.7	(13)6.5
I talked less than usual	(44)21.9	(77)38.3	(72)35.8	(8)4.0
My sleep was restless	(27)13.4	(56)27.9	(97)48.3	(21)10.4
I was unhappy*	(19)9.5	(106)52.7	(52)25.9	(24)11.9

Note: 0- Rarely/None, 1- Some/Little, 2- Occasionally, 3- Most/All time
* - Reversed items

TABLE 8
Categories of the respondents' depression

Depression	Frequency	Percentage
Depressed (22 – 60)	167	83.1
Less depressed (16 – 21)	21	10.4
Not depressed (0 – 15)	13	6.5
Total	201	100.0
Mean = 28.94, SD = 7.59		

TABLE 9
Correlations between respondents' satisfaction with the amount of financial supports and post-divorce welfare

Variables	N	Post-divorce Welfare			
		Economic Strain (r)	(p)	Depression (r)	(p)
Iddah maintenance	179	-0.211**	0.005	-0.011	0.886
Mut'ah	110	-0.210*	0.028	0.068	0.678
Arrears of maintenance	40	-0.293	0.067	-0.091	0.342
Child maintenance	149	-0.278**	0.001	-0.048	0.560

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01

TABLE 10
Correlations between the ex-husbands' compliance to court-ordered financial supports and post-divorce welfare

Variables	N	Post-divorce Welfare			
		Economic Strain (r)	(p)	Depression (r)	(p)
Iddah maintenance	179	-0.249**	0.001	-0.038	0.614
Mut'ah	110	-0.273**	0.004	-0.034	0.722
Arrears of maintenance	40	-0.310	0.052	0.060	0.712
Child maintenance	149	-0.294***	0.0001	-0.089	0.281

Note: **p<.01, *** p<.001

in assessing the quantum of *iddah* maintenance, arrears of maintenance, *mut'ah*, and child maintenance, they are often left to the discretion of the learned judge to decide the amount based on the means and needs of the parties involved, for which in many cases the amount awarded by the Shariah courts though not substantial, deemed fair and reasonable (cited in Ahmad, 1997; as cited in Zaleha, 2005).

The results also revealed that a substantial percentage of the ex-husbands did not comply or they partially complied with the court-ordered financial supports. Past research indicated that the inadequate enforcement of child maintenance was one of the reasons for the low economic well-being of divorced women (McLanahan and Booth, 1989; Maznah, 1999; Zhan and Pandey, 2004). This implies that the non payment of financial supports or the smaller amount provided by the ex-husbands may intensify the financial problems of divorced women, particularly for those who are not in the labour force. This may contribute to the high incidences of poverty among the female-headed households (*Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat*, 2003).

The study also revealed that the ex-husbands' compliance to the child maintenance order constituted the highest percentage compared to the other types of financial supports after divorce (*iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, and arrears of maintenance). This is consistent with the findings of other research which indicated that the payment for child maintenance though relatively small, it constituted essential proportions of the divorced families' disposable income (Duncan, 1994). Since the current study was viewed from the perspectives of the divorced women, it could be concluded that without personal biases they also agreed that men still paid heed to their children's financial needs even after the divorce.

It was also found that the more satisfied the divorced women with the amount of *iddah*

maintenance, *mut'ah*, and child maintenance provided by the ex-husbands, the less economic strain they would experience. Similarly, the more the ex-husbands' complied with the court-ordered *iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, and child maintenance, the less economic strain they would experience. Thus, the non payment of financial supports or the smaller amount provided, as well as none or partial compliance of the court orders exacerbated the financial problems of the divorced women, particularly those who were without any income and carried the burden of raising the children single-handedly.

However, the divorced women's satisfaction with the amount of all types of financial support provided by the ex-husband and the ex-husbands' none or partial compliance to all types of financial supports did not make them depressed. This could probably be due to the fact that the financial supports after divorce were usually accomplished after a short period of time. For example, *iddah* maintenance is only payable within the three-month period or until the end of pregnancy (i.e. if the divorced wife is pregnant). On the other hand, emotional disturbances may become an on-going source of stressor for the divorced women, as a result of the internal process of regaining identity, becoming independent of one's ex-husband, sole parenting responsibility, loneliness, continuing interaction between the parties in their role as parents and economic hardship (Murray *et al*., 2001; Gazso-Windle and McMullin, 2003; Cowan *et al*., 2006).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the laws regulating the financial aspects of the divorced family merit great attention as it can affect the overall well-being of the family members, as well as an economic restraint against irresponsible breakdown of a marriage. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that the assessment of reasonable sum of financial supports after divorce, specifically with regards to the *iddah* maintenance, *mut'ah*, and child maintenance as well as the effective enforcement of court order, are the significant factors which may augment the economic welfare of the divorced Muslim women.

It is therefore recommended that policies, which directly and indirectly affect divorced women, need to be reviewed, improved or amended in order to protect their rights as well as their children's in the event of divorce. For example, remedies should be more comprehensive in terms of providing for a life-long education for Muslim women and men with regards to their rights and responsibilities during marriage and after divorce.

In addition, unruly ex-husbands should be prosecuted under the Shariah criminal law, as this might be a more effective deterrent punishment and the Shariah judges should indicate clear instructions on the modes of payment while delivering the judgment on the financial supports to be given by ex-husbands after divorce. In assessing the amount of reasonable maintenance, the Poverty Line Income (PLI), as determined by the Malaysian Government, may also serve as a guideline whereby the amount may not be less than the PLI for the families earning below the poverty line before their separation. At the same time, the Shariah court should not hesitate to consider the increased cost of living in determining the amount of financial supports and each case should be decided based upon its facts and circumstances which might differ from one case to another.

In assessing the amount of *mut'ah*, apart from the financial position of the ex-husbands as well as the social status and conduct of the ex-wives, other factors such as the length of marriage, salary compensation, and psychological effects of divorce may need to be considered by the Shariah court. Finally, the recent establishment of the *Unit Pantau Perintah Mahkamah* under the *Jabatan Kehakiman Shariah Malaysia* is a commendable step which may assist in supervising the enforcement of the *Shariah* court order, particularly the ones related to the financial supports after divorce.

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Communication Channels Used by Academic Staff in Interacting with Their Students

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to report the findings on the impact of communication technology as a channel for interaction between academic staff and their students, conducted at a Malaysian higher learning institution. The study focused on media choice and it attempted to determine the communication channels mostly used by academic staff in interacting with their students and the reasons for selecting these channels. It also intended to find out whether there was a significant relationship between communication channels mostly used by academic staff and their perception of media richness. The results revealed that although the existence of new communication technologies such as the internet offers faster and cheaper facilities, face-to-face communication is still the most used and preferred communication channel by academic staff in interacting with their students. In addition, there was a significant relationship between the communication channel mostly used by respondents and their perception of media richness and social presence. This explained why the higher level of social presence, the higher the level of experience with a channel would be. The findings of this study extended two of the most widely investigated media choice theories; Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Social Presence Theory (SPT).

Keywords: Computer Mediated Communication, face–to-face communication, Media Richness Theory, Social Presence Theory

INTRODUCTION

Interaction between academic staff and their students plays a key role in ensuring that they (academic staff) can accomplish their objectives in both educational and interpersonal relationships. Due to the nature of their job, academic staff usually spends a lot of time interacting with students.

Although face-to-face meetings are still likely to be an important channel, with the growth of new communication technology, it is no longer the sole communication medium used by academic staff in interaction with their students. New communication technologies offer new channels and possibilities in communicating. New communication technologies and their facilities are also known as the new media, as opposed to the traditional media of face-to-face meetings, as well as telephone and text-based documents. Thus, research into understanding factors influencing communication media choice and exploring optimal ways of communicating

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has sparked the interest of academics and practitioners alike.

The scope of this study is media choice and this research attempted to determine the most preferred communication channels used by academic staff in interacting with their students and the reasons for their selection.

The impact of new communication technologies in human communication has been the target of intense research. For instance, Barnes (2003) proposed that the need to understand the impact of new technologies on education is growing as technological advances offer more communication options. In recent years, while many academic staff have the choice to turn to new communication channels as a means of communicating with students, few researches have been aimed to assess how academic staff communicate with their students. Which channels do they most use in interacting with their students? Are they new communication channels or traditional ones?

Theoretically, the above dichotomies of communications channels (traditional channels vs. new communication channels) have some differences in terms of the nature of channels, characteristics of each channel, etc. Based on the differences highlighted in the literature review, this study thus attempted to answer the following questions:

- RQ1: What are the levels of academic staff experience (use) of using each communication channel (face-to-face, telephone line, mobile phone, email, writing message, online communication) in faculty-student interaction?
- RQ2: What is the perception of the academic staff on media richness factors?
- RQ3: Which communication channels do the academic staff most frequently use for special messages (based on different types of task)?
- RQ4: Which communication channels are most frequently used by the academic staff based on the type of relationships (educational/ personal relationship)?

Media Richness Theory and Social Presence Theory

Although there has been a vast amount of literature investigating new communication channels, how these new channels are integrated into human communication behaviour is still not well understood, or which traditional media are replaced, if so, by the new communication channels. To answer these questions, there has been research on new communication media usage including changing perceptions of communication media (Schement and Stout, 1989), the technical and social characteristics of the new media (Huang and Wei, 2000), the human conceptualization of the underlying properties, roles, and functions of the new media (Katz and Rice, 2002), the perceived characteristics of the new media (Chidambaram and Dag, 1998), and the effect of context and social influence on the adoption and usage of the new media (Carlson and Zmud, 1999).

In addressing the role of communication technologies in the interaction between academic staff and their students, this research project joined a body of literature that aimed to extend two of the most widely investigated media choice theories, namely Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Social Presence Theory (SPT).

Social Presence Theory (SPT)

Social presence is a subjective quality of the communication medium and it is related to the social psychology concepts of intimacy (determined by physical distance, eye contact, smiling, and personal topics of conversation) and immediacy (determined by the medium's capacity in transmitting information) (Short, Williams and Christie, 1976). Tu (2002) argued that social presence could be defined in terms of a combination of social relationships, communication styles, task analyses, feedback levels, and measures of immediacy.

Short and his teammates see social presence as the ability of individuals to collaborate effectively through technology, even when they are located in different locations and time frames.

Social presence refers to the degree to which a medium allows communicators to experience others as being psychologically present, or the degree to which a medium is perceived to convey the actual presence of the communicators. Social presence can be a function of both verbal cues (e.g. tone of voice) and non-verbal cues (e.g. facial expression, direction of gaze, posture, and dress) (Short, Williams and Christie, 1976).

Short, Williams and Christie (1976) surveyed the literature on mediated communication and concluded that communication media differed in their ability to provide a sense of social presence. They also concluded that most new media are lacking in social presence. In other word, communicating by media is rather different than communicating in person. This has the implication that understanding may be distorted due to a lack of social cues and thus, users will have the tendency to misinterpret messages. In addition, reduced social presence may lead to less emotionality in exchanges, weakening the interpersonal function of communication.

This theory also classifies different communication media along a one-dimensional continuum of "social presence." Media that are capable of providing a greater sense of intimacy and immediacy are perceived as having a higher social presence. On a continuum of social presence, communication media such as face-to-face meetings, which are capable of conveying non-verbal and social context cues, are considered to have the most social presence, whereas CMC, written, text-based communication have less of this because they lack non-verbal feedback cues.

According to the social presence theory, communication tasks differ in their requirements for social presence. The appropriateness of a medium for performing certain communication tasks is determined by the degree to which the medium's characteristics of social presence fit the requirements of the tasks. Tasks that require interpersonal skills, such as resolving conflicts or negotiation, demand high social presence, whereas tasks such as exchanging routine information are low in their social presence requirements. Media like face-to-face and group meetings are more appropriate for performing tasks with high social presence requirements, whereas media such as e-mail, letters, and memos are fit for low social presence tasks.

Media Richness Theory (MRT)

The media richness theory was proposed by Daft and Lengel in 1986. It is viewed as a refinement and extension of the social presence theory. According to Dennis and Kinney (1998), richness of a medium is based on its ability to process rich information. Daft and Lengal (1986) proposed Media Richness theory (MRT) which hypothesizes on the information carrying capacity of media. This capacity is increased by the extent to which the medium meets the four criteria as follows:

- Feedback Capability – the ability of the medium to facilitate instantaneous feedback (synchronicity) and clarification of issues during engagements.
- Multiple Cues/Communication Channels Utilized – the range of cues (including body language, voice inflection, physical representations) facilitated by the medium.
- Language Variety – the ability of the medium to facilitate engagements involving both numbers and natural language.
- Personal Focus/Source – the ability of the medium to convey the personal feelings and emotions of communicating parties.

Based on above criteria, the media richness theory classifies communication media along a continuum of "richness," where richness is based on the ability of the media to carry non-verbal cues, provide rapid feedback, convey personality traits, and support the use of natural language. These criteria impact upon human understanding and frame of reference. For instance, the media which provide all these criteria (e.g. carrying non-verbal cues, providing rapid feedback, etc.) are better for understanding the messages. As Lam (1998) claimed, media richness refers to the ability of the media to change human

understanding, overcome different conceptual frames of reference or clarify ambiguous issues in a timely manner. Consequently, communication media possessing more features of the criteria will rank higher on the richness scale compared to one which possesses less.

The media richness theory proposes that face-to-face communication is the richest medium, followed in order by telephone, written personal, CMC, written formal, and numerical formal media. Oral media, such as face-to-face and telephone, are believed to be richer than the written media because they provide opportunities for immediate feedback and can have multiple cues including kinesics, facial expression and tone of voice and usage of natural language that is high in variety. Particularly in the face-to-face media, participants are able to use varying modes of communication: words, vocal cues (e.g. voice inflection, sighs), non-verbal communication (e.g. gestures, touch), and written or drawn communication (e.g. paper, blackboards). These modes combine to transmit factual information about the task and social information about the personal characteristics of team members. Other media have lesser abilities to transmit the different forms of communication (Wright, 2000).

In media richness theory, the media are placed in continuum of richness, from low in richness to high in richness. Daft and Lengel (1986) state that media low in richness are suitable for facilitating discussion over simple topics, while media high in richness are suitable for complex organizational topics. They focus on 'traditional' communication media, such as the face-to-face meetings which are considered the richest media, while the leanest media are regarded as formal, unaddressed documents (such as memos). Media are placed on a continuum of information richness, suggesting that the richness property of each medium is fixed.

The media richness theory also differentiates between lean and rich media by the number of cue systems within each medium. This approach suggests that because CMC is a lean channel, it is useful for simple or clear messages. CMC is also more efficient for communication that does not require co-ordinated interaction efforts. On the other hand, a richer medium should be used for information that is ambiguous, emphatic or emotional (Wright, 2000).

Ambiguous refers to equivocal, whereby the communicators face the problem of confusion because there are too many possible meanings in the message. When words or events are ambiguous or equivocal, people do not require more information but they need a context or framework to help them sort through the data. They need a filter to help them screen out interpretations that will turn out to be counterproductive. Therefore, face–to-face meeting is best for ambiguous messages as it provides rapid feedback.

Complex messages refer to unpredictable human dimensions and emotional aspects of interactions. It includes those messages that require further explanation, elaboration or clarification. Complex messages are neither objective nor computational procedures that clearly instruct people what to do. According to Keil and Johnson, (2002), complexity is more subjective or perception-dependent than ambiguity.

Keil and Johnson (2002) also noticed that CMC and written media could oversimplify complex problems because they do not provide a means to convey feedback or information concerning personal feelings. In addition, Kock (2004) found that the lack of non-verbal and social cues in CMC interaction reduces social regulation, leading to more relaxing feeling and occasional overly emotional interactions.

Media richness theory proposed at a time when the Internet as we know it today was yet to be conceptualized and this has lead to difficulties in trying to position such media on a scale of relative richness. However, if we attempt to assess an electronic medium such as email based on the criteria for media richness, we will see that email is not a rich medium and thus should not be used for highly equivocal communications.

Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of this paper, we chose to investigate the model shown below. Based on the model which was derived from the media richness theory and social presence theory, three factors could affect the selection of communication channels in interacting which each other.

Based on the above mentioned theories, the type of task refers to the nature of message that contains simple/straightforward message (e.g. clear message), ambiguous messages (e.g. messages that require discussion, negotiation or clarification) and complex message (e.g. messages that require elaboration, explanation or demonstration with examples).

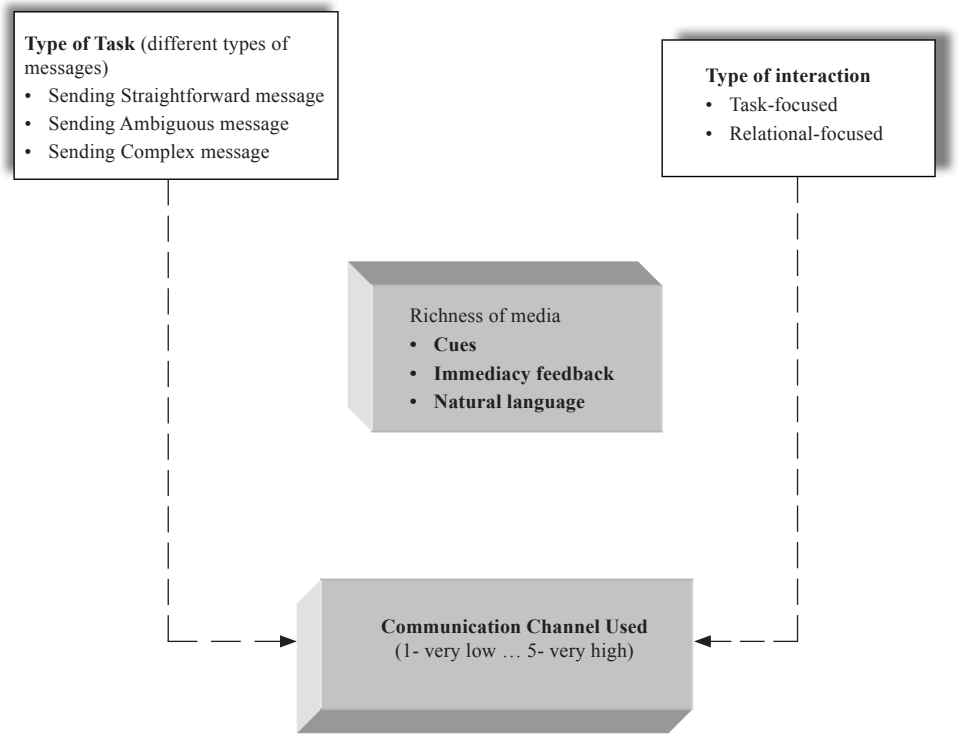
Type of interaction refers to the kind of relationship between academic staff and their students, which includes task-focused (e.g. educational relationship) and relation-focused (personal relationship).

Richness of media means the ability of media to carry both verbal cues (e.g. volume, tone, and rhythm of sound) and non-verbal cues (e.g. gestures, facial expression, and eye contact) so as to provide rapid feedback, convey personality traits, and support the use of natural language.

Communication channels refer to both traditional and new channels of communication including face-to-face, telephone, mobile, email, written messages, and online communication. These were ranked on the scales from 1= very low, 2= low, 3= middle, 4= high, and 5= very high, to measure the level of academic staff's experiences in using each of the communication channels in interaction with their students.

Hypotheses

Based on conceptual framework, there are three factors that can influence the choice of



communication channel by the academic staff. For this purpose, two hypotheses were postulated to explore these factors. The first hypothesis is related to the experience of academic staff with different channels:

H1- Whether experience level differed across different communication channels.

The second set of hypotheses is the role of academic staff's perceptions (in terms of richness) in determining the different communication channels used in interacting with their students. The effectiveness of the different constructs such as providing immediate feedback, conveying personality traits and carrying both verbal and non-verbal cues were also examined in this study. *(Noticed that the differences between the first three channels mostly used by the academic staff were measured and the other three remaining with lower usage were left out)*.

H2.a - There is a significant relationship between the first communication channel mostly used by academic staff and their perception of media richness.

H2.b - There is a significant relationship between the second communication channel mostly used by academic staff and their perception of media richness.

H2.c - There is a significant relationship between the third communication channel mostly used by academic staff and their perception of media richness.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey research design by distributing self-administered questionnaires to the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed among 80 academic staff at one Malaysian higher learning institution. The population of this study was 103 academic staff, and based on Bartlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001), a sampling table with a total of 80 respondents were selected randomly from a total population of 103 academic staff.

Meanwhile, the research instrument used in this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Lam (1998) and Chidambaram and Dag (1998). The reliability of the questionnaire was examined by calculating the internal consistency of the scales using Cronbach's alpha. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the 6 items of media richness was 0.89, which is statistically acceptable.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

1-Respondents' Personal Information

Among the 80 respondents of this study, 41.9% were males and 58.1% were females. Majority (66.1%) of the respondents have PhD, followed by Master's holders who contributed about 24.2% of the sample. Five respondents (9.7%) were Professors, and most of them (75.8%) had more than 10 years of teaching experience. However, the mean for the respondents' level of teaching experience was 18 years, while the minimum teaching experience was 1 year and the maximum was 37 years.

2- The Level of Experience in Using Communication Channels

To answer RQ1, the responses to the six channels (including face-to-face, telephone line, mobile phone, email, writing message, online communication) used were examined. Table 1 indicates that academic staff considered themselves as most experienced with face-to-face meeting (Mean = 4.84) and least experienced with online communication (Mean = 1.66). Meanwhile, the experience with other channels, telephone line (Mean = 3.66), mobile phone (Mean = 3.41), Email (Mean = 3.20), and Written message (Mean = 3.20) fell between these two extremes.

The first hypothesis addressed the experiential differences across the different communication channels. In order to determine this, pair sample t-test was used to compare the mean of communication channels used by the academic staff in interacting with their students.

TABLE 1
The level of experience

Cannels	Mean	Std. Deviation
Face-to-face	4.84	.371
Telephone line	3.66	1.01
Mobile phone	3.41	1.03
Email	3.20	.93
Written message	3.20	1.26
Online communication	1.66	1.02

The channels were on the scale from 1= very low to 5= very high

Based on the finding, the first hypothesis was found to be supported, suggesting that academic staff's experience levels significantly differed according to the different media used.

Table 2 indicates that there is a significant difference between the mean for the face-to-face meetings, telephone line, and mobile phone with other communication channels. For example, the face-to-face with telephone line ($t = 9.26$, $p = .00$), face-to-face with mobile phone ($t = 9.69$, $p = .00$) and telephone line with mobile phone ($t = 9.80$, $p = .001$).

3- Communication Channel Used and the Perception of Media Richness

RQ.2 asked the academic staff on the perception of media richness factors. In this study, the academic staff were requested to provide reasons of their selection for certain medium in communicating with their students. As can be seen from Table 3, the respondents agreed that the channel must convey personality traits of themselves and students (Mean = 4.47), provide immediate feedback (Mean = 4.37), enable both the respondents and students to use friendly language (Mean = 4.34), carry both verbal and non-verbal cues (Mean = 4.24), and carry sufficient verbal cues (Mean = 4.18).

Hypotheses 2.a through 2.c addressed whether there was a relationship between communication channel most used by academic staffs and their perception of media richness. As Table 2 and 3 shows, academic staffs choose face-to-face channel as their mostly used communication channel, significantly. This was followed by telephone line and mobil phone as the second and third ones. In line with this, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to measure whether there was a significant relationship between face-to-face, telephone line, and mobile phone channels, as the three

TABLE 2
Pair sample t-test

Pair sample t-test	t	df	p
Face-to-face Telephone line	9.267	61	.000
Face-to-face Mobile phone	9.69	61	.000
Telephone line Mobile phone	9.80	61	.001

TABLE 3
Academic staff's perception of media richness

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation
The channel must convey personality traits of mine and students, e.g. friendliness, respectfulness, and concern.	4.47	.67
The channel must provide immediate feedback.	4.37	1.15
The channel must enable both me and students to use friendly language.	4.34	.71
The channel must carry both verbal and nonverbal cues, e.g. volume and eye contact.	4.24	.78
The channel must carry sufficient verbal cues, e.g. volume, tone, and rhythm of sound.	4.18	1.12
The channel must carry sufficient non-verbal cues, e.g. gestures, facial expression, and eye contact.	3.64	1.45

TABLE 4
Pearson Correlation for communication channels used and perception of richness of media

	Media Richness	
Channel	r	p
Face-to-face	.376	.001
Telephone line	.399	.001
Mobile phone	.450	.067

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

channels mostly used by academic staff, and their perception of media richness. In other words, to understand whether the choices of face-to-face meetings or telephone line and mobile phone as the mostly used communication channels was due to their perception of media richness provided by this medium. As can be seen in Table 4, two of the above hypotheses were supported and there were significant relationships between the face-to-face and telephone line as channels, and their perceptions of media richness. In other words, these results confirm that academic staff preferred using face-to-face and telephone line channels due to the high level of social presence and media richness provided by these media. Nevertheless, the third hypothesis (i.e. the relationship between mobile phone and academic staff's perception of media richness) was rejected. One possible reason is that it was less experienced by academic staff (Table 1) so they could not consider mobile phone as a rich medium, or they probably believed that mobile phone was less effective because of its accessibility, cost, etc., as compared to Face-to-face and telephone line.

Thus, the perceptions of media richness play an important role for academic staff in the selection of channels to interact with their students. This finding is also consistent with the social presence, which claims that face-to-face has the highest level of social presence and richness of information because it allows simultaneous observation of multiple cues, including kinesics, facial expression, and tone

of voice. Meanwhile, face-to-face meeting also provides immediate feedback, personal interaction, and use of natural language that is high in variety.

4- Communication Channel Mostly Used based on the Type of Task

As shown in Table 5, 38.7% of the academic staff preferred meeting their students on the Face-to-Face basis to communicate straightforward and clear messages. Mobile phone was ranked as the second preferred medium (27.4%), followed by Email (19.4%), Written messages (8.1%) and Telephone line (6.5%). However, these findings contradict with the notion of social presence and media richness theories which propose that communicators use a lean channel for straightforward and clear messages. One possible reason to explain why academic staff preferred using face-to-face for almost every task is the phase that "old habits are hard to break." In other words, it grows into a habit to use this particular means of communication traditionally and culturally. Similarly, this is also because the new communication technologies are more or less new arrival, and thus they may feel or face some difficulties in terms of accessibility (for both sides; sender and receiver), effectiveness, and their ability to correctly carry messages.

To communicate ambiguous messages, 90.3% of the academic staff preferred using face-to-face meeting, and only 9.7% chose to use Telephone line. This finding is consistent with the social presence and media richness theories which suggest that a rich medium is useful for ambiguous messages. 93.8 % of the academic staff chose face-to-face meeting as the preferred channel to communicate complex messages, and this was followed by written messages (3.7%) and email (2.5%).

As mentioned in the earlier section, these findings cast some doubts on the media richness theory which states that task with different information rich requirements requires the use of different media. In this study, while media use differed within tasks, it did not differ across the tasks. For example, academic staff appeared to be relying on the traditional media for almost every task.

However, when this result is considered in light of the support for hypothesis No.1, a possible explanation emerges. The academic staff's experiences with different media differ, and they are obviously more experienced when it comes to using traditional media (e.g. face-to-face), but are less experienced with new communication channels (e.g. online communication). As their level of experience with a channel increases, their use of that medium also tends to increase.

TABLE 5
Communication channel used based on the type of task

Type of task	Communication Channels	Frequency	Percentage
Sending simple messages	Face-to-face	31	38.7
	Mobile phone	21	27.4
	Email	15	19.4
	Written messages	8	8.1
	Telephone	5	6.5
Sending ambiguous messages	Face-to-face	72	90.3
	Telephone line	8	9.7
Sending complex messages	Face-to-face	75	93.8
	Written messages	3	3.7
	Email	2	2.5

5- Communication Channel Used based on Types of Interaction

In general, for both educational and personal type of interactions, most of the academic staff preferred using the face-to-face channel in communicating with their students, followed by the use of mobile phone, email, and written message. Although face-to-face and telephone are considered as having high level of media richness, according to the social presence and media richness theory, Email has lower level of social presence and media richness as compared to telephone. However, this study found that email (38.7%) was preferred by academic staff "to pass lecture or tutorial notes to students." This preference of students could be explained by some characteristics of e-mail, as suggested by Sproull and Goodman (1991), where they pointed out that e-mail technologies share the following five characteristics which differentiate them socially from other communication technologies: 1) email is asynchronous, 2) email is fast, 3) email is text based, 4) email has multiple-receiver addressability, and 5) email has built-in external memory, which is important for social memory.

TABLE 6
Communication channel used and types of interaction

Educational Relationship	Communication Channels	Frequency	Percentage
To fix appointments with students to see them or do something.	Mobile phone	36	45.2
	Face-to-face	22	27.4
	Telephone line	16	19.4
	Written message	6	8.1
To provide feedback on students' assignments or final year projects.	Face-to-face	59	74.2
	Written message	12	14.5
	Telephone line	7	8.1
	Mobile phone	2	3.2
To pass lecture or tutorial notes to students.	Face-to-face	34	41.9
	Email	31	38.7
	Written message	10	12.9
	Telephone line	5	6.5
To encourage and motivate students to do something.	Face-to-face	75	93.5
	Email	2	3.2
	Mobile phone	2	3.2

Personal Relationship	Channels	Frequency	Percentage
To show concern about students' problems (e.g. sympathy, condolence).	Face-to-face	71	88.8
	Email	4	4.8
	Written message	2	3.2
	Mobile phone	2	3.2
To invite students to eat/ drink something with you.	Mobile phone	39	48.4
	Face-to-face	27	33.9
	Telephone line	6	8.1
	Email	2	3.2

CONCLUSION

The major conclusion of this research is the perception that media richness plays a key role in the selection of channels. As it was discovered in this study, face-to-face communication is mostly used and preferred communication channel (Mean = 4.84) by the academic staff in interaction with their students, followed by telephone line (Mean = 3.66), and mobile phone (Mean = 3.41). A significant difference (H1) between the academic staff's level of experience across the different channels was also found in this study.

This finding resonates with Chidambaram *et al*. (1998) who discovered that even though many new communication technologies have surfaced and are available (such as the Internet which offers faster and cheaper facilities), traditional channels still remain the most preferred channels among the academic staff at this university. The main reason for this finding, as supported by H2.a and H2.b, is because of their higher level of social presence and richness of information (F-F = r, .376, p =.001 & telephone line = r, .399, p =001). In other words, face-to-face and telephone line were still preferred because academic staff have experience with them, and they considered them as more effective and rich mediums, and are generally satisfied with them. Nevertheless, the H2.c for the third communication channel used was rejected.

Although face-to-face meeting remains highly appropriate and popular in most situations, modern communication channels such as email can also provide a preferable solution in other contexts. Despite the lower usage of e-mail for ambiguous and complex messages, e-mail is still indicated as the third widely adopted and preferred communication medium among the faculty members in faculty-student interaction, especially for sending simple messages and complex messages (Table 5).

Another explanation for the results of this study is probably the factor of time. The element of time, as discussed by the Social Information Processing Theory (SIP), is one of the most important factors in the deciding to use the kind of media in interacting which others (Whalter, 1996). These are mostly because of the slower process involved in using the new communication channels, while multiple channels and cues available in the face-to-face interaction expedite the exchange of information and fulfilling the task.

In view of this, Burgoon *et al*. (2002) developed the principle of interactivity. According to the principle of interactivity, the differences among channels are not just based on the number and types of cues filtered out, but also based on several criteria or structural affordances such as contingency, transformation, participation, proximity, synchronicity, parallelism and so on.

Thus, future studies should consider examining the factor of time in the selection of media channels in interacting with each other. In addition, future studies also need to be conducted determine the effects of principle of interactivity in each communication channel.

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Community Learning Centre Program as an Educational Tool for Rural Community Literacy Development: Community of Nasr Abad as a Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Literacy plays a key role in community development. Literate people improve their quality of life with less difficulty, and Iran is no exception. For this purpose, the government of Iran has invested a lot of human, innovation, natural, and social capitals for literacy development to improve the quality of life of its people after the Islamic Revolution. Various programs have been set up for this purpose. One of the main programs for literacy development is the Community Learning Centre Program (CLCP) and one of the communities that has joined the program is the community of Nasr Abad. Hence, the objective of this paper was to examine the role of the community learning centre program in the rural community literacy development in the community of Nasr Abad.

Keywords: Community Learning Centre Program, community, literacy, development, community development

INTRODUCTION

There are 9 million illiterates in the Islamic Republic of Iran at present. In particular, adults formulate the main illiterate population in the country. A person is defined as an illiterate if he/she cannot, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement in his everyday life (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, April 2008). Hence, rural community literacy development means expansion of the reading, writing, and numerical skills at the community level (Yopp and Singer, 1994). In Iran, adults in literacy refer to the persons aged over 10 year old who have lagged behind formal education system and are enrolled in adult literacy classes (LMO, 2006a).

Since 1979 and after the Islamic Revolution, literacy programs have become a major tool in promoting the level of literacy in the communities in Iran (Ebrahimian, 2002; Jamshidi, 1988). A

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large number of people, infrastructure, and capitals have been allocated for this purpose. Despite all these efforts, the literacy level in Iran is still low (79.5%) compared to other neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Libya, Qatar, Kuwait (Sabagheian, 1992; UNESCO, 2005).

Thus, to improve the level of literacy in the country, the government of Iran has carried out various literacy programs. Among these programs are the Public Program, Literacy Program for Employees and Labourers, Literacy Program for the Armed Forces, Conscript Teacher Program, the Program of Literacy Mobilization, the Program for Nomadic People, Person-to-Person Program, Miscellaneous Learners Program, Literacy Program for People on Dole, Literacy Program with the Help of Prayer Imams in Mosques, and Literacy Program for Parents at School.

However, after several years of implementation of such programs, the results are still not very encouraging. Many people who had participated in these literacy programs indicated that they did not experience much improvement in their literacy levels (Abedi, 1991). Several studies have analyzed the factors which could contribute to the failure of the literacy activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran (e.g. Adli and Javdan, 1999; Afshang, 1997). These studies revealed three main contributing factors, as follows:

- Absence of an effective program in the communities;
- Lack of commitment by the people; and
- Lack of the participation from the people.

Based on the three factors, the researchers concluded that the lack of effective programs was the most important reason for the failure of the previous literacy programs in the country. It was also concluded that the lack of an effective program resulted in deficiencies in other elements such as community participation and the commitment from the people (Davoudpour, 1994; Ghafari, 1997).

Therefore, the government decided to introduce a new program in order to achieve higher levels of literacy due to the shortcomings and the failure of previous literacy programs in Iran, particularly in solving the problem of illiteracy in the country (Mehdizadeh, 2003). For this purpose, Iran has introduced a new program known as Community Learning Centre Program (CLCP) (Abhami, 2002; Ebrahimian, 2002; Mehdizadeh, 2003).

Community learning centre program was initially set up in the framework of UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Programme of Education For All (APPEAL), with the financial assistance of Japan and Norway in the Asian and the Pacific Countries in 1998 (APPEAL, 2005). Iran launched the program in 2000. As one of the rural communities in the country, the community of Nasr Abad joined the program in 2003.

According to the latest national statistics of Iran, the community of Nasr Abad comprised of around 1,950 people, with 1000 males and 950 females. Most of the population are adults (SCI, 2006a; 2006b). A year prior to the program, this community had around 350 illiterate adults. After four years of implementation, the program is proven to have significantly decreased the number of illiterate adults. At present, there are only about 100 people who are still illiterate.

METHODOLOGY

The current study was carried out among the people in the community of Nasr Abad living in the state of Yazd. This community was chosen because they had had the lowest literacy level in the state of Yazd. In this study, two types of data were collected; the primary and the secondary data. The primary data were collected by having both face-to-face interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), while the secondary data were gathered through printed and unprinted media, published and unpublished articles, journals, books, and reports.

Three types of respondents were interviewed so as to gather the primary data required for this study. There were learners, educators, and executives. Learners are those participants

who have taken part in the program. They were taught how to read, write, and do simple calculation. Meanwhile, educators are the people who have also participated in the program as teachers and facilitators to teach the illiterates. The executives are those who assisted both the educators and the learners in achieving their goals in the program.

The people were selected because they were involved directly with the community learning centre program in this community. In this study, 60 respondents, namely 20 learners, 20 educators, and 20 executives were interviewed. They had at least five years working experience related to CLCP activities. The respondents were selected using the purposive sampling technique.

Although this was a qualitative study, the results were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively by considering the frequencies and the transcriptions of the data gathered during the interview with the respondents. In this study, the qualitative aspects of the documents (i.e. both published and unpublished) were summarized and classified according to the necessary data.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To explain the role of community learning centre program in the literacy development of the rural community in this study, five theoretical approaches were applied. The five approaches are top-down, bottom-up, participatory, andragogy, and self-directed approaches. All the five approaches were employed to explain why and how the CLCP is a very successful program for literacy development. Similarly, these approaches were necessary to ensure the success of the CLCP.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Based on the results, the Community Learning Centre Program was found to have played an encouraging role in the literacy development of the rural community in the community of Nasr Abad. The program taught the learners to read, write, and do simple calculation. The literacy level among the people in the community has improved after the implementation of the community learning centre program. Details of the literacy level after the implementation of the program are shown in Table 1.

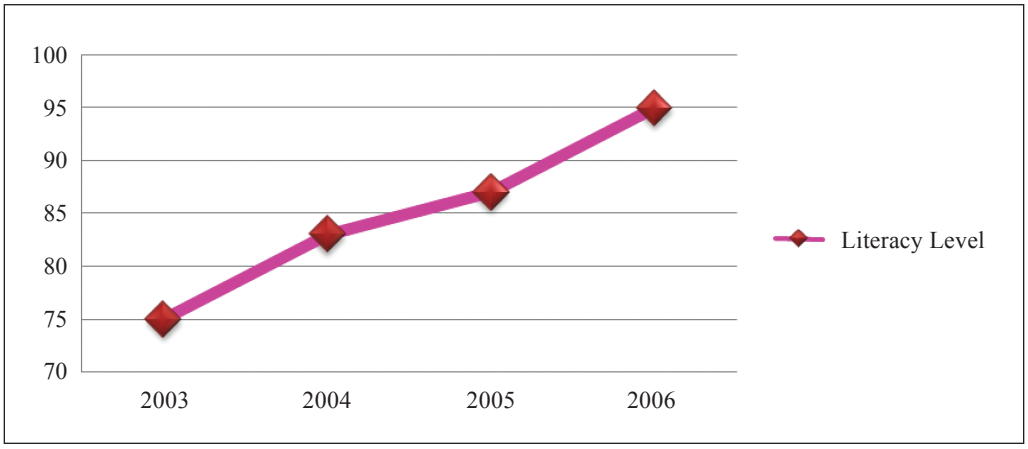
In the community of Nasr Abad, the level of literacy of its people before the introduction of the community learning centre program was 75%. The percentage, however, was found to increase to 95% four years after the implementation of the program (Literacy Movement Department of Taft, 2007). Based on the data presented in Table 1, the literacy level of the people in the community was improved around 20%. This indicates that the literacy level of the people in the community has been steadily increased. To clearly illustrate this trend, the literacy level in Nasr Abad after the implementation of the community learning centre program is depicted in *Fig. 1*.

The respondents of the study also believed that due to the effective role of the Community Learning Centre Program, the community have made a useful contribution to improve

TABLE 1
Literacy level in Nasr Abad after the Community Learning Centre Program

Year	Literacy Level (%)	Illiteracy Level (%)
2003	75	25
2004	83	17
2005	87	13
2006	95	5

Source: Literacy Movement Department of Taft (2007)



Source: Literacy Movement Department of Taft (2007)

Fig. 1: The trend of the literacy level in Nasr Abad after the Community Learning Centre Program

the level of literacy among its people. Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that the Community Learning Centre Program has managed to make the people work collectively to promote their level of literacy. Hence, the CLCP has been successful in encouraging the people in the community to be more enterprising and to enhance their earning ability and empowerment. During the four year's period, the people of Nasr Abad willingly participated in the various activities organized in the community learning centre program. Indeed, the CLCP of the community was able to educate people how to read, write, and do simple calculation.

There are several reasons that have contributed to the success of the CLCP in this community. Based on the findings gathered from the respondents, some of the reasons which have contributed to the success of the CLCP in the community are financial management skills, monitoring and evaluation skills, resource mobilization skills, establishing linkages, and networking. Thus, the Community Learning Centre Program CLCP) implemented in the community has also established linkages and networking between the people and other relevant community-based, national, and international organizations. To improve the level of literacy, the community learning centre program in Nasr Abad has established a good link between the programme and the local authorities which resulted in the allocation of funds to support its activities.

It is also believed that through linkages and networking among the CLCP and the relevant organizations, there was a feeling of ownership among the people involved in the program.

At the same time, the partnership was also established with the neighbouring vocational school. Hence, the community learning centre program could use the facilities available at the school to train the people in the community to read, write, and do simple calculation. Many of the respondents also pointed out that their effort to improve the level of literacy has also been supported by the local leaders. Costs of heating, electricity, water and sanitation supply, as well as cleaning services at the community learning centre were covered by the local leaders. In addition, the community learning centre program has been granted with more funding from the other authorities, and this is used to pay those who are involved in the programme.

According to the respondents, the CLCP has also established linkages with higher education institutions in neighbouring communities to

promote the level of literacy and reduce the problem of illiteracy among the people in the community of Nasr Abad. The establishment of such collaborations with institutions of higher education institution has enabled these institutions to conduct survey and need assessment of the people for a possible education seminar in the communities.

The respondents also stated that the CLCP has established linkages with the CLCP in other communities to enable them to learn from each other. From the beginning of the CLCP, it has been successful in involving and using mass media to publicize literacy education. For that purpose, means such as records and photos of the CLCP activities, study visits, and seminars have been employed, and also exhibited. It is crucially important to highlight the CLCP has flexible curricula and learning materials for all its learning activities.

The respondents of the study also believe that the CLCP plays a crucial role in improving the level of literacy in Nasr Abad, because its activities have been carefully monitored and evaluated. Some strengths and weaknesses in its activities have also been identified, and the identified problems are solved through monitoring and evaluation of the methodology and implementation process. In this community, the community learning centre program which has limited resources has done its maximum to adjust its activities to fulfil the needs of the local people.

Moreover, the CLCP has made a big impact on the level of literacy among people involved in the program. It has set up in the disadvantaged areas to get literacy skills so as to identify the needs of the people in the community. Finally, the respondents of the study have concluded that the CLCP is a new concept for the local people at Nasr Abad, i.e. to have a learning centre which belongs to all the people.

DISCUSSION

Based on the study, it can be concluded that the Community Learning Centre Program (CLCP) has played a significant role in increasing the level of literacy among the people in this community. After analysing the results gathered from all of the respondents of the three different groups (learners, educators, and executives), the CLCP can be regarded as an affective program to be used in improving the literacy skills which include reading, writing, and doing simple calculation among the people in this community.

Based on the findings of the study, and as agreed by all the respondents, the CLCP has played a very important role in this community. Learners, who have participated in CLCP literacy classes, are taught to read, write, and do simple calculation. The skills are very significant in their daily life, especially in problem-solving and improving personal life.

This argument is supported by two different adult learning approaches known as andragogy and self-directed approaches. According to these approaches, learners are involved in the planning of their instruction, because they want to solve their problems through their skills. They also participate in the process of identifying and planning their own learning. In this program, learners are most interested in learning subjects which have immediate relevance to their job or personal life (LMO, 2006a; 2006b).

Based on these approaches, the learning process in the community learning centre program is problem-centred. In the program, learners learn to solve their problems in daily life (Shabani, August 2008). They are also independent in learning, doing, listening to all the other interactions. They prescribed the content of textbooks for themselves. They also play the role of educators to teach themselves and their classmates. Thus, learners are active in the processes of both teaching and learning (Bagheri, July 2008; Shabani, August 2008). The literacy classes in this community learning centre program were when compared to the traditional literacy classes. With these specifications, the community learning centre program was found to implement a successful role in increasing the level of literacy among the people in this community.

The results of this study are also supported by several studies outside Iran (e.g. Abhami, Mohadethnasri and Ghiyami, 2002; Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal, 2008; Horwood, 2008; Kanno and Shrestha, Ministry of Education and Sports of Nepal, 2008; Ramazani and Basharatniya, 2002; Statistics Indonesia, 2008; The National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2008; UNESCO, 2002).

Based on the studies mentioned above, the community learning centre program has undeniably played a very important role in promoting the level of literacy not only in Iran, but also in other participating countries. For example, in Indonesia, the community learning centre program has an effective role in CLD. The literacy level in the country, before the implementation of the community learning centre program, was merely 78%. The percentage, however, increased to 86.8% seven years after the introduction of the community learning centre program (Statistics Indonesia, BPS, 2008). This means the level of literacy in this country was improved around 9% after the implementation of the community learning centre program (Statistics Indonesia, 2008). The ALG was 1.2% in Indonesia. Through the community learning centre program, people in various communities of the country have learned to read, write, and do simple calculating.

UNESCO (2002, p. 3) states that community learning centre program is one of the major strategies used to decentralize the literacy activities which have a key role in the bottom-up strategy to promote the level of literacy in the local communities. According to UNESCO, the community learning centre program has increased the level of literacy in the communities by establishing the bottom-up delivery of education for basic literacy and lifelong learning, and providing the opportunities for community members. The literacy activities in community learning centre program at the community level has been successful, because every community learning centre program is autonomous in the sense that its programs are selected and designed by members of the community in response to problems they have identified as existing in that particular community (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3).

The findings are also supported by Kanno and Shrestha (2006, p. 1) who indicate that the absence of a local centre is a main challenge faced by the literacy development process in a country with the low level of literacy. The problem leads to another challenge in the literacy programs and also this has also caused the actual needs of communities to be ignored in a literacy program. They also added that the establishment of a community learning centre program as a local program had solved the problem of illiteracy by designing literacy programs based on the actual needs of the communities. In particular, the program increases the level of literacy of the people in the communities by placing the focus on the actual needs of the communities and combining the literacy programs with life skills.

Nepal also has a successful experience in community literacy development through community learning centre program. In this country, the community learning centre program has had a good role in educating the literacy skills such as reading, writing, and simple calculation to its people. At the same time, the literacy programs provided at its community learning centre have been incorporated with basic literacy, post literacy, boys' and girls' literacy, and women education. The programs have improved the literacy level in this country over the years. For instance, the literacy level of the people before the implementation of the community learning centre program was merely 14%. The percentage was increased to 34.9% seven years after the implementation of the community learning centre program in the country (Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal, 2008; Ministry of Education and Sports of Nepal, 2008). Based on the Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal, the level of literacy has been significantly improved around 20.9 % after the introduction of community learning centre program in the country. The ALG in Nepal is around 3%.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community learning centre program has played a very encouraging role in the literacy development of the rural community of Nasr Abad in Iran. On the average, the level of literacy in the community was promoted by 20% through community learning centre program within four years. It can also be concluded that on average, the annual growth level of literacy in the community is around 5%.

In addition to this finding, this study also shows that the successful roles that the program is not the only key that has made the community learning centre program a known phenomenon, but what it makes more interesting is the fact that its success is very much dependent on the presence of effective activities and its relationship with other factors such as the local leaders, the participation of the people in the community, international organizations, good educators, and the government. All these factors have contributed equally to the success of community learning centre program. In other words, each factor has its own advantages and strengths. Removing one factor will retard the process of achieving success. One factor is no more or less important than the others.

Therefore, all the literacy activities in community learning centre program at the community level have been implemented effectively with the co-operation of all these factors. Thus, to determine which factor is more or less important for the community learning centre program is a rather complex task to do. Therefore, without these important factors, the community learning centre program will not be able to successfully carried out.

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Needs versus Wants: Comparing Job-related and Personal Needs of Non-Academic University Employees for English Language Training

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ABSTRACT

In company-sponsored workplace training programmes, training developers have traditionally focused on employees' job-related needs when designing the training curriculum, in line with conventional wisdom in the practice of human resource development. The personal needs of employees that are not directly related to job demands, commonly labelled as 'wants', are often not considered as important. In the realm of English language learning, however, research and theories have pointed to the importance of learner factors and their motivation for language learning. The sources of motivation, in particular integrative motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), that arise from the learners' personal lives should not be neglected. This study compares the job-related and personal ESL (English as a second language) training needs of a group of non-academic employees of a public university in Malaysia. It investigates the extent to which personal needs are important motivators as compared to job-related needs in workplace English language learning. The framework of this research on workplace learning is informed by theories and concepts developed in the fields of motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Dornyei, 2005) and domains of language use (Fishman, 1972), as well as workplace training literature (Kraiger and Aguinis, 2001; Machin and Treolar, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003). Data were collected through a questionnaire containing statements of personal and job-related needs. The needs were rank-ordered to identify the most important needs. The results showed that on the whole, the employees found both personal and job-related needs equally relevant. However, analysis of the most important needs indicated a clear preference for personal needs. The results have implications for both the design and instruction of workplace ESL programmes for the study's population, and challenge the common practice of focusing only on job-related language needs in workplace ESL programmes. Finally, the results provide empirical support for the conceptualisation of an L2 workplace training motivation model which takes into consideration personal needs as an important component.

Keywords: English language training, ESL needs, job-related needs, Malaysian workplace, motivation, personal needs, workplace learning

INTRODUCTION

In most workplace training programmes, instruction is often geared towards workplace demands, that is, towards the fulfilling of job-related needs. Personal needs (or 'wants' in the language of training), which are known as non job-related needs arising from social, self-development, family, and lifestyle goals, are seldom considered in the overall scheme of company-sponsored training. While this practice is in line with conventional wisdom in training management (Goldstein and Ford, 2002; McGehee and Thayer, 1961; Nadler, 1984; Mitchell, 1993; Blake, 2007), a training

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curriculum that narrowly focuses on workplace demands without considering the learner's personal needs is not without its drawbacks, especially in an ESL (English as a second language) training context. Motivation researcher, Dornyei (2005) has argued that L2 (second language) learning cannot be equated with learning of other academic subjects, as language is involved in most of an individual's mental activities and it forms part of his identity. Thus, understanding the L2 learner's motivation should be approached from the perspective of the whole person. In relation to this study, this would mean that excluding a learner's personal needs could possibly result in diminishing the learner's motivation to learn the L2.

A pertinent question faced by ESL training developers is whether employees' personal needs should be considered in workplace English language training programmes. The literature that best supports the importance of taking into account employees' personal needs can be found in theories and research on motivation in L2 learning (Dornyei, 2005; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner and Tremblay, 1994; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Crookes and Schmidt, 1991) and training motivation (Kraiger and Aguinis, 2001; Machin and Treolar, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003).

Motivation and Language Learning

Theories of motivation for language learning emphasise learners' needs and goals as important factors that affect the extent of their involvement and attitude towards learning, which in turn, influence the success of their language learning effort (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner and Tremblay, 1994; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Crookes and Schmidt, 1991). In particular, Gardner and Lambert's (1972) model of instrumental and integrative motivational orientations acknowledges that motivation for L2 (second language) learning may be influenced by different aspects of the learner's life. In the context of language learning, instrumental motivation, which is the motivation to learn a language in order to obtain external rewards (such as a better job or better examination grades) is said to be essential, especially for learners in environments where opportunities to interact with the target language community are scarce. On the other hand, integrative motivation, which is the motivation to learn a language for social purposes, enjoyment and personal fulfilment, has been shown to be a more significant force in ensuring learners' long-term success in their L2 acquisition (Gardner and Tremblay, 1994; Sook Ryu Yang, 2003). This specifically indicates that for language learning to successfully take place, language instruction must take into account what motivates learners the most, and this will include learners' integrative needs which mainly fall in the personal-social domain.

Second, past research has lent support for the inclusion or consideration of personal language learning needs in ESL training programmes. For instance, Benson (1991) found that integrative goals such as "enjoyment of entertainment in English" (Benson, 1991, p. 36) were favoured over instrumental ones among Japanese ESL learners. Furthermore, Brown (2000) discovered that learners seldom cited needs that reflect only one motivational orientation when learning a second language. Rather, a combination of both instrumental and integrative needs plays a part in motivating the L2 learners. For example, he found that international students in the U.S. indicated their wish to learn English not only for academic purposes, but also for integration with local Americans.

Training Motivation

Personal needs of employees have been argued to be an important factor affecting the motivation of employees attending workplace training. Sarmiento and Kay (1990) propose that literacy programmes should be worker-centred and address the needs of the worker as a whole person. This would include the worker's personal, as well as job-related needs. Meanwhile, Fingeret (1994) asserts that many workers attending workplace literacy programmes are motivated by their personal needs such as the wish to be able to read to their children or help their children with school work.

Crocker *et al*. (2002) acknowledge that both employers and employees may have different goals and expectations from workplace ESL training programmes. They recommend that employees' personal goals be recognised and included as a way to empower employees and to prepare them for wider roles not limited to their jobs. This stance is in line with the observation by Kraiger and Aguinis (2001) that goal-setting is an important factor in determining trainees' motivation to learn. Finally, studies on training motivation (Machin and Treolar, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003) have found that employees' perception of the benefits and importance of training significantly affect their pre-training motivation to learn.

Thus, when a training curriculum ignores the learners' needs, whether job-related or personal, what motivates the learners most cannot be utilised to enhance learning, and this diminishes the effectiveness of the training programme.

Domains of Language Use

While the integrative-instrumental approach towards motivation has been the point of reference for most studies on motivation, Fishman's (1972) theory of domains of language use has offered another viewpoint on language and motivation. According to the domain theory, people use different languages or language varieties in different situations. In like situations, grouped together and called a 'domain', it was found that a certain language or language variety may be preferred over others. Based on empirical data from a particular group of people, the main domains identified by Fishman were family, friendship, religion, education, and employment, wherein certain languages or language varieties were dominant.

Following the domain theory, it is thus possible to determine whether a language or language variety is dominant in a certain domain for an individual or a group of people. Likewise, it is reasonable to expect that an individual's motivation to learn a language can be influenced by his or her need to learn it for different domains. As shown in a study by Rahman (2005), the motivation of a group of Bangladeshi ESL learners to learn English was found to be very domain specific, with a significant slant towards the academic domain.

Support for the notion of the existence of language use domains can be found in later L2 motivation research, where it was pointed out that the notion of the integrative concept was rather superfluous and lacks empirical support (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2009). Instead, four orientations were proposed, which were "travel, friendship, knowledge, and instrumental orientation" (p. 24). This strongly suggests that L2 motivation can be linked to specific domains.

Thus, from an L2 learning point of view, it is likely that motivation to learn a language is domain specific, depending on what languages dominate particular domains in the learners' lives.

Two Domains of Language Needs: Job-related and Personal Needs

Training practitioners are well aware of the job-related and personal needs (also referred to as 'needs' and 'wants') dichotomy that rule in the discourse of corporate training, where 'needs' is the wheat and 'wants' is the chaff. However, practitioners have also agreed that getting the employee-trainee to buy into the need for training is essential in ensuring a successful training outcome. This basically involves articulating the convergence of needs of the employees and the organisation, as well as the mutual benefits that both parties will enjoy. It is proposed that this can be done more effectively with a thorough analysis of the employees' personal needs, in conjunction with their job-related needs.

Thus, to study learners' motivation to learn English in the workplace context, it is expedient to frame their needs in the two domains of job-related and personal needs, instead of using the integrative-instrumental framework, as these two categories of needs are significant for L2 learning, and yet are often in direct conflict in the context of workplace training.

OBJECTIVES

This study was undertaken to examine the role of personal language learning needs, which are often ignored in most corporate training needs analysis, in providing the motivation or interest for the learners to learn English. This was done by describing the personal English language needs of a group of adult ESL learners at the workplace, in relation to their job-related needs, and comparing the relative importance of both the categories of job-related and personal needs.

The objective of this study was to compare the felt job-related and personal language learning needs of the subjects. It sought to answer the following questions:

- How do personal needs compare with job-related needs as a source of motivation for the learners to learn English?
- What are the most important personal and job-related needs of the learners?
- How do the sub-groups of learners, defined by job, age and gender, differ in their needs?

By investigating the learner as a whole person with language needs that span his or her work, family and social lives, the study attempted to provide insight into: 1) what motivates this specific group of learners, and 2) the significance of personal needs vis-à-vis workplace ESL training. The findings would provide insight into the motivation of the learners in workplace ESL training programmes, as well as inform practical decisions on programme planning and instructional design. The findings would also contribute towards the development of an L2 training motivation model that includes personal needs as its component.

Context of the Study

Needs of learners are context dependent; therefore, it is important to describe the unique background of the study subjects and the Malaysian university in which they are employed, and how it contributes to the framework for the study.

This study was conducted in conjunction with the university's on-going English language training project which was initiated for the purpose of upgrading the English proficiency level of the university's non-academic employees. This project was meant to be a part of the university's effort towards enhancing the university's appeal in the international post-graduate market. It was decided that for the university to be more competitive in attracting international research students, this group of employees (who provide administrative and technical support services) should undergo in-service English language courses to improve their command of the language. The university's mission and the reasons for the English programme had been well-communicated to all the university employees before the programme was instituted.

The language of the university's administration was (and is) Malay, the national language. Furthermore, ethnic Malays comprise over 90% of the non-academic staff in the university, contributing to the somewhat monolingual (Malay language) environment at work. However, in recent years, the university has increased its foreign graduate student enrolment, as well as its intake of foreign lecturers, giving rise to an increased need for both technical and administrative staff members to use English at work.

In the wider context of the country, English which holds the official status of a second language in Malaysia is spoken by a large section of the urban community, and is widely used in commercial, cultural, and educational activities. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that given the specific context of the university and the employees, these non-academic staff members may have English language needs contributed by job-related factors, as well as factors beyond the work-related domain (personal needs), which could prove to be strong motivators for them to learn English.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a survey design that involved a total of 208 respondents who answered a questionnaire comprising two scales, the job-related needs and the personal needs scales.

The Subjects

The subjects in the study comprised a group of the university's non-academic employees, consisting of clerical/administrative and technical staff members who were attending a basic in-service English language training course. The course that ran for two weeks, with six hours of instruction per day, was carried out at a centralised location in the university. The selection of the participants to attend the course was done by the heads of departments, or the faculty deans who had been invited to enrol their non-academic staff members for the English course. As the course was a basic course meant for learners with low to low-intermediate proficiency in English, the staff members enrolled included those who were within this level of proficiency, as subjectively evaluated by the faculty deans in consultation with the respective staff members. A total 375 participants attended the course.

The course participants were randomly assigned to 18 classes, out of which 10 classes were randomly selected to answer the research questionnaire. The participants in the 10 selected classes (totalling 208 respondents) were given about half an hour to complete the questionnaire on the first day of their class. Since the questionnaires were administered and collected by instructors in class, the return rate was 100%.

As shown in Table 1, the respondents from both the clerical/administrative and technical categories were fairly distributed at 53.4% and 46.6%, respectively. Tables 2 and 3 show the breakdown by age and gender. The respondents were mainly ethnic Malays, making about 97.12%, while the remaining 2.8% consisted of Chinese, Indians, and other minority races.

The Questionnaire

A questionnaire, containing 32 job-related (J) and personal (P) needs statements in English,

TABLE 1
Job category of the respondents

Job Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Clerical/administrative	111	53.4
Technical	97	46.6
Total	208	100

TABLE 2
Age of the respondents

Age	Number of Respondents	Valid Percentage (%)
18 – 25 years	45	22.3
26 – 35 years	38	18.6
36 – 45 years	71	35.0
above 45 years	49	24.1
*Total	203	100

Note: *5 missing values

TABLE 3
Gender of the respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	72	34.6
Female	136	65.4
Total	208	100

was developed to measure the perceived English language needs of the respondents. A list of needs statements were written based on the non-academic staff members' job requirements for the J scale, and a specification of common activities related to recreation, friends, home, and family for the P scale. The list of statements was checked for relevance and face validity by the researchers in consultation with an assistant registrar who is the Head of Administrative Affairs of a faculty in the university. Initially, a total of 34 needs statements were short-listed and included in the questionnaire. To ensure that no other needs relevant to the group of respondents were left out, an open-ended question was included following the 34 statements asking the respondents to write down any other needs they might have had and indicate their degree of relevance.

However, after administering the questionnaire to the respondents, feedback received from the class instructors who had administered the questionnaire pointed out possible misinterpretations of items J8 and P15. Consequently, the two items were removed from the data set collected, leaving only 32 needs statements in total, with 16 items each for the J and P scales, respectively.

The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents through the class instructors. The class instructors explained the instructions and any item in the questionnaire which the respondents found difficult to understand. The respondents were given about thirty minutes to fill out the questionnaire. The respondents answered the stem question, 'Why do you need to learn English?' by indicating on a 4-point scale the degree of relevance of each need. The needs statements were worded clearly in either job-related or personal terms. For example, the statements 'I need to answer telephone enquiries in English' and 'I need to order food at restaurants when entertaining for work purposes' are job-related, whereas the statements 'I need to help my children with their homework' and 'I need to order food at restaurants when eating out with my family and friends' are statements of personal needs. Job-related needs are either related to job requirements or are activities carried out in the work context, while personal needs are those needs which arise from non work-related purposes and situations such as social, family, and lifestyle contexts.

DATA ANALYSIS

The means across all the items in the J and P scales for each respondent represent the scores for both the J and P values for the respondent, whereas the mean of an individual needs statement across respondents represent the collective rating of that particular need for the group.

Based on the means of the individual items, job-related and personal needs were compared and rank-ordered for the overall group and the sub-groups of job, age, and gender. As the points on the rating scale in the questionnaire had been weighted from 1 to 4 (1=very irrelevant, 2=irrelevant, 3=relevant, 4=very relevant), the mean values of the collective responses therefore corresponded to the same descriptors, where only items with the means of 2.5 and above would be considered as relevant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the overall results that represent the needs of all the respondents as a group are presented first, followed by the results pertaining to the sub-groups as defined by job, age, and gender.

Overall Results: Job-related Needs and Personal Needs

The means of the J and P scales for the overall group and the sub-groups of job, age, and gender showed that overall, both job-related and personal needs were rated as 'relevant' by the respondents (means between 2.5 and 3.25), as displayed in Table 4. The perception of the relevance of both job-related and personal needs, based on the mean values, appears to be the same for the sub-groups defined by the job, age, and gender of the respondents.

The result showing the respondents' perceived relevance of English to job functions is to be expected. One important reason for this is of course, the increased intake of foreign students by the university, as well as expatriate lecturers who do not speak Malay, the national language. Thus, both clerical/administrative and technical staff cannot avoid having to communicate with these English-speaking people at work. Furthermore, the emphasis on the importance of English by the university management serves to remind employees of the part they are expected to play. Top-down initiatives to create a conducive environment for

TABLE 4
Means of job-related and personal needs

Grouping	Mean (Job-related Needs)	Std. Deviation	Mean (Personal Needs)	Std. Deviation
Overall (n= 208)	2.8933	.26132	2.9465	.38316
Job				
• Clerical/Admin (n=111)	2.9657	.26063	2.9916	.37679
• Technical (n= 97)	2.8125	.28782	2.8978	.39272
Age (5 missing values)				
• 18 – 25 years (n= 45)	2.9722	.42233	2.9653	.37325
• 26 – 35 years (n= 38)	2.8717	.51912	2.9737	.39843
• 36 – 45 years (n= 71)	2.8926	.41355	2.9533	.39032
• above 45 years (n= 49)	2.8827	.44523	2.9171	.38411
Gender				
Male • (n= 72)	2.8333	.46072	2.8854	.36890
Female • (n= 136)	2.9251	.43851	2.9789	.38793

Note: Mean value: 1- 1.74=very irrelevant, 1.75 – 2.49=irrelevant, 2.5 – 3.24=relevant, 3.25 – 4.00=very relevant.

the learning of English have included setting one day weekly as an English speaking day, where all communication, including meetings, must be carried out in English. Mandatory testing of non-academic employees' English proficiency, carried out by order of the management of certain faculties and administrative centres, would have further encouraged the perception that English is important to an employee's career in the university.

What is interesting is the perceived relevance of English in the personal lives of the respondents, especially the result which indicated the extent of need for English in the respondents' personal lives to be comparable to that in their work lives.

The results reflect the respondents' wish to participate in social/cultural/educational activities in English, and this appears as strong a source of motivation to learn English as job-related reasons. In other words, the wish to learn English for non job-related purposes such as watching television, making friends, or helping one's children to learn English is a significant motivator for the respondents.

The Most Important Needs: Main Motivators

Based on the means of the English language needs computed, the rank orders of job-related and personal needs were obtained.

For the whole group comprising 208 respondents, it was found that almost all of the individual job-related and personal needs had means of 2.5 and above, the cut-off point for a need to be considered relevant. Only two needs, namely 'interacting with neighbours' and 'presenting talks and speeches for non job-related purposes' (both personal needs), had means of less than 2.5 (see Appendix, Table 14).

While there is no practical difference in the overall mean values of the two categories of needs (i.e. both personal and job-related needs were rated as 'relevant'), the analysis of the highest ranking individual needs show a preference for personal needs over job-related ones. Table 5 shows the most important needs which were rated as 'very relevant' by the respondents. Out of the eight most important needs, six are personal needs and only two are job-related ones.

Personal needs

Out of the eight needs rated highest (with means of 3.25 and above), six are personal needs (see Table 5). Learning English for the purpose of getting more respect and better service from others were ranked as the highest and second highest on the list, respectively.

It appears that the respondents on the whole associated English with status, and the state

TABLE 5
The most important needs of the whole group

Rank	Item Code	Description	n=208 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P3	Get respect from others	3.4135	.58335
2	P17	Get better service	3.3798	.69850
3	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.3654	.55704
4	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.3413	.62463
5	P1	Help children with homework	3.3029	.87895
6	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.2981	.72738
7	P8	Give children practice in speaking	3.2692	.83093
8	J17	Career advancement	3.2548	.82677

Note: Mean value: 1- 1.74=very irrelevant, 1.75 – 2.49=irrelevant, 2.5 – 3.24=relevant, 3.25 – 4.00=very relevant. Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

of being more respected, as reflected in their response to the statements 'People will respect me more as a person if I can communicate well in English' and 'As a consumer, I will get better service if I can speak English well.' These two items represent the respondents' strongest reasons for learning English. This, in itself, indicates the respondents' belief that mastering English confers social rewards that are tied to the way one will be regarded by others.

Equally important were the purposes of watching movies and TV programmes in English, and reading for leisure. These indicate the respondents' ready acceptance of such cultural and recreational activities in English.

It is interesting to note that out of the six highest scoring needs, two had to do with children: 'I need to help my children with their homework' and 'I want my children to practice speaking English with me.' These two needs show that the concern parents have for their children's educational achievement can be a main source of motivation for them to learn English. This particular finding is consistent with that of Fingeret (1994) who studied workers' reasons for attending workplace literacy programmes: "many adults come to literacy programmes because of concern with their relationships to their children" (p. 36).

In the specific case of the study's subjects, this concern might stem from the wider socio-political landscape in the country, where the medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics in Malaysian schools was changed from the national language to English in 2003. Hence, if a parent had in the past helped his or her children with their Science and Mathematics homework using the national language, he or she would now have to be able to do the same in English. Similarly, if in the past school children could afford to ignore English, doing so now would affect their performance in not only the English Language subject, but also the subjects of Science and Mathematics. Parents in general have understood the increase in the stakes for their children. Thus, it is not inconceivable that the study's respondents, many of whom are parents, indicated it was very important for them to learn English for the benefit of their children. More generally, this result could be an indication of the growing awareness of the importance of English in the country, and in the world.

Job-related needs

As shown in Table 5, two job-related needs were rated as "very relevant" (means of 3.25 and above). The need with the highest score was 'I need to read work-related books/magazines/manuals' (Mean = 3.30), followed by 'My chances of career advancement are higher if I can communicate well in English' (Mean = 3.25).

People who attend training and development programmes may come with two kinds of objectives: he/she aims to improve performance in a current job, or chooses to prepare for a future job. The respondents' emphasis on learning English to help them read material related to their job indicates a focus on skills upgrading for either the current or a future job, and at the same time, they clearly indicated their orientation towards learning English in view of their future career prospects. This reflects the success of the university's administration in encouraging the perception that competence in English is a factor influencing decisions on staff promotion, despite the fact that in reality, there is no formalised policy that ties promotions to English language test scores.

The next section discusses the job-related and personal needs of the respondents across their jobs, age, and gender.

Job-related and Personal Needs According to Job, Age and Gender

As shown in Table 4, the job-related and personal English language needs for all the sub-groups, defined by job, age, and gender, were rated as 'relevant', with means ranging between 2.5 and 3.25. The mean ratings for both the categories of needs did not vary according to the respondents' job, age or sex. However, when only the highest scoring needs (means of 3.25 and above) were compared, the importance of personal needs over job-related needs become apparent.

Needs of the clerical/administrative group

The rank order of English language needs for the clerical/administrative group in the 'very relevant' (means of 3.25 and above) category shows a comparable number of job-related and personal needs (Table 6). Of these nine needs, five are personal needs and four job-related ones.

These highest ranked needs slightly differed from those which were derived from the overall group. There is an additional highly rated personal need for this group, i.e. 'I would like to make friends with English-speaking people', which did not get a high rating in the overall group results. Furthermore, the two needs related to helping children with learning English did not make it to top ranking. As for job-related needs, two additional ones for the clerical/administrative group were answering telephone enquiries, and answering enquiries from students and staff; both these activities truly reflect their job functions.

Needs of the technical group

The rank order for the technical group shows seven needs with top ranking (means of 3.25 and above). Of these seven, six are personal needs and one job-related need. It is surprising that even the activities closely related to the technical staff's job function such as 'Explain processes and procedures' and 'Liaise with suppliers and vendors,' were ranked lower on their list of priorities. Interestingly, the needs are similar to the list of the highly rated needs obtained from the overall group, minus one job-related need, i.e. 'career advancement.'

Thus, it appears that the technical staff placed greater importance on personal needs (whereby almost all the needs rated 'very relevant' were personal needs) although they agreed that almost all of the reasons for learning English listed were relevant (mean above 2.5).

Needs according to age group

Tables 8 to 11 show the most important needs for the respondents from various age groups. On the whole, the most important needs are similar to those of the overall group, with some minor differences. Similarly, personal needs were found to predominate over job-related needs for all the age groupings.

The most important needs for the 18 – 25 age group (Table 8) appear to be mainly personal needs (four personal and two job-related needs). A significant omission from the list are the needs related to children. This is presumably because of the youth of the respondents in the group, making it less likely for them to have children

TABLE 6
The most important needs of the clerical/administrative group

Rank	Item Code	Description	n= 111 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P3	Get respect from others	3.5225	.56964
2	P17	Get better service	3.4685	.68517
3	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.4324	.53294
4	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.3874	.64907
5	J17	Career advancement	3.3874	.81096
6	J1	Answer telephone enquiries	3.3784	.57294
7	J6	Answer enquiries from students and staff	3.2793	.67650
8	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.2793	.70287
9	P9	Make friends with English-speaking people	3.2793	.67650

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant.
Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

TABLE 7
The most important needs of the technical group

Rank	Item Code	Description	n=96 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P1	Help children with homework	3.3958	.80104
2	P8	Give children practice in speaking	3.3333	.77686
3	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.3229	.76081
4	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.2917	.57887
5	P3	Get respect from others	3.2917	.57887
6	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.2917	.59677
7	P17	Get better service	3.2917	.69459

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant.
Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

of school-going age. Except for this group, the respondents from all other age groups clearly indicated the need to help their children with homework as important.

For the 26 – 35 age group (Table 9), the most important needs consist of five personal needs and only one job-related need. Topping the list is to 'help children with homework', reflecting the life stage of the respondents in this particular age group. The only need contributed by the work context for this group is to 'read work related books/magazines/manuals.'

The most important needs for the 36 – 45 (Table 10) and above-45 (Table 11) age groups are similar to those of the overall group, with the addition of the job-related 'answer enquiries from students and staff' for the 36 – 45 age group, and additions of 'answer telephone enquiries' and 'make friends with English-speaking people' for the above-45 group. Once again, personal needs were found to outnumber job-related needs for these two groups.

It is noted that the personal need to make friends with English-speaking people so far is unique only to the above-45 group. The wish to make friends with English-speaking people, who presumably cannot speak one's native language, requires a certain amount of confidence and willingness to step out of one's comfort zone. The results suggest that the mature respondents in the age group of above-45 are more likely to possess this characteristic.

TABLE 8
The most important needs of the 18 – 25 years age group

Rank	Item Code	Description	n= 75 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P3	Get respect from others	3.4267	.61891
2	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.3867	.56704
3	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.3600	.67062
4	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.3330	.64385
5	J17	Career advancement	3.3067	.83786
6	P17	Get better service	3.3067	.73473

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant.
Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

TABLE 9
The most important needs of the 26 – 35 years age group

Rank	Item Code	Description	n=39 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P1	Help children with homework	3.4872	.68333
2	P3	Get respect from others	3.3846	.63312
3	P17	Get better service	3.3590	.74290
4	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.3077	.56914
5	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.3077	.46763
6	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.3077	.83214

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant.
Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

TABLE 10
The most important needs of the 36 – 45 years age group

Rank	Item code	Description	n=71 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P17	Get better service	3.4507	.67160
2	P3	Get respect from others	3.4085	.52314
3	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.3662	.59097
4	P8	Give children practice in speaking	3.3239	.77041
5	J17	Career advancement	3.3099	.74823
6	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.2958	.64135
7	J6	Answer enquiries from students and staff	3.2958	.59514
8	P1	Help children with homework	3.2817	.94397
9	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.2817	.75947

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant.
Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

Needs of the male and female respondents

The male respondents rated only four needs as 'very relevant', and all of them are personal needs (Table 12). Thus, the job-related needs do not appear to feature as prominently as the personal needs for the male respondents. Also, the two personal needs related to children ranked as high in the overall group did not make it to the male respondents' most important needs list. This probably reflects the gender roles in Malaysian society, where women generally spend more time on parenting duties. It is emphasised that these results do not in any way indicate that the men do not feel the need to help their children with their homework. The men's mean score of 3.2361 for 'help children with homework' places it along the higher end of the 'relevant' range (see Appendix, Table 15).

Meanwhile, the female respondents' list of the most important needs contained the same needs as those of the overall group, with an additional job-related need, 'answer enquiries from students and staff' (Table 13). It is interesting to note the difference in the perception of job-related English language needs between the men and women. The work domain seems to be a strong source of motivation for the women, but not for the men.

TABLE 11
The most important needs of the above-45 years age group

Rank	Item Code	Description	n=49 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.4286	.64553
2	P3	Get respect from others	3.4082	.53690
3	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.3673	.56629
4	P9	Make friends with English-speaking people	3.3469	.69384
5	P1	Help children with homework	3.3265	.89883
6	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.3265	.68881
7	J6	Answer enquiries from students and staff	3.2857	.57743
8	J1	Answer telephone enquiries	3.2653	.56920
9	P17	Get better service	3.2653	.70057

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant. Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

TABLE 12
The most important needs of the male respondents

Rank	Item Code	Description	n=72 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P3	Get respect from others	3.3333	.62800
2	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.2917	.51563
3	P17	Get better service	3.2917	.74023
4	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.2500	.68693

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant. Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In summary, there are several important findings derived from the study. Firstly, both personal and job-related needs were collectively rated as relevant by the subjects comprising non-academic staff members of the university. This is true for the overall group and the sub-groups defined by job, age, and gender. Next, the analysis of needs by job, age, and gender showed that the technical subgroup ranked personal needs as higher than the job-related ones, whereas the clerical/administrative sub-groups were motivated more by a balance of both job-related and personal needs. For the age sub-groups, personal needs dominate over job-related needs. Finally, male respondents cited personal needs as more important, whereas the work domain contributed more towards the female respondents' needs.

Analysis of the top ranking needs for the whole group indicated that on the whole, personal needs feature more prominently than job-related ones. This implies that the non-work environment provides a vibrant support for the respondents' needs and wish to learn English.

The results have several implications for workplace ESL training:

- ESL learners in workplace training programmes may have personal needs that could prove to be a strong source of motivation for them to learn English.

TABLE 13
The most important needs of the female respondents

Rank	Item Code	Description	n=136 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P3	Get respect from others	3.4559	.55601
2	P17	Get better service	3.4265	.67372
3	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.4044	.57580
4	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.3897	.58595
5	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.3456	.71372
6	P1	Help children with homework	3.3382	.87111
7	P8	Give children practice in speaking	3.3235	.85960
8	J6	Answer enquiries from students and staff	3.3162	.76448
9	J17	Career advancement	3.2721	.83862

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant. Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

These personal needs, if incorporated into workplace ESL training programmes, will enhance learning and learner satisfaction.

- Analysis of personal needs, in conjunction with job-related needs, will yield a more complete needs and motivation profile of learners for more effective programme planning.
- Apart from practical implications, the results also suggest that L2 personal needs constitute an important variable in a conceptualisation of a model for L2 training motivation. Thus, future research on workplace language learning and training motivation should take account of learners' personal needs which have largely been excluded in the discourse of workplace training.

Needs versus Wants: Final Remarks

There are no easy answers to the question of whether needs or wants should be given priority in ESL workplace training. Given the time and budget constraints in any training programme, it has been a common practice for training practitioners to take great care in identifying 'wants'- often called 'nice-to-know stuff' - in order to ignore them. Meanwhile, 'need-to-know stuff' or 'needs' must take precedence over 'wants'. This practice has been the benchmark of 'good programme planning' and has hardly ever been questioned.

We argue, however, that this practice of unilaterally favouring needs from wants may be misguided in light of the fact that language needs pervade both work and personal domains, unlike the more easily domain compartmentalised technical skills needs. Fingeret's (1994) assertion that workplace ESL learners come to class with concerns about their relationship with their children is applicable even to today's learners.

Thus, it is recommended that future research, which takes account of the importance of personal needs in workplace training programmes, deal with the issue of balancing learners' personal needs with job-related needs, addressing questions such as to what extent personal needs should be considered in the overall training curriculum, and how personal needs may be incorporated without detracting from training's aim of upgrading job-related skills. Answers to these questions will contribute towards the planning and execution of more successful workplace ESL programmes.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 14
The overall rank order of needs

Rank	Item Code	Description	n=208 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P3	Get respect from others	3.4135	.58335
2	P17	Get better service	3.3798	.69850
3	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.3654	.55704
4	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.3413	.62463
5	P1	Help children with homework	3.3029	.87895
6	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.2981	.72738
7	P8	Give children practice in speaking	3.2692	.83093
8	J17	Career advancement	3.2548	.82677
9	J6	Answer enquiries from students and staff	3.2452	.66846
10	P9	Make friends with English-speaking people	3.2260	.67523
11	J1	Answer telephone enquiries	3.2212	.60524
12	J9	Read reports or other documents	3.1058	.67984
13	J5	Work-related travel	2.9712	.81598
14	P7	Travel for leisure	2.9423	.71326
15	J2	Understand/communicate in meetings	2.9327	.75199
16	J12	Liaise with suppliers/ vendors	2.8462	.71922
17	J4	Explain processes and procedures	2.7981	.75348
18	P12	Shopping	2.7933	.66707
19	P6	Order food at restaurants	2.7692	.71870
20	J14	Write telephone messages	2.7692	.74511
21	J3	Communicate with boss	2.7500	.69156
22	J13	Write announcements and notices	2.7308	.77060
23	P10	Communicate with children's teachers	2.7260	.79058
24	J10	Plan for further studies	2.6731	.90562
25	P13	Interact with children's friends	2.6490	.79667
26	P14	Interact with friends	2.6442	.70084
27	P5	Participate in radio / TV chat/game shows	2.6394	.82812
28	J11	Give talks, speeches at work	2.5865	.76910
29	J15	Order food at restaurants	2.5769	.76382
30	J16	Write reports/letters	2.5337	.76696
31	P11	Interact with neighbours	2.3798	.73883
32	P16	Present talks/ speeches at non job-related functions	2.3029	.79223

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant.
Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

TABLE 15
The rank order of the male respondents' needs

Rank	Item Code	Description	n=72 Mean	Std. Deviation
1	P3	Get respect from others	3.3333	.62800
2	P2	Watch movies and TV programmes	3.2917	.51563
3	P17	Get better service	3.2917	.74023
4	P4	Read books and magazines for leisure	3.2500	.68693
5	P1	Help children with homework	3.2361	.89591
6	J17	Career advancement	3.2222	.80882
7	J7	Read work-related books/magazines/manuals	3.2083	.74944
8	J1	Answer telephone enquiries	3.2083	.50980
9	P9	Make friends with English-speaking people	3.1944	.66373
10	P8	Give children practice in speaking	3.1667	.76910
11	J6	Answer enquiries from students and staff	3.1111	.64033
12	J9	Read reports or other documents	3.0139	.70222
13	J5	Work-related travel	2.8611	.81020
14	J2	Understand/communicate in meetings	2.8472	.70531
15	P7	Travel for leisure	2.8333	.69254
16	J12	Liaise with suppliers/ vendors	2.8333	.71214
17	P12	Shopping	2.8056	.57263
18	J4	Explain processes and procedures	2.7500	.72686
19	P6	Order food at restaurants	2.7222	.67655
20	J3	Communicate with boss	2.7083	.65940
21	J14	Write telephone messages	2.7083	.68055
22	P10	Communicate with children's teachers	2.6528	.71523
23	J13	Write announcements and notices	2.6528	.71521
24	P13	Interact with children's friends	2.6389	.71813
25	J10	Plan for further studies	2.6350	.86330
26	P14	Interact with friends	2.6111	.70324
27	J11	Give talks, speeches at work	2.5833	.80052
28	J15	Order food at restaurants	2.5278	.75015
29	P5	Participate in radio / TV chat/game shows	2.5139	.80485
30	J16	Write reports/letters	2.4722	.82183
31	P11	Interact with neighbours	2.3472	.69523
32	P16	Present talks/ speeches at non job-related functions	2.2778	.77322

Note: Mean value: 1-1.74= very irrelevant, 1.75–2.49= irrelevant, 2.5–3.24= relevant, 3.25–4.00= very relevant.
Item code indicates the context of the needs as either job-related (J) or personal (P).

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Relationships between Family Background and Family Strengths with Children's Social Competence

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the relationships between family background (parental age, parental education, number of children, family monthly income) and family strengths with children's social competence. A sample of 200 parents completed parent and child measures in a structured questionnaire. The results showed that all the variables for the family background were not significantly related to children's social competence. Families who had higher levels of togetherness and utilized more respectful communication had children who displayed higher levels of social competence. The findings imply that children with higher levels of social competence come from families with higher level of family strengths.

Keywords: Social competence, family background, family strengths

INTRODUCTION

Social competence refers to the composite of social and communicative abilities that children utilize to cultivate relationships with adults and other children to succeed in an environment (Hart, Olsen, Robinson and Mandleco, 1997; Mendez, McDermott and Fantuzzo, 2002). Socially competent children are able to elicit positive responses from others and are therefore skilful in forming close and supportive relationships (Mendez *et al*., 2002). On the contrary, children with deficiencies in social competence tend to be less adroit socially and often display high levels of negative emotionality and impulsive behaviour (Snyder, Prichard, Schrepferman, Patrick and Stoolmiller, 2004). Meanwhile, negative emotionality, such as anger, frustration, and hostility, has been linked to delinquency and aggressive behaviour in several studies (e.g. Eisenberg *et al*., 1997; Stice and Gonzales, 1998). In short, social competence is a valuable individual skill and resource, and is therefore an indicator of positive mental health. Thus, numerous interventions (L'Abate and Millan, 1985) have targeted social competence to assist children in overcoming adjustments difficulties and preventing serious emotional and behavioural problems later in life (Garmezy, 1991; Hoglund and Leadbeater, 2004).

The present study is guided by an ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which suggests that children's development is influenced by resources and proximal processes in the immediate environment. In particular, resources (such as parental age, level of education, family monthly income, and number of children) and proximal processes (such as family strengths) are likely to influence the child's functioning

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in social relationship in later life (e.g. Larsson and Frisk, 1999; Lau and Kwok, 2003; Hoglund and Leadbeater, 2004; Laible, Torquati and Ontai, 2004; Anthony *et al*., 2005). There are relatively few studies in the literature which have examined family background and the construct of family strengths in relation to children's social competence, especially in Malaysia. The purpose of the present study was to fill in this research gap by determining the relationship between family background (namely parental age, level of education, family monthly income, and the number of children) and family strengths with children's social competence.

Family Background and Children's Social Competence

Previous studies have unveiled mixed findings pertinent to the relationship between family background and children's social competence. A study in a western country indicated that children from middle socio-economic status (SES) families were often regarded as more socially competent than children in lower SES families (Larsson and Frisk, 1999). Meanwhile, parents with higher education levels tend to have children with greater social competence (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov, 1994). Highly educated parents are more likely to use positive communication with their children in solving problems, arranging peer experiences, and fostering friendships which enhance children's social competence (Duncan *et al*., 1994; Coughlin and Vuchinich, 1996). However, there is also evidence which suggests that mothers' education is not significantly correlated to children's social competence (Hoglund and Leadbeater, 2004). In Malaysia, a study by Anjli Panalal (2004) showed that the level of children's social competence is not affected by mothers' education and age, but it is influenced by the number of children.

Earlier studies showed that families with fewer children and lower economic strain were more likely to have children with higher level of social competence (Anjli Panalal, 2004). A research by Mistry, Biesanz, Taylor, Burchinal and Cox (2004) found that family income had a greater impact on the social competence of children living in poverty than on those not living in poverty. Another study by Brody, Stoneman and Flor (1996) found that family financial resources were directly linked to youths' social competence. Furthermore, the relationship between family income and child's social competence diminishes as income moves further away from the poverty line (Costello, Compton, Keeler and Angold, 2003; Dearing, McCartney and Taylor, 2001). On average, low-income parents (or those facing economic loss), are less child-centred and nurturant in interactions with their children and are more parent-centred, rejecting, and inconsistent when disciplining their children compared to more affluent parents (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo and Garcia Coll, 2001; McLoyd, 1990; 1998). This may in turn decreases the level of children's social competence.

Family Strengths and Children's Social Competence

Family strength is a broad term that refers to family behaviour, processes, and relationship characteristics (Otto, 1975; Williams, Lingren, Rowe, Van Zandt and Stinnett, 1985; Schlesinger, 1998; Moore, Chalk, Scarpa and Vandivere, 2002). Otto (1975) conceptualized family strengths as "those forces and dynamic factors… which encourage the development of the personal resources and potentials of members of the family and which make family life deeply satisfying and fulfilling to family members." There are six main characteristics of family strength, and these are commitment, appreciation, communication, time together, shared values and beliefs, and coping with stress (Stinnet and Sauer, 1977; Stinnet, 1979; Stinnett, Sanders, DeFrain and Parkhust, 1982; Casas, Stinnett, Williams, DeFrain and Lee, 1984; Geggie, DeFarin, Hitchcock and Silberberg, 2000; Yuen and He, 2004).

The strengths in families help family members to face challenges in their daily life, particularly during times of adversities. Related

literature has consistently showed that several aspects of family strength (such as demonstration of unconditional love, cohesion, encouragement of individuality, and adequate social support) may help children to acquire a sense of social competence, learn appropriate social skills, respond to rules, as well as limit and control their anger and aggression (Schoenrock, Bell, Sun and Avery, 1999; Zou *et al*., 2002; Bates, Luster and Vandenbelt, 2003). Meanwhile, Lau and Kwok (2003) found three domains of family environment (namely relationship, personal growth, and system maintenance) as significantly correlated with children's social, appearance, and academic.

Several other studies also found that greater involvement in family routines among members might lead to greater family strength and more cooperative behaviour among urban African-American pre-schoolers (Keltner, 1990; Koblinsky, Kuvalanka and Randolph, 2006) and greater social competence and self-regulation among rural African-American school-age children (Brody and Flor, 1997; Brody, Flor and Gibson, 1999). Similarly, family routines such as having dinner together, reading stories to children, and visiting family relatives are consistent with African-American traditions involving the extended family (Billingsley, 1992). Family routines may foster secure, predictable, and organized home environments, enable mothers to exert positive control over their pre-schoolers' time, activities, and friends/ acquaintances, and reduce the potential for negative social competence such as impulsive, aggressive behaviours that stem from boredom and idleness (Koblinsky *et al*., 2006).

METHODS

Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 200 (97 mothers and 103 fathers) parents who came from the second generation of Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) with a focal child aged between 7 and 12 years. The purpose of FELDA is to help the government to carry out rural land development schemes and improve the economic status as well as the living standard of the poor rural community. There are over 500,000 second generation settlers in Malaysia who are still actively involved in the development of FELDA schemes. A lot of aids and facilities have continually been provided to the second generation of settlers, and these include education, spiritual, and physical development. All the respondents were Malays and residing in FELDA schemes located in the states of Negeri Sembilan and Pahang. In this study, both Negeri Sembilan and Pahang were purposively selected as the location based on the following considerations: (i) the availability of the second generation FELDA families which would facilitate the selection of the respondents based on the discussion with the FELDA's Director of Community Development in Kuala Lumpur; (ii) the availability of the study resources (finance, manpower); and (iii) the accessibility of the respondents.

Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from FELDA's Director of Community Development at the headquarter in Kuala Lumpur, the Directors of FELDA in Negeri Sembilan and Wilayah Mempaga, Pahang. Only ten out of twenty one FELDA schemes given by FELDA's headquarter with a high probability of obtaining the respondents who fulfilled the criteria were selected using a simple random sampling. The ten selected schemes included four FELDA schemes in Negeri Sembilan (Felda Bukit Jalor, Felda Bukit Rokan, Felda Pasir Besar, and Felda Sg. Kelamah) and six FELDA schemes in Pahang (Felda Bukit Kepayang, Felda Bukit Mendi, Felda Lurah Bilut, Felda Bukit Puchong, Felda Mayam, and Felda Cemomoi).

The respondents were identified using a simple random sampling and face-to-face interviews were conducted by the researchers and trained assistants at their homes. This method permits the collection of the most extensive data on each person questioned (Tan, 2004; Brenner, Brown and Canter, 1985). The respondents' permissions to participate were sought prior to the interviews using structured questionnaires. The respondents were given a

token of appreciation upon the completion of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Firstly, a descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a clearer picture of the data distribution. Secondly, the factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed to define the underlying dimension of family strengths and this was then used in the subsequent analysis. Thirdly, the magnitude and strength of the relationsip of the studied variables were quantitatively measured using Pearson product-moment correlations. Finally, the multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the best set of predictors of the children's social competence.

Measurements

All the measurements used in this study were either translated from English into or designed in Bahasa Malaysia. The back-to-back translation was used for this purpose. Moreover, Bahasa Malaysia is the native language for the Malaysian Malays and also the national language of Malaysia.

Family background

Information of the respondents' family background was obtained by asking them to report on their age, the educational level, the number of children, and their family monthly income.

Family strength

The family strength was assessed using an adapted version of the Australian Inventory of Family Strengths (AIFS) (Geggie *et al*., 2000). For the purpose of this study, the 85-item AIFS was reduced to 79 items to better suit the Malaysian context. The six items were deleted from the original scale due to the issues of contextual and cultural relevance. This study also edited three items in order to make them more appropriate for the participants. Based on the factor analysis using the varimax rotation procedure, three factors emerged and these explained 38.34% of the variance and labelled as shared values, togetherness, and respectful communication. It is important to note that four items with a factor loading less than .30 were eliminated from the scale. Therefore, only 75 items were included in the subsequent analysis. The overall family strength had an internal consistency of α =.89. The subscale of shared values had 27 items, and were used to measure whether family members had a sense of greater good or power in life, spirituality or set of values and beliefs that give strength, perspective, purpose, and guidelines for living, and provides the family with a sense of belonging or togetherness (e.g. "In our family, we believe love is powerful force that keeps us together"), and with an internal consistency of α =.96. The sub-scale of togetherness had 27 items which measured to the 'invisible glue' that bound the family and gave the family members a sense of belonging (e.g. "In our family, a crisis makes us stick closer together"), and showed an internal consistency of α =.94. The sub-scale of respectful communication comprising of 21 items described family members as open and honest with one another, and were willing to listen to other member's views (e.g. "In our family, we like talking openly with each other"), and showed an internal consistency of α =.90. The scale responses were found to range from 1=definitely agree to 6=definitely disagree. All the items in the scale were reversed score to ensure higher scores indicated higher levels of family strength.

Children's social competence

The 12-item Social Competence Scale (SCS) (Corrigan, 2002) was used to measure the children's social competence. The SCS assesses a child's pro-social and emotional skills and it was completed by the parents. Each item on the scale states a behaviour that a child may display in a social setting. Some examples of the relevant statements include: 'Can give suggestions and opinions without being bossy' and 'Can calm down when excited or all wound up'. The responses were then coded on a five-

point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (Not at all) to 4 (Very Well). The total of the SCS score was obtained by adding the scores for all the items and this was found to range from 0 to 48. A higher score showed a higher perception of the children's social competence. Dennis, Brotman, Huang and Gouley (2007) reported that the SCS had a good internal consistency (alpha coefficient = 0.87), while the test-retest reliability showed correlations of .52 and .69. The concurrent and construct validity of the scale was also well established (Dennis *et al.*, 2007). For this study, the Cronbach's alpha of the SCS was found to be .80.

RESULTS

Family Background

As shown in Table 1, the respondents' average age was 36.6 years old indicating that in overall, the respondents were in the middle adulthood stage. As for the level of education, the results revealed that the respondents had moderate educational qualifications, whereby the majority (89.5%) of the respondents obtained at least some secondary qualifications. The average level of education was 10.2 (SD=1.9), and this indicated that on average, the respondents had completed their education until Form Three. A further analysis indicated that the respondents have been married for about 13 years on average. Generally, the respondents in this study had a moderate family income per month (Mean = RM932.4). Approximately 36.5% of the respondents earned a family monthly income which was lower than the Poverty Line Income (PLI) for that rural area, i.e. RM657 (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010). They seemed to have a considerably large number of children (Mean=3.7, SD=3.7) which exceeded the average size of the Malaysian family of 2.76 (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010).

Family Strengths and Children's Social Competence

Both the means and standard deviation of the family strengths and the children's social competence are shown in Table 1. Family strength was measured on the 6-point Likert-type scales with higher scores representing higher levels of family strength. The midpoint of the scale is 3. The respondents' mean score on the AIFS was 5.06, indicating that the respondents (on average) rated their family strength as high level. A similar pattern was also detected for all the sub-scales of family strength, where the average shared values, togetherness, and respectful communication were 5.24, 4.84, and 5.13, respectively. The children's score on the SCS was 2.22 with a midpoint of 2, indicating that children had a high level of social competence.

TABLE 1
Means and standard deviations of measures

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Respondents' age	36.6	5.7
Years of education	10.2	1.9
Duration of marriage	13.2	4.4
Family monthly income	932.4	604.0
Number of children	3.7	1.4
Total family strengths	5.06	.36
Shared values	5.24	.40
Togetherness	4.84	.46
Respectful communication	5.13	.41
Children's social competence	2.22	.49

The Relationships between Family Background, Family Strengths and Children's Social Competence

The correlation matrix for all the variables included in this study is presented in Table 2. The findings revealed that none of the family background variables was significantly correlated with the children's social competence. Meanwhile, the total family strength was positively correlated with the children's social competence ($r = .24$, $p < .01$). As for the sub-scales of the family strength, only two of three sub-scales were found to significantly correlate with the children's social competence, and these were togetherness ($r = .26$, $p < .01$), and respectful communication ($r = .27$, $p < .01$).

Predictors of the Children's Social Competence

To determine the factors that best predict the social competence of children, two regression models were conducted. In the first model, the family background variables were included, while the total family strength was added in the second model. In this way, the variance shown by both groups of variables could be compared. The results are summarized in Table 3. Model 1 for children's social competence (which accounted for 4%) did not reach significance, $F(4,195) = 2.12$, $p = .08$. These findings showed that all family background variables did not contribute significantly and uniquely to the children's social competence. Meanwhile in Model 2, the variance shown in terms of the children's social competence increased when the total family strength was added, and the model became significant with $F(5,194) = 3.91$, $p = .002$, accounting for an additional 9% of the variance. The results illustrated that the children from families with higher levels of family strength tended to demonstrate greater social competence.

DISCUSSION

On the contrary to expectation, all the family background variables (parental age, parental education, number of children, family monthly income) were found to have no significant relationships with the children's social competence. The results of this study are in agreement with the findings of Anjli Panalal (2004), who found that there was no relationship between maternal education and age with children's social competence. The findings are also inconsistent with other previous research (e.g. Brody *et al*., 1996; Larsson and Frisk, 1999; Anjli Panalal, 2004; Mistry *et al*., 2004) which revealed that family background had influence on the level of children's social competence.

As expected, higher levels of family strength was associated with higher levels of children's social competence. This finding lends a support

TABLE 2
Correlations among measures

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Respondents' Age	-							
2. Number of years of education	.04	-						
3. Family monthly income	.18*	.34**	-					
4. No. of children	.30**	-.10	.13	-				
5. Total family strength	-.03	.03	.06	.15*	-			
6. Shared values	-.03	-.01	.03	.11	.86**	-		
7. Togetherness	-.01	-.07	.07	.13	.86**	.57**	-	
8. Respectful communication	-.05	.01	.05	.15*	.84**	.68**	.55**	-
9. Social competence	.11	.11	.14	.13	.24**	.10	.26**	.27**

*p <.05, **p<.01

TABLE 3
Predictors of children's social competence

Predictor Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	β	Beta	p	β	Beta	p
Respondents' age	.059	.056	.449	.090	.086	.227
Respondents' education	.295	.093	.217	.225	.071	.324
Number of children	.457	.110	.143	.223	.053	.460
Family monthly income	.001	.081	.290	.067	.067	.358
			R^2 =.04, F = 2.12			
Total family strength				.049	.228	.001**
						R^2 =.15, F = 4.74**

*p <.05, **p<.01

to the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and is congruent with the other studies (e.g. Schoenrock *et al*., 1999; Bates *et al*., 2003) which found that healthy family environment played a central role in the development of children's social competence. As for the dimensions of family strength, togetherness was found to be significantly correlated with children's social competence. This particular outcome is consistent with the previous studies which showed that the relationship between family connectedness and support with children's social competence (Schoenrock *et al*., 1999; Lau and Kwok, 2003).

The present study also revealed that respectful communication was significantly associated with social competence. This result is consistent with the previous studies which found that positive communication was an important factor in increasing social competence, particularly among children (Coughlin and Vuchinich, 1996; Franco and Levitt, 1998; Smith, Prinz, Dumas and Laughlin, 2001). The communication between parents and children, in the effort to resolve problems and issues, will promote children's problem-solving abilities and social competence (Coughlin and Vuchinich, 1996).

Some limitations of the present study should also be noted. First, since the findings of the present study were based only on Malay families and the data were gathered only from the families with at least one child (between the age of 7 to 12 years) residing in FELDA schemes in the states of Negeri Sembilan and Pahang, the generalizability of these findings is therefore limited to the sample assessed. The study needs to be replicated with a more heterogeneous population such as families of various ethnic groups, structures, and social classes, to determine whether the findings hold true in the contexts with different cultural values, lifestyles, occupational variations, and opportunities. Second, the study assessed family strengths only from the parents' perspective. It would be interesting to compare the parents and children's perceptions on the family strength, and these might differ based on the different perspectives. Finally, due to the cross-sectional nature of the data retrieved, the conclusions about the direction of effects regarding the relation between family background and family strengths with children's social competence cannot be done. It would certainly be interesting to include more time points over longer period of time.

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The Relationship between Parental Belief on Filial Piety and Child Psychosocial Adjustment among Malay Families

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between parental belief on filial piety and child psychosocial adjustment among Malay families. The study sample comprised 108 mother-child dyads of Malay families from the central zone of Peninsular Malaysia. Data were collected using structured questionnaires. Parental belief was measured using Parental Belief Scale, while child psychosocial adjustment was measured using Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Results showed that children whose parents believed in filial piety had significantly lower levels of total difficulties in behavioural, emotional symptoms, conduct problem, and hyperactivity or inattention. Findings implied that filial piety could be used as a positive measure of behavioural and emotional control of a child. Therefore, it is important for parents to nurture their children about filial piety expectations so as to provide them with moral education associated with positive psychosocial adjustment.

Keywords: Child, families, filial piety, Malay, parental belief, psychosocial adjustment

INTRODUCTION

Psychosocial adjustment is taken as a form of positive development of the self through the integration of personal and other people's perceptions of oneself. The multifaceted awareness of oneself, which results from relationships with parents and peers, affects children's psychological well-being (Bracken, 1996; Steinberg and Morris, 2001). Some children can regulate different perceptions of themselves effectively while others may not be able to form a coherent identity (National Institute of Child and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network [NICHD ECCRN], 2004). Meanwhile, children who failed to negotiate various images of themselves might have difficulties in their psychosocial adjustment in terms of emotions, conduct, attention or focus, peer relationship, and prosocial behaviour (Brugman, Reijneveld and Verhulst, 2001). Ultimately, problematic psychosocial adjustment early in life may have harmful consequences in adulthood (Buchanan, Flouri and Brinke, 2002).

Adjustment problems in the form of age-inappropriate, abnormal or unhealthy behaviour may also severely interfere with the everyday functioning of the child (Brugman, Reinjneveld and Verhulst, 2001; Wallander, Thompson and Alriksson-Schmidt, 2003, pp. 141-158). Positive adjustment and normative functioning of children are developed through numerous relationships but most importantly through the ties between children and their parents.

Parents play an important role in socializing their children towards adopting any particular

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values. Parental belief or schemata refers to parents' views of developing child that affect the way they respond to the child (Gamble, Ramakumar and Diaz, 2007). Belief may have more than one goal and it is usually expressed through behaviour (McGillicuddy-De Lisi and Sigel, 2002). Variability in parental belief on child development, attitudes towards childrearing, and enforcement of certain behaviours in the daily interaction between parents and their children have lasting effects on the social functioning of the children (Parke, 2002, pp. 27-73; NICHD ECCRN, 2004). Research on parental beliefs have emphasized its effects on individuals' relationship development (Scott and Hill, 2001), important life outcomes (Katz and Windecker-Nelson, 2004), parents' childrearing, behaviour, and children's socio-emotional competence (Dunsmore and Karn, 2001).

How a child grows and develops is dictated and influenced by his/her parental belief (McGillicuddy-De Lisi and Sigel, 2002). Filial piety is one of the concepts in parental belief. As for the family-child relation, the concept of filial piety particularly emphasizes on children's love and respect for their parents. Obligation, sacrifice repayment, and respect are the traditional meanings of filial piety (Tsai, 1999). It has remained and developed among Asian societies which give guidance to the social behaviours (Chen, Bond and Tang, 2007).

Kim (2003) who studied the importance of parental belief in filial piety among Korean families, found that filial piety based on child-rearing tended to emphasize on teaching and parent role-modelling in order to prevent children from wrong-doing. In addition, Chao (2000), in her comparative study on parenting among immigrant Chinese and European American families, found that Chinese mothers endorsed the socialization goals for filial piety and structural parental involvement practice in comparison with European American mothers. These studies indicated that Asian parents were more likely to have parent-centred socialization goals.

Filial piety in the Asian culture focuses on respect and care for the elders in the family and these help to maintain family order by promoting responsibility, interdependence, sacrifice, and family harmony (Bengtson and Putney, 2000). The lifelong loyalty to one's parents explains why the quality of relationship between parents and adult children remains positive in East Asian samples, even if there are imbalances in the exchange of support over the life course (Trommsdorff, 2006, pp. 143-184). Asian culture remains more traditional and familistic than most Western industrialized societies (Kojima, 2000). As a case in point, despite shifts in values (due to modernity), filial piety is sustained within the Chinese societies through education (Cheung and Kwan, 2008). This is in contrast with the Western culture which places emphasis on independence, self-fulfilment and self-reliance (Sung, 2000), as well as reciprocity in the form of a balanced exchange within a parent-child relationship (Trommsdorff, 2006, pp.143-184). Therefore, filial piety can be seen as a form of lifelong mutual dependence (Schwarz, Trommsdoff and Chakkarath, 2004) and parenting continues to be one of the most enduring forms of commitment and investment in a parent-child relationship.

What the parents believe about the process of development in general and the capabilities of their own children in particular are likely to be a major influence on parental practice (McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). This hypothesis was based on the Personal Construct Theory developed by Kelly (1955). According to the theory, each individual formulates personal constructs through which the world is viewed and interpreted. These constructs are defined as templates that fit over the realities composed by individuals. Personal constructs are used to predict events and assess accuracy of such predictors after events have occurred. Thus, one constructs guide behaviour when interacting with others.

Parents' belief about children can be viewed as a means through which events are categorized and the parent's own behaviour is guided just as Kelly's personal constructs are seen as the directing source of behaviours. Such belief about children is constructed on the basis of

experience with one's own child, as well as on the basis of the parent's own experiences as a child in a family (McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). This belief system provides a framework for assimilating new information or knowledge. The parent's belief system is built from information obtained in the course of interactions with children and it systematizes the grouping of constructs so as to minimize psychological inconsistencies between these cognitive elements.

Every parent has their own belief on what competent parenting consist of. Parenting is a dynamic adaptation process which develops in accordance to the developing needs of the child. The problem is, not all parents may understand how imperative it is to adjust their belief to the development of the child. Some parents may feel that their belief should be consistent and it is not necessary to change as the child develops. Other parents may understand the importance of adjustment; however, they do not adjust their parenting in a manner that promotes healthy parent-child relationships and child development. As a result, the child is being negatively affected in their psychosocial adjustment.

In sum, theory and research have indicated that every parental belief leads to parental behaviour, which then yields a particular child outcome. The present study therefore examined the relationship between parental belief on filial piety and child's psychosocial adjustment among Malay families, in addition to describing the levels of both variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative survey methodology to gather information on the relationship between parental belief and child psychosocial adjustment. A set of standardized, bilingual survey questionnaire was administered during the data collection process, in which questions focusing on the respondents' demographical characteristics and standardized instruments were included.

Participants

The participants for this study were drawn from a larger sample that took part in a study of parenting behaviour and child adjustment in two culturally divergent family environments (the intercultural and the monocultural family). Only participants who are from the monocultural family were included in the present analyses.

A total of 108 Malay mother-child dyads were recruited for the study. All families involved in this study resided in the central zone of Peninsular Malaysia. The respondents were identified using a purposive sampling, drawn from the Department of National Unity and Integration (JPN). The sampling frame from the JPN was built on the registration records of kindergartens (TASKA) run by the state department. The unit of analysis for the study was mother-child dyad, therefore only mothers and the targeted children, aged 8-19 years old, were recruited for the study.

Procedure

Malay and English languages are the major mediums of communication among the different ethnic groups in Malaysia. Thus, a set of standardized Malay-English bi-language survey question was used to gather information from the respondents. The questionnaire was aimed at collecting information on parental belief and child psychosocial adjustment as well as demographic information. Anonymous questionnaires were used and consent forms provided a brief description of the study, and emphasised the confidentiality of participants' responses and the uses of the data. Before administering the questionnaire, participants were informed about the limits to confidentiality and the related procedures.

In most instances, interviewers worked in pairs and thus enabled the mother and child to be interviewed separately so as to allow for confidentiality and maximise the comfort of the participants. The questionnaires were either self-administered or administered by the interviewers. If it was administered, the interviewers asked questions based on the

standardized questionnaire, indicated the response options to the questions, and recorded the participant's answer. The administration method was depended on the educational background of the participants. Most mothers preferred to be interviewed by the interviewers, especially those from working-class families and those living in the rural areas. Generally, children aged older than 12 were offered self-administration, where at least one of the interviewers was present throughout the administration to monitor and respond to any questions and concerns. Children younger than 12 year old or for those who were not confident in self-administration of the questionnaire, the interviewer read the questions aloud to them and recorded their responses on the survey form. The questionnaires, data collection procedures, informed consent forms, and instructions were reviewed by the Ethics Committee of the University of Oxford.

Measures

Dependent variable

Children's psychosocial adjustment

The 25-item Malay version of Goodman's Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) was used to measure 5 types of behavioural attributes among children/ adolescents: 1) The *prosocial subscale* (5 items) focused on the positive (strength) aspects of behaviour ($\alpha = 0.58$); 2) The *emotional symptoms subscale* (5 items) measured emotional problems among the children/adolescents ($\alpha = 0.74$); 3) The *conduct problems subscale* (5 items) measured behaviour such as anger, fighting, cheating, and stealing ($\alpha = 0.66$); 4) The *hyperactivity subscale* (5 items) focused on child/adolescent restlessness, fidgetiness, and distraction ($\alpha = 0.43$) and 5) The *peer relationship problems subscale* (5 items), assessed child/ adolescent relationship with peers ($\alpha = 0.55$).

Subscale scores were computed by summing scores on relevant items (after recording reversed items; ranged 0-10). Based on Goodman's recommendation for pro-social subscale, scores higher than the cut-off point of 5 reflect a normal level of behaviour, whereas scores higher than the cut-off points for the other four subscales reflect borderline or abnormal behaviour (cut-off points: *Emotional symptoms* = 3; *Conduct problem* = 2; *Hyperactivity* = 5; *Peer problem* = 2). A total difficulty score was also calculated by summing the scores of the emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, and peer relationship problems subscales. A higher total score for difficult behaviour indicates higher levels of problem in psychosocial adjustment. An adequate Cronbach alpha coefficient was recorded for the sample ($\alpha = 0.67$).

Independent variable

Parental beliefs

An 8-item scale, which aimed to measure the dimension of filial piety of parental beliefs in an Asian culture, was developed based on the parental belief and family culture of Malays and Chinese families (Chao, 1995; Ho, 1994; Kling, 1995; Chao, 2000; Chao and Tseng, 2002). In addition, some items for the scale were adapted and modified from the existing scales to capture the child-rearing belief among Asian parents (Chao, 2000). In more specific, this scale was designed to assess perspectives emphasizing patriarchy and children's filial behaviour that includes family honour and respect, caring for parents, good etiquette and behaviour, as well as succeeding in school (i.e. how important it is for a child to grow up: 'honouring the family'; 'being obedient'; 'respecting their elders'). Mother and child were asked to indicate their opinion and expectations for child's behaviour based on a 4-point Likert scale (1= 'Not at all desired/Strongly disagree' to 4= 'Strongly desired/Strongly agree'). Higher total score indicates stronger emphasis of parental belief on filial behaviour among children. The Cronbach alpha value for the scale is 0.76.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Of the 108 children studied, there were equal numbers of boys and girls with ages ranged from 8 to 19 years (Mean = 11.95). Most (61.1%) of the children were still in their middle childhood, and aged between eight to twelve years, while the rest (38.9%) were in their adolescence. About half of the children were the eldest child in the family (Table 1). The mean age of the mothers was 38 years. About two-third of the mothers had achieved at least upper secondary education qualification (66.1%) and were not working (63.0%) during the time of this study.

Child's Psychosocial Adjustment

Goodman (1997) noted that approximately 20% of a community sample could be expected to score in the abnormal or borderline band, with the remaining 80% scores in the normal

TABLE 1
Distribution of respondents' background (N = 108)

Variables	N (%)
Child's gender	
Male	54 (50)
Female	54 (50)
Standard deviation = 0.50	
Child's age (years)	
8-12	66 (61.1)
13-14	15 (13.9)
15-19	27 (25.0)
Mean = 11.95 (years)	
Standard deviation = 3.25	
Eldest child in the family	
Yes	51 (47.2)
No	57 (52.8)
Standard deviation = 0.50	
Mother's age	
< 34	26 (24.1)
35-43	62 (57.4)
> 44	20 (18.5)
Mean = 38.41 (years)	
Standard deviation = 5.56	
Mother's education	
Primary school (year 1-6)	15 (13.9)
Lower secondary (Remove-Form 1-3)	14 (13.0)
Higher secondary (Form 4-5, GCE O level)	49 (45.4)
Vocational/technique (Form 4-5)	2 (1.8)
After secondary (Form 6, GCE A level)	13 (12.0)
Higher education (Polytechnique, TeachersTraining College/University)	14 (13.0)
Missing	1(0.9)
Mother's occupational status	
Working	40 (37.0)
Not working	68 (63.0)

band. Based on the parents' report, 81.5% of the children were considered as normal for the overall psychosocial adjustment, while 18.5% reached borderline/abnormal levels in the SDQ total difficulties score. For the individual subscales, the highest percentage of borderline or abnormal level was reported in their child's symptom of peer relationship problems (30.6%), and this was followed by a lack of pro-social behaviour (20.4%), conduct problems (19.4%), hyperactivity (16.7%), and emotional symptoms (14.8%).

As shown in Table 3, parents tend to report higher scores for filial piety (Mean= 29.70, SD = 2.33), as compared to their children (Mean=28.23, SD = 3.70). Results from the comparative analysis also showed that there were significant score differences between the parent's and child's perceptions on the importance of filial piety in parental belief. This finding suggested that Malay parents tend to perceive familial obligation and respecting elders as more important elements in child's socialization than their children.

Relationship between Parental Belief and Child's Psychosocial Adjustment

Correlational analyses were conducted to assess the relationship between both parent- and child-reported parental belief and, child's psychosocial adjustment. The results showed significant negative relationships between child self-reported parental belief on filial piety with child's overall difficulties ($r = -.23$, $p < .05$), conduct problems ($r = -.25$, $p < .05$), hyperactivity/inattention ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$), and emotional symptoms ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$) (see Table 4). Nevertheless, no significant relationship was detected for peer relationship problems and pro-social behaviour. These findings demonstrated that children who had reported higher levels of parental emphasis on filial piety were more likely to experience lower levels of

TABLE 2
Parents' report on child's psychosocial adjustment (N = 108)

Children's Behaviour	N (%)
Emotional symptoms	
Normal (Score 0-5)	92 (85.2)
Borderline/Abnormal (Score 6-10)	16 (14.8)
Conduct problems	
Normal (Score 0-3)	87 (80.6)
Borderline/Abnormal (Score 4-10)	21 (19.4)
Hyperactivity/Inattention	
Normal (Score 0-5)	90 (83.3)
Borderline/Abnormal (Score 6-10)	18 (16.7)
Peer relationship problems	
Normal (Score 0-3)	75 (69.4)
Borderline/Abnormal (Score 4-10)	33 (30.6)
Pro social behaviour	
Normal (Score 6-10)	86 (79.6)
Borderline/Abnormal (Score 0-5)	22 (20.4)
Total difficulties	
Normal (Score 0-15)	88 (81.5)
Borderline/Abnormal (Score 16-40)	20 (18.5)

TABLE 3
Parent's and child's reports on parental belief (N = 108)

Filial Piety	Mean	SD
Parent's report	29.70	2.33
Child's report	28.23	3.70
	t-value (Df)	3.80 (107)***

Note: SD: Standard deviation; Df=Degree of Freedom; ***p<.001

TABLE 4
Correlations between parental belief on filial piety and child self-report on psychosocial adjustment (N = 108)

	Parent's Report on Filial Piety	Child's Report on Filial Piety
Emotional symptoms	- 0.07	- 0.20*
Conduct problems	0.07	- 0.25*
Hyperactivity/Inattention	0.03	-.0.20*
Peer relationship problems	0.15	0.03
Pro social behaviour	- 0.14	0.05
Total difficulties score	0.04	- 0.23*

Note: *p < 0.05

overall psychological difficulties, less conduct problems, and lower levels of hyperactivity and emotional symptoms. However, the study did not detect any significant relationship between parent-reported parental belief and child's psychosocial adjustment.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between parental belief and psychosocial adjustment among Malay families. This study showed that only child-reported parental belief on filial piety had a significant relationship with child's overall difficulties, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, and emotional symptoms, while parent-reported parental belief was found to have no significant relationship with child's psychosocial adjustment. Based on the results, it can be concluded that parents are not the only ones who instil filial piety in their children (Yeh and Bedford, 2004). Nearly all aspects of the society that a child comes into contact with may play a role in emphasizing the values of filial piety. For example, television programmes, advertisement, relatives, friends, and teachers may contribute to socialize children with the norms of filial piety (Yeh and Bedford, 2004). In other words, parents are not the only source of filial values.

Filial behaviours, such as respect to and caring for parents, are associated with lower levels of children's overall emotional and behavioural difficulties. The study showed that filial piety is the root of good conduct and has significant association with the development of proper conduct (Ho, 1994). The finding also provided support to the notion about the importance of filial piety as a core principle in a family system (Chan and Lim, 2004). This study has shown that children, who believe in respect and caring to their parents, tend to experience lower levels of overall difficulties, hyperactivity and conduct problems and emotional symptoms.

Similarly, Yeh and Bedford (2004) demonstrated that greater filial belief did correspond to a reduced incidence of inappropriate behaviour.

In this study, filial piety is perceived as an influential parental belief among Malay families. Previous studies also indicated that Malays in Singapore (Kau and Yang, 1991) and in Malaysia (Krishnan, 2004) tend to believe in filial piety. Filial piety in Asia is manifested in many forms of respectful attitudes and behaviours towards the elderly, such as "kissing their hands, bowing, and with hands joined in front of the face", specifically in the Malay and Indian cultures (Ingersoll-Dayton and Saengtienchai, 2009, pp. 305-306). In addition, although Asian cultures value independence, they place more value on interdependence with others (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Moreover, Asian cultures strongly believe in the family unit and are depending on one another as a family (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) and as such, filial piety cuts across generations of parent-child relationships since children can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to their parents, except by investing in the next generation (Trommsdorff, 2006, pp. 143-184). These evidences show that the concept of filial piety is still an important socialization goal among today's parents who often live a less traditional lifestyle.

These results support the Theory of Personal Construct which recognizes the relationship between parental belief and child's psychosocial adjustment. Parents will hold a favourable attitude towards a given behaviour if they believe that performing the behaviour will lead to mostly positive outcomes in their children. More importantly, it can be seen that parents play an important role in regulating the child's psychosocial outcome. The implication of this study is that parental emphasis on filial piety may be considered as an effective and positive measure of behavioural and emotional control of a child. Therefore, it is important for parents to nurture their children about filial piety belief and expectations, so as to provide them with moral education associated with positive psychosocial adjustment.

The present study attempted to determine the relationship between parental belief on filial piety and child psychosocial adjustment among Malay families. However, there are several limitations which should be highlighted and taken into consideration. First, this study did not focus on parental belief among fathers. Future research should examine the role of fathers in parental belief. This is because fathers serve important functions as they are sensitive, supportive, and gently challenging companions for the child in exploration beyond the family (Marsiglio, Amato, Day and Lamb, 2000) and make a unique contribution to their children's development (NICHD ECCRN, 2004). This is an important limitation because there is little information available in the literature regarding parental belief among fathers.

Additionally, the sample for this study was derived from Malay families. The findings may not be generalized to all ethnic groups. Therefore, future studies should address this gap. Ethnicity and culture seem to play a huge role in parental belief (Cote and Bornstein, 2000). Parents interpret, respond, and shape child's behaviour in accordance with culturally prescribed expectations and socialization goals (Bornstein and Cheah, 2005). As such, the adaptive or maladaptive nature of social behaviours appear to depend on the meanings given to them within the cultural context (Cheah and Park, 2006).

The present work is also limited in the sense that there was no measurement at all levels that might be relevant for child's psychosocial adjustment. For example, the researchers have no sound measurement of individual temperamental of children or peer's relationship that may play a role in these processes. Future research may include these measurements when assessing its effect or the relationship on child's psychosocial adjustment. Finally, because of the correlational nature of the data gathered in the present study, the researchers were unable to make conclusions about the direction of effects. Future studies may include any other statistical analysis in order to find interesting findings regarding the effect of

parental belief on child psychosocial adjustment. Despite these limitations, the present study has helped to fill a gap in the understanding of how parental belief on filial piety is linked to child's psychosocial adjustment. Such findings provide crucial information which can be used to help parents in making proper adjustment in order to help the child develop more effectively.

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Observations of Sustainability Practices in Malaysian Research Universities: Highlighting Particular Strengths

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ABSTRACT

Although Sustainable Higher Education (SHE) is a very important issue in Malaysia, there have not been any comprehensive studies related to the current public Higher Education initiatives and efforts in sustainability. It is a relevant issue which merits a proper study to evaluate both the strengths and deficiencies of the local universities in terms of sustainability. Thus, to carry out this objective, an exploratory method was conducted by reviewing archival data, observation, interviews, as well as short and long conversations with both the staff and students of the four selected Malaysian research universities. The observation, interviews and conversations have validated the archival research. The results indicated that Malaysian research universities have already recognized the concept of SHE and embarked into the sustainability movement. However, there still remains a big gap towards achieving the idealistic goals. The findings would throw some insights into the existing policies and initiatives of SHE which could serve as a reference and preliminary study to improve the current situation.

Keywords: Sustainable Higher Education, Malaysian research universities, Sustainability initiatives

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is popularly described as "a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland, 1987, p. 19). Malaysia is actively engaged in international pacts concerning sustainable development efforts. She is one of the signatories of Agenda 21, as one of the most popular sustainability declaration. Agenda 21 very explicitly addresses the importance of Higher Education Institutions in its Chapter 36. Educational institutions have largely been instrumental in discovering the growing crisis facing the world (Shriberg, 2002a). Despite the activists' calls for higher education to lead society on a sustainable path, there is little systematic guidance available for campus sustainability advocates and scholars (Shriberg, 2002b). Therefore, it is necessary to figure out what is the existing situation of the Malaysian Universities in terms of sustainability and what are the rubrics of their Sustainable Higher Education (SHE). This paper attempted to grasp the important rubrics of SHE by performing a vast literature review on the initiatives of the western universities and the existing situation of the Malaysian Research Universities. With archival research and triangulation strategy, the authors have analyzed both students and

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university's authority feed backs and observation of the first author, in the span of 30 months. The sampling for the interviews made use of the saturation point theory.

DEFINITION AND LITERATURE OF SHE

Sustainable Higher Education has been defined differently, but addressed as the same concept by different scholars. For instance, Velazquez *et al.* (2006, p. 812) defines it as "a higher educational institution, as a whole or as a part, that addresses, involves, and promotes on a regional or a global level, the minimization of negative environmental, economic, societal, and health effects generated in the use of their resources in order to fulfil its functions of teaching, research, outreach and partnership, and stewardship in ways to help society make the transition to sustainable lifestyles." However, Svanström (2008) refers to it as a higher education of which the philosophy's hub of its mission, based on the definition of sustainability by Brundtland and acts upon local and global responsibilities to protect and enhance the health and well-being of both humans and eco-systems. Finally, Cole (2003, p. 30) defines it as "an institution which actively engages the knowledge of the university community to address the ecological and social challenges that we face now and in the future." To conclude the definition, it can be said that SHE considers the convenience of the people and university ecology both at present and in the future.

The Stockholm Declaration (UN, 1972) was the first to make reference to SHE, and has recognized the interdependency between the environment and humanity. However, based on the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF), the first official statement in campus sustainability was "Talloires Declaration," which was introduced in 1990. This declaration was signed in an international conference in Talloires, France. To support this agenda, United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) took the first pace on a worldwide basis to foster the SHE movement. For this purpose, UNESCO designed a framework entitled Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), which was officially launched in January 2005, and its related programme which must be completed by December 2014 (Velazquez *et al.*, 2006). Nevertheless, slow progress to all aspects of sustainability is worldwide spread, and inefficient progress in higher education has been assessed and found to yield more frustrating results (Jey, 2004).

Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar (2008) stated that as a result of the realization of the impacts of universities operations over the environment, SHE has become a global concern for university decision makers. Hutchison (2004) declared that there has not been any institution in the modern society which is better situated and more obliged to facilitate the process of transition to a sustainable path than higher education institution. In addition, the pressure from sustainability movements, government environmental protection agencies, university stakeholders, as well as the momentum of other forces, including students' activism and NGO's, have intensified this trend (Orr, 2004).

FIVE IMPORTANT RUBRICS OF SHE

Introduction and Origins

Analyzing 30 American and Canadian universities and institutions' sustainability initiatives in the span of two years led the authors to categorize the major rubrics of SHE based on their frequency. Thus, an archival research method was carried out in the time frame of 2006-2008 to achieve this goal. This archival research method was conducted using books, published and unpublished journal articles, conference proceedings, reports, university websites, theses, newsletters by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and the documents on Education for Sustainability Profile available at the website of Second Nature. In doing this part, the material was context analysed and categorised. The three rubrics of operation outreach and services, and administration have

already been recognized as sustainable rubrics of a company (Weenen, 2000). What makes universities distinctive from companies is their academia. Therefore, two more titles (courses and curricula and research and scholarship) in referring to University leaders for Sustainable Future guideline (ULSF, 1992) were selected to cover the university sustainable initiatives.

All the relevant initiatives driven from the context analysed were put into table form. The heads of the columns were the five rubrics. The selection criteria for categorizing were based on the meaning of the initiatives. It was observed that all fitted in those tables. A telephone interview was carried out by 11 international scholars to confirm and validate the categorization. The interviews were selected based on their relevant publications in refereed journal in the field of Sustainable development. Implying their comments, which were confirming the procedure and literature, caused some wording change and categorizing the initiatives into five rubrics. The five rubrics are: 1) Sustainability in Policy, Planning, and Administration, 2) Courses and Curricula, 3) Research and Scholarship, 4) University's Operation, and 5) Outreach and Services.

Sustainability in policy, planning and administration

This topic investigates the extent to which formal written statements of an educational institute contain suitability issues (ULSF, 1992). It contains institutional missions, planning of an organization and its structure. It embeds how universities have articulated sustainability in their vision, mission down to their policies. Although there are criticisms that universities' mission and vision may have been used for a long time in universities, which are not very easy to be amended, taking them as rubrics will encourage them to change and show their tendency to sustainability. Sydney University of Technology is an example where its mains policies orbit over sustainable development to undertake and promote scholarly jobs towards sustainability (Weenen, 2000).

Courses and Curricula

This topic considers the number of courses, which are being taught at an institute or a university, and embeds sustainability of the syllabus and different programmes, such as Masters of Sustainable Development, which teaches sustainability-related issues. An example is East Arkansas Community College - Forrest City in USA which offers three programs in Renewable Energy Technology in the fall semester of 2009 (EEAC, 2009).

Research and scholarship

The topic concerning SHE includes research and scholarship. In this field, the number of studies, which have fulfilled sustainability and the number of scholarships or fellowships in a limited period of time, were also taken into account as indicators for sustainability efforts. An example of this rubric is University of Montana which received a $300,000 grant in July 2009 from the National Science Foundation to research on sustainable ethanol production (NWM, 2009).

University's operation

This topic indicates the different practical actions which are being fulfilled in the campus territory. These include: 1) source reduction of toxic material, 2) source reduction of radioactive wave, 3) sustainable landscape, biodiversity, lawn minimization, native plants, protecting against invasive plants, 4) pesticide control and pest management, 5) sustainable dining and organic food, 6) sustainable transportation, 7) waste reduction scheme, 8) recycling of solid waste management, 9) sustainable purchasing, 10) sustainable construction and renovation, 11) sustainable energy or energy efficient management, 12) renewable energy (solar energy), 13) indoor air quality, 14) CO_2 reduction and reducing air pollution, 15) conservation of culture and heritage, 16) egonomics, 17) equity and poverty, 18) handicapped people's facilities, 19) occupational health and safety, and 20) global climate. Several scholars, such

as Holden *et al.* (2008), Ramos *et al.* (2008), Wright (2007), Armijo de Vega (2008), and Weenen (2000), as well as some institutions like the ULSF, and Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), have addressed parts of these issues. An example of this rubric is Colorado State University in USA which has installed USD 35000 photovoltaic cells to operate in a more sustainable style and reduce greenhouse gas emission (CSU, 2009).

Outreach and services

This topic addresses the interaction of sustainability issues between an educational organization and its surrounding neighbourhood. In other words, how a university or a college can increase the awareness of non-academic people or help them to move forward to the goals of sustainability much faster. Some examples of these are participating programmes, distance learning, collaboration with industry, organizing workshops, as well as programmes and seminars. An example of this rubric is University System of Ohio in USA which has launched collaboration with Ohio Environmental Council to link education and training with sustainable industry jobs (USO, 2009).

MALAYSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Malaysia has 20 public universities, 24 polytechnics, 37 community colleges and other private and foreign university branches (MOHE, 2008). Four of these universities have been accorded the status of Research University. This entitles the four selected universities to receive higher research grants than other public universities. The four universities are University Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) (ibid).

STUDY METHODS

This study employed several methods. In the first phase, initiatives and documents from 30 western universities and institutions were perused and analyzed to get the major rubrics of SHE (as explained in the previous sub-section). The second phase employed archival study method, involving documents, newspapers, articles and websites, to investigate different initiatives, and sustainable efforts in the four selected Malaysian universities.

The two other study methods validated the findings, namely observation research and interviews. In particular, the observation research was carried out for 30 months, beginning November 2006 to May 2009. The types of recording included taking notes and photographs. Meanwhile, the interviews consisted of two parts. Firstly, 10 semi-structured open-ended, face-to-face, and self-administration interviews were carried out. The interviews involved members of top-level university management, such as vice-chancellors and their deputies, and very experienced lecturers and the staff who are in-charge of matters pertaining to sustainability or campus management. The second part involved short and long conversations with students and academicians. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim and were analyzed. The results of the analysis were sent to the interviewees to check the accuracy of the interpretation. The second part was performing short and long conversations. These conversations were carried out by conversing with 19 university lecturers and 38 post-graduate students. The saturation point theory was used in sampling the study. The fact that the interview and observation form in the qualitative part, the issue of sampling is therefore not very significant and thus, it is better to employ saturation method (Kumar, 2005). This means that in a qualitative research, it is not necessary to determine the extent of the diversity, while the qualitative aspect only supports the archival research.

SUSTAINABILITY IN POLICY, PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

University Malaya (UM)

University Malaya, the oldest university in Malaysia, was established in April 1949; it has a total of 26,963 students and 1,918 academic

staff (UM, 2008). Its mission and vision are consecutively "to advance knowledge and learning through quality research and education for the nation and for humanity, and be an internationally renowned institution of higher learning in research, innovation, publication and teaching" (UM, 2009). In addition, UM has 10 core values, namely "integrity, respect, academic freedom, open mindedness, accountability, professionalism, meritocracy, teamwork, creativity, and social responsibility" (UM, 2009).

It appears that only the social aspect of sustainability has been considered in the statements of the university's mission and vision, and there is no mentioning of environmental and economic issues at all. Emphasizing on humanity in their vision is an indicator of this claim (ibid). However, one of the core values of the University of Malaya is social responsibility, whereas its fourth clause is respect to environment and sustainability (ibid). UM has also included Integrated Approaches to Sustainable Development Practice as one of its policies.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia is the national university which was formally established in 1970 and comprised 22,605 students and 1,582 academic staff (UKM, 2009).

Its vision is "to be a leading university that pioneers innovation in the construction of knowledge to achieve the aspiration of producing a society imbued with dynamic, learned, and civic leadership" (UKM, 2008).

Its mission is "to be a premier university which ennobles the Malay language and disseminate knowledge encapsulated in the national culture" (UKM, 2008).

The philosophy of this university is "a combination of faith in Allah and beneficial knowledge and of theory and practice as the basis for the advancement of knowledge, the education of society and the development of the University (UKM, 2008)."

In its mission and vision statements, the concept of sustainability is not directly recognizable, but it has referred to the social aspect. UKM has a sustainable programme, i.e. Sustainable UKM Charter, which aims to push its campus more towards sustainability (UKM, 2008).

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)

USM was established in 1969, with 20,842 students and 1,287 academic staff (USM, 2008). USM is the only university in Malaysia which was awarded the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX) status in 2009 (USM, 2009). The title of USM's programme as an Apex university is "Transforming Higher Education for a Sustainable Tomorrow", and this clearly shows the focus in the policy of USM towards SHE.

The mission of the university is "to lead and innovate in achieving excellence at the international level through advancing and disseminating knowledge and truth, instilling qualities which stress academic excellence and professionalism, developing holistic individuals, providing a strong commitment towards the society's aspiration, the country's vision, and universal aspirations"(USM, 2008).

The vision of its Institute of Post-Graduate studies is "to spearhead USM to become a world-class university by embarking on research programmes via strategic planning and implementation of its R & D mechanism" (USM, 2008). In the fourth mission of USM, social sustainability is tacitly cited.

"The University in a Garden" concept has also been embedded in the university design (USM, 2008b). This concept is very popular and well-known in USM, and even a book with the same name has been published in the university (Ibid). A Healthy Campus Programme, entitled "Kampus Sejahtera" an excellent innovation of USM, was initiated in 2001 (USM, 2008). "Kampus Sejahtera" is a programme which steers the whole USM community towards sustainability (Ibid). USM has a defined post

for sustainability matters, i.e. the Coordinator of Sustainability.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

UPM was formally established in 1972, and it has 29,352 students and 2,137 academic staff (UPM, 2008). Its vision is "to become a university of international repute" (UPM, 2008). Meanwhile, its vision is "to be a leading centre of learning and research, contributing not only towards the creation of wealth and nation building, but also towards universal human advancement and discovery of knowledge."

UPM has 10 strategic goals; to produce quality graduates who are competitive and resilient; to strengthen UPM students through mastery of soft skills; to transform UPM into a renowned research university; to strengthen UPM as a centre of excellence in agricultural education and research; to strengthen UPM network with industry and society; to manage human capital and work environment excellently; to enhance a quality management system based on good practice to; effectively generate and manage University financial resources; to make UPM fully connected based on Information and Communication Technology (ICT); and to strengthen UPM through its alumni.

The social aspect of sustainability is addressed in the mission of the university. Besides, in two goals of the eight goals of the university, the concept of environmental and economic sustainability has also been embedded. These are "to enhance a quality management system which is effective, efficient, transparent and client-friendly" and "to effectively generate and manage University's financial resources, and to establish UPM as the Centre of Professional Development Services and Continuing Education." The Faculty of Design and Architecture in UPM has a journal entitled "Alam Cipta: International Journal on Sustainable Tropical Design Research and Practice" which specifically focuses on the issues pertaining to sustainability.

SUSTAINABLE COURSES AND CURRICULA

University Malaya

According to a research report entitled, Planning for implementing Education for Sustainable Development, sustainability has not been neglected from the eyes of this university's researchers even before 2001 (Zeeda, 2001). UM has joined "Global Classroom", which aims at helping to create bold new leaders, by offering a Master's level course known as the "Integrated Approaches to Sustainable Development Practice" which links leading problem solvers with hundreds of graduate students all over the cosmos through new web technology (The Earth Institute, 2008).

Some programmes offered in UM contain sustainability issues. For instance, Bachelor of Environmental Engineering, Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management, Bachelor of Ecology and Biodiversity are among the undergraduate programmes which contain various topics on sustainability. In the Masters and PhD programmes, such as Master of Safety Health and Environment, Master of Environmental Technology, and Ph.D, different aspects of sustainability are the on-going programmes provided at UM. Centre for Research in Biotechnology for Agriculture (CEBAR) "is a physical and virtual centre which teaches sustainability issues and researches on it" (UM, 2008). Based on the results from the interviews carried out among UM post-graduate students, UM offers courses which include or touch on sustainability issues, such as ecology and people. However, there is a need for a comprehensive investigation to be carried out in order to figure out the real statistics to be done.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Institutes, such as the Faculty of Science and Technology as well as other centres at UKM, are teaching issues related to sustainability and researching on it. The School of Environmental and Natural Resource Sciences has programmes

which entail sustainability issues, and there is a specific research programme entitled, "Sustainable Use of Natural Resources" (UKM, 2008). Bachelor of Environmental Health, Bachelor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Bachelor of Environmental Science, Bachelor of Social science, Master of Engineering Environmental Studies, Master of Environmental Science, Master of Engineering and Environmental Geophysics, Master of Environmental Conservation, Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Conservation, Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Management are among the programmes which address sustainability issues.

Based on the name and syllabus of the courses and the results of interviews conducted as supporting method among post-graduate students, some courses have been found to contain the issues which can contribute to the different aspects of sustainability; however, their proportion is still very small. It was discovered that the university authorities were aware of these deficiencies. Some of them are working, based on the interviews explained in sub-section 5, to find a solution.

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)

Some faculties and institutes, such as the Centre for Education, Training and Research in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CETREE), are teaching issues related to sustainability (USM, 2009).

USM offers a variety of courses and programmes related to sustainability; these include Masters and PhD of Science in Coastal Ecosystem, Plankton Ecology and Productivity, Insect Biochemistry and Physiology, Master of Environmental Engineering, Master of Social Science in Gender Studies (USM, 2008). Even its Graduate School of Business offers a type of MBA entitled, Masters of Business Administration in Sustainable Development (USM, 2008). Based on the data gathered from the interviews with the post-graduate students, some courses contain issues relevant to sustainability, such as Environmental Impact Assessment, Air and Noise Pollution Control, and Sustainable Drainage System. However, no comprehensive study has been done to uncover the extent of integration of these issues in different courses (Meng, 2007).

Universiti Putra Malaysia

UPM teaches sustainability issues in different faculties and institutes. In particular, some faculties such as the Faculty of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences focus more on topics related to sustainability.

The Bachelor of Environmental Management, Bachelor of Science (Human Development and Management), Master of Environment, Master of Science in Environmental Management, PhD of Environmental Science, PhD of Environmental Management, PhD of Community Development are among the various programmes which are offered at UPM, and these incorporate issues relevant to sustainability (UPM, 2008). In terms of course and curricula, UPM in the first semester of 2007- 2008 offered 39 courses at the post-graduate level which included sustainability issues (UPM, 2007). Some examples of these courses were the Environment Pollution and Treatment Technology, Environmental Impact Assessment Techniques, Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plan, Trade, Finance and Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Theories and Issues.

SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

University Malaya

UM has established the Centre for Equatorial Sustainable Design (ESD) and the Centre for Research in Biotechnology for Agriculture (CEBAR) which aims at enabling researchers to better coordinate inter-disciplinary collaboration in the pursuit of sustainable research excellence, as well as offering distance learning programmes. Masters in Bio safety is a good evidence to prove the interest of this particular university in this trend (ibid).

The allocations of a variety of funds to students, such as different fellowships, scholarships and grants, are among the actions done to move the campus community towards more economic sustainability.

Such fund designated for the Post Doctoral research in Sustainability ranges from MYR66,000 to MYR90,000 annually (International Scholarship Resource, 2007).

This includes performing on-going research which address the different aspects of sustainability, such as "Sustainable tourism facilities on eco-sensitive sites in the tropics" (a PhD thesis), "Advocating for barrier-free Built Environment" (a funded research project), and "Eco-literacy school" (Yasmin, 2008).

Another example is the allocation of a private company's funds by Sime Darby amounting to RM 2.5 Million funding for sustainable research (Sime Darby, 2008). In addition, there are also local and international collaborations with other universities to research on sustainability issues, such as "Problem-Oriented Project Based Learning in Environmental Management and Technology" between Malaysia, Denmark, and the Netherland (MUCED-I&UA, 2006).

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

In the form of scholarships, funds have been provided for the students to pursue their research in UKM (UKM, 2009). In particular the Institute for Environment and Development (LESTARI) specially provides opportunities for students to carry out various research pertaining to environment and sustainability. The main goal of this Institute is to fulfil the aspiration of the university, as envisioned by the United Nation's Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, i.e. to conceptualize the aim of sustainable development through research and capacity development (LESTARI, 2009).

Currently, these are three main researches being focused on at this institute; these are Research Centre for Sustainability Science and Governance (SGK), Research Centre for Environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability (KASES) and Langkawi Research Centre (PPL) (ibid). For instance, LESTARI encompasses a variety of topics such as the SGK, comprising of five sub-groups related to Ecosystem Studies, Sustainability Assessment and Planning, Urban Ecosystem Sustainability, Malaysian Mountain Ecosystem Research Initiatives (MMERI), and Malaysian Network for Integrated Management of Chemicals and Hazardous Substances for Environment and Development (LESTARI, 2009). KASES, on the other hand, encompasses three sub-groups, which are Environmental Hazards, Environmental Economics, Community Well-being and National Tropical Rock (ibid). It is important to highlight that this institute has had 41 collaborative researches, 33 fundamental researches, and 21 contract research in different areas on sustainability (LESTARI, 2009).

UKM has also housed Lake Chini Research Centre which researches on restoring the Pahang Biosphere Reserve Lake and its surrounding wetlands (Shahabudin, 2008). The Institute of Solar Energy Research (SERI) is another institute in UKM which studies on issues related to sustainability (ibid). In addition, proposing a new design paradigm for green zero energy public toilet is another achievement in the realm of sustainability.

UKM has obtained around RM229 million research grants from various sources, in which a sizable part of it is being paid to the students to work on some specific topics. Parts of these research grants are exclusively allocated for topics on sustainability. For example, in the experimental and applied research grant, six projects have been defined to research on Energy and have so far received a total of RM1, 282, 696.00, and nine projects on Environment which received RM1,915,166.00 (UKM, 2009).

Universiti Sains Malaysia

In research and scholarship, 17 monographs and books containing issues on sustainability in the campus have been published only by *Kampus Sejahtera* (Meng, 2007). In more specific, USM has funded and collaborated in 50 projects related

Fig. 1: UKM working on sustainability issues in Langkawi

to issues on sustainability, under the *"Kampus Sejahtera"* programme (ibid). Eight percent of 5861 research projects, conducted by USM between 1974- 2007, incorporated issues related to sustainability (ibid). Meanwhile, 11% of 1,800 papers have been published in the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). Some 19% of the conference papers (out of 2,200) are related to sustainability. USM has offered several types of scholarship such as USM fellowship which gives RM1,500 for first year Master students, RM1,800 for second year Master students, RM2,100 for first year PhD students, RM2,300 for second year PhD students, and RM2,500 for third year PhD students (USM, 2009).

Universiti Putra Malaysia

In research and scholarship, UPM has given financial support, such as fellowship or different kinds of research assistantship, to majority of the students. During 2007 – 2008 for instance, more than 500 fellowships were offered for both Malaysian and international students (Malaysian Scholarship Centre, 2009).

Some research in different faculties address the issues related to sustainability. At the Faculty of Design and Architecture for example, nine out of 12 PhD students were fulfilling their research in Landscape studies, and these were nine out of 18 students addressing issues on sustainability in Architecture (FRSP, 2009).

Some of the institutes which are researching on issues related to sustainability include the Institute of Bioscience, Institute for Community and Peace Studies, Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products, Faculty of Environmental studies, as well as Faculty of Design and Architecture (UPM, 2009).

SUSTAINABLE OPERATION

University Malaya

In terms of operation, Recycle Project is considered as an effective action of SHE in parts of UM (Azizan, 2005). Specific needs of the campus users such as restaurants serving middle eastern dishes and food have been established on the campus. Providing these eating places will let the sizable number of middle eastern students to cater for their favourite foods inside the campus without having to travel and produce emissions of green gas. Parts of the lighting system at UM use fluorescent lamps which consume less energy and are more efficient.

Moreover, UM has made attempts at conserving the energy use in its buildings by using reflective colours in the building facades so as to decrease the heating absorption (*Fig. 3*).

UM campus not only has been covered by municipality transportation fleet but also by private shuttles with the aim to encourage people to use public transportation. However,

based on the conversations with the students and lecturers, majority of them still prefer using private transportation to go home or even around the campus.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

UKM has also recognized the use of recycling bins as an effective action of the SHE. However, recycling bins are provided only at certain limited areas.

The on-going initiatives by the university to conserve energy include encouraging the students to turn off the lights and computers at some faculties, as well as constructing buildings which use passive ventilation for their cooling (see *Fig. 4*). In addition, UKM has unique and beautiful flora and fauna, with various indigenous sustainable landscapes, as shown in *Fig. 5*. The results gathered from the interviews with the students and lecturers indicated that private transportation is the most common mode of transportation, which is a big challenge for this university. For this, both the students and lecturers explained that they preferred using own transport to go home due to the inefficiency of the public transport available.

Fig. 2: UM provides comfortable buses, but majority of the students still use private transportation

Fig. 3:UM has various types of landscape

Fig. 4(a): UM uses bright and reflective colours for/in buildings to conserve the cooling energy

Fig. 4(b): UM uses natural lighting in its building

Universiti Sains Malaysia

USM provides some bicycles at its sport centre to encourage students to have a more sustainable transportation mode (Meng, 2007). In addition, organizing different campaigns, such as "No Straws Campaign", "Say No to Plastic Bag Campaign", "2,700 New Undergraduates' Pledge to Go Green", "Banning Polystyrene Containers", were other initiatives which have been done at the university (see *Fig. 3*). Moreover, USM has decided not to invest in the industries related to tobaccos, gambling or liquor (Ibid). This university has been quite successful in its efforts to protect the environment; for instance, some red eagles were found nesting in the campus on 23 January 2009 (USM, 2009a). Furthermore, the university has a policy which emphasizes on purchasing green products. Apart from that, recycling programme, rain water harvesting, restriction of motorcycle use to reduce noise, energy management programme and energy consumption audit and air quality, have also been introduced by the university. However, some of these initiatives have yet to be properly implemented (see *Fig. 7*). Selling organic food which is produced near campus is another activity done (see *Fig. 10*).

Fig. 5: Using passive ventilation for cooling buildings

Fig. 6: Green landscaping at UKM

Fig. 7: Banning motorcycling without effective enforcement

Fig. 8: USM researches on different modes of transportation

Fig. 9(a): Banning the use of poly-styrofoam in USM and using washable plate

Fig. 9(b): Encouraging the ban on poly Styrofoam in USM

Fig. 10: Organic food sold at the entrance of USM

Universiti Putra Malaysia

UPM also has taken similar initiatives. Among other, recycling bins are easily available at the different faculties all over the campus. In addition, public transportation has also been boosted via shuttle services. Both city and university's buses cover the different routes throughout the campus and the surrounding residential areas.

Cycling lanes are provided in parts of the university. Some of its lecturers, such as the former vice chancellor and former deputy dean of the Faculty of Design and Architecture, prefer cycling as their mode of transportation on campus. Interestingly, there is a lecturer, from the Faculty of Environmental Studies, who exclusively uses bicycle as the only mode of her transportation both inside and outside the campus (Star, 2007). Potable water heaters and coolers have been catered in most of the hostels and study rooms to prevent the students from using their own water heaters and coolers. A total of twenty hostels and one big international housing complex have housed students inside the campus to reduce distance involved in transportation (UPM, 2008). Two large condominiums at affordable rental rates ranging between USD 150 to USD 350 were constructed near the university (UPM, 2009).

Based on the authors' observations which were carried out for a period of two and a half years, the university was found to provide luxurious shuttle buses for the residents of these condominiums to go to university campus. Among the four selected universities, UPM is the only campus to have a mosque, a church and a Hindu temple which are located inside the campus. Besides, there are also Muslim and Chinese cemeteries which are adjacent to UPM. Normally, making university autonomous causes less transportation and gas emission.

On top of this, the majority of the hostels and all the faculties at UPM have been equipped with free internet connection, either inside the students' rooms or at public places. As an agriculture university, UPM has farms inside the campus, which are not only used by students for research purposes, but also provide some food supplies to meet the needs of UPM's residents. Based on the conversations carried out with the participants and the observations done, it seems that transportation still poses a big challenge to UPM and the other selected universities.

COMMON OPERATIONAL PRACTICES AT THE FOUR UNIVERSITIES

Majority of the campus users' needs, such as banking facilities, restaurants, swimming pool, sports complex, grocery shops, stadium, laundry,

Fig. 11: Providing shady side walk and cycling lanes is a good example for UPM

Fig. 12: Recycling bins at all faculties are parts of the facilities provided on campus

tailor shops, binding and photography services, mosque, clinic, and even petrol stations, as well as shopping malls, have been catered for inside the campus or places which can be reached in less than five minutes by cycling. Even the hostels and different faculties have housed the essential needs of their users independently and it is common to see courts for various sports such as tennis, volleyball, and basketball, football fields, as well as laundry and grocery shops, cafés and restaurants, parks, and study areas provided at these hostels.

These universities, by assisting students to organize different associations for foreign students, embarked to distinguish the different needs of their international students and provide them with special needs such as restaurants serving Middle Eastern food and delicacies. All these result in lesser need for transportation and lower Green Gas Emission (GGE). Transportation service has been boosted by buying new shuttles and providing comfortable bus stops. Moreover, covered sidewalks are also provided, with more green plants grown to encourage students to walk. Gardens, parks, and ponds are specially designed and provided in campuses; these do not only refine the air and produce oxygen, but also provide a good habitat for different species and help biodiversity. These universities have also planted trees and

plants, and this effort has led to the formation of unique flora and fauna aimed at using indigenous plantation and sustainable landscape. Moreover, the communication between campus users is sternly done via electronic, whereas most of the communications, from students to lecturers and staff (and vice versa), are done through email. The assessment system and students' marks are done through the electronic portal which reduces the use of a lot of paper and thus helps conserve the environment. Every university has provided other facilities such as electronic system for campus users to transfer funds, pay tuition fees, water and electricity bills, purchase their daily necessities like telephone top up, books, etc.

OUTREACH AND SERVICES

University Malaya

UM is among the local universities which offers distance learning programmes, such as Masters of Bio-safety which transcends the borders of the campus (UM, 2008). It also offers part-time programmes for those in the working community such as the Bachelor of Business and Administration and career development programmes like "Current Labour Issues and Solutions" (UMCCED, 2009).

Collaborating with the other overseas universities in doing their collaborative research on sustainability (e.g. "Energy Research Group" with University of Southampton) is also an indicator to prove the tendency of UM towards sustainability (Energy Research Group, 2008).

Events pertaining to sustainability have also been held, such as World Environment Day, Rain Forest and Our Environment Exhibition, Earth Day, Green Day, Workshops on Problem-Based Learning in Environmental Education, and Hari Kesedaran Alam Sekitar (Azizan, 2005). In addition, UM also has a partnership with WWF Malaysia, and NGO, in Educational Environment (EE) (Daniel and Nadeson, 2006).

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

UKM offers a variety of part-time programmes for the working community such as Environmental Management (UKM, 2008). There are also several collaborative research works with overseas universities on sustainability. For instance, UKM has collaborations with Mahidol University (MU) and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, Aalborg University (AAU) in Denmark, and Berlage Institute in the Netherland (Hansen and Lehmann, 2006). Consecutively, "ASEAN-EU" University Network Programme allocated the universities with grants for curriculum development to establish a new programme, i.e. Masters in Urban Quality Development and Management (ibid). UKM community outreach also embarked to initiate projects for the villagers of Kundang Hulu in Johore, including studies on flood mitigation (Shahabuddin, 2008). This University also has a partnership with WWF Malaysia, and NGO, in Educational Environment (EE) (Daniel and Nadeson, 2006).

Universiti Sains Malaysia

USM also offers part-time programs for the working community, as well as distance learning in various aspects of sustainability, such as Bachelor in Social Science and Master of Environmental Management (USM, 2008). In addition, USM has a centre for distance learning, i.e. School of Distance Education (SDE). She has had an influential role on Penang Island through conducting various workshops for the local authorities and multidisciplinary research. Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abd Razak, the Vice Chancellor of USM has personally initiated a new technique to have more outreach and services to the Malaysian community, i.e. by publishing a series of articles in a very simple and understandable manner in their website, addressing a combination of sustainability and hot news given under "Views and Comments." The articles vary from environmental sustainability, like his articles entitled, '*Squandering green opportunities* to social aspects and economic aspects such as *inconsistent, insensitive translations of Allah'* and '*Coming together for tomorrow*' (USM, 2009). USM also has a partnership with WWF

Malaysia, and NGO, in Educational Environment (EE) (Daniel and Nadeson, 2006).

Universiti Putra Malaysia

UPM also offers part-time programmes, such as Masters of Environmental Studies and distance learning programs for the working community. Moreover, UPM has an institute known as the Institute for Distance Education and Learning (IDEAL).

The university has organized workshops, seminars, and lectures, which indirectly or directly are addressing the concept of sustainability such as the workshops for senior citizens, for both the public and the university students. In addition, there have been several collaborations with the external community, so as to motivate more a sustainable life like the collaboration with University Malaysia Sabah to improve the livelihood in Kota Marudu and encourage a sustainable management for shoreline and fisheries (UPM, 2009). Moreover, UPM also has partnerships with WWF Malaysia and other NGOs, in Educational Environment (EE) (Daniel and Nadeson, 2006).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In relation to the initiatives made by these world-class universities on sustainability, it was found that SHE encompasses five main rubrics; these are 1) Sustainability in Policy, Planning and Administration; 2) Sustainable Courses and Curricula; 3) Sustainable Research and Scholarship; 4) Sustainable Operation; and 5) Sustainable Outreach and Services. It is also important to note that the concept of SHE has already been recognized by the top managers of the four research universities, and that all of these universities have already embarked in moving towards the SHE. However, there are still deficiencies which should be given due considerations by these universities in order to catch up with the first-world countries. In this study, the selected universities were found to have started the efforts of varying degrees on sustainability. For example, one university has shown its high commitment in policy, mission, while another university has shown strong efforts in its operation. Although making an accurate comparison is not in the scope of this paper, it can be stated that University Sains Malaysia has taken the highest initiatives in all the five aspects based on the initial observations, but UKM is strong in the first issue by having different active organizations such as LESTARI and SGK. Meanwhile, UPM has taken good initiatives in operations such as providing bicycle lanes, recycling bins and having different religious praying houses. Similarly, UM has had good outreach and services by having partnerships with various organizations. Nevertheless, there is still a need to develop or adapt a local assessment tool and formulate a strong multidisciplinary research team to make a comprehensive and accurate comparison among the four selected universities. In terms of sustainable operation, it seems that private transportation still poses a major issue which needs to be addressed by these universities.

Thus, it can be concluded that as far as SHE intentions and effects are concerned, the four research universities (UM, USM, UKM, UPM) are positive parties with varying degrees of commitment and success. However, these universities still have a long way to go to be at par with their counterparts, particularly the western universities, in addressing all the issues pertaining to SHE.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study attempted to provide evidences which could be used to prove that Malaysian universities have already understood SHE and stepped forward in this global movement. Besides, there has been no claim stating that these five rubrics function as a comprehensive tool to measure the universities in terms of sustainability. It solely gives some insights on important on-going sustainable rubrics and initiatives in the universities. Similarly, there has been no intention to compare these four universities, as a suitable assessment tool

and a strong multidisciplinary research team are required to measure Malaysian campus sustainability which has yet to be adapted.

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