



Pertanika Journal of  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**& HUMANITIES**

**JSSH**

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## **Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities**

### **About the Journal**

#### **Overview**

Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities (JSSH) is the official journal of Universiti Putra Malaysia published by UPM Press. It is an open-access online scientific journal which is free of charge. It publishes the scientific outputs. It neither accepts nor commissions third party content.

Recognized internationally as the leading peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal devoted to the publication of original papers, it serves as a forum for practical approaches to improving quality in issues pertaining to social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities.

JSSH is a **quarterly** (*March, June, September and December*) periodical that considers for publication original articles as per its scope. The journal publishes in **English** and it is open to authors around the world regardless of the nationality.

The Journal is available world-wide.

#### **Aims and scope**

Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities aims to develop as a pioneer journal for the social sciences with a focus on emerging issues pertaining to the social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities.

Areas relevant to the scope of the journal include Social Sciences—Accounting, anthropology, Archaeology and history, Architecture and habitat, Consumer and family economics, Economics, Education, Finance, Geography, Law, Management studies, Media and communication studies, Political sciences and public policy, Population studies, Psychology, Sociology, Technology management, Tourism; Humanities—Arts and culture, Dance, Historical and civilisation studies, Language and Linguistics, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Religious studies, Sports.

#### **History**

Pertanika was founded in 1978. A decision was made in 1992 to streamline Pertanika into three journals as Journal of Tropical Agricultural Science, Journal of Science & Technology, and **Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities** to meet the need for specialised journals in areas of study aligned with the interdisciplinary strengths of the university.

After almost 25 years, as an interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, the revamped journal focuses on research in social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities, particularly in the Asia Pacific region.

#### **Goal of Pertanika**

Our goal is to bring the highest quality research to the widest possible audience.

#### **Quality**

We aim for excellence, sustained by a responsible and professional approach to journal publishing. Submissions are guaranteed to receive a decision within 14 weeks. The elapsed time from submission to publication for the articles averages 5-6 months.

#### **Abstracting and indexing of Pertanika**

Pertanika is almost 40 years old; this accumulated knowledge has resulted in Pertanika JSSH being abstracted and indexed in SCOPUS (Elsevier), Thomson (ISI) Web of Knowledge [BIOSIS & CAB Abstracts], EBSCO & EBSCOhost, DOAJ, Cabell's Directories, Google Scholar, MyAIS, ISC & Rubriq (Journal Guide).

## Future vision

We are continuously improving access to our journal archives, content, and research services. We have the drive to realise exciting new horizons that will benefit not only the academic community, but society itself.

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The abbreviation for *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* is *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. Hum.*

## Publication policy

Pertanika policy prohibits an author from submitting the same manuscript for concurrent consideration by two or more publications. It prohibits as well publication of any manuscript that has already been published either in whole or substantial part elsewhere. It also does not permit publication of manuscript that has been published in full in Proceedings.

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The Pertanika Journals and Universiti Putra Malaysia takes seriously the responsibility of all of its journal publications to reflect the highest in publication ethics. Thus all journals and journal editors are expected to abide by the Journal's codes of ethics. Refer to Pertanika's **Code of Ethics** for full details, or visit the Journal's web link at [http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/code\\_of\\_ethics.php](http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/code_of_ethics.php)

## International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)

An ISSN is an 8-digit code used to identify periodicals such as journals of all kinds and on all media—print and electronic. All Pertanika journals have ISSN as well as an e-ISSN.

Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities: ISSN 0128-7702 (*Print*); ISSN 2231-8534 (*Online*).

## Lag time

A decision on acceptance or rejection of a manuscript is reached in 3 to 4 months (average 14 weeks). The elapsed time from submission to publication for the articles averages 5–6 months.

## Authorship

Authors are not permitted to add or remove any names from the authorship provided at the time of initial submission without the consent of the Journal's Chief Executive Editor.

## Manuscript preparation

Refer to Pertanika's **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS** at the back of this journal.

Most scientific papers are prepared according to a format called IMRAD. The term represents the first letters of the words **I**ntroduction, **M**aterials and **M**ethods, **R**esults, **A**nd, **D**iscussion. IMRAD is simply a more 'defined' version of the "IBC" [Introduction, Body, Conclusion] format used for all academic writing. IMRAD indicates a pattern or format rather than a complete list of headings or components of research papers; the missing parts of a paper are: *Title, Authors, Keywords, Abstract, Conclusions, and References*. Additionally, some papers include Acknowledgments and Appendices.

The *Introduction* explains the scope and objective of the study in the light of current knowledge on the subject; the *Materials and Methods* describes how the study was conducted; the *Results* section reports what was found in the study; and the *Discussion* section explains meaning and significance of the results and provides suggestions for future directions of research. The manuscript must be prepared according to the Journal's **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS**.

## Editorial process

Authors are notified with an acknowledgement containing a *Manuscript ID* on receipt of a manuscript, and upon the editorial decision regarding publication.

Pertanika follows a **double-blind peer-review** process. Manuscripts deemed suitable for publication are usually sent to reviewers. Authors are encouraged to suggest names of at least three potential reviewers at the time of submission of their manuscript to Pertanika, but the editors will make the final choice. The editors are not, however, bound by these suggestions.

Notification of the editorial decision is usually provided within ten to fourteen weeks from the receipt of manuscript. Publication of solicited manuscripts is not guaranteed. In most cases, manuscripts are accepted conditionally, pending an author's revision of the material.

As articles are double-blind reviewed, material that might identify authorship of the paper should be placed only on page 2 as described in the first-4 page format in Pertanika's **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS** given at the back of this journal.

### The Journal's peer-review

In the peer-review process, three referees independently evaluate the scientific quality of the submitted manuscripts.

Peer reviewers are experts chosen by journal editors to provide written assessment of the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of written research, with the aim of improving the reporting of research and identifying the most appropriate and highest quality material for the journal.

### Operating and review process

What happens to a manuscript once it is submitted to *Pertanika*? Typically, there are seven steps to the editorial review process:

1. The Journal's chief executive editor and the editorial board examine the paper to determine whether it is appropriate for the journal and should be reviewed. If not appropriate, the manuscript is rejected outright and the author is informed.
2. The chief executive editor sends the article-identifying information having been removed, to three reviewers. Typically, one of these is from the Journal's editorial board. Others are specialists in the subject matter represented by the article. The chief executive editor asks them to complete the review in three weeks.  
Comments to authors are about the appropriateness and adequacy of the theoretical or conceptual framework, literature review, method, results and discussion, and conclusions. Reviewers often include suggestions for strengthening of the manuscript. Comments to the editor are in the nature of the significance of the work and its potential contribution to the literature.
3. The chief executive editor, in consultation with the editor-in-chief, examines the reviews and decides whether to reject the manuscript, invite the author(s) to revise and resubmit the manuscript, or seek additional reviews. Final acceptance or rejection rests with the Editor-in-Chief, who reserves the right to refuse any material for publication. In rare instances, the manuscript is accepted with almost no revision. Almost without exception, reviewers' comments (to the author) are forwarded to the author. If a revision is indicated, the editor provides guidelines for attending to the reviewers' suggestions and perhaps additional advice about revising the manuscript.
4. The authors decide whether and how to address the reviewers' comments and criticisms and the editor's concerns. The authors return a revised version of the paper to the chief executive editor along with specific information describing how they have answered the concerns of the reviewers and the editor, usually in a tabular form. The author(s) may also submit a rebuttal if there is a need especially when the author disagrees with certain comments provided by reviewer(s).

5. The chief executive editor sends the revised paper out for re-review. Typically, at least one of the original reviewers will be asked to examine the article.
6. When the reviewers have completed their work, the chief executive editor in consultation with the editorial board and the editor-in-chief examine their comments and decide whether the paper is ready to be published, needs another round of revisions, or should be rejected.
7. If the decision is to accept, an acceptance letter is sent to all the author(s), the paper is sent to the Press. The article should appear in print in approximately three months.

The Publisher ensures that the paper adheres to the correct style (in-text citations, the reference list, and tables are typical areas of concern, clarity, and grammar). The authors are asked to respond to any minor queries by the Publisher. Following these corrections, page proofs are mailed to the corresponding authors for their final approval. At this point, **only essential changes are accepted**. Finally, the article appears in the pages of the Journal and is posted on-line.



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**JOURNAL DIVISION**  
Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (R&I)  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, IDEA Tower II  
UPM-MTDC Technology Centre  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
43400 Serdang, Selangor Malaysia.  
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Fax: +603 8941 6172  
E-mail: [penerbit@upm.edu.my](mailto:penerbit@upm.edu.my)  
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## ABSTRACTING/INDEXING

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# Foreword

Welcome to the **First Issue 2016** of the Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (JSSH)!

JSSH is an open-access journal for the Social Sciences and Humanities that is published by Universiti Putra Malaysia Press. It is independently owned and managed by the university and run on a non-profit basis for the benefit of the world-wide social science community.

This issue contains **33 articles**, of which **two** are review articles, **one** is a short communication and **thirty** are regular research articles. The authors of these articles come from different countries, namely, **Malaysia, Thailand, United Kingdom, Nigeria, India, USA, the Philippines, Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan**.

The first review article in this issue discusses the potential of ASEAN in *halal* certification implementation (*Baharudin Othman, Sharifudin Md. Shaarani and Arsiah Bahron*) and the second review article is on conceptualising culture, identity and the region in recent reflections on Southeast Asia (*Victor T. King*). The short communication in this issue reports on the challenges of action research implementation in Malaysian schools (*Norasmah, O. and Chia, S. Y.*).

The regular articles cover a wide range of topics. The first article is on the construction and development of a quantitative scale to measure source credibility in maternal mortality (*Che Su Mustaffa and Salah Saudat Abdul Baqi*). The following articles look at: a therapeutic approach in implementing psychosocial intervention to improve the neuropsychological functioning of students with learning disabilities (*Preeti Tabitha Louis and Arnold Emerson Isaac*); Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*, studying Levi's basic anxiety, conflict and the search for glory (*Shima Shokri, Ida Baizura Bahar and Rohimmi Noor*); the voices of the Burmese Rohingya refugees in the everyday politics of survival in refugee camps in Bangladesh (*Kazi Fahmida Farzana*); efficiency of commercial banks in India as a DEA approach (*Mani Mukta*); a comparative study of the portrayal of the girl child in short stories by selected Indian women writers (*Alla Ratna Malathi*); the preparation, knowledge and self-reported competency of special education teachers regarding students with autism (*Toran, H., Westover, J. M., Sazlina, K., Suziyani, M. and Mohd Hanafi, M. Y.*); teaching presence in an online collaborative learning environment via Facebook (*Annamalai, N., Tan, K. E. and Abdullah, A.*); debate as a pedagogical tool to develop soft skills in the EFL/ESL classroom as a qualitative case study (*Aclan, E. M., Noor Hashima Abd Aziz and Valdez, N. P.*); a case study of blog-based language learning, an investigation into ESL learners' interaction (*Zarei, N. and Supyan, H.*); the Malaysian Chinese diaspora in Melbourne in terms of citizenship and a sense of belonging (*Low, C. C.*); the impact of healthcare expenditure and infectious diseases on labour productivity performance in Africa, with a consideration of the importance of institutions (*Hassan, A. M., Norashidah, M. N. and Nor, Z. M.*); dissecting nature and grotesque elements in Tunku Halim's *Juriah's Song* (*Nur Fatin, S. A. J., Wan Roselezam, W. Y. and Hardev*

*Kaur*); the rise of Jewish religious nationalism and the Israeli approach to the Palestinian conflict (*Javadikouchaksaraei, M., Bustami, M. R. and Farouk, A. F. A.*); language attitude and motivation of Islamic school students, focussing on how *Madrasa* students of the academic year 2013-2014 in Indonesia perceive English, English teaching and learning and native speakers of English (*Ag. Bambang Setiyadi and Muhammad Sukirlan*); correlation between social capital and entrepreneurship for Posdaya empowerment (*Saleh, A., Metalisa, R. and Mukhlisah, N.*); employability, mobility and work-life balance and how they relate for MBA holders in Malaysia (*Samuel, R. and Ramayah, T.*); forensic linguistics in the light of crime investigation (*Farshad Ramezani, Arefeh Khosousi Sani and Kathayoun Moghadam*); genre-based and process-based approaches to teaching news articles (*Jeneifer C. Nueva*); students' coping strategies for free-riding in group work (*Priscilla Shak*); the impact of English language proficiency on interpersonal interactions among students from different nationalities in a Malaysian public university (*Sarwari, A. Q., Ibrahim, A. H. and Nor Ashikin, A. A.*); preference of conventional degrees by educational institutions, which investigates two cases from Pakistan and India (*Hussain, N. and Mirza, A.*); a human rights lesson from selected Malay proverbs (*Mohd Faizal Musa*); self-help groups as an empowerment and financial model for women in Nadia district, West Bengal (*Sharmistha Bhattacharjee*); social networking sites that can negatively impact academic grades (*Shakiratul Hanany Abd Rahman and Stephen, J.*); Sadegh Hedayat's *Stray Dog* in exploring 'unhomely moments' (*Oroskhan, M. H. and Zohdi, E.*); a conceptual model of tourist satisfaction (*Kwok See Ying, Ahmad Jusoh and Zainab Khalifah*); the concept of a social organism as seen in the response of Javanese society to modernism in the Serat Wedhatama by Kangjeng Gusti Pangeran Adipati Arya (K.G.P.A.A.) Mangkunegara IV (*Sahid Teguh Widodo*); the fall of national identity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (*Abdalhadi Nimer A. Abu Jweid*); and Project Zero, a benchmark for developing an analytical framework (*Dass, L. C., Arumugam, N., Dillah, D. and Nadarajah, D.*)

I anticipate that you will find the evidence presented in this issue to be intriguing, thought-provoking and useful in reaching new milestones. Please recommend the journal to your colleagues and students to make this endeavour meaningful.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all the contributors who have made this issue possible, as well as the authors, reviewers and editors for their professional contribution. Last but not least, the editorial assistance of the journal division staff is also fully appreciated.

JSSH is currently accepting manuscripts for upcoming issues based on original qualitative or quantitative research that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation.

**Chief Executive Editor**

Nayan Deep S. KANWAL, FRSA, ABIM, AMIS, Ph.D.  
[nayan@upm.my](mailto:nayan@upm.my)

**Review Article**

**The Potential of ASEAN in Halal Certification Implementation:  
A Review**

**Baharudin Othman<sup>1\*</sup>, Sharifudin Md. Shaarani<sup>2</sup> and Arsiah Bahron<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Jalan UMS,  
88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia*

<sup>2</sup>*Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Jalan UMS, 88400 Kota Kinabalu,  
Sabah, Malaysia*

**ABSTRACT**

Halal is now seen not only in terms of market share or profitability of products, but what is more important is the implementation of the production of a service or a product itself. In fact, development is not just limited to country, but across the country or even continent. In this case, the various systems and the certificate used are really halal, clean and safe. In the context of the world, and ASEAN countries in particular, the output goes for halal requirements is important for the religious practices and the quality of life that once gives confidence to the various parties including consumers, industry and government. Most existing researches focused on consumer perception of the status of certificates issued, the logo and the quality service of certification body. Moreover, the research on comparison certification done by existing research is only focusing on portal used without a global view. Thus, a qualitative approach through library research is used in collecting related data which aims to review halal certification practices in the context of ASEAN. Result of this study indicates that the ASEAN countries (Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam and Philippines) have similarities and differences in practicing halal. However, findings prove that all countries are even in placing *sharia* as a guide by following

Al-Quran and Sunnah as reference. Besides showing that not all countries have same infrastructure and capability as technology and standard preparation.

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*E-mail addresses:*

baharudinums@gmail.com (Baharudin Othman),  
fatihah@ums.edu.my (Sharifudin Md. Shaarani),  
bharsiah@ums.edu.my (Arsiah Bahron)

\* Corresponding author

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## INTRODUCTION

In general Islam is a way of life for every Muslim. Thus in implementing Islam, it's just not for purely religious rituals such as prayer, fasting, charity, etc. but more than that which requires its followers to behave well in family relations and social interactions. Besides it is a task for its followers in determining things to be consumed (Aziz, 2013). Specifically, Muslim around the world should concern about their religion's practices including daily activities and ensuring halal food is one of their responsibilities especially living in the multiracial country and different religions. As reported there are two strong markets for halal food which are Southeast Asia and Middle East (Dewi, 2007) while more than 507.3 million Muslims population or halal consumers in Southeast Asia (The Future of the Global Muslim Population, 2011).

Halal is an Islamic term, derived from Arabic word which means permissible. Now it can be seen in a broader scope in accordance with the concept of '*Halalan Toyyiban*' covering halal, safe, clean and quality. Indeed, the debate about the concept of *halalan toyyiban* refers to the proposition that the Al-Quran is a starting point in the determination of Halal and forbidden/prohibited foods as described by Allah in Surah Al ' An'am, verse 145 ; Al'Araf, verse 157; Al – Maidah verses 1, 4, 5 and 88. Even the Prophet Muhammad also ordered his followers to always emphasize matters related to halal dietary nutrition as hadith narrated by Anas bin Malik, the

Prophet said: "It is the duty of Muslims to seek halal". In addition, it is able to meet the principles of *maqasid shar'iyyah* particularly on the aspects of guarding life and intellectuality as defined by al-Qaradawi (2006) the final conclusion by legislation aimed passages such as passages in the forms of instructions, are forbidden and what are allowed, while juz'i laws try to realize it into the lives of *mukallaf* be it individual, family or community. For example all muslims are not allowed to eat carrion or blood, not only because they are categorized by syarak as *najis* but it can affect the health of the body.

Hence, halal certification is seen as a tool to determine whether a service or product relating to halal is really halal, safety and clean. There are several of previous studies related to halal for ASEAN countries, yet so many are concentrated to certain countries and aspect of study. Mohd. Al'Ikhsan (2014) have made a comparative study regarding halal certification of ASEAN countries but the discussion is focused on standard practice only to four countries which are Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei. In contrast to Spiegel *et. al* (2012) standard practice is viewed with greater scope to produce globally applicable standard and is not limited to only ASEAN country. Meanwhile, a study by Prabowo *et.al* (2015) using normal methods of group technique (NGT) is limited in the area of East Kalimantan only without halal practices can be generalized in Indonesia as a whole even if the subject is constituted stakeholders that directly involved in the

halal matter. Study in nation as a halal hub was presented by Nik Maheran *et al.* (2009) that chooses only Malaysia as a model by presenting a framework through integration role of supply chain strategy and halal assurance system.

Reality is each country has different practices based on the country's halal requirement. In fact, the involvement of the halal certifying agency also vary by culture and interests. Here, the discussions focused on Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam and Philippines as one who has been to the fore in halal certification.

## METHODOLOGY

The study applied qualitative methods by utilizing library research, especially in understanding in depth research on halal dietary practices in a country. According Swanto (2003) methods of library research is a systematic way of information to be obtained from reading the source where researchers will create an approach and find the answers for each stated objective.

The study focused on getting information through secondary sources which obtained from journals, books, magazine, newspapers and electronic media such as the official portal organizational halal certification bodies that are said to be subjective. Mohd Al'Ikhsan and Siti Salwa (2014) in their study of comparative standards ASEAN countries find second resources have been able to produce a good result with some structured study. In this study, assessment will consider, analyze and process all the

information obtained and associate with explicit and implicit meanings in the text. The results of the analysis presented in the tables to facilitate readers identify as to what is practiced by the countries concerned in halal certification. Subsequently, in order to obtain information that is not clear, communication via email is used for clarification of halal certification bodies that country.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The 'key findings' contribute to make ASEAN as a hub for Halal certification can be seen through the role of authority certifying bodies; laws, standards and guidelines; the certification process and logo, referral and legal issues. Hence, it followed by the potential which can be achieved through the effect of its practices.

### *The role of Authority Certifying Bodies*

Implementation of Halal certification among ASEAN member countries is quite unique. Most countries have a role in terms of the establishment and functioning in certification. Some of the countries focused only on certification alone without engaging in training or consultation like Malaysia. Even some of them are non-profit oriented completely controlled by the government but also plays a role in providing consultancy to the industry such as Brunei. For Indonesia and Thailand, both countries have appointed special Islamic body in halal control and certification which also run consultancy. Unlike Thailand, appointed Islam body has its own laboratory

for analysis of related halal product. In addition there are also countries that have halal certification body for more than one (Vietnam and Philippines). According to Fischer (2012) Malaysia and Singapore play an increasingly important role, and hold a special position as countries where the state supported by Muslim agencies, certifies halal products and spaces as well as work processes in ways that are highly commercialized. The role of Authority Certifying Bodies as followed:

### **Malaysia**

Halal certification in Malaysia is under the government. JAKIM involvement as a government agency under the Prime Minister in particular, in providing halal certification in Malaysia on food products and consumables Islam began in 1974 when the Research Center, the Islamic Affairs Division, Prime Minister giving halal certification to productivity products that conform to Islamic law. While giving halal certification in the form of a certificate was first issued in 1994 and the use of JAKIM halal logo began on 30 September 1998. Now, JAKIM through Hub Halal Division introduce many types of halal certification schemes. JAKIM also not involves in any consultancy or giving training to the industry players. According to the Trade Descriptions Act 2011 (APD2011), JAKIM and State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN) are the competent authority in the halal certification Malaysia. Based on the APD 2011 also, only listed foreign halal certification bodies are allowed to be

presented in Malaysia's market. Starting 2012, JAKIM and State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN) began to implement 1 Act, 1 Standards and Guidelines, 1 Certificate, 1 System and 1 logo.

In addition JAKIM also with other agencies such as the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism, the Ministry of Health Malaysia (Food Safety and Quality Division), Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the Department of Veterinary Services, the Department of Standards Malaysia (DCM). Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Department of Chemistry Malaysia, Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), Quarantine Inspection Service Department of Malaysia (MAQIS), Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC), Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE), Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation (SEMIDEC) collaborated in the halal industry in Malaysia based on their roles and responsibilities.

### **Indonesia**

In Indonesia, Majlis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) exercises an effective monopoly over Indonesia's halal certification scheme similar to doctrinal compliance in Islamic banking and insurance (Tim, 2012). Lembaga Pengkaji Pangan Obat-obatan dan Kosmetika Majelis Ulama Indonesia (LPPOM-MUI) is an institution formed by MUI. LPPOM does MUI function in

protecting muslim consumers in especially all the things related to the products of foods, drugs and cosmetics (<http://www.halalmui.org>, retrieved August, 20, 2014).

### **Singapore**

Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) is the organization which issuing halal certificates in relation to any food product, service or activity in Singapore since 1978. In halal activities, MUIS is a single body which is responsible totally to ensure that the requirements of the Muslim law are complied with in the halal supply chain from farm to the table including transportation, production, processing, storage, marketing and display of the food product and services. Up to now, MUIS has offers seven types of Halal certification schemes to various sectors of the industry in Singapore.

### **Brunei**

The Islamic Religious Council (MUIB) is a powerful body and is responsible for determining and controlling the policies and administration of Islam. MUIB halal food management has delegated the Halal Food Control Division (BKMH), Department of Syariah Affairs (JHES), Ministry of Religious Affairs. Besides, they also work together with other agencies.

### **Thailand**

Halal certification in Thailand is managed by non-government certification body 'The Islamic Central of Thailand', known as (CICOT). CICOT is a body / organization

in Thailand, the largest single undertaking governance and coordinate the various activities of Islamic Affairs since 17 years ago, under the jurisdiction of King Bhumibol Adulyadej and registered under the provisions of the Royal Act Concerning the Administration Islamic Organization. CICOT not perform any other relevant industry certifications such as GMP, HACCP and ISO and only commit on the confirmation of halal certification.

As the main body of halal certification, CICOT act as policy planners halal certification, prepare and provide training to the auditors auditing lawful in the Islamic Religious Council Province, providing halal supervisors to halal slaughter industry, providing halal consultant to the food industry and halal slaughter and issuing halal certificates. In provinces with Islamic Council, halal application will be fully managed by the Islamic religious councils province from the review until approval. CICOT will issue halal certificates based on the pass list submitted by the Islamic Religious Council. While for provinces that have no Islamic Council, halal certification application will be fully managed by CICOT to issue halal certificates.

### **Vietnam**

People's Socialist Republic of Vietnam is the country's former communist one-party system and the practice of the Communist Party of Vietnam. This notion does not practice any religion but allows the diversity of religious practices among the population. The country has 63 provinces

and five representatives of the Muslim community have a Ho Chi Minh City, An Giang Province, Ninh Thuan, Tay Ninh and Hanoi. Of the five regions, only the Tay Ninh Province who did not carry the halal certification. For the region of Ho Chi Minh City, An Giang and Ninh Thuan Province, halal certification carried out by Islamic delegates respectively. While in Hanoi, Halal certification is carried out by a private agency that has received approval from the government.

One of the halal certification bodies in Vietnam is Halal Certification Agency (HCA) which has been registered under the Vietnamese government since 2007. This organization only commit on halal certification where it carried out for all schemes, food / beverage, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, food, health, logistics except slaughterhouse and meat processing plant. Besides HCA there are also other certifiers body.

## Philippines

Implementation of the halal certification in Philippines quite different from other ASEAN countries in which there are several certification bodies and logos used in the country including the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), an agency under the Office of the president of the Republic of the Philippines and has been tasked to create a campaign, formulation development and accreditation of halal certification do by law Republic Act (RA) 9997 with effect from 2010 while pursuing a virtually role responsibilities on

Muslim Affairs office which handles the affairs of the Muslims in the Philippines; and the Islamic Da'wah Council of The Philipines (IDCP), the non-governmental organization established in 1981, registered with the Philippine Security and Exchange Commision in 1982 in which the body is one of the stand-alone muslim organization which is responsible for issuing halal certificates in addition to training and facilitation to any company which wishes to apply halal certificate.

### *Laws related to Halal*

Law generally refers to an ordinance or regulation to be observed by all parties. In halal certification, laws and regulations are specifically designed to assist any party involved in the certification that no events occur which allows any party to implement without the inherent sense of responsibility and integrity. According to Naemah and Norazlina (2015) halal products are just like other products in the context of sale of goods laws. In designing and implementing legislation to be dealt with various aspects including capacity, power and scope of the role of certification bodies as well as the chain of agencies involved. For ASEAN countries, there are legal certification under government control but there is also formed by the certification body without involving the government. Findings showed that Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and Thailand created act and related laws pertaining to the enforcement of halal through cooperation with the relevant agencies. However, differences in the

ability to carry out enforcement vary by country because there are countries that are under the government and under the appointed council. Unlike Vietnam, which are considered new in halal certification compared to other countries, there is no specific law relating to halal certification. Meanwhile, Philippines depends on the support of the Islamic body in halal product as ensuring an effort to create a special law relating halal is still running. Law established by the certification body without involving the government is usually more to the existence of the agreement related to certification without penalties or fines as prisons and others. The law on halal used by the ASEAN countries can be seen as:

## **Malaysia**

Beginning in January 2012, halal controls made under the Trade Descriptions Act 2011 (APD 2011). Before enforced APD 2011, the enforcement of halal make based on the Trade Descriptions Act 1972 and under which the subsidiary, the Trade Descriptions (Use of Expression Halal) Act 1975 and the Trade Descriptions (Marking of Food) Order 1975. Since it did not confirm any body designated to issue certificates halal in Malaysia the results show some halal certification body to issue halal certificates in Malaysia.

Recognizing that the system created problems for consumers, and also to the government, then the government has made amendments to introduce the Trade Descriptions Act 2011 (APD 2011) which was passed by Parliament on 11 July 2011

Under the APD in 2011 created two orders of subsidiaries Trade Description Order (Definition of Halal) Order 2011 and the Trade Descriptions (Certification and Marking of Halal) in 2011.

Under these orders have been made that some rules;

- Only the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) and the Islamic Religious Council of the States (MAIN) can issue halal certificates in Malaysia. Halal certificate issued by the addition of Jakim and MAIN unauthorized either domestic or export markets.
- Use of Quranic verses or any symbol that can confuse the Muslims is prohibited, especially if the restaurant is owned by non-Muslims.
- The product to be exported to Malaysia shall use only Malaysia halal logo or the halal logo from foreign halal certification bodies recognized by JAKIM. For example, for products from Indonesia, should use a MUI halal logo.
- The name of halal certification bodies should be placed together with halal logo.

In addition, during the implementation of halal certification, any Acts or Regulations from related agencies also applies especially to meet the concept of *Halalan Thoyyiban* such as the Food Act 1983 and its regulation, the Animal Act 1953 (Revision 2006) Animal Rules 1962 and others. However, for issues related to the inclusion of meat products and meat-based products to Malaysia, the

rules are quite different between Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.

### Indonesia

Halal certificate is issued by MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia /The Indonesian Council of Ulama) based on assessment done by LPPOM MUI (Lembaga Pengkajian Pangan, Obat dan Kosmetika Majelis Ulama Indonesia – The Assessment Institute for Foods, Drugs and Cosmetics The Indonesian Council of Ulama).

In Indonesia, the MUI halal certification is based on fatwa and related laws.

Law 18/2001 on Animal Health and Husbandry sets basic requirements for halal certification of meat in Indonesia. It requires that ‘animal products produced in and/or imported to Indonesia for distribution must be accompanied by ... a halal certificate’ (art. 58(4)), that is, an ‘explanatory document issued by a halal certifying body in Indonesia’ (Elucidation to art. 58). The Law also provides that ‘animal products exported from Indonesia must be accompanied by ... a halal certificate if required by the importing country’ (art. 58(5)).

MUI also has a comprehensive formal role in relation to *halal* food labelling and advertising in general. Article 30(2)(e) of Law 7/1996 on Food states that ‘every person who produces or imports packaged food into Indonesia for commercial purposes must attach a label on and/or in the package’ that states whether the product is *halal*. According to article 11(1) of Government Regulation 69/1999 on Food Advertising and Labelling, the food must first be checked

by an accredited inspection agency (art. 11(1)). In Decision 518/2001, the Minister of Religion issued guidelines and procedures for the inspection and identification of *halal* food. These oblige all commercial packaged-food producers and importers who claim their food is *halal* to submit their produce to the inspection agency (art. 2(1)). It appears that LP-POM is, in fact, the only institution in Indonesia appointed as an inspection agency for *halal* food (Tim, 2012; <http://www.halalmui.org>).

It also clear that government bodies responsible for food controlling is Ministry of Agriculture which focusing for meat and animal based foods. While National Agency for Foods and Drugs Control (BPOM - Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan) for food packaged product.

### Singapore

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) is the sole custodian of Halal certification in Singapore (<http://www.muis.gov.sg>). Halal certification is controlled under the AMLA, Section 88. Based on the Administration of Muslim Law Act AMLA , Section 88A(1), it stated that The Council may issue halal certificates for any product, service or activity and adjust the holder of these certificates to ensure that claims sharia law is followed in the production, processing, marketing or product exhibitions, preparation the service, or the performance of such activities . Halal certification is advised by the Mufti and supported by The Office of the Mufti of Muis.

## **Brunei**

Brunei Darussalam has several laws to regulate halal food, recognition of halal food premises, slaughter centers in the country and abroad and tempered foodstuffs imported from abroad. The law is as Halal Meat Act Chapter 183 and its regulations, Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order 2005, the Public Health (Food) Act (Chapter 182) and the Brunei Halal Food Standards (PBD 24: 2007).

Brunei also emphasizes the inclusion of meat imports into that country. Applications to include raw meat to be used by local food producers, importers only imported by the company that holds the import permits halal slaughter of halal abroad recognized by the Islamic Religious Council of Brunei. Prior to consideration by the Islamic Religious Council, the application will be vetted by the Board of Issuing Halal Import Permit (LMPIH).

## **Thailand**

It is a country which has differences in belief and religion. However, His Majesty the King and the government uphold and support all religions and freedom of worship is allowed to be practiced without prejudice. CICOT regulated by the Department of Administration, Ministry of State (Ministry of Interior Provincial Administration Department) and the Department of Religion, the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs (Ministry of Culture The Religious Affairs Department).

CICOT operated under the regulations laid down in the Regulation of the Central

Islamic Committee of Thailand Regarding Halal Affair Operation of BE 2552 which among other things including offences misuse halal logo for the Applicant / halal certificate holder and penalties. Among other things, the jurisdiction CICOT also subject to certain provisions of other laws relating to the following ministries such as Department of Animal, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce; and The Foreign Ministry.

## **Vietnam**

Halal certification in Vietnam is still new formal compared to the other ASEAN countries. In this country, halal certification is based on the efforts and initiatives of non-governmental organizations. Hence, anybody can perform halal certification upon registration to the government. Among the halal certification bodies exists in Vietnam is Halal Certification Agency (HCA), the Islamic Community of Vietnam, the Islamic Community of Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC VN) and other certification bodies. Up to now there is no specific law relating to halal certification in Vietnam. However, halal management in Vietnam is still subject to the laws of the relevant agencies such as the Division of Health, Division of Fisheries and others.

## **Philippines**

Halal certification in the Philippines carried out by taking into account the needs and interests of the religion and its followers. Thus it has become a main

matters in ensuring that the Muslims get food which fully follow halal requirements by the government. In consideration to the FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC First Regular Session, the Government has outlined a number of policies to protect the Muslim community in the Philippines, including ensuring that halal requirements are meet international standards. In achieving these goals include creating essential amenities such as a Philippine Halal Accreditation and Regulatory Board which will be responsible for the formulation, drafting, management and implementation of programs related to all the halal manufacturing, production, distribution, preparation, handling, storage and verification of halal approved-food, non-food merchandise and services; and at the same time it shall consider the muslim cultural (<http://www.senate.gov.ph/lisdata/71466386!.pdf>, Retrieved August 25, 2014)

Thus, halal certification in Philipines has been implemented formerly since 1980's. The decision of the Supreme Court of the Philippines in G.R. No. 153888 is the authentic recognition of the Government of the Philippines that IDCP is the duly recognized HALAL authority in the country. (<http://www.idcphalal.com/halal.html>, Retrieved August 26, 2014) Nowadays others agency or body like NCMF and other Islamic organizations in Philipines also take part in halal certification activities.

### *Standards and Guidelines*

Standard terms contain different meanings. The standard can be defined as a measure; degree; standards; a standard that is used as a measure of the weight. Whereas according to the Standard Australian (2009), the standard is referring to a published document which states that the specifications and procedures designed to ensure that the material, product, method or service is fit for purpose use and consistently function as intended. In addition, halal standards considered as important guideline especially to provide transparent religious and technical guidelines pertaining to halal certification, to enhance consistency with regard to compliance with halal certification terms and conditions which are stated by the organization, to facilitate trade and other business opportunities (<http://www.muis.gov.sg>) and the other important thing is to meet the religious basis.

In this case, a standard can be developed in the private or public, in companies, national, regional or international level, and can be applied through products, processes, services, systems and technology management, basically standard has three basic characteristics of the following: (1) in terms of its level in the company, the national level (such as Malaysian Standard (MS) and the British Standard (BS), the regional level (European standard (EN)), or international level (ISO and IEC): (2) in terms of its subject, such as food, textiles, engineering and so forth: and (3) characteristics in terms of the types, such as specifications, rules, codes of practice, codes of practice and

other. In the context of the ASEAN countries there are countries that develop standard as a general guideline, in addition there is also a country that focus on halal assurance system (Indonesia), and some even use both with halal documents related to implementation in halal certification. Besides, various efforts have been undertaken, but the standard is actually certified for use has not been achieved consistently. Each with its own standards and guidelines developed. What is done now is to collaborate indirectly. For example, for countries such as Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, halal agenda is becoming one of the main topics of the annual meeting of the Unofficial Meetings Of Religious Ministers known as MABIMS. Mohd. Al'Ikhisan dan Siti Salwa (2014) on the results of their study indicates that halal standards are regulated and governed by their own party responsible. However, in terms of implementation capacity among different industry is taking a grip on a country's official religion, culture and the economy. Prabowo *et.al* (2015) shows even the Indonesian state has a large Muslim population, yet attitude among the industry in implementing the certification has not yet reached the maximum level due to factors related to knowledge and disclosure and regulatory standards may be lacking. The findings of the study also showed that halal certification for all countries is to be 'voluntary'. The standards and guidelines adopted by the ASEAN countries can be explained by;

## **Malaysia**

Malaysian government has implemented the approach with the development of halal standards recognized global development. Evidence, the guidelines have been recognized by the United Nations (UN) and has relied on by the Codex Commission in developing Allimentarius "General Guidelines for use of the Term Halal" CAC / GL 24-1997 was enacted in 1997 which recommended measures to be taken for the use of the word halal food labels (Jafri, 2006, p.31; Ilya Nur *et al.*, 2011, p.123).

Therefore, Malaysian government through the National Standards Committee under the Department of Standards Malaysia (DCM) has established Halal Standards Development Committee (ISC 1) on 14 March 2003, ISC has played its role to developed the standard for halal products and other services related to halal such as transportation, retailing and others. Subsequently, Malaysian Standards (MS) are developed through consensus by committees which comprise from various parties which involve directly on halal activities such as producers, users, consumers and others with relevant interests. To the greatest extent possible, Malaysian Standards are aligned to or are adoption of international standards. Approval of a standard as a Malaysian Standard is governed by the Standards of Malaysia Act 1996 [Act 549]. Malaysian Standards are reviewed periodically. The use of Malaysian Standards is voluntary except in so far as they are made mandatory by regulatory authorities by means of

regulations, local by-laws or any other similar ways. Among the standards are:

- MS1500:2009: Halal Food-Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage – General Guidelines (Second Revision).
- MS 2200: PART 1 :2008: Islamic Consumer Goods - Part 1: Cosmetic And Personal Care - General Guidelines
- MS200 – 1 : 2010: Halalan Toyyiban Assurance Pipeline – Part 1:Management System Requirements For Transportation Of Goods And/Or Cargo Chain Services
- MS2400 – 2 : 2010: Halalan Toyyiban Assurance Pipeline – Part 2: Management System Requirements For Warehousing And Related Activities
- MS2400 – 3 : 2010: Halalan Toyyiban Assurance Pipeline – Part 3:Management System Requirements For Retailing
- MS2424 : 2011:Halal Pharmaceuticals – General Guidelines
- MS2200 : 2012: Islamic Consumer Goods – Part 2: Usage of Animal Bone, Skin and Hair – General Guidelines

In implementing the halal certificate also, other guidelines been used as follow:

- Manual Procedure of Halal Certification Malaysia (Third Revision) 2014
- Guidelines For Halal Assurance Management System of Malaysia Halal Certification

- Malaysian Protocol - The Malaysian Protocol For The Halal Meat And Poultry Production
- Sertu - Garis Panduan Sertu.

### **Indonesia**

Halal standard is established based on fatwa of MUI fatwa commission where it covers : materials, products and process facilities. Regarding to the standards, Halal Assurance System concept on food, drugs, and cosmetic in industry HAS23000: Requirements of halal certification as halal certification standard. Besides, there are other guidelines such as HAS23103: Guidelines of Halal Assurance System Criteria of Slaughterhouses; and HAS 23201: Requirements of Halal Food Material.

### **Singapore**

To ensure that the requirements can be met effectively and follow the *Sharia*, The Singapore MUIS Halal Standards (SMHS) have been developed by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), in collaboration with SPRING Singapore (National Standards Body) and MUIS - appointed Halal standards committee, involving religious scholars, industry players and government officials. SHMS development go through many stages, including in-depth studies or researches by committee members while also taking into account the views of the parties, whether from organizations such as local government

bodies, organizations, institutions or individuals who have knowledge and expertise in halal activities such as scholars, halal practitioners, academic members, scientists and others. Those meeting is very important before the standard be Implemented widely in Singapore.

The SMHS has two main components:

- i) General Guidelines for the Handling & Processing of Halal Food (MUIS-HC-S001)
- ii) General Guidelines for the Development & Implementation of a Halal Quality Management System (MUIS-HC-S002)

### **Brunei**

For the preparation of the halal standard, The Technical Committee on the Development of National Halal Standards and Guidelines for Halal Food was entrusted by the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources. In relation to this standard, the working group was appointed to prepare the guidelines which aims to clarify the requirements to be complied to obtain the Halal Certificate and Halal Permit issued by the Majlis Ugama Islam Brunei Darussalam (Majlis).

The standard and guidelines related to halal such as;

- Brunei Darussalam Standard Halal food (PBD24:2007)
- Brunei Darussalam Certification Guideline for Halal Certificate and Halal Label (BCG Halal 1) First Edition 2007
- Brunei Darussalam Guideline for Halal Certification and Halal Label -

Guideline for Halal Compliance Audit (BCG Halal 2) First Edition 2007

- Guideline For Certification Halal Compliance Auditor (BCG Halal 3) First Edition 2007
- Guideline for Halal Surveillance Audit (BCG Halal 4) First Edition 2007
- Guidelines for Manufacturing and Handling of Halal Medicinal Products, Traditional Medicines and Health Supplements (GD24: 2010) ,First Edition.
- Guideline for the Use of the Brunei Halal Brand (BCG Halal Brand)

### **Thailand**

To support and ensure that government policies are successfully implemented, the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT) took the initiative to collaborate with other agencies in developing standards. Therefore, a signing done between The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT) and Board of Halal Thai Promotion and Business Development to issue “National Halal Standard” as the sole standard as well as to reinforce trust to Muslim consumers in their country and also around the word.

The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT) then set up regulations for Halal certification / accreditation as common standard for the whole country. Accordingly, General Guidelines on Halal Products THS 24000: 2552 is widely used in Thailand.

## Vietnam

Since halal certification is relatively new in Vietnam among ASEAN countries, reference standards and guidelines used are from foreign countries.

## Philippines

To ensure halal matters meet the standards, The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) – Bureau of Product Standards issued PNS 2067: 2008 titled “Halal Foods – General Guidelines” to harmonize all existing national and international guidelines for halal certification and halal food trading (Josephine, Pamela and Michelle, 2011). In addition, some of the halal certification bodies in Philippines (ex. IDCP) also refer to the other ASEAN Country standards like Malaysia and LPPOM MUI

### *The Certification Process*

Halal certification process in ASEAN countries quite unique. This is due to the availability of countries where in some countries, their halal certification is managed by the government or body appointed by the government and there is also a stand-alone act as voluntary. What distinguishes all certification bodies in terms of the certification process is the ability and technology capability through research on halal certification body of official portal of the ASEAN countries, it was found that Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei are more forward than the Philippines and Vietnam. Whatever the means used the certification

process still covers the application, as audit and compliance checks;

## Malaysia

Beginning in 2012 the implementation of halal certification in Malaysia involving all states have adopted 1 system, 1 Standard and Procedure, 1 Logo, 1 and 1 Certificate of the Act. Malaysian halal certification process through several stages starting with the application, auditing and monitoring/enforcement.

- Application

All applications Malaysian halal certification managed online through the system MyeHalal start of the application until the issuance of the certificate. Applications MYeHalal administered and placed in the data center JAKIM containing major module for staff (revised application, field audits, certification panel, monitoring and reporting of statistics), the applicant (manual application of MyeHalal system, information on companies) and consumers (news, certification information, directory of Malaysia's halal). In MYeHalal system, application will be sorted by location of the factory and only applications that are eligible and meet the conditions set will be processed. At this stage, the review of documentation carried out. Among the matters under review, including the ingredients used, ingredient suppliers, halal certificate / certificate of laboratory analysis of the ingredients, the process flow, control system and so clean (JAKIM, Malaysia Halal Certification Procedures Manual

(Second Revision) 2011). Eligible and complete applications are required to pay an application fee for the further actions.

- Halal Audit Compliance

For halal auditing process by the competent authority, some level of the audit process: 1) Auditing process will be done after receipt of payment; 2) Scheduling the audit will be conducted by the relevant officials and certified by the Auditor ; 3) Auditor will examine the factory / premises consist of at least two officers of the *Sharia* and technical; 4)The audit will be carried out in two forms; internal audits and field ; 5)The report will be presented The Pre-Panel and Panel appointed Halal Certification.

Halal certificate will be issued to companies that have been approved by the Panel Meeting Halal certification. Certificates issued are recorded the names that have been certified halal products and company names or product factory, the reference standard for the issuance of certificates (eg: MS15000: 2009 for food products), halal certification company registration number and expiration date. Malaysian halal certificate holder is subject to the conditions set out in the back of the certificate.

- Monitoring and Enforcement

Halal Hub Division, JAKIM through the Monitoring and Enforcement Branch responsible for ensuring compliance with the Malaysian halal standard and non-enforcement of the Halal Certification Malaysia (SPHM).Monitoring involves

periodic inspections and follow-up inspection conducted on the SPHM continuous schedule from time to time. The inspections were carried out by JAKIM / MAIN / JAIN with other law enforcement agencies based on public complaints or non-compliance during periodic monitoring results (JAKIM, ISO Guide 65.2012).

### **Indonesia**

A process through certain procedure that involve both procedure and LPPOM MUI to ensure that materials used, production facility, production process and halal assurance system practiced by the company or producer have met halal requirement of LPPOM, so the product(s) produced can be declared as halal products(s) by Fatwa Committee in a halal certificate. Thus, for any company or producer who intend to get halal certification from LPPOM MUI such as processing industry, slaughterhouse, restaurant catering service, and distributor must fulfill the requirements for Halal Certification HAS 23000 (Policies, Procedures and Criteria).

### **Singapore**

MUIS issues Halal certificates based on a set of systems-focused Halal certification requirements known as the Singapore MUIS Halal Quality Management System (HalMQ). To date, MUIS offers 7 Halal certification schemes for various sectors types of industry. The halal certification process include application submission, processing, certification and post

certification. During the halal certification process the applicants must fulfill the halal requirement and procedures and follow the term and condition set by MUIS.

### **Brunei**

Halal certification in Brunei is divided into two; halal certification and halal permit for halal food products. Halal certification is for food premises certified halal by the Islamic Religious Council of Brunei and was given a period of one or three years. While the permit is granted for the use of halal labels on food products that have been certified halal by the Council. Every permit issued shall be lawful for a particular type of food product and is valid for life as long as meet the requirements and conditions under the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order 2005.

Similar to the halal certification bodies, the applicants must follow the halal regulation and guidelines set up by competent body. Here, the guideline used is authorized under the Majlis, which requires the place of business to set up and implement *Halal* procedures that meet the Brunei Darussalam Standard for Halal Food PBD 24 : 2007, followed by the application and granting of the Halal Certificate and Halal Label. The certification process practiced in Brunei includes adequacy, compliance and any follow-up audits by appointed certified auditors. Then, the Majlis will verify and confirm the maintenance of the certified *Halal* procedures through surveillance audit.

### **Thailand**

Halal certification administration under the Department of Halal Affairs where all the receiving and processing of applications is conducted by this department. Application involve the following categories: consumables / commodities; butcher and slaughterhouse / processing plant; food and beverage products, including kitchen; meat and meat-based products imported; products for export to other countries.

Halal certification process are 1) Acceptance of applications - Applications created manually must be submitted to the Office of CICOT by hand or by post, the assessment document is made to ensure that the ingredients used in halal and does not contradict Islamic law based on the data base of raw materials that have been developed by CICOT, confirmation of acceptance communicated to the applicant and a new application is required to attend training provided by CICOT; 2) Auditing process – Appointed auditors will conduct the auditing based on the procedures and its findings questionable ingredients will be sent to the Halal Science Centre, Chulalongkorn University for analysis, field audit covering operating procedures of the process, cleanliness, store, waste management, and other vehicles 3; Compliance Inspection - This inspection is carried out without notice for all matters related to the halal certification has been specified in the contract agreement, both assisted by Halal Certificate Halal Affairs Committee consisting of *Sharia* experts and

specialists in food technology, all reports and recommendations of the audit will be presented to the Halal Affairs Committee meetings will be held as necessary and appropriate. Certificates will be issued once the applicant is able to meet halal requirements.

### Vietnam

Halal certification process in Vietnam is based on the practice of halal certification bodies respectively. However, the process is basically still covering the application, assessment documents, auditing and monitoring / enforcement.

### Philippines

The promulgation of the Philippine National Standards on Halal Food in February 28, 2008 was a “breakthrough” in the sense that both the industry and certifying bodies would now have common references and benchmarks in halal compliance in relation to the production and processing of food. Intensified halal education program is underway and being implemented nationwide by the Department of Trade and Industry. Since Philippines has many Islamic body involve in halal certification, the process of halal certification in the The Philippines are still subject to regulation by the certification body.

#### *Referral and Legal Issues*

In the implementation of halal certification among ASEAN countries, the basis or reference for the meet halal certification is

based on the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and the *Sharia law* as applied by the country. Some of the countries explain in depth reference for the certification as Islamic School of Thought Practices (*Mazhab*) that are included in the Act or in the standards such as Malaysia and Brunei. In addition, there are also countries in which the certification decision or issue supported by relevant national fatwa committee (Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand). However, for the new countries in the implementation of halal certification, reference fatwa Islamic state world-countries also be considered by the halal certification bodies (Vietnam, Philipines). The referral and legal issues related to Halal certification among ASEAN countries can be presented as:

### Malaysia

“Hukum Syarak” or Shariah law as applied in Malaysia means the laws of Islam in the Mazhab of Shafie or the laws of Islam in any of the other Mazhab of Hanafi, Maliki or Hanbali which are approved by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to be in force in the Federal Territory, Penang, Melaka, Sabah and Sarawak or the Ruler of any State to be in force in the respective State while “fatwa” means any religious decree which are verified by the any authority related to the religion of Islam. (Trade Descriptioan Act 2011; Trade Description (Definition of Halal) Order 2011 and Trade Description (Definition of Halal) (Amendment) Order 2012. In certain issues related to the halal especially on new bio technologies including the *istihalah*, it shall referred to National

Fatwa Committee. This committee will make the decision on any issues.

### **Indonesia**

Halal certification implemented by MUI LPPOM, agency involvement is very important in that they do not stray from the path of *sharia law*. Therefore, the National Fatwa Committee involved fully as committee members in halal certification. Any issues related to halal will be decided by halal fatwa committee.

### **Singapore**

Halal certification is done by the Singapore based on the Quran and Sunnah as well as a fatwa, standards, terms and conditions of certification. Related fatwa issued by the Fatwa Committee halal Singapore while halal standards are drawn by Halal Standards Committees involving of muslim scholar, government agencies, industry players and consumer. Some issues may have differing opinions amongst the Islamic scholars such as new biotechnology, use of ingredients of unconventional sources, animal slaughtering and meat processing techniques. All these issues are referred to the Mufti Office.

### **Brunei**

Shariah means the Laws of Islam in the Mazhab Shafi'i or in any other mazhab which are approved by His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan to be in force in Brunei Darussalam. Brunei Darussalam as country where the system is fully Islamic

governance, several committees appointed by the role of halal and its activities. Any issues relating to halal is referred to the Mufti's office. Moreover, the mufti's office also involves as committee member in halal activities.

### **Thailand**

Determination laws and fatwa refer to the Quran, Hadith and Islamic School Of Thought, also issued fatwas from other Muslim. Besides, the determination of the law and the ruling made by the Council of Scholars, headed by Sheikh-Islam composed of scholars from the University of Al-Azhar University and the University of Madinah, lecturer and chairman / member of several associations / Islamic organizations including CICOT. Any how, if some new products attached for certification are still confused in Halal status this case must be transferred to the Council of Halal Scholars (Ulama) awaiting for solution.

### **Vietnam**

Halal certification in Vietnam is dependent on halal certification bodies managed by non-governmental organizations. Up to now there is no specific law or as a reference in the implementation of halal certification in Vietnam. Reference to any issues or halal management is referred to halal certification body itself as well as other Islamic country.

In general, their view is in line with other Islamic School of Thought as practiced in Malaysia and other ASEAN countries. *Shariah Law* - means the Islamic law based

on the AI-Quran, AI-hadith(Traditions of the Messenger of Allah), Ijma (Consensus of Islamic Scholars) and Qiyas (Legal Deduction or Analogy) according to the Shafei or anyone of the Hanafi, Maliki or Hanbali Schools of Thought (Fourteenth congress of the Republic Of The Philippines, First Regular Session, <http://www.senate.gov.ph/lisdata/71466386!>. Retrieved August, 28,2014).

### **Philippines**

However, they also open the critical issues to take into account the views of Muslim organizations abroad as long as not contradict with the Al-Quran and Sunnah. Since they do not have National Fatwa Committee, in any cases or issues relating to halal that need a reference, it will be discussed at the syariah committee whis is appointed by the Ulama Coucil or respective halal certification bodies.

### *Halal Mark or 'Logo'*

Halal mark refers to any symbol, sign or logo that indicates a product is really fulfill halal requirements by certification body or authority in the country. A certified products are covering all aspects of either ingredient, content, process, logistics and any relevant in the determination of halal (Mohammad Naim, 2014). It also consider as form part of a visual branding system indicating many products as safe to consume, as displayed commercially in many places (Fischer, 2012). In the context of the ASEAN countries, marking to determine a product's halal certification is dependent

on the body or authority in the country. For Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and Thailand marking halal logo is represented by one logo. Unlike Vietnam and the Philippines, as the halal logo marking on the product is more than a logo design by certification body respectively.

In certain circumstances, the availability of unscrupulous manufactures or traders also use their own logos designed or known '*self-declaration*' since especially for the country does not limit the power of the recognition's logo. Moreover, until now there is no country that compulsory placing the logo on all the halal products. It seems like voluntarily for manufacturers or traders to place the logo for their products. Thus, based on the cases reported in Malaysia, it shows that a large number of offences are done by the vendors or manufacturers in Malaysia mostly due to inaccurate information to the consumers, especially in term of using the Halal mark (Mustafa 'Afifi & Azlin, 2014). Among the cases reported, three directors of Rail Passion Sdn. Limited. (Rail Passion) was brought in the Magistrate's Court on two charges of selling coffee containing the pork deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) in their shop, Kluang Rail Coffee without notifying its existence within the statement written on the label of the coffee packaging (Utusan Malaysia, 20 May 2011); Manufacturer using fake Halal label on baking ingredients (Berita Harian, 18 July, 2014); the use of halal logo on edible items produced from chickens that are not slaughtered properly according to Islamic law (Berita Harian, 20 February 2008).

Moreover, most of the enforcement is more focused on the misuse of logos that have been obtained unless there are complaints from consumers regarding to the halal matters. Table 1 shows halal mark used by ASEAN countries (Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam and Philippines):

### **HALAL HUB CERTIFICATION POTENTIAL**

Currently, it is undoubtedly that ASEAN countries have tremendous potential in the halal certification on four major areas, which are the cores of halal certification. They are - Halal standard reference, Leading halal-based industries, Training Centre of Expertise, World leading halal technology systems, Halal ecosystem and the unity of halal marks:-

Halal standard reference - halal industry is not only focused on the field of Islamic finance and investments, but it includes all-inclusive food, consumables,

pharmaceuticals, logistics and so on. For halal certification in the ASEAN countries, it has now become a world reference in particular organizations involved in the halal certification. It can be seen where various halal standard has just been released and as a guide to industry and other countries in the world. For example Indonesia as a developing country compared to other ASEAN countries in introducing the Halal Assurance System has become the reference by various countries around the world such as Islamic body in Canada, France and so on. Leading halal-based industries - Existence of halal standards are supported by the work process and integrated from a variety of government agencies, particularly favorable to the halal industry among countries - countries in ASEAN. This is evident in the export of halal products by Malaysians to ten countries (China, Singapore, Indonesia, the United States, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Thailand, Japan, South Korea and India) have reached

TABLE 1  
Halal mark used by ASEAN countries

Malaysia	Indonesia	Singapore	Brunei	Thailand	Vietnam	Philippines
						
						

Source : Portal related agency

RM32 billion during the year 2012 (HDC, 2013). Similarly, Thailand in 2012 where Thailand considered as the sixth largest exporter of halal food in the world (Thailand Halal Halal World, 2012, p.21);

Training Centre of Expertise Halal - In most ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand now has a research institute specializing in halal in addition to addressing issues arising from the development of food technology. Thailand, for example, has pioneered the laboratory analysis expertise among Islamic halal certification bodies of other ASEAN countries through building their own labs, as well as Malaysia, which is currently under construction. However, cooperation between the Islamic certification bodies with relevant agencies in their respective countries remains significant given the need of laboratory analysis, especially related to critical materials.

World leading halal technology systems - witnessed how the success of the organization should be in line with current technology. In the halal industry among ASEAN countries, it begins with the manual method until it moves through the online system e - halal and now has received recognition from various parties.

Halal Ecosystem – Each ASEAN country has basic implementation on halal. Therefore, an effort needs to be developed especially on the development of human resources. Through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) ASEAN 2015 in line with Malaysia as the chairman of ASEAN 2015, it is the starting point to equip

global industry practitioners, policy makers, entrepreneurial development agencies and even governments with technical knowledge for developing infrastructure needed for standards and conformance (Salama, 2015).

The Unity of Halal Marks – Though ASEAN countries have similarities and differences in halal practices, it does not mean they cannot be unify especially in terms of halal marks. To support this, by 2012 halal the Indonesian government officially for the first time recognized the Malaysian halal trust mark and now permitting Malaysia to trade its halal products in Malaysia (Yahya, 2012).

## THE IMPLICATION OF STUDY

The finding from the study shows that through halal practices among ASEAN countries and future potential has given several major implications. It can improve mutual understanding among ASEAN nation in the sense of halal scoop because each country can understand Halal practices adopted and thus to make the halal products as an economic source to strengthen ties among the countries. Any related problems can be solved easily, quick and accurately based on the Halal practiced.

It also has certain practical implication to offer. In respective of Islamic bodies that govern halal certification, it has broaden the space to improve the credibility of certification by making reference and comparison to the law, standards, regulations nor the certification systems that have been implemented by the respective nations. This contributes for it to achieve a higher

standard and at an equivalent level. Hence gives the ability to market a Halal product at a global scale and became the model to countries outside ASEAN. In addition, Halal practitioners no longer feel the lack of information on the Halal dietary practices among ASEAN countries. In fact it could facilitate the marketing process because of a clear understanding regarding the situation and the real needs of the particular country.

In addition, it has social implications. The users will feel more confident towards any products manufactured by any ASEAN country without feeling contempt to associate it with religious issues. What's important is how a said Halal product actually fulfill the law of syariah practiced in the particular country.

### THE STUDY LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to only seven countries excluding Laos, Cambodia etc. through secondary data from journal, conference paper, electronic media and email communication. As halal development growing fast especially on procedures and standards, laws and technology used, an alternative approach needs for further study.

### CONCLUSION

Implementation of halal certification not restricted to a particular aspect instead it should be seen as a whole including the role of bodies certifying authority, laws related to halal, standards and guidelines, the certification process, referral and legal issues, halal mark or 'logo'. Halal

certification body that exists has played a role in the halal certification with each capabilities and functions. For example in terms of roles, laws, standards and logo there are several differences in implementation. Compared to the legal issues and referral certification process is more prominent in terms of implementation. In addition, halal certification is seen as a claim that requires the cooperation of the state and country setting. Therefore, to increase the capacity of ASEAN countries as halal hub certification, a platform is required, particularly in its efforts to integrate the region's halal certification especially with the issues that arise relating to halal status. Here ASEAN countries have huge potential in the certification not to mention there are similarities in terms of school of thought, Islamic practices, and mostly supported by the state government and at least give serious attention to halal requirements, especially in a country with a diverse population in term of religion, ethnicity and cultural differences. In order to strengthen the ASEAN region, the blueprint should be developed as guidelines and related halal dietary reference.

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**Review Article**

**Conceptualising Culture, Identity and Region: Recent Reflections on Southeast Asia**

**Victor T. King<sup>1,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Adjunct Professor, Center for Ethnic Studies and Development, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Huay Kaew Road, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand

<sup>2</sup>Emeritus Professor, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, United Kingdom

**ABSTRACT**

Debates concerning the definition of Southeast Asia as a region are intense and ongoing, and the delimitation and rationale for regional analysis have become increasingly problematical in the era of globalisation. Southeast Asia is characterised, though not clearly and unequivocally defined by cultural diversity and openness. It has a long history of cultural connections with other parts of the world and it demonstrates the importance of physical migrations and cultural flows into, across and out of the region, which have generated cross-cultural encounters and social intercourse, with the Indian sub-continent, East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. These interactions have in turn resulted in cultural hybridisation, synthesis and mixed or *mestizo* communities, the phenomena of pluralism and multiculturalism within national boundaries, and in the co-existence of culturally different majority and minority populations. The processes of cultural differentiation and interaction have made Southeast Asia one of the most culturally complex regions in the world and have complicated the process of regional definition. In spite of these cultural complexities, there are those who have argued that it is ‘the ubiquity of publicly displayed cultural forms’ and the fact that Southeast Asia is ‘arguably the best place to look for culture’ which serves to define it as a region. The centrality of culture in the definition of this region will be explored and it is proposed that the conceptualisation of the relationship between culture and identity might be a way forward in addressing these regional complexities.

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*E-mail addresses:*

victor.king@cmu.ac.th, v.t.king@leeds.ac.uk (Victor T. King)

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## INTRODUCTION

This review brings together a compilation of ideas related to culture, identity and region with reference to Southeast Asia; it comprises reflections on what has been happening in this field during the past decade. When the author was engaged in the writing of *The Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region* (King, 2008, [2011]), which was primarily an exercise in historical, structural, political-economic and comparative analysis within a regional context, it became clear that there was a substantial literature in what can appropriately be labelled 'the sociology of culture', including the complex interrelationship between culture and identity, which could not be included in that volume. It seemed difficult to accommodate it within the particular tradition in which the book was located at that time, which had been inspired by the Dutch school of Non-Western Sociology founded and developed by W.F. Wertheim and continued by Otto van den Muijzenburg and researchers at the University of Amsterdam (see, for example, Wertheim, 1964, 1967, 1974, 1993).

The cultural turn in sociology had emerged especially from the 1980s with the increasing interest in 'posts': post-modernism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, post-Orientalism and the multidisciplinary enterprise of cultural studies, preoccupied with the dramatic and expanding impact of the global media, and communication and information technology on developing societies. A major inspiration for these intellectual developments

were Foucault-Derrida-Lacan-derived relationship between power and knowledge, the all-consuming passion among increasing numbers of people for consumption in late capitalism, the emergence of cultural politics and an engagement with the enormous opportunities for cross-cultural encounters in diasporas, international labour migration, the movement of refugees and asylum seekers, business travel and global tourism (Jenks, 1993, pp.136-158; and see Clammer, 2002, pp.9-12; Goh, 2002a, pp.21-28, 2002b; Kahn, 1995; and Turner, 1990).

Although the author is not an enthusiastic supporter of post-modern and post-structuralist fashions (see, for example, Jackson, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005), the importance for social scientists of coming to terms with the concept of culture has to be acknowledged, and specifically for those scholars interested in understanding culture within a Southeast Asian regional context. In Southeast Asia, these cultural interests have flourished in the recent concerns among social scientists with what is often referred to as 'ethnicity' (King & Wilder, 1982; and see Brown, 1994; and for Asia, see Mackerras, 2003), and with what has come to be called increasingly and in a much more expanded and all-encompassing cultural studies sense 'identity' or 'cultural identity' (see, for example, Kahn, 1998). In its full-blown modes, post-modernism and post-structuralism, though variegated, frequently require the same kind of efforts of translation into a simple and straightforward English language which, in an earlier sociological excursion, C.

Wright Mills undertook on behalf of Talcott Parsons (Mills, 1959, pp.25-33). Stanislav Andrewski makes the same point with regard to Parsonian sociology about the impenetrable style adopted by some post-war senior sociologists and their acolytes in his characterisation of social science ‘as sorcery’ (1972). As a more recent example, James Goodman’s work has been selected at random in the author’s general reading on globalisation; the concluding pages of his chapter on ‘the new inequalities’ in Asia Pacific demonstrate a similar kind of linguistic density, comprising expressions such as ‘reciprocal and reflexive mobilisations’, ‘resistance identities’, ‘the capacity to reground the public realm’, ‘transformative project identities’, ‘liberal hegemonism’, ‘transversal solidarity’, disrupting disembodied liberalism’, ‘alternative normative foundations’, and ‘an enveloping politicisation of hegemonism and the agents of new constitutionalism’ (2003, pp.46-47). It is doubtful that most university undergraduate students would begin to comprehend this barrage of opaque and concentrated concepts, yet, in spite of this lack of clarity the author recognises there is something in post-modernism that requires attention.

Although there is a chapter in the author’s book *The Sociology of Southeast Asia* (2008, [2011]) on ‘Ethnicity and Society’ and another on the ‘Asian values’ debate, as well as references to identities in the context of changing class, gender and urban relations, insufficient attention was devoted to a comparative study of the

development and transformation of complex and shifting identities across Southeast Asia. In the present author’s book there was a failure to embark on any sustained sociological consideration of the burgeoning literature on the effects of and responses to globalisation, consumerism, the media, migrations and tourist encounters (see for example, King, 2013, pp.167-180, 2015, pp.497-527). With regard to this failure there had to be an acceptance of the very persuasive case which has been made in a Southeast Asian and wider Asian context for the integration of perspectives from cultural studies with political economy analyses in understanding a region (Clammer, 2002, p.11; and see Ollier & Winter, 2006; Reynolds, 2006). Furthermore, the concern to locate cultural studies, following Stuart Hall, within the histories and legacies of colonialism in the post-1945 developing world should also be addressed (see Morley & Chen, 1996, pp.10-13).

My current commitment to promote the study of ‘identities in motion’ in a regional context is designed to rescue my earlier excursions into the sociology of Southeast Asia in an attempt to comprehend the dynamic, shifting, fluid, open-ended and contingent character of cultural identity. Regional analysis necessarily involves a comparative approach, but in my view, it requires a more loosely formulated notion of comparison or ‘apt illustration’, or ‘inter-referencing’ and affinities’ in order to reveal the social and cultural characteristics of Southeast Asia and the social and cultural processes at work there (see, for example,

Chua, 2014; Béteille, 1990). In recognising the problematic nature of comparison in the social sciences, I believe we are on safer ground by confining ourselves to ‘restricted comparisons’ rather than indulging in such bold exercises that entail comparison across Asia as conducted by Aat Vervoorn (2002). In Vervoorn’s attempt to cast light on social, cultural, political, economic and demographic changes across Asia, he fails to give any precision to what he means by Asia other than that it embraces the Middle East through Central Asia to East Asia and includes Southeast Asia. He undertakes an impossible task.

### **THE DEFINITION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PROBLEM OF AREAS**

Attempts to define Southeast Asia as a region in its own right and studies on the related multidisciplinary field of Southeast Asian Studies have intensified during the past decade; sometimes debates and discussions are confined to Southeast Asia, and at other times the region is located in broader discussions of Asia and Asia-Pacific (see King, 2014; Goh, 2011a, 2011b, 2014). The intensification of these concerns appears to be generated by five main concerns (see Ludden, 2000; Miyoshi & Harootunian, 2002; Morris-Suzuki, 2000; Szanton, 2004; Waters, 2000). They are:

- 1) The relative decline in interest in regional studies in the West specifically with regard to such regions as Southeast Asia, as a result of increasing scepticism of the ability or need to demarcate regions in the era of globalisation;
- 2) In pedagogical and financial terms the decline in student interest in the value of regional studies and learning other languages, and the decrease in government funding for area studies;
- 3) A questioning of the theoretical and methodological contribution and robustness of area studies approaches;
- 4) Criticisms of Euro-American-centric perspectives in area studies, particularly with regard to Asia, the colonial and Orientalist roots of the study and demarcation of regions, and the assumed continuation of Western academic hegemony;
- 5) The continuing problematic relationships between social science disciplines, as the proper generators of ‘universalising’ theories and appropriate methodologies, and the localising, grounded concerns of area specialists.

That these debates and trends should be qualified in that the so-called ‘crisis’ in area studies remain patchy; there has been decline in some countries and institutions and expansion in others. Not all areas of the globe have experienced a decline, even in Western academic institutions where there has been a noticeable decrease in the attention to such regions as Southeast Asia and South Asia, there is still considerable and increasing interest in such regions as East Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe and Russia. There are strong advocates of an area studies approach and its scholarly value whereby they persist in arguing the

case for context-specific, locally sensitive and grounded research.

The preoccupation with the definition of Southeast Asia wider Asia and the importance of area studies escalated dramatically from the early 2000s through to the present time with publication of edited books (accompanied by numerous journal articles, for example, Evans 2002; Jackson 2003a, 2003b; Burgess 2004; Kuijper 2008; Schäfer 2010), though we can discern the interest to provide substance and essence to Southeast Asia well before then (see for example, Fifield, 1976, 1983), which continued through the 1980s (see, for example, Emmerson, 1984) and through the 1990s (see for example, McVey, 1995; Reid, 1999).

More recently, there have been studies that point to certain socio-cultural, historical and geographical characteristics which enable us to differentiate Southeast Asia from other parts of Asia (Winzeler, 2011; Osborne, 2013; Reid, 2015). Indeed, in the writing of a general book on Southeast Asia, there is a requirement and a necessary compulsion to identify and define the area within which the subject matter, debates and themes are being presented.

There have been some prominent Southeast Asian scholars who have proposed a different pathway from the attempt to essentialise Southeast Asia namely replacing the ‘old’ Euro-American-dominated Southeast Asian Studies with something ‘new’ which is based on local scholarship, interests, agendas and priorities and on ‘alternative’, Asian-constructed discourses,

though with some recognition of the need to continue scholarly engagement with the West (Goh, 2011a, 2011b; Heryanto, 2002, 2007; and see Sears, 2007).

There are also those who contend that there have been significant theoretical developments generated in the study of Southeast Asia, and that the region should be seen as an ‘epicentre’ for scholarly innovation within the context of ‘centrality’ of Asia (Chou & Houben, 2006a, 2006b; Edmond *et al.*, 2011a, 2011b); in this vein, some anthropologists have also argued the study of Southeast Asia can be defined by a certain dominant scholarly style and preoccupation (Bowen, 1995, 2000; Steedly, 1999).

Despite the decline of interest in Southeast Asia in some countries, particularly in Europe and North America, there are many studies involving the region in other parts of the world (Reid, 2003a, 2003b; Saw & Wong, 2007; Park & King, 2013). Scholars have pointed to the opportunities and possibilities provided by methodological developments in the practices and approaches embodied in Southeast Asian Studies (Huotari *et al.*, 2014; Huotari, 2014), and have attempted to establish the importance of grounded and locally contextualised research. Some scholars have noted recent developments in the teaching and learning environment of area studies and innovations particularly the way in which knowledge of an area is presented (Wesley-Smith & Goss, 2010).

Goh Beng Lan’s position (2011a, 2011b, 2014) embraces much of what has just been

presented. She argues for the importance of Southeast Asia in global terms, for the vitality of scholarship within the region and for the contribution of local scholars to understanding their own region. She also emphasises the importance of situating knowledge production in a Southeast Asian context and addresses the distinctions and mutually enriching interactions between locally generated (insider) and Euro-American-derived (outsider) interests, perspectives and approaches.

However, in accepting some elements of what has been argued for Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Studies, the author's overall position up to now has been a sceptical one. Although he has written and edited general books on Southeast Asia (see King, 1999; King & Wilder, 2003 [2006], King, 2008 [2011]), he continues to hold to the conceptualisation of the Southeast Asian region as a 'contingent device', following the stimulating paper by Sutherland (2005; and see McVey 2005, pp.308-319), and the edited book by Kratoska *et al.* (2005a, 2005b). Scholars who have specialised on Southeast Asia, particularly those located in Southeast Asian Studies centres, institutes and programmes, have frequently been engaged in debates about what defines their region and what is distinctive about it; they naturally desire to give it some kind of form, substance and rationale. Furthermore, these concerns have been much more prominent in academic disciplines which have a greater preoccupation with location, contextualisation, concreteness, and the need for grounded and detailed

understanding. History, archaeology and pre-history, geography, anthropology and linguistics immediately come to mind; regional definition does not have such a preoccupation for universalising academic disciplines as economics, political science and international relations and sociology.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be another pathway that we might take in our concerns to delimit a region. I accept that Southeast Asia now has a clear political and regional identity and a global voice through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It has become a reality after being constructed by external powers in the context of the Pacific War, decolonisation and the Cold War (Kratoska *et al.*, 2005b). That reality continues to be expressed in academic centres, institutes, departments, posts, programmes, publications, conferences and media engagement. But there is always the desire to give substance to an artificially created political entity: to fill it out and anchor it in social, cultural, historical and geographical terms. Although the author remains sceptical, his current view is that an exploration of the concept of culture and its relationship to identity can at least provide a partial solution to the dilemma of regional definition. The concept of culture and identity is explained below.

## **THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE**

What should be emphasised here, in the lines of John Clammer, is that Southeast Asia is characterised by cultural diversity and openness; it has a long history of cultural connections with other parts of

the world demonstrating the importance of physical migrations and cultural flows into, across and out of the region, which have generated cross-cultural encounters and social intercourse. These interactions have in turn resulted in cultural hybridisation, synthesis and mixed or *mestizo* communities, the phenomenon of pluralism and multiculturalism within national boundaries, particularly within a country like Malaysia, and the obvious defining characteristic of the region expressed in the co-existence of culturally different majority and minority populations (Clammer, 2002, pp.9-11; and see Forshee, 1999, pp.1-5).

These historical processes can be framed in terms of the twin concepts of differentiation (and diversity) and convergence (Mackerras *et al.*, 1998, pp.1-14). Using this simple perspective we need not trouble ourselves endlessly about whether or not Western theories on culture, particularly post-structuralist ones, are appropriate in analysing and understanding other cultures (see Jackson, 2004, and Morris, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002). The processes of cultural differentiation and interaction nevertheless have made Southeast Asia one of the most culturally complex regions in the world. Indeed, there are those who have argued that it is 'the ubiquity of publicly displayed cultural forms' (Bowen, 1995, pp.1047-1048) and the fact that Southeast Asia is 'arguably the best place to look for culture' which has served to define it as a region (Steedly, 1999, pp.432-433). The centrality of culture has in turn prompted social scientists of a

particular theoretical persuasion, to pursue these cultural expressions relentlessly and develop a particular way of perceiving and examining culture in the region (Bowen, 2000; King, 2001, 2005, 2006). On this last point Mary Steedly has proposed that it is the work of a particular assemblage of American social scientists, pre-eminent among them Clifford Geertz (see, for example, 1973), which has 'thoroughly associated this part of the world, and Indonesia in particular, with a meaning-based, interpretive concept of culture' (1999, p.432; and see Goh, 2002a, p.29, 2002b).

Yet, the situation in Southeast Asia has become, if anything, infinitely more complex since Geertz's and his followers' field research. More recently, processes of cultural change in the region have become intertwined with and indeed are generated by modern forms of globalisation, the expansion of consumer culture under late capitalism, and the rapidly growing influence of the global media and trans-national communication systems. Zygmunt Baumann, for example, has pointed to a shift from the focus on political economy to the centrality of culture in post-modern society so that power, influence and control operate in more subtle ways through advertising, public relations and the creation of needs and longings by those who generate and control flows of information and knowledge (1987, 1998). In engaging with Baumann's observations on current post-modern predicaments, regional specialists of Southeast Asia need to address and understand the character of cultural

change and encounters in the region and the responses of local people to this bewildering range of forces, pressures, interactions and influences. The comparative, region-wide study of culture is therefore central to this enterprise and within that the importance of understanding identity and its construction and transformation in political and economic contexts. However, *contra* Bowen and Steedly, the author of the present study would argue that rather than seeing culture as ‘publicly displayed’, ‘interpretive’ and ‘meaning-based’, it should be linked with the concept of ‘identity’.

As Goh Beng-Lan has argued in her interesting study of cultural processes, cultural politics, power, resistance and identities in contemporary urban Penang and specifically the conflicts and struggles which the Portuguese-Eurasians of Kampung Serani experienced against the redevelopment of their long-established community, our current notions of modernity in late capitalism are influenced by ‘the issue of cultural identity and difference’ and in the construction of what we call ‘the modern’. Moreover, when local agency, context, interests and priorities are acknowledged then we can better understand how ‘modern forms and ideas are produced, imbued with local meanings, and contested in modern Southeast Asia’ (2002a, p.28). One of the most important elements of these more recent approaches to the understanding of change in Southeast Asia is that of culture as comprising ‘meanings’ and ‘understandings’ within the context of identity construction, maintenance and negotiation.

### *Definition of Culture*

It is without doubt culture is a concept. It is, as Kahn proposes, an ‘intellectual construct’ (1992, p.161). Nevertheless, there are several considerations in contemplating the character of culture. Culture is taught, learned, shared and transmitted as a part of collective life (this is purely Parsonian [1951] and also derives from the Tylorian ‘complex whole’ [1871]). It comprises ideational, conceptual, conscious dimension of human life and the ideas, accumulated skills and expertise embodied in material objects (art and artefacts) and carried and given expression most vitally in language. Culture encompasses the symbolic, meaningful, evaluative, interpretative, motivated, cognitive and classificatory dimensions of humanity (Geertz, 1973). It refers, in its more popular connotations, to ‘ways of life’ and ‘ways of behaving’ and therefore, pervasive. It has to be understood in terms of form, content and process and although there are cultural regularities and continuities which are easily detected. There are also quite obvious alterations, modifications, contestations and transformations. In some ways, though not as neatly bounded as was once originally supposed, it is patterned and has a certain systematic quality so that someone who has not been socialised into a particular culture, can, when he or she has discovered its ethical judgements, values, standards, beliefs and views of the world, see the connections which it makes between cause and effect and the explanations which it provides for the place and function of

humans within the natural world and for the bases of human interaction, organisation and behaviour, can make sense of it even without necessarily approving of its underlying principles. Having said this we need to accept that there may be events and behaviour which are beyond culture or constitute a ‘counterpoint’ to it which they are not ‘meaningful’ or ‘comprehensible’ (see Daniel, 1991).

Alternatively, having contemplated what culture ‘is’ we should also address what culture ‘is not’. It is not, in ‘essentialist’ mode, firmly bounded, closed and delineated. It is not a totality, rather, it is open-ended and constantly in motion. In this connection, social science analyses need to adopt carefully delineated comparative perspectives, examine several sites, and move across disciplines and time. Moreover, culture is not homogeneous, integrated and agreed, rather, it is contested and is part of systems of power, privilege and economic inequality, as well as generated, sustained and transformed in strategies, discourses and practices; these contests and struggles operate at different levels and in different arenas. But although those who have power and control economic resources can more easily impose their cultural visions, values and behaviours on others, this imposition, or in Gramsci’s terms ‘cultural hegemony’, is never complete (Gramsci, 1990, pp.47-54; 1978; Hall, 1996, pp.411-440; Wertheim, 1974).

### *Culture and Identity*

Culture is also very closely implicated in the concept of identity or ethnicity. It was Raoul Naroll, among many others, who defined ‘ethic units’ as ‘culture-bearing units’, although his out-of-date mechanistic approach to cross-cultural classification was abandoned many years ago (1964). Some social scientists have indeed talked of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘cultural identity’ in the same breath because the main elements of ethnicity and identity are cultural: they comprise values, beliefs, and behaviour and the meanings which are given or attached to these as well as differences (and similarities) in language and material culture.

However, ethnicity has increasingly come to be seen as a special kind of identity attached to particular groups, communities, majorities or minorities and which command broader or larger scale forms of allegiance and loyalty. In its specifically ethnic dimension, identity is what distinguishes or differentiates a particular category and/or group of individuals from others. Ethnicity is frequently expressed as unifying and differentiating people at varying levels of contrast, and with the process of separating or distinguishing some from others by certain cultural criteria (Hitchcock & King, 1997). In many cases that which unifies and defines some people is considered to be what makes them human; in other words, it is their particular culture which marks them off and gives them identity and which logically encourages them to classify others as less than human: sub-human, savage, barbaric or primitive (Leach, 1982). This is especially

the case when the majority or dominant population in nation-states categorise the minorities as ‘marginal’, ‘undeveloped’ and ‘unsophisticated’.

In this connection, one of the major concerns of political scientists working on Southeast Asia has been the process of nation-building and the associated tensions and conflicts between attempts by political elites to unify and homogenise, and the responses of the constituent communities of the state which often wishes to retain separate, viable and valued local identities. Boundary definition and maintenance are also rendered much more problematical in situations of ‘cultural hybridization and syncretism’ (Chua, 1995, p.1); yet, our attention to boundaries is crucial in any study of identity maintenance and transformation (Barth, 1969). A relatively neglected field of research in Southeast Asia has been the ways in which the media and communications technology have been deployed in the construction of national identities and the effects of the globalised media and other cultural flows on both national and local identities (in the Malaysian Borneo context, for example, Postill, 2006; Barlocco, 2008). It is interesting that this subject has not received the attention it deserves given the legacy of one of the most prominent social scientists of Southeast Asia, Benedict Anderson, and his examination of the ways in which the nation is constructed and ‘imagined’ through various devices, including such media agencies as newsprint (1991). However, it is important to emphasise that identity, phrased

in terms of ethnicity and nation, embraces other categorical and group markers such as class, gender, and age or generation (Du Gay *et al.*, 2000a, 2000b); and we need to focus on the major processes which have been involved in identity formation and transformation: nation-building, the media, tourism, physical movement and globalisation, and the construction of majorities and minorities.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Whilst recognising the contingency of Southeast Asia as a concept and as the focus of attention within the multidisciplinary field of Southeast Asian Studies and which has shifting boundaries depending on the criteria deployed and the research interests pursued, I would argue that there is no contradiction between adopting this fluid conceptual approach and one which defines Southeast Asia more clearly, concretely and explicitly in terms of the regional identity embodied in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, what is required is to bring this dual conceptualisation of a region into a framework of culture and identity, though keeping in mind the importance of addressing the political-economic environment within which culture operates, as Clammer has already argued (2002).

Our understanding of Southeast Asia as a region acknowledges that the politically defined Southeast Asia which comprises territorially demarcated nation-states does not have a culturally and ethnically defined Southeast Asia. However, in deploying

concepts of culture and identity, we can then understand Southeast Asia by using various shifting frames of reference. This approach which focuses on the construction and expression of identity can embrace populations beyond the ASEAN-defined region which are culturally related to those within the region, as well as giving us the capacity to examine ASEAN as a segment of the global system which is also defined in terms of culture and identity. We must emphasise the politically defined ASEAN is not merely political; the Association has also been engaged in translating a political-strategic community into one which expresses a cultural and regional identity.

In recognising that Southeast Asia is not a unitary and “fixed” region, we move on to disaggregate the populations and territories of our variegated Southeast Asia. This can be done by looking at the constituent nation-states of ASEAN as entities defined by political criteria but also demarcated and expressed by a culturally constructed identity, and as units, continuously engaged in the process of imagining and creating those identities. At the sub-national level we need to engage with constituent ethnic groups, some of which are contained within nation-state boundaries, and others which cross boundaries. Indeed, in addressing the issue of boundary-crossing and the fact that ethnic groups are distributed across territorially demarcated states within and beyond the ASEAN-defined Southeast Asia, the interrelated concepts of culture and identity will enable engagement with

units of analysis at various levels and scales (extra-regional, regional and sub-regional).

Two recently published books on Southeast Asia demonstrate this on-going engagement with the definition of Southeast Asia. Anthony Reid, a distinguished historian and who has been a strong advocate for a Southeast Asian regional identity, present a strong case for its integrity (and see Osborne, 2013); but, in his recent book, the present author found the Reid had subtly shifted his ground. In his book on the general history of Southeast Asia, we find that in defining the region it is constructed and envisioned as an entity defined by what it is not; in other words it is ‘Not China, not India’ (2015, pp.26-29). But this too presents problems if we are operating with a nation-state-based approach to defining Southeast Asia. I would argue that in terms of the concepts of culture and identity, it is possible to accommodate what we conceptualise as Southeast Asian culture as spilling over, intruding into, interacting and engaging with the areas which are now defined as ‘Indian’ and ‘Chinese’. In other words, in my view, we should not counterpose Southeast Asia with entities which we refer to as ‘India’ and ‘China’. We need to include them in the process of defining Southeast Asia.

Robert Winzeler’s *tour de force* focuses on ethnography, ethnology and change among the peoples of Southeast Asia and he makes the point that the definition and delimitation of Southeast Asia as a region is problematic in that, it was ‘a creation of European colonialism, rather than a reflection of natural, geographical, cultural,

or linguistic boundaries' (2011, p.1). As Winzeler demonstrates, the political map of nation-states does not sit neatly vis à vis the messy distribution of ethnic groups. But Winzeler's book is an excellent illustration of what I am proposing here with regard to the importance of comparative studies of ethnic groups in the region and the importance of addressing culture and identity (Winzeler, 2011, p.20).

Winzeler suggests that the character of Southeast Asia can be captured in a series of contrasts, which in turn acknowledges the complexity and diversity of the region which is constantly open to outside influences (Winzeler, 2011, p.6). Interestingly, some of the contrasts he identifies have been around for a long time and have been explored in anthropological studies (see for example, Leach, 1954; Burling, 1955). He draws attention to the differentiation between upland/highland and lowland populations, majorities and minorities, the local and the immigrant (overseas minority) communities, mainland and island cultures and linguistic groups, and world religions and local religions.

However, in the present author's view, Winzeler does not provide a sufficient conceptualisation of these crucial regional markers. Therefore, the main purpose of this review, in surveying the intense preoccupation in the scholarly literature over the last 15 years to define Southeast Asia, is to propose that we engage more thoroughly and deeply with the twin concepts of culture and identity. They do not provide perfect and

all-encompassing solutions to the problem of regional definition. But in the Southeast Asian case, the adoption of a concept of cultural identity which enables us to address different scales, levels and kinds of identity, and the shifting and fluid nature of how local communities identify themselves and how they are identified by others, may provide a pathway out of the impasse which the field of multidisciplinary area studies is grappling with.

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***Short Communication***

**The Challenges of Action Research Implementation in Malaysian Schools**

**Norasmah, O. and Chia, S. Y.\***

*Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

**ABSTRACT**

Teachers can improve their practices through the application of action research. However, many challenges prevail over its implementation (action research). This paper discusses major challenges to implementing action research in Malaysian schools and offers concrete suggestions for overcoming them. The main challenges which will be discussed in this article are teachers' heavy workloads, time constraints, and a lack of in-depth understanding and skills related to this methodology. Possible solutions include coaching strategies to enhance teachers' action research knowledge and skills. Action research should be a mandatory component of teachers' official duties and a component of their annual performance evaluations to motivate them to work towards implementing action research. Action research conferences could be periodically held to provide teachers with opportunities to share their action research experiences and recognise research output.

*Keywords:* Action research, challenges, implementation, solutions, teachers

**INTRODUCTION**

Currently, teachers in Malaysia must, from time to time, modify their teaching and learning practices to ensure quality of the country's educational system. According

to Noraini (2010), implementing action research could help teachers to improve understanding of their practices and thereby enhance them. This methodology is also supported by the Education Planning and Research Division (2008), which advises teachers to develop a deep understanding of teaching phenomena or problems that they encounter in their schools by collecting and interpreting action research data.

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*E-mail addresses:*

lin@ukm.edu.my (Norasmah, O.),

phoenixchia@gmail.com (Chia, S. Y.)

\* Corresponding author

Therefore, action research is a method that could improve the quality of education through the activities of teachers who are critically aware of their own practices and are willing to change (McNiff, 1988). Teachers' implementations of action research could improve teaching quality (Madzniyah, 2006); however, teachers who want to implement action research tend to face challenges in doing so, such as time constraints and heavy workloads (Nor' Azah, 2007; Othman, 2011). Teachers also are challenged by their lack of knowledge and skills in action research (Norasmah & Chia, 2015). This paper aims to identify all the major challenges to action research implementation in Malaysian schools and to propose feasible solutions.

## ACTION RESEARCH

Lewin (1946) was a pioneer of action research in social psychology. He defined action research as a spiralling process involving three stages: (1) planning, (2) action, and (3) understanding the results of the action. Corey (1953) was the first to apply action research in the field of education, proposing action research as a process of reviewing problems, taking corrective actions, and evaluating those actions. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) pointed out that:

*"action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own*

*social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of those practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out."* (p. 5)

Glickman (1990) described action research in the educational environment as research conducted by teachers in school settings to improve their instructional practices. Thus, action research in education is an active process that involves planning, action, observation or evaluation, and reflection on the action taken to identify its (action) influence on research participants and improve the action researcher's practices.

However, the basic questions remain regarding the purposes of action research and the philosophy that sets it apart from other approaches. The philosophy that underlies action research directly speaks to its purpose, the action researcher's functions, and how it is practiced. In particular, John Dewey's (1916) philosophical ideas directly influenced the development of action research philosophy. He stated that:

*"When we experience something we act upon it, we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequence. We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return. ... The connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness or value of the experience. ... When an activity is continued into the undergoing*

*of consequences, when the change made by the action is reflected back into a change made in us, the mere flux is loaded with significance.”* (p. 163)

This statement reflects a need to continuously engage in a spiralling process, such as action research, until improvements or improved understanding of achievement is obtained.

Bridges (2003) described the philosophy of action research in education as guided by three principles: (1) epistemological, (2) social, and (3) ethical. Epistemological means that “action researchers” do not refer to any externally generated theories for developing their understanding of a problem; instead, they refer to their personal experiences in real situations. Koshy (2005) characterised action research as creating new knowledge out of specific practical problems. This new practical knowledge cannot be generalised to large populations, but it can be generalised to situations that are similar to that in which they were developed (McGinty & Waters-Adams, 2006). The social principle refers to teachers taking responsibility to act as action researchers to develop their personal practices. This idea was supported by Elliott (1994) who stated that:

*“The rationale for involving teachers as researchers of their own practice is connected to an aspiration to give them control over what is to count as knowledge about*

*practice. As action researchers, teachers are knowledge generators rather than appliers of knowledge generated by outsiders.”* (p. 133)

The third principle concerns ethics, in which action researchers have an ethical obligation to protect the rights of their research participants, whether they are students, parents, or themselves. According to Elliott (1975), teachers must be responsible for their actions and behaviours, which include protecting students. Moreover, the action research process should not harm or disadvantage anyone involved (Cook, 2010).

Many different approaches to action research can be found in the literature, along with their related concepts, because of the numerous theoretical orientations adopted by action researchers. However, current action research work falls into three general types of action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986): (1) technical, (2) practical, and (3) emancipatory. In technical action research, the action researcher sets and/or identifies a problem and formulates an intervention, whereas a practitioner only takes part in an intervention. The focus is to determine the effectiveness of a given intervention. The practical action research approach promotes the teacher as a researcher, focusing on understanding specific practices in the classroom or school setting. In emancipatory action research, the action researcher collaborates with practitioners to find effective solution to a given problem and

promotes a critical consciousness towards social change.

From the perspective of the purposes of action research, four types of action research are found in the field of education: (1) individual, (2) collaborative, (3) school-wide, and (4) district-wide, two of which are commonly performed by teachers in Malaysian schools. The first of these is an individual action research, in which a teacher conducts action research alone on a single issue in the classroom or in co-curricular activities. The particular issue may be related to instructional strategies, student achievement, or classroom management. The second approach used in Malaysian schools is collaborative action research, in which two or more teachers work together to plan, act, observe, and reflect on a common issue involving more than one class. These teachers usually focus on innovation in educational material resources, student learning problems, or school management.

Action research has many advantages. It is considered an appropriate method with greater potential than traditional experimental research for practitioners to understand their practices in actual situations (Yee & Teoh, 2015). According to Koshy (2005), action research can be conducted within educational settings, meaning that action researchers are not outside of the phenomena being researched. In other words, teachers can assess their personal capabilities through the actions they personally take (Rahimah, Abu, Ismail, & Rashid, 2014). Action research also provides opportunities for researchers to

develop a theory from real life research and application. Alis (2009) described teachers in classroom or school environments as gaining a deep understanding of instructional practices and problem situations through their action research, by which they are more reflective and creative in their activities and more willing to change and evaluate the problems they face. In addition, action research can be a foundation for making decisions and can thereby contribute to a teacher's professional development (Othman, 2011).

However, despite the many advantages of action research, it has some limitations. Among the most common problems is the time commitment, in that, teachers performing action research activities tend to find it challenging to find sufficient time to collect data, reflect and share their findings with their colleagues (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Brown, 2002; McGinty & Waters-Adams, 2006).

## **CHALLENGES TO ACTION RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION IN MALAYSIA**

### *Workload and Time Constraints*

Studies have indicated teachers who are already burdened with multi-tasking tend to report inadequate time for action research (Volk, 2010; Zhou, 2013). These results correspond with the findings of Nor' Azah (2007) and Madzniyah (2006), who found that time constraint is the main factor preventing teachers from engaging in action research such as action planning, action implementation, data collection, and data

analysis are time consuming (Othman, 2011). Teachers of General Certificate of Education in particular face time constraints associated with completing their syllabi as quickly as possible to prepare students for examination (Madzniyah, 2006). In addition, teachers are often expected to perform non-teaching tasks, including participation in meetings and clerical work (Azita, 2012). Consequently, many teachers have been unable to implement action research projects in schools.

#### *Lack of Action Research Knowledge and Skills*

A lack of in-depth knowledge of action research practices may prevent teachers from implementing this methodology because they simply do not possess the required skills. According to Othman (2011) and Shamsahhimi (2007), teachers tend to be unclear about action research. This contention is supported by Madzniyah (2006), who found that lack of understanding of action research relates to teachers belief that action research implementation involves extra work that is unrelated to teaching and learning practices. Nor' Azah (2007) reported that teachers indeed generally lacked the skills necessary to conduct action research in schools while Madzniyah (2006) found that teachers' reflection skills tend to be low, and they often do not know whom to consult when faced with problems related to their action research projects. Thus, there is a general doubt among teachers of the whole exercise of action research and its positive influences.

#### *Limited Support*

Teachers also may encounter lack of support by their school administrators regarding action research (Shamsahhimi, 2007; Othman, 2011). Rozita (2009) found that school administrators did not support teachers who attempted to implement action research because the administrators did not understand the concepts and processes of action research. Lack of support from administrators may cause teachers to feel pressured, frustrated, or it may lower their confidence in their abilities to successfully perform action research activities (Nor' Azah, 2007).

### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR MALAYSIA**

#### *Coaching Strategies*

Coaching may help improve a teacher's problem-solving skills, increase the quality of their reflections, and raise the levels of their work satisfaction (Allan, 2007) thereby developing their professional skills (Teemant *et al.*, 2011). Schools should consider appointing experienced teachers to coach their colleagues which in turn could encourage them to implement action research. It is expected that coaching can improve teachers' confidence in the success of their action research and help them experience positive outcomes from implementation. Norasmah and Chia (2015) found that coaching increased teachers' understanding of action research as a methodology and improved their confidence. The Kolb Cycle model can be combined with the GROW model as an action research

and coaching tool (Fig.1). It has successfully been used to coach and assist teachers to implement their action research.

#### *Action Research as an Official Duty*

Malaysian teachers generally hesitate to implement action research because it is not one of their official duties; they conduct action research only in response to coercion or orders from their school administrators (Madzniyah, 2006; Shamsahhimi, 2007). In 1999, the Thailand Education Act announced a policy that required all teachers to implement action research, which compelled them to learn about action research and how to implement it; consequently, all Thai teachers developed themselves as researchers to improve their

teaching practices which directly contributed to student achievements (Wasun, 2011). Stringer, Christensen, and Baldwin (2010) argued that action research should be implemented as part of a teacher's routine work to enable them to systematically solve problems. Action research would therefore be a good idea for Malaysian teachers as well as Thai teachers.

#### *Annual Performance Evaluation*

It would be beneficial to incorporate assessments of action research into teachers' annual performance evaluations. These annual evaluations are important in Malaysia to determine eligibility for promotions, salary increases, and outstanding service awards (Public Services Department

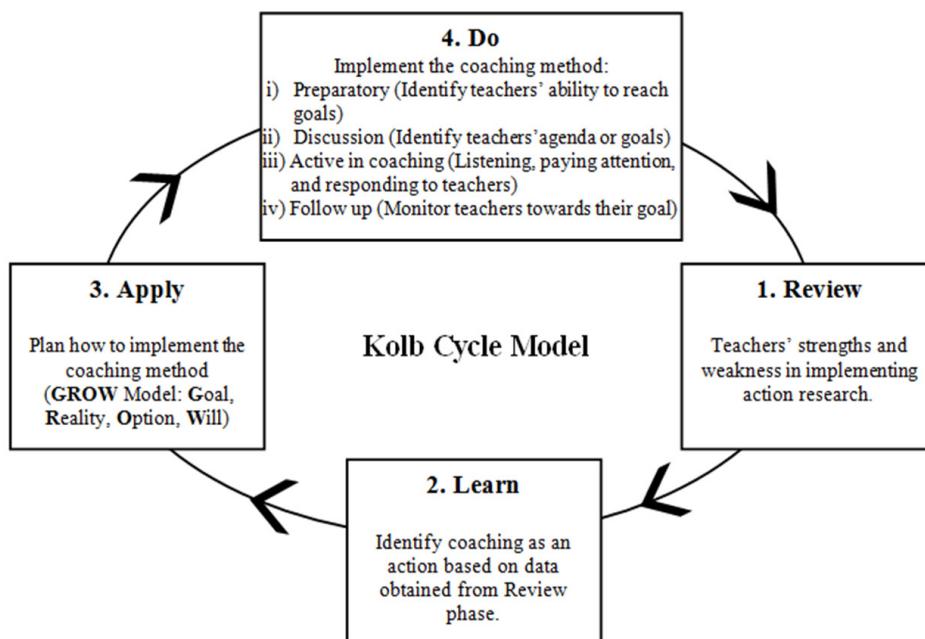


Fig.1: Overview of a coaching strategy using the Kolb Cycle Model  
(adapted from Norasmah & Chia, 2014)

of Malaysia, 2011). In Thailand, action research evaluations are used as evidence for promotion evaluations (Wasun, 2011). Thereby, teachers interested in promotions and salary increases may be motivated to find ways to implement action research.

#### Action Research Conferences

One of the ways to overcome challenges of implementing action research would be to create contexts in which teachers could network and share their research. It is important for them to present reports and share their findings with colleagues. Schools or district educational offices could hold conferences periodically to facilitate these activities. These conferences could serve as venues for in-service training and professional development. In Malaysia, this idea is currently supported by the Sibu District Education Office (2014), which qualifies participation in the Sarawak Teachers' Conference on Action Research, Innovation, and Research as in-service training. Books and certificates are symbols of recognition and awards recognise the achievements of teachers who have successfully implemented action research to improve their teaching practices.

## CONCLUSION

This paper provides an overview of the challenges of implementing action research in Malaysian schools and prospective solutions. The outcome of this study could be used to guide the Ministry of Education officials and other stakeholders in their efforts to promote action research

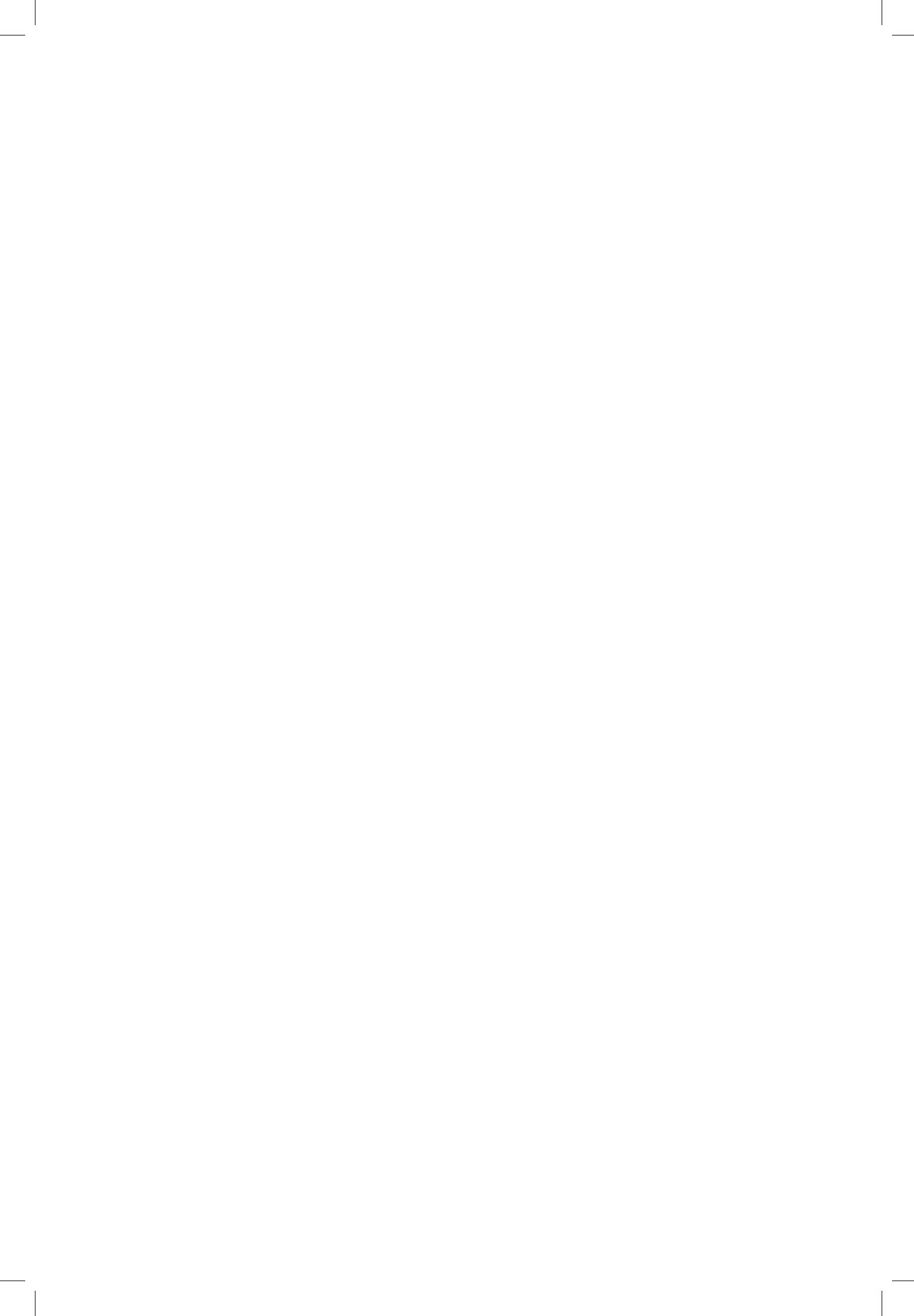
in schools. Through their efforts, more teachers could implement action research to meet the challenges and demands of the educational environment. Action research implementation has demonstrated its value for improving the quality of education in numerous contexts, and it would benefit the Malaysian educational system as well.

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## Construction and Development of Quantitative Scale to Measure Source Credibility in the Maternal Mortality Context

Che Su Mustaffa<sup>1\*</sup> and Salah Saudat Abdul Baqi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Communication, School of Multimedia and Communication Technology, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Jitra, Kedah, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Communication, University of Ilorin, P.M.B. 1515, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

### ABSTRACT

Many communication studies have established the role of credibility of the source on effective information dissemination. In particular, the factors of believability, trustworthiness, and related attitudinal attributes of the source have been found to have a high influence on the effectiveness of a message. However, very little attention has been paid to the influence of the demographic characteristics of the source. The major objective of this study was to develop a scale for measuring characteristics of gender, age, and socio-economic status of the source on effective dissemination of information on maternal mortality. The inclusion of factors such as perceptions of gender, age and socio-economic status of the source to source credibility study provides a sound appreciation of the influence of visible characteristics of the source on attitudinal and behavioural changes on the content of disseminated messages. Accepted psychometrics scale-development procedures were followed that rigorously tested a large pool of items for their reliability and validity. A total of 365 respondents were involved in this study. Data for the study were gathered through quantitative surveys that included men, and women of childbearing age in north-central Nigeria. Using exploratory and confirmatory samples, the current research developed a 16-item semantic differential scale to measure the influence of demographic characteristics of the source on effectiveness of delivering a message. The scale was validated using respondents' self-reported measures perception toward the source's gender, age and socio economic status. From a theoretical perspective, by identifying and measuring this tri-

component construct, the researcher can validly assess the impact of each of the dimensions on the source credibility scale on maternal mortality information. The findings of this research have supported the views of previous scholars that the

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*E-mail addresses:*

chesu402@uum.edu.my (Che Su Mustaffa),

sau\_baqi@yahoo.com (Salah Saudat Abdul Baqi)

\* Corresponding author

effectiveness of disseminated information depends largely on the credibility of the source. The resulting scale demonstrated high reliability and validity. The generated instrument has increased the array of measuring items that are available for source credibility and diffusion of innovation studies. The acceptable validity and reliability values of the instrument strengthen their replication in other studies and other context. The findings of this study contribute to knowledge both at the academic and pragmatic realms. They offer important contributions for communication planners change agents and individuals in their day-to-day communication discourse on the application of source credibility and diffusion of innovation theories. Consistent with source credibility theory-based studies, this study has justified the assertion that an increased perception of characteristics of the source leads to an increase in message effectiveness as proved by the introduction of demographic features of the source to the source credibility model. Findings are explained in depth and methodological, theoretical and managerial implications are highlighted.

*Keywords:* Age, gender, instrument development, message effectiveness, source credibility, socio-economic status, maternal mortality

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## INTRODUCTION

Credibility refers to a person's perception of the truth of a piece of information. It is a multi-dimensional concept that serves as means for the receiver of the information to rate

the source or transmitter of the information pertaining to the communication. A detailed review of literature on source credibility over the last six decades indicates much research has been undertaken on the effect of source credibility in various disciplines. (See for example, Hovland & Weiss, 1952; Koslin, Stoops, & Loh, 1970; Dutta-Bergman, 2003). However, except for a few studies (Pearson, 1980; Freiden, 1984; Markham, 1988; Engstrom & Ferri, 2001) the demographic features of the source are rarely considered in examining credibility (Pornpitakpan, 2004).

The impact of visible characteristics of the source on message effectiveness is confirmed by Sapsord and Jupp (1996) who observed that "the respondents will ascribe beliefs and opinions to the interviewer (source) on the basis of visible characteristics such as accent and dress (perceived social class), ethnic origin, or gender" (p.97). Nonetheless, the demographic characteristics of the source in determining message acceptance has received little attention. This probably is due to lack of a standardised instrument for measuring the impact of perceptions of demographic features of the source on message effectiveness. This in turn could be due to the minimal attention given to the study of demography of source credibility, which was noted by Pornpitakpan (2004). In the context of health behaviour, socio-economic status and gender are rarely integrated in explaining the credibility assigned to the source by message recipient. Equally worrisome is the lack of investigation of perceptions of age

characteristics of the source in credibility literature (except for example, Weibel *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, there seems to be a “conspiracy of silence” against maternal mortality, an issue that still ravages most developing countries (Briggs, 2009) and which researchers have largely neglected.

Interdisciplinary studies have revealed that gender differences are relevant in virtually every human activity. Gender refers to the socially defined differences between men and women, which are based on widely shared norms within the society (West & Zimmerman, 1987). These differences often pose barriers to communication depending on the weight and direction of stereotypes that are prevalent in particular societies (Verberder, 1996). Gender studies have become a topical issue globally especially in the social sciences given the pervasive nature of gender dynamics at all strata; thus, its evolution as an integrated part of academic research for many decades either as the primary focus of the study (predictor variable), or as one of many control variables (Freiden, 1984; Macintyre & Hunt, 1997; Fox, 2005; Gallivan & Benbunan-Finch, 2008). This study aims at developing a scale for measuring characteristics of gender, age and socio-economic status of the source on effective dissemination of information on maternal mortality. The factors for the study were generated from a pool of literature drawn from different fields of study that discussed all the variables of interest (gender, age and socio-economic status). These were rigorously treated to fit the present context. The inclusion of perceptions of gender, age

and socio-economic status of the source to source credibility study provides a sound appreciation of the influence of visible characteristics of the source on attitudinal and behavioural changes towards the content of disseminated messages

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Extant literature on source credibility has established a link between the characteristics of the source and the audience's attitude towards the disseminated message; thus, the overarching impact of source credibility on developmental communication is unequivocal. Several empirical studies have been conducted on the influence of source credibility on effectiveness of communication (Hovland & Weiss, 1952; Koslin *et al.*, 1970; Dutta-Bergman, 2003; Clow *et al.*, 2011; Nagy *et al.*, 2011). These findings have prompted the use of testimonials for advertising, endorsers for political aspirants, developmental campaigns and advocacies. Common attributes of the source that are often explored include: trustworthiness, expertise, competence, attractiveness, dynamism, objectivity, believability, professionalism, attractiveness, authoritativeness and related attributes of the source and have been found to have a high influence on message effectiveness (Hovland & Weiss, 1952; Dholakia, 1987; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Copeland *et al.*, 2011; Nishith *et al.*, 2012).

A study by Hovland and Weiss (1952) revealed that the weight attached to a source's trustworthiness has a significant

impact on how the recipient rates the piece of information or message received. They further reported that, though subjects tend to support spontaneously the views of a high credibility source, this trust is reduced with time and the subjects tend to share the views of the low credibility source thus recalling the opinion expressed in the message but most likely forgetting the source because of the initial low rating. This is an action that the duo tagged the “sleeper effect”. On a general note, a source with high credibility often elicits more favorable disposition to an advocacy than a source with low credibility (Pornpitakpan, 2004). However, all the attitudinal qualities that attracted the focus of previous researchers require some level of intimacy or interaction between the source and the receiver to decipher while not much has been documented on the influence of visible demographic features of the source on message effectiveness (Pornpitakpan, 2004).

In a review of multi-disciplinary articles on gender studies in Cuba from 1974 to 2001, Sarmiento (2003) revealed a rich understanding of the interplay between the sexes in the society that is occasioned by gender study. She concluded that it is impossible to study any matter concerning social behaviour without a gender perspective. Source and receiver are held accountable for their actions on the basis of their sex, while their membership in one or the other sex category can be used to legitimise or discredit their other activities. Gender refers to the socially defined differences between men and

women, which are based on widely shared norms within the particular society (West & Zimmerman, 1987). These differences often constitute barriers to communication depending upon on weight and direction of the stereotype that are prevalent in a particular society (Verberder, 1996). (this is a repetition from page 7). In his discussion of masculinity and femininity of cultural dimensions, Hofstede (2002) observed that men are adjudged to be assertive, ambitious, and tough while women are expected to be subservient, tender and attractive. He stressed that “attractive women can use their beauty as weapons in social competition” (p. 101), thus acknowledging the controversial strength of the gender of the source (male and female) in eliciting desired change in behaviour from message receivers. In the same vein, Wood (1994) found that men and women communicate for different reasons; while women communicate to establish and maintain relationship with others, men communicate to exert control, preserve independence and enhance status.

The significance attached to the concept of age has been well documented in literature. Like gender, the concept of age is relative across culture. In a typical power distance culture, (Hofstede, 2002), elders enjoy unreserved respect and pride of place in all endeavours. This view can be juxtaposed with the findings of Krueger, *et al.* (2003) whereby age is found to determine earning potentials: great potentials for the young and diminishing potentials for the old. Abdelmagid (1990) reported an inconsistent role of age in moderating

human judgement. While age interacted significantly in the Policy-Self and Self-Others indices, it failed to interact either as the main effect or in a moderating capacity with the Self-Others index.

Mueller and Parcel (1981) have defined the concept of socio-economic status (SES) as the relative standing of a family or individual on a hierarchical social structure, in relationship to their access to or control over wealth, prestige and power. These characteristics can pass for source credibility measures based on their potential ability to attract believability to whatever their possessor says. The examination of SES has taken the centre place in assessing the development of a place or an individual (Vaughn, 1958; Jalovaara, 2001). Following the arguments for and against the various measures of socio-economic status (SES), the examination of SES credibility of a source as perceived by the audience is based on education, cultural background, marital status and professionalism of the source. Professionalism is preferred to occupation due to its favourable consideration in a naturalistic setting (Greenhalgh *et al.*, 2004). As can be seen from the argument for and against each measure of socio-economic status, many studies have adopted and made different submissions of various measures of SES. Although some researchers have conducted studies on gender and age as measures of socio-economic status (Aiyedun, 2003; Dwidevi & Lal, 2003; Vereecken *et al.*, 2005), Finch (1986) and Morgan (1986) have validated their status as predictor variables. Therefore, the

current measurement considers education, professionalism, cultural leaning and marital status as more pertinent measures of the influence of SES as the source for effective dissemination of information on maternal mortality.

In an extensive review of publications on the persuasiveness of source credibility from a wide range of disciplines, Pornpitakpan (2004) reported that only few studies were based on the perception of the source's gender while perceptions of source's age and socio-economic status received no relevant mention in the review of articles that spanned five decades. The awareness of the strong relationship between persuasive tendencies which is built on trust and the subsequent attitudinal and behavioural changes lends credence to the search for the right mixture of source credibility in bringing about changes, especially in the health sector.

Thus, this current article provides a research-based solution for diagnosing source credibility in information dissemination of maternal mortality. First, we discuss the conceptual basis for a new construct called the Source Credibility Scale (SCS). Following this, we present the systematic development and validation of a new multifaceted instrument and a discussion about measurement model.

## **ORIGIN OF SOURCE CREDIBILITY STUDIES**

Source credibility refers to a set of attributes or characteristics of a source that influences how the receiver or the audience responds

towards his message. It can also be seen as an assessment of a set of physical and demographic attributes of the source that influence how the receiver responds or behaves towards the message. The concept enjoys a universal appeal as old as recorded history (Baran & Davis, 2003). The study is rooted in the theories of attitude change in social psychology (Pornpitakpan, 2004) but its reference can be traced to “the Aristotelian dictum that the source’s character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses” (Pearson, 1982, p.3). However, early empirical study of the concept credits it to Hovland and his colleagues at Yale University (Baran & Davis, 2003).

Hovland, a psychologist with a background in behaviourism in learning theory, headed a team of researchers in an experimental evaluation of the effectiveness of various programmes offered by the Information and Education Division of the United States army during World War II. The experiment involved using a source (films) as stimulus and receivers as subjects while systematically controlling other external variables in order to measure the source’s (films) effectiveness in influencing attitudes and motivation. The outcome of the experiment revealed that although the movies successfully increased knowledge about the war, they were not as effective in influencing attitude and motivation. The group also discovered that the stimulus only succeeded in strengthening existing attitudes rather than cultivating new ones (Baran & Davis, 2003).

This initial discovery led to a sustained interest in what is now known as source credibility. The group considered the communicator, the content of the message and the audience as central factors in attitude change. In their examination of the communicator, they based source credibility on two factors - trustworthiness and expertise - and concluded that high credibility in a communicator was synonymous with an increased attitude change and vice-versa (Hovland, Janis, & Kelly, 1951). This model has been adopted in diverse areas of studies that require changes in attitude and behaviour towards advocated patterns. Principal among these fields are applied psychology, abnormal and social psychology, marketing, advertising, politics, and communication (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Koslin, Stoops, & Loh, 1970; Dutta-Bergman, 2003; Pornpitakpan, 2004). There appears to be widespread acceptance of the assumption that the characteristics of a communicator can impact greatly the acceptance of the message by the audience (Pearson, 1982; Dholakia, 1987). This finding prompted the use of testimonials for advertising, endorsers for political aspirants, developmental campaigns and advocacies. Although the consequence of diverse attributes of the source on message effectiveness has been examined as would be seen in later parts of the current study, the interactive influence of gender, age, and socio-economic status of the source on effective message dissemination has received little attention from researchers (Pornpitakpan, 2004). In a study of socio-

economic position, gender and health, Macintyre and Hunt (1997) noted that interactions between these variables are worth examining because they “structure opportunities and life chances” (Macintyre & Hunt, 1997, p. 329). The current study argues that age, gender and socio-economic status of the source are crucial additional factors that can make or mark the success of a communication transaction.

### *The Factor Model*

The factor model determines the extent to which the receiver judges the source as credible. This perspective is based on the assumption of credibility study as a multi-dimensional concept that can only be captured fully by multi-item measures (Eisend, 2006). The factor model of source credibility adopts semantic differential items that are later grouped into dimensions of credibility using explorative factor analysis. This reveals a multitude of dimensions of source credibility as evidenced in Pornpitakpan’s (2004) critical review of five decades of publications on persuasiveness of source credibility and corroborated by Eisend (2006) who reported that the factor model is often used in source credibility studies. Consequently, numerous dimensions of source credibility have attracted interest of researchers. In his search for acceptable dimensions of source credibility in marketing communication, Eisend (2006) harnessed a multitude of 28 factors of source credibility from the early days of the development of the concept. These factors ranged from similarities

between message source and receiver (ethos), media credibility, to plain source credibility. He derived a typology of 49 most frequently used credibility dimensions as presented in Table 1.

To attenuate the envisaged procedural problems that are identified with generalisation of these diverse source credibility dimensions, Eisend (2006) came up with three main dimensions: sincerity, professionalism and attraction. Teven and McCroskey’s (1997) measures of credibility have gained widespread application in recent studies on classroom teacher-student communication transactions (Zhang, Zhang, & Castelluccio, 2011). Teacher credibility is measured by the dimensions of competence, trustworthiness and caring (Teven & McCroskey, 1997). However, all these attitudinal qualities require some level of intimacy or interaction between the source and the receiver to decipher. This model has been criticised for the likelihood of creating artificial and unstable factors (Schweitzer 1969; Meyer 1988). Another critique of factor analytic approaches to the study of credibility by Cronkhite and Liska (2009) expressed some reservations for the seemingly haphazard scale selection, exclusive use of similar names for factors having different scales, statistical procedures, and conceptualisation of source credibility without being cognisant of the interaction between an evaluation of the communicator, characteristics of the receiver and judgement of the message (Baran & Davis, 2003).

TABLE 1  
Previous factor model studies of source credibility

No	Author (s)	Concept Specification	No. of Factors	Dimensions
1.	Hovland <i>et al.</i> (1953)	Communicator credibility	2	Trustworthiness and expertness
2.	Aronson, Turner and Calsmith (1963)	Message discrepancy	2	High and low credibility
3.	Hewgill and Miller, 1965; Miller and Hewgill (1966)	Threat of the message	3	Counsellor's expertness, trustworthiness, and attractiveness
4.	Bochner and Insko, (1966)	Message discrepancy	2	High and low credibility
5.	McCroskey (1966)	Source Credibility	2	Authoritativeness and character
6.	Strong (1968)	Message discrepancy in counselling	2	High and low credibility
7.	Whitehead (1968)	Source Credibility	4	Trustworthiness, Competence, Dynamism, Objectivity
8.	Berlo <i>et al.</i> (1969)	Source Credibility	3	Competence, Trustworthiness, Dynamism
9.	Golberge (1969)	Gender (author) credibility	5	Article's value, Persuasiveness, profundity, the author's writing style and competence
10.	Berlo <i>et al.</i> (1970)	Source credibility	3	Safety, Qualification and dynamism
11.	Horai <i>et al.</i> (1974)	Source variable	2	Physical attractiveness and expertise
12.	Falcione (1974)	Source credibility	4	Gender, Age, Physical attractiveness, Trust
13.	McGuire (1978)	Source variable	3	Credibility, Attractiveness, Power
14.	McCroskey and Jenson (1975)	Source credibility	5	Source, Extraversion, Competence, Composure, Character
15.	Pearson (1982)	Role of gender in source credibility	4	Competence, Trustworthiness, Dynamism, Coordination
16.	Freiden (1984)	Endorser credibility	3	Endorser type, Gender of communicator, Age of audience

TABLE 1 (*continue*)

17.	Meyer (1988)	News credibility	5	Fairness, Unbiased, Completeness, Accuracy, Trustworthiness
18.	Ohanian (1990)	Celebrity endorsers' credibility	3	Gender, Completeness, Accuracy
19.	Craig (1992)	Gender stereotype in TV commercials	2	Male vs Female roles
20.	Eisend (2006)	Spokesperson credibility	3	Sincerity, Professionalism, Attraction

## METHOD

The study reviewed literature that generated items to measure the credibility ascribed to gender, age and socio-economic status of the source by message recipient in determining message effectiveness. The tested and validated items were then administered on selected samples through a survey.

### *Instrument Development*

A variety of studies have already dealt with the discovery of dimensions of credibility using explorative factor analysis (Eisend, 2006). The usual procedure is to confront study participants with a number of semantic differential items. Subjects rate the credibility of the source of communication applying those items and data is then combined to factors by means of factor analysis. The factors are interpreted as dimensions of credibility. This entire procedure is defined as the factor model of credibility.

Factor model studies of credibility revealed a multitude of dimensions of source credibility. Table 2 gives an overview of previous factor model studies.

These dimensions highlight competence and trustworthiness identified in initial source credibility research by Hovland and colleagues (Hovland *et al.*, 1951; Hovland & Weiss 1952), namely competence (competence, expertise, expertness, knowledge ability, qualification, smart dimension) and trustworthiness (trustworthiness, character, personal integrity). In addition, frequently used dimensions related to characteristics of presentation style or the appearance of the source (dynamism, attractiveness, attraction, role model dimension, presentation) is highlighted.

Table 2 also presents a summary of major studies that have addressed the scaling of source credibility. Although all the studies were designed to measure the same construct, there is no consistency among the authors as to the number and types of dimensions that source credibility comprises. Furthermore, with the exception of McCroskey (1966), none of the authors have assessed the reliability and validity of the resulting scales. As should be apparent, most attempts to assess the impact of source

credibility have been based on instruments of unknown reliability. This fact partially explains the inconsistencies in the literature regarding the impact of communicator credibility as it relates to attitude formation and attitude change. Given the accumulative nature of research, and the fact that researchers base and build the findings of their studies on those of others, there must be a consistent measurement approach for source credibility. This measurement approach must first provide a theoretical basis for the selection of constructs to

represent the hypothesised dimensions of source credibility, and second, must produce a valid, reliable measurement scale. In view of the widespread theoretical and empirical interest in the concept of source credibility, the purpose of the present research is to advance and later assess a tri-component construct using psychometrically accepted procedures to produce a reliable and valid scale.

The vast number and variability of the dimensions already indicate some procedural problems. In particular, the

TABLE 2  
Source Credibility Scale

Author (s)	Dimensions Measured	Number of Items	Reliability Checks	Validity Checks	Scale Type*	Method of Analysis
McCroskey (1966)	Authoritativeness	6	Yes	No	SD	Factor Analysis
	Character	6				
	Authoritativeness	23	Yes	No	LIK	Factor Analysis
	Character	20				
Whitehead (1968)	Trustworthiness	18	No	No	SD	Factor Analysis
	Competence	4				
	Dynamicism	3				
	Objectivity	3				
Bowers and Philips (1967)	Trustworthiness	7	No	No	SD	Factor Analysis
	Competence	5				
Berlo, Lernert, and Mertz (1969)	Safety	5	No	No	SD	Factor Analysis
	Qualification	5				
	Dynamism	5				
Simpson and Kahler (1980-81)	Believability	8	No	Limited	SD	Factor Analysis
	Dynamism	6				
	Expertness	7				
	Sociability	3				
Wynn (1987)	Expertness	12	No	No	SD	Factor Analysis
	Dynamism	6				
	Believability	3				
	Sociability	3				

Note: \*SD = Semantic Differential; \*LIK = Likert Scale.

problems can be ascribed to methodological issues of item generation, item selection and ordering, the factor analysis procedure, and the interpretation of factors. One point of criticism refers to the procedure of item generation; if existing literature is the source of items, the problem of a missing theory of credibility must be faced (McCroskey & Young 1981; Meyer 1988). On the other hand, a possibility exists that respondents, when characterising different sources of credibility, also associate the credibility of a source with the source's image in general. Because the researchers are able to determine a priori the possible factors through their selection of items and may even influence the outcome of the factor loadings in their choice of the number of similar items, factor models are sometimes said to produce artificial and unstable factors (Schweitzer, 1969; Meyer, 1988). The use of the same items for different dimensions leads to the assumption that the factors are not always independent. Therefore, factor analysis procedures assuming orthogonal factors are often times inappropriate. With respect to factor interpretation, researchers have used different expressions to describe dimensions with loadings on identical items, for example, "character" and "trustworthiness" (Wanzenried & Powell, 1993). These methodological problems take the bulk of responsibility for unequal results of factor model studies in addition to varying aspects of the research setting (e.g., communication situation or topic; cf. Applbaum & Anatol, 1973, 1972; Baudhuin & Davis, 1972; Burgoon 1976; Liska, 1978;

Powell & Wanzenried, 1995, 1992, 1991; Schweitzer & Ginsburg, 1966; Scott & Landry, 1982).

Basically, those inconsistencies indicate a lack of measurement reliability (Tucker, 1971). Almost none of the cited studies above used reliability or validity checks to evaluate the results. However, validity and reliability are central conditions of generalisability and applicability of the results of factor model studies and hence, they are considered in the subsequent parts of this study.

#### *Development of Items for the Source-Credibility Scale*

Items were developed from literature to measure the influence of gender, age, and socio-economic status on effective dissemination of health information (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The questions were framed carefully to elicit responses that provided answers to the research questions and aid measurement of the relationship between identified variables. Responses to the questions were in close-ended forms for ease of analysis. However, provision was made for some brief expressions where necessary.

The instrument was later given to 10 experts for testing validity and reliability, before the self-administered questionnaire was subjected to a pilot study to ensure proper interpretation of instructions and questions by the respondents (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2007). Data for the actual study was obtained from 380 respondents out of which five cases constituted outliers and were deleted

accordingly (Hair, *et al.*, 2010). The target population was men and women of child-bearing age between 15 and 65 years of age in Kwara State, Nigeria. Fifteen is the National Population Centre-acknowledged reproduction age for females, while 65 is the retirement age from federal public service. The records of Women of Child Bearing Age (WCBA) in the State guided the selection of samples for inclusion in this study (Kwara State Demographic Data, 2008). Although the sample determination was based on women's list because maternal mortality primarily concerns women, the inclusion of men in the study was in response to the need to 'reduce gender imbalance in reproductive health matters' as well as 'to increase the involvement of men in reproductive health' (Revised National Health Policy, 2004, p. 34). A systematic sampling procedure was adopted in selecting every 4th household from three wards from each of the selected

LGAs (Ajikobi, Mbandawaki and Wara osin/Egbejila from Ilorin West; Gwanara, Yashikira, and Kaiama from Baruten; and Omupo, Ilala and Ajasse from Ifelodun LGAs). According to Sekaran (2003), a systematic sampling procedure can be adopted where a list of entire members of the population can be generated from which a predetermined *nth* would be selected for inclusion. Individual participants were selected through a simple random sampling. Fish and bowl technique (Baxter & Babbie, 2001; Baxter, 2004) was adopted in determining who was to be included from households that had more than two eligible respondents. However, there were instances in which all the eligible respondents in the household were included, depending on the size of the town or village. Small pieces of paper on which yes/no were written were presented to the prospective respondents as a quantitative data gathering instrument.

TABLE 3  
Description of initial items and their sources

Constructs	Sources	No. of items	Brief description
Gender of the Source	Crocco <i>et al.</i> (2008); Smith (2008); Duggan and Banwell (2004); Orewere (1991); Feldman-Summers <i>et al.</i> (1980); Bochner, (1994); Pearson, C.J (1982); Ogwurike (2005)	23	Audiences' perception of the impact of the gender of the source, on effective information dissemination.
Age of the Source	Dwivedi and Lal (2007); Crocco (2008); Lin and Burt (1975); Engstrom (1996)	13	The impact of young or older sources on message credibility.
Socio-Economic Status of the Source	Aiyedun (2003); Krueger <i>et al.</i> (2003); Imoh (2008); Ogwurike (2005); Orewere (1991); Lin and Burt (1975); Duggan and Banwell (2004);	14	The degree to which socio-economic status such as education, marital status, professionalism, and cultural relevance of the source influence message acceptability.

Depending on the number of people aged between 15 and 65 years in each household, a maximum of two respondents were selected for inclusion from each household. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher with the aid of five research assistants between December 2010 and March 2011. The validity of the instrument was confirmed via exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (EFA and CFA).

The literature on source credibility, information effectiveness, gender, age, socio-economic status and maternal mortality was reviewed extensively in an attempt to develop an appropriate instrument for this study. Initially, a total of 50 items were developed for the three exogenous variables in our self-designed instrument. Twenty-three items were designed to measure the influence of gender of the source, 13 to measure the influence of age of the source and 14 to measure the influence of socio-economic status of the source as presented in Table 3 below. However, only 20 items withstood the test of time after the rigours of the initial validity tests.

#### *Rating Scales for the Responses*

In line with conventional practice in source credibility studies (Eisend, 2006), a Semantic Differential Scale with bipolar adjectives was employed to describe the respondents' attitude towards particular issues raised in the items. The respondents were instructed to choose from a five-point response scale in which the minimum score was 1 (Very Much Unlike Me) and the maximum score

was 5 (Very Much Like Me). Scholars have argued that a five-point scale is as reliable as any other rating mechanism (Sekaran, 2010). Neuman (2006) argued in support of having non-attitude and middle position or no opinion responses; however, the use of an interval scale like a Semantic Differential Scale establishes the equality of the magnitude of differences between one point on the scale and the next thus, giving more meaning to the response choices by the respondents.

## **RESULTS**

### *Preliminary steps to inferential statistical analysis*

Sequel to the commencement of inferential statistical analysis, data was examined to ensure compliance with basic assumptions that govern the application of multivariate analysis to research. A violation of these assumptions can lead to the creation of errors which can impair the credibility of research findings. Notable among these basic assumptions are tests of normality, multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity. Prior to conducting these tests, data was screened and treated for missing values and outliers.

### *Data screening*

To confirm the assumption of psychometric properties before applying necessary data analysis techniques, this study employed a series of data screening approaches such as detection and treatment of missing values, identification of outliers, tests for assumptions of normality, multicollinearity,

etc. This analysis is a major pre-requisite to determining the choice of data analysis technique (Lattin, Carroll, & Green, 2003; Byrne, 2010).

#### *Detection and treatment of missing data*

Missing data refers to information not available for a respondent but available to others in the study. This can occur if the respondent fails to complete one or more sections in a survey, from data/code entry error (Baxter & Babbie, 2004), or from problem of data collection where respondents were requested to skip certain portion of the questionnaire that are not applicable to them (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Except for the latter which can be ignored, untreated missing data reduces sample size available for analysis. This can impede generalisation of findings possibly leading to erroneous results. Preliminary inspection of returned instruments revealed that 30 out of the 410 returned questionnaires had more than half of the required information not provided by the respondents. These cases were excluded from the analysis in line with the recommendation of Hair, Black, Babin, Andersen, and Tatham, (2010) that, in a situation where a researcher does not fall short of sample size, it is better to exclude cases of respondents with more than 50% missing data. Consequently, 380 cases were entered into SPSS for windows version 14 for analysis. In checking for missing data, each of the variables was inspected for scores that were out of range or empty cells via frequency tables in SPSS. The identified

errors were tracked down in data file and aligned according to the inputs in the code book. In instances where out of range scores were entered from responses, the name of the variable in which the error occurred was clicked on SPSS, the column highlighted and the questionnaire checked for correct value. Five of such cases were observed for the sex variable in the demographic section of the instrument in which an out-of-range value of '3' was keyed in instead of either 1 or 2. The affected case numbers were visited and fixed accordingly. After fixing the errors, the frequencies were run again. Twenty six instances of missing data involving 22 cases were observed. Of these cases, only one had three missing data while two had two missing data each and the remaining 19 cases recorded one missing data each. The 26 instances were remedied with mean substitution as one of the most acceptable techniques of generating replacement values for missing data (Chaffee, 1991; Hair *et al.*, 2010).

#### *Detection and treatment of outliers*

Outliers are observations with values distinctly different from those of other observations in the data set. Byrne ( 2010) describes it as observations which are numerically distant to the rest of the data set. As observed by Hair *et al.* (2010), outliers could be beneficial or problematic, depending on their status in a particular data. They explain that an outlier is beneficial when it helps to fish out characteristics of the population that might have gone unnoticed in the normal course of analysis while a

problematic outlier gives false impression about population ‘and can seriously distort statistical tests’ (p.64). Given the gravity of the impact of outliers in shrouding the reality in statistical findings, Hair *et al.* (2010) recommend that detection and treatment of outliers be effected at various levels. Detection of outliers at the univariate level was conducted by inspection of box plots using the exploratory descriptive method in SPSS while Mahalanobis distance was calculated to detect outliers at the multivariate level (Pallant, 2003).

An inspection of the box plot for each of the variables revealed four outliers extending more than 1.5 box length from the edge of the box (Pallant, 2003) for the gender variable. Although Hair et.al. (2010) cautions on the deletion of outliers ‘unless demonstrable proof indicates that they are truly aberrant and not representative of any observations in the population’ (p.67), this study is confident the deletion of few cases from a sample size of 380 will not hamper the findings in this study. Case numbers 142,268, 269 and 271 were deleted accordingly in three repeated actions after which clear box plots were displayed. Similar exercises were performed on other variables in the study and they all presented neat box plots - an indication that data was free of outliers and thus, satisfying one of the requirements for multivariate analysis. (Pallant, 2003; Hair *et al.*, 2010). For visual inspection of box plots for the six variables in this study, please see Appendix A.

At the multivariate level, the Mahalanobis distance of data from its predetermined

threshold;  $p = 0.001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) was calculated. This involved the reading of the critical value of the data based on the number of independent variables (Pallant, 2003) from the chi-square table. With 23 degree of freedom (number of items in the independent variable) critical value in this study was  $\chi^2(23, 0.001) = 49.728$ . Next, the Mahalanobis distance was calculated through linear regression in SPSS version 14. The entry of the Mahalanobis check creates a new data title; ‘Mah\_1’ at the end of the data file. Only one case presented Mah\_1 greater than 49.728 and was deleted accordingly. Subsequent analysis in this study was therefore based on a sample size of 375 having lost five cases to outliers at both univariate and multivariate check levels.

#### *Normality Tests*

Measures were taken to ascertain normal distribution of data in this study as a prerequisite for multivariate analysis. Failure to do this can lead to a misleading relationship between the variables under study and jeopardise the significance of research findings. One of the measures of testing the normality of data was an assessment of its distribution through skewness and kurtosis (Hair et.al., 2010). Various values have been ascribed to acceptable skewness and kurtosis by scholars. While Kline (2005) approves of  $\pm 3$  value for skewness, and  $\pm 8$  for kurtosis, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) say both should not be greater than  $\pm 2$ . Although a perfect skew assumes the value of zero, this is ‘rather an uncommon

occurrence in the social sciences' (Pallant, 2003:53). All the variables in this study present acceptable values of skewness and kurtosis within the set criterion by the two cited scholars. Table 4 displays the normal distribution of all measured variables in this study with skewness and kurtosis not greater than  $\pm 2$ ; the table further indicates that all the variables were positively skewed.

Another statistical test for normality employed in this study was the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics which also assesses the normality of distribution of scores. The significant value obtained ( $p < 0.01$ ) is due to the large sample involved in the study ( $n=375$ ). Pallant (2003) explains that it is very rare to have an insignificant Kolmogorov-Smirnov value ( $p > 0.05$ ) with large samples of more than 200. Table 5 shows the results of the statistical test on all the measured variables.

Other tests of normality were conducted through visual inspections. Hair *et al.* (2010) encouraged researchers to gain a better perspective of a variable through its histogram which is a graphical representation of frequency of occurrence of the variable in a data set. Thus, the normality of the distribution of data in

this study is further established by the presentation of histograms and the normal probability plot for each of the variables in this study. A histogram is said to indicate normal distribution when the distribution is clustered at the middle of the curve thus displaying a high peak (kurtosis) while the two tails of the curve indicate a symmetry of distribution (Pallant, 2003). The normal probability plot is based on an assumption that the data lie on a 'reasonably straight diagonal line from bottom to top' (Pallant, 2003: 144; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). The histograms and the normal probability plots are presented in Appendix A.

#### *Multicollinearity*

The focus of inspection in multicollinearity is observing the degree of relationship that exists between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Multicollinearity occurs when the correlation between the independent and the dependent variables on one hand, and the intercorrelation between the independent variables on the other is .7 and above (Pallant, 2003; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Hair *et al.* (2010) further explain that the existence of multicollinearity between

TABLE 4  
Values of Skewness and Kurtosis of measured variables

Variable	Skewness	Standard Error	Kurtosis	Standard Error
Gender of the source	-.384	.126	-.867	.251
Age of the source	-.207	.126	-.719	.251
Socio-Economic Status of the source	-.197	.126	-1.030	.251
Mass Media	-.964	.126	.412	.251
Interpersonal Channels	-.766	.126	-.223	.251
Effective Information Dissemination	-.953	.126	.093	.251

variables hampers the predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent, just as it makes determination of the unique roles of the independent variables difficult. The correlations result reveals the absence of multicollinearity between the independent variables, as well as between the independent and the dependent variable. The correlation between effective information dissemination (EID) and gender of the source characteristics (GSC) is 0.231, between EID and age of the source characteristics (ASC) is 0.103, between EID and socio-economic status of the source (SESC) is 0.413, all of which are less than the upper ceiling of 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Also, the intercorrelation between the independent variables is less than 0.7. Between GSC and ASC is 0.692, while the correlation between GSC and SES is 0.630. Between ASC and SES is 0.593. The table also shows a clear distinction between the measures of the two moderating variables. The correlation between the mass media and the interpersonal channel is

0.505.

Other ways of testing for multicollinearity are tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Tolerance refers to ‘the amount of variability of the selected independent variable that is not explained by the other independent variables’ (Hair *et al.*, 2010: 201). This is obtained from:  $1-R^2$  formula (Pallant, 2003; Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.201). On the other hand, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) refers to the degree to which the standard error has been inflated by multicollinearity. The formula for obtaining VIF is  $1/\text{Tolerance}$ . Arguably, multicollinearity exists when tolerance value is low and the VIF value is high. Researchers seem to defer on a common cutoff threshold on tolerance value, but we adopted a minimum tolerance value of .10 which corresponds to a VIF value of 10 suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010) in this study. Any value less than 0.1 is said to suffer multicollinearity.

The test for multicollinearity is conducted by assigning the role of dependent

TABLE 5  
Test of Normality: Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics for all measured variables

<b>Variate</b>	<b>Kolmogorov-Smirnov<sup>(a)</sup></b>			<b>Shapiro-Wilk</b>		
	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Gender of the Source	.100	375	.000	.955	375	.000
Age of the Source	.076	375	.000	.979	375	.000
Socio-Economic Status of the Source	.082	375	.000	.958	375	.000
Mass Media	.127	375	.000	.914	375	.000
Interpersonal Channel	.147	375	.000	.926	375	.000
Effective Information Dissemination	.182	375	.000	.902	375	.000

a Lilliefors Significance Correction

variable to each of the independent variables in turn to assess the amount of variance in the selected variable that is unexplained by the remaining independent variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Going by this and the suggested minimal acceptable tolerance value (.10), this study can be said to be free of multicollinearity with tolerance vs VIF values of 0.648 vs 1.543; 0.601 vs 1.664; and 0.509 vs 1.964 for GSC, ASC, and SESC variables respectively as presented in Table 6.

#### *Assumptions of Linearity*

An important but under reported requirement for multivariate analysis is the test for linearity between dependent and independent variables (Hau & Mash, 2004). In order not to run afoul of this rule, this study adopted the suggestion of Hair *et al.* (2010) that the linear relationship between the variables in a study can be assessed through a graphic inspection of histograms, normal probability plots of regression standardised residuals for the dependent variable and the scatter plot of residuals against predicted values. As indicated in appendix, the histogram shows

that the data set is reasonably normal. That the normal distribution is a good model for the data is further confirmed by normal probability plot which reveals positive linear correlation between the variables while the scatter plot lends credence to the random nature of data by indicating no clear relationship between the residuals and predicted values.

#### **EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (EFA)**

In line with the convention of available literature on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Hair *et al.* (2010) and Bryne (2010) suggested a two-step model building method. The first step involves performing confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to estimate the overall fit of the measurement model in testing the relationship among constructs as well as to define the nature of each construct whether reflective or formative. The second step involves using the covariance matrix resulting from the CFA from the measurement model, to test the hypothesised relationships between the constructs in the structural model (Hair

TABLE 6  
Test for Multicollinearity

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
Gender of the Source	Age of the Source	.648	1.543
	Socio-economic Status of the Source	.648	1.543
Age of the Source	Socio-economic status of the source	.601	1.664
	Gender of the source	.601	1.664
Socio-economic Status of the Source	Gender of the Source	.509	1.964
	Age of the Source	.509	1.964

et.al., 2010). However, prior to conducting confirmatory factor analysis, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to purify and validate the untested self-designed measurement scales as suggested by Bryne (2010) and Hair et.al. (2010).

Literature has underscored the need for EFA to identify, summarise and assist in validating factors that contribute differentially to the causal explanation of variance in effective dissemination of information on maternal mortality (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Following this suggestion, the present study used SPSS version 14.0 for Windows to perform the EFA. Here, data was allowed to statistically load on factors that were independent of theory or any a priori assumptions related to the measurement instrument (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Rules guiding the performance of factor analysis assert that data must meet certain underlying assumptions among which is sample size. The sample size of 375 after deleting the five cases that constituted outliers was adequate for the performance of EFA (Cochran, 1977). The Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA), otherwise known as Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, has been theoretically argued to vary between 0 and 1 (Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993). A MSA value that is closer to 0 indicates an existence of higher partial correlation between the variables thus rendering the application of factor analysis to such data inappropriate. A value closer to 1 is an indication that the patterns of the correlation are compact, or as Hair *et al.*(2010) succinctly put it, “reaching

1 when each variable is perfectly predicted without error by the other variables” (p.104). Consequently, the application of factor analysis to such data is expected to yield distinct and reliable factors (Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993; Hair *et al.*, 2010). To play it safe, Hair *et al.* (2010) suggested that KMO / MSA values must exceed 0.50 to be deemed fit for factor analysis; otherwise, the researcher would either need to collect more data and/or include more variables. To appreciate the strength of the measure, Hair *et al.* (2010) classified any value of 0.80 and above as meritorious; 0.70 and above as middling; 0.60 and above as mediocre; 0.50 and above as miserable; while value below 0.50 was considered unacceptable. The KMO for the data in this study is 0.901, which empirically falls within the category of data that are classified as meritorious. This establishes the appropriateness of factor analysis to the data gathered for this study with some degree of confidence.

The Bartlett test of sphericity, a statistical measure for the presence of correlation among variables, is another prerequisite for the performance of factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Importantly, it is argued that for any factor analysis to be efficient, the researcher needs to establish the correlation matrix has significant relationships among some of the variables of interest. Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001) affirm that for any Bartlett's test to be significant, it must obtain a statistical significance with a value less than 0.05. The output of Bartlett's test in this study: ( $\chi^2 = 8069.102$ ; DF= 1431; sig.= .000) confirms the existence of a

relationship between perceptions of gender of the source, the age of the source, and the socio-economic status of the source; the latter have been included in this study for further analysis. This implies that the data in this study is significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

Having conformed with the stated rules of thumb for performing factor analysis, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation was performed on the variables: perceptions of gender, age, and socio-economic status of the source. Applying the latent root criterion, only factors that accounted for the variance of at least a single variable were considered for retention (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The 50 items that represented all the constructs were factor analysed with unspecified eigenvalue resulting in the extraction of six factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 accounting for 48% of the total variance extracted. This is an acceptable solution value in the social sciences (Hair *et al.*, 2010) which means that the three distinct factors reflecting the three categories of constructs being studied were all significant. Notably, the first few factors usually explain a larger percentage of variances that are recorded in a study (Hair *et al.*, 2010). For instance, factor 1 explains

about 32 % of the total variance in the analysed data set in this study. The results of the eigenvalues extracted and percentage of variance explained are presented in Table 7.

As explained earlier, a critical look at the unrestricted EFA showed that a few items fell short of the recommended 0.50 cut-off criterion in addition to a few crossloaded items that could cause confusion in interpretation (g1 and ses3). However, the low loading and the crossloaded were considered for deletion at the confirmatory factor analysis level (Tabachnick, 1996; Pallant, 2003; Hair *et al.*, 2010). The itemised results indicate that gender of the source variable was measured by seven items after the deletion of two items with less than a 1.0 standard deviation, age of the source was measured by seven items after the deletion of one item with less than a 1.0 standard deviation and socio-economic status of the source was measured by six items, all totalling 20 items to represent the exogenous constructs. It is worthy of mention that a subsequent analysis through CFA indicated that the average variance extracted in the constructs ranged from 0.75 to 0.88; values that are all greater than the 0.50 cut off criterion as suggested by Nunnally and

TABLE 7  
Eigenvalue extracted and total variance explained for the constructs

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.353	31.970	31.970	7.353	31.970	31.970
2	2.076	9.025	40.995	2.076	9.025	40.995
3	1.750	7.609	48.604	1.750	7.609	48.604

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Berstein (1994). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  were also greater than the 0.70 lower bench mark that is specified for exploratory factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Tables 8 to 10 present the complete list of items that were entered for each construct after the deletion of the three items owing to their lack of variability.

## STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

The proposed model for this study was tested through structural equation modeling (SEM). Bryne (2010) explains three cardinal strengths of SEM over other forms of multivariate analysis such as regression and ANOVA among others. These are: 1) its ability to simultaneously estimate two structures: the measurement model and the

TABLE 8  
Factor Analysis Results and Cronbach's alpha for Gender of the Source

Code	Items	Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$
G1	I accept the content of a message if the source is of the same gender as me.	0.677	0.848
G2	I am more willing to seek further information on a given message if the source is of the same gender as me.	0.637	
G5	I seek further clarification on a given message from others if the initial information was from a male source.	0.478	
G9	I am more willing to listen to a female source of information because of her fluency.	0.578	

TABLE 9  
Factor Analysis Results and Cronbach's alpha for Age of the Source

Code	Items	Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$
A2	I accept information from elderly sources only.	0.550	0.800
A3	I believe a young source is more innovative in delivering messages.	0.361	
A4	I am willing to adopt messages from a source that is within my age group.	0.540	
A5	I believe a source of information becomes less effective as the person grows older.	0.513	
A6	I will not pay attention to any information if delivered by a young person.	0.643	
A7	I believe a young person does not have adequate knowledge to deliver a message.	0.744	
A8	I believe the elders are too emotional to deliver messages effectively.	0.522	

TABLE 10  
Factor Analysis Results for Socio-economic Status of the Source

Code	Items	Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$
SES1	I believe a highly educated source of information only addresses the rich.	0.551	0.801
SES2	I will believe a message if the source is culturally relevant to me.	0.559	
SES3	I believe the profession of the source plays a role on his/her style of information delivery.	0.338	
SES4	I am better informed if the source is a specialist on the issue of discussion.	0.694	
SES5	I will adopt the content of a given message if the source is a high profile figure.	0.721	
SES6	I will cross check any information from unmarried sources.	0.731	

structural model in a single structure; 2) its ability to assess and estimate measurement errors in the explanatory variables that can lead to untold inaccuracies, and, 3) the application of SEM incorporates both unobserved (latent) and observed variables as against other forms of multivariate analyses that are based on observed variables only. The relevance of SEM to the current study is underscored by Shook, Ketchen, Hult, and Kacmar, (2004) who noted that the application of SEM becomes handy when “strong theoretical underpinnings are critical to causality inferences” (p. 398) in nonexperimental research.

The measurement model indicates how measured variables or indicators come together to represent their unique constructs while the structural model shows the interrelationship between the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The first stage involved the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to estimate the overall fit of the measurement model among the constructs (characteristics of the source’s gender,

age, socio-economic status). The general specifications for a simple measurement model that: 1) each measurement indicator is congenial. i.e. it has non-zero loading on the construct it measures but a zero loading on other constructs; 2) the error terms are independent of each other and the factor; 3) associations between the indicators are not measured; and 4) one of the loading paths that are hypothesised to measure a construct must be constrained to have a value of 1.00 for the purpose of model identification are applied here (Kline, 2005; Hair *et al.*, 2010; Bryne, 2010). This involves an examination of parameter estimates and goodness of fit (Bryne, 2010) through the maximum likelihood procedure. Importantly, all the hypothesised measures for the constructs are reflective.

#### CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)

The hypothesis to be tested here relates to the pattern of causal structure linking the constructs of perceptions of characteristics

of a source's gender, age and socio-economic status of the source and their consequence on the construct of effective information dissemination. To perform the CFA, all the constructs with their indicators must interact to test their fitness to the model (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Unlike the EFA, CFA in SEM pre-specified indicators are attached to constructs in a bid to validate the model (Bryne, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2010). Through CFA, the strength of each indicator on its latent construct is examined based on factor loadings. Bryne (2010) explained that the factor loading of each measure indicates the correlation coefficient between it and its latent construct. Consequently, in order to establish the validity and the reliability of the measurement model, this study conducted CFA on the individual constructs that constitute the exogenous variables. However, Hair *et al.* (2010) cautioned that the determination of the performance of an item should not rest solely on significant loading alone, rather, consideration should also be given to the statistical significance of each estimated coefficient. Although all the loadings are significant at  $p = .001$ , the items that are observed to be of lower values are subject for deletion (Bryne, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2010). The CFA loading depicts the standardised maximum loading estimate for the 20 indicators representing perceptions of characteristics of gender, age, socio-economic status of the source — the exogenous constructs.

## **CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Construct validity was evaluated by assessing the item loadings, their corresponding  $t$ -values, composite reliabilities as well as average variance extracted. A critical view of the results in Table 8 below reveals that a larger percentage of the proposed indicators of the constructs of interest to this study have factor loadings above 0.50 indicating that the hypothesised items truly have strong relationship with the conceptualised model, an evidence of convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Their significant critical ratios ( $t$ -value  $> 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) are also indicative of their differences on the constructs they are purported to measure; if otherwise, Anderson & Gerbing (1988) suggested that such indicators should be eliminated. Table 11 presents all 20 items of the exogenous constructs with loadings ranging from 0.438 to 0.724 before modification. Of equal importance to SEM is the calculation of composite reliability to demonstrate the reliability of factors and the internal consistency of the items. The established composite reliability indicates a strong internal consistency between the indicators in the model as well as a correlation between all the constructs in the model. This leads to a conclusion that the data in this model have both construct and convergent validity as the estimates of most of them are  $> 0.5$  minimum criterion (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The composite reliability values are in the range of 0.806 to 0.88; exceeding the 0.70 minimum criterions Fornell and Larcker set (1981).

## MEASUREMENT MODEL

The measurement model examines how the observed variables converge to represent the constructs they measure (Hair *et al.*, 2010). As Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Hair *et al.* (2010) advanced the application of structural equation modelling, the measurement model comes before the final structural model. The hypothesised measurement model for this study is presented in Figure 1 below. The model bears indicators loaded on their predetermined exogenous constructs. Bryne (2010) noted four important procedures to fitting a hypothesised model. They are: 1)

the model fitting process, 2) the issue of statistical significance, 3) the estimation process, and 4) the goodness-of-fit statistics as discussed inter-alia.

## DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

To pass the test of discriminant validity, the average variance extracted for any two constructs that are measured must be greater than the square of correlations that exist between them (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity also confirms that individual measurement indicators only represent one latent construct without cross loading.

TABLE 11  
Summary of item analysis

Constructs	Code	Factor Loading	t-value	Composite Reliability
Gender of the Source	G1	.629	12.045***	<b>0.880</b>
	G2	.587	12.383***	
	G3	.597	12.348***	
	G4	.674	11.654***	
	G5	.616	12.237***	
	G6	.687	11.589***	
	G9	.576	12.515***	
Age of the Source	A2	.529	12.718***	<b>0.820</b>
	A3	.496	12.895***	
	A4	.673	11.637***	
	A5	.674	11.652***	
	A6	.631	12.002***	
	A7	.464	12.982***	
	A8	.650	11.903***	
SES of the Source	SES1	.656	11.664***	<b>0.806</b>
	SES2	.689	11.167***	
	SES3	.509	12.750***	
	SES4	.566	12.459***	
	SES5	.724	10.606***	
	SES6	.684	11.156***	

Note: \*\*\* p < .001.

Table 12 presents the summary of the calculated variance extracted (VE) based on the squared multiple correlation (SMC) and the standardised error of variance (SE). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in this study ranged from 0.58 to 0.73, thus exceeding the minimum 0.5 criterion (Barclay, Thompson & Higgins, 1995). This implies that the variance of the measurement error is less than the variance the latent construct captured.

The examination of the discriminant validity of this model was conducted by

comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for a given variable with the correlation between that variable and other variables in the study. The diagonal elements in the correlation matrix are replaced by the square root of the AVE as presented in Table 13.

In summary, the assessment of discriminant validity confirms the independency and uniqueness of the constructs in this study. The AVE for the individual constructs is greater than the correlation between all the constructs thus,

TABLE 12  
Variance extracted

Construct	SMC	SMC <sup>2</sup>	S E	VE
GSC	.395	0.156025	.054	
	.344	0.118336	.056	
	.356	0.126736	.062	
	.454	0.206116	.057	
	.380	0.1444	.058	
	.471	0.221841	.053	
	.332	0.110224	.057	
		1.083678	0.397	0.73
ASC	.279	0.077841	.068	
	.246	0.060516	.121	
	.453	0.205209	.115	
	.454	0.206116	.120	
	.398	0.158404	.115	
	.215	0.046225	.073	
	.422	0.178084	.067	
	<b>2.732</b>	0.932395	<b>0.444</b>	0.68
SESSC	.430	0.1849	.144	
	.475	0.2256	.133	
	.259	0.0670	.129	
	.320	0.1024	.140	
	.524	0.2745	.111	
	.468	0.2190	.114	
		1.0734	0.771	0.58

supporting discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

### TESTING INDIVIDUAL CONSTRUCT MEASUREMENT MODEL

In order to establish convergent validity of measured variables on the construct they are proposed to represent, it is advisable to conduct single-group measurement analyses (Byrne, 2010; Hair e. al., 2010). The CFA tests were based on multiple goodness-of-fit indices to affirm the strength of the models (Breckler, 1990; Anderson & Gerbing, 1992).

### PERCEIVED GENDER OF THE SOURCE CREDIBILITY MEASURES

The hypothesised model for the gender of the source variable had all seven indicators entered as shown in Table 14. Although this

result was fairly fit, the required ratio of  $< 0.2$  was not achieved; the RMSEA was also higher than the acceptable  $< 0.05$  value. Consequently, acceptable goodness of fit indices was achieved after the model was trimmed. Item g1 was deleted based on its high modification indices and cross loading on other indicators.

### PERCEIVED AGE OF THE SOURCE MEASURES

Although the seven items hypothesised for the age of the source model met the criterion for the measurement of goodness of fit indices, the ratio was greater than the cut-off less than 2 values. Hence, item a2 was deleted at this individual measurement test level on the basis of cross loading on the modification index. A summary of the fitting process is presented in Table 15.

TABLE 13  
Test of Discriminant Validity

Construct	1	2	3
Age of the Source	0.68		
Socio-Economic Status of the Source	0.458***	0.58	
Gender of the Source	0.544***	0.546***	0.73

Note: The bold numbers on the diagonal are the Average Variance Extracted (AVE); off diagonal numbers are the correlations among constructs; \*\*\*p < 0.001.

TABLE 14  
Measurement Model for Perceived Gender of the Source Construct

	X <sup>2</sup>	DF	Ratio	Pvalue	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
First Model	61.26	14	4.378	.000	.953	.907	.933	.900	.095
Trimmed model <sup>a</sup>	17.12	9	1.903	.04	.986	.967	.985	.975	.049

Note a: Fit model was achieved for the gender of the source variable after the deletion of g1 owing to high modification indices and cross loading.

## **PERCEIVED SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE SOURCE MEASURES**

Six items were hypothesised to represent the socio-economic status of the source construct. The CFA measurement test yielded just fair results. Although the GFI had a value greater than 0.9, the AGFI, CFI, and TLI were less than the minimum cut-off criterion. The ratio was also greater than 2, and the RMSEA is greater than the cut off 0.05 criterion (Bryne, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2010). Hence, the need existed for modification to achieve the acceptable goodness of fit indices. In pursuing an acceptable fit model, items SES1 and SES2, which were observed to have higher modification indices, were deleted. The outcome is presented in Table 16.

## **ASSESSING MEASUREMENT MODEL VALIDITY**

The measurement model for the exogenous constructs was tested in the current study. In processing the CFA, the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) was adopted for parameter estimation given the sample size was  $> 100$  (Ding, Velicer, & Harlow, 1995).

## **MEASUREMENT MODEL FOR THE EXOGENOUS CONSTRUCT**

Having established the convergent validity of the measures on the individual exogenous constructs at the preliminary single-group analyses, perceptions of the three demographic variables of the source (gender, age and socio-economic status constructs) were caused to interact in a single composite measurement model as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010) so as to gauge their causal relationships on the

**TABLE 15**  
Measurement Model for Perceived Age of the Source Construct Model

	X <sup>2</sup>	DF	Ratio	Pvalue	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Hypothesised Model	34.10	14	2.436	.002	.975	.951	.965	.948	.062
Trimmed model <sup>a</sup>	15.67	9	1.741	.074	.986	.968	.986	.976	.044

*Note a:* The fit model for the perceived age of the source data was achieved after the deletion of item a2.

**TABLE 16**  
Measurement Model for Perceived Socio-Economic Status of the Source Model

	X <sup>2</sup>	DF	Ratio	Pvalue	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Hypothesised Model	82.33	9	9.149	.000	.930	.837	.889	.815	.147
Trimmed model <sup>a</sup>	3.060	2	1.530	.216	.996	.980	.997	.991	.038

*Note a:* Fit model is achieved after the deletion of SES1 and SES2.

endogenous construct. A correlation was run to examine the relationships between them as well as to establish their differences. Table 17 shows that the correlation between the three constructs ranges between 0.582 and 0.768, which are adequate correlation parameters and all item covariance are significantly different ( $t$ -value  $> 1.96$ ).

Of the 20 items that were hypothesised in the study as measuring the influence of the perceived characteristics of gender, age and socio-economic status of the source on effective dissemination of information on maternal mortality, only 16 were statistically reliable and fit the final measurement model. Fig.1 reveals the relative chi-square ( $\chi^2/\text{df}$ ) for the data is 1.942, the GFI = .940, the AGFI = .919, the CFI = .946, the TLI = .936 while the RMSEA = .050 demonstrating that the indicators on the three constructs fit the model. Although the model did not meet the 0.95 cut-off criterion for the absolute and incremental indices (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Bryne, 2010, Hair *et. al.*, 2010), it satisfied the minimum requirement of 0.90 albeit with a significant p-value. Modification to achieve the acceptable GOF indices will be done at the level of measurement testing for exogenous constructs.

### *Profile of Respondents*

The sample comprised 45.3% male (n = 170) and 54.7% females (n = 205). Some of them, 39.5% (n = 148), fell within the age group of 30 and 44 years with 26.4% (n = 99) between 15 and 29 years; and 26.9% (n = 101) between 45 and 60 years while 7.2% (n = 27) were more than 60 years. A little above half of them, 51.5% (n = 193) belonged to the low education group (respondents having a maximum of secondary school certificate) while 48.5% (n = 182) of them had higher education (respondents with degrees ranging from diploma to Ph.D. certificates). A number of them, 47.5% (n = 178), were in salaried jobs while 8.5% (n = 32) of them were housewives. Others were into sales and services: 25.5% (n = 94), farming: 15.5% (n = 58), and students: 3.5% (n = 13).

With regards to marital status, a larger percentage of the respondents: 75.7 % (n = 284) were married while 24.3 % (n = 91) were unmarried, separated, divorced or widowed but collectively classified as unmarried as their status at the time of the interview read. Respondents with more than four children constituted 32.0% (n = 120) of the sample, 20.3% (n = 76) had a maximum of two, 27.7% (n = 104) had a maximum of

TABLE 17  
Correlations among Exogenous Constructs

Covariances	Estimates	S. E.	C. R. ( $t$ -value)	Correlations
GSC <--> ASC	.229	.034	6.667***	.768
GSC<--> SESC	.222	.043	5.202***	.582
ASC<--> SESC	.269	.046	5.819***	.710

Note: \*\*\*p < 0.001.

four children while 20.0% ( $n = 75$ ) had no child at all. An analysis of the respondents by their various social organisations revealed that a large number of them, 29.9% ( $n = 112$ ), associate themselves with religious groups followed by 21.6 % of them ( $n = 81$ ) who belonged to developmental unions while 18.6% ( $n = 63$ ) were members of women's organisations; 12.5% ( $n = 47$ ) were members of youth organisations and 7.7% of them were members of professional/technical groups while 11.5% did not belong to any social group.

## DISCUSSION

Since the original contributions to source credibility studies by Hovland, Janis, & Kelly, 1953; Berscheid, 1966; Chaiken, 1979; Johnson, Torcivia, & Patrick, 1968; McGinnies & Ward; 1980; Mills & Harvey, 1972; Ross 1973; Wu & Shaffer 1987 in communication; Applbaum & Anatol, 1972; Berlo, Lernett, & Mertz, 1969; McCroskey, 1966; Miller & Basehart, 1969; Whitehead, 1968 in marketing and Baker & Churchill, 1977; Caballero & Solomon, 1984; DeSarbo & Harshman, 1985; Kahle & Homer 1985; Mowen & Brown, 1981; Wynn, 1987 in advertising,

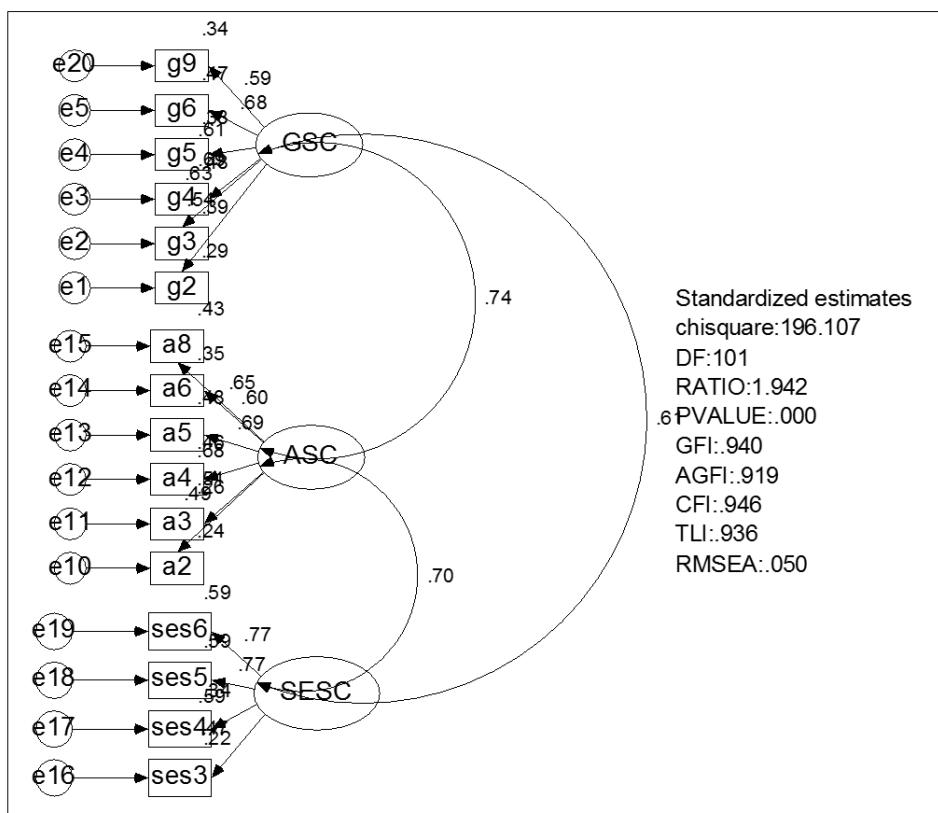


Fig.1: Measurement model for the exogenous constructs.

source credibility has been operationalised variously by means of a reliable and valid measurement . However, experimental studies that have been used for various dimensions of source credibility have not been consistent in their manipulation checks of the experimental variables. The current research has defined the domain of source credibility construct and has developed a reliable and valid scale for its measurement.

All in all, the following 16 items in Table 18 were found fit to examine the impact of the demographic features of the source on his or her credibility.

The measurement consists of three constructs, 1) perception towards gender, 2) age, and 3) socio- economic status of source credibility in effective information

dissemination regarding maternal mortality. From a theoretical perspective, by identifying and measuring this tri-component construct, the researcher can validly assess the impact of each dimensions of the source credibility scale on maternal mortality information or any attitude or behavioural change information.

The findings of this research have supported the views of previous scholars that the effectiveness of disseminated information depends largely on the credibility of the source. In specific terms, the findings have lent credence to the findings of Sarmiento (2003) who said that asymmetries in perceptions of the gender of the source would impact credibility of message delivered.

**TABLE 18**  
Items Found Fit to Examine the Impact of the Demographic Features of The source on His or Her Credibility

S/N	Item
1	I am more willing to seek further information on a given message if the source is of the same gender as me.
2	I easily remember a given message if it is from a female source.
3	I discuss any information from a female source with my spouse before taking decision.
4	I seek further clarification on a given message from others if the initial information was from a male source.
5	I can identify myself in a message if it is from a female source.
6	I am more willing to listen to a female source of information because of her fluency.
7	I accept information from elderly sources only.
8	I believe a young source is more innovative in delivering messages.
9	I am willing to adopt messages from a source that is within my age group.
10	I believe a source of information becomes less effective as the person grows older.
11	I will not pay attention to any information if delivered by a young person.
12	I believe the elders are too emotional to deliver messages effectively.
13	I believe the profession of the source plays a role on his/her style of information delivery.
14	I am better informed if the source is a specialist on the issue of discussion.
15	I will adopt the content of a given message if the source is a high profile figure.
16	I will cross check any information from unmarried sources.

The findings of this study are also consistent with literature that extent to which perceptions of age of the source determine message effectiveness directly correlates with certain characteristics of the message recipient(Al-Maghribi & Dennis (2010). Borrowing from Krueger, Rogers, Hummer, LeClere & Huie, (2003) age determines earning potentials: great potentials for the young ones and diminishing potentials for the old. It is consistent with a report by Salman and Hashim (2011) report on the generational difference between the younger and older Malays in the ranking of mass media outlets for information sourcing and internet usage. Dwivedi and Lal (2007) contended that elders needed to be trained to get maximum benefit from information technology. This can further inform their roles as information sources and recipients. Different communication processes and channels reach different age groups depending on the social, economic, political and geographical context. The socio-economic status of the source plays a small role in determining the success or otherwise of the disseminated message.

## LIMITATIONS

The present study has a number of limitations and their identification should help to refine future research efforts. The first was the lack of a standardised instrument for adaptation in this study. This is probably due to the minimal attention to the study of demography of source credibility as noted by Pornpitakpan (2004) and the “conspiracy of silence” against issues of maternal

mortality (Briggs, 2009) by researchers. As a result, items were generated from a pool of literature from different fields of study that discussed all the variables of interest to this study (Baxter & Babbie, 2001; Baxter, 2004). Borrowed from other studies, these items were streamlined to fit the present context.

Second, the measurement of the variables was an issue of concern. Some researchers prefer to study the variables of interest by dimensions (Pearson, 1982). However, no strict rule exists about the form of measures to be adopted in different contexts. Most importantly, the measures of a study depend on the underlying objects of such studies. Hence, assessment of perceptions of gender, age and socio-economic status of a source as well as the determinants of effective dissemination of information on maternal mortality were measured holistically. Unlike other studies on source credibility which were based on experimental methods (Hovland & Weiss, 1953; Pearson, 1982), data for this study was gathered through a self-report approach that may be susceptible to common method variance. However, adequate measures were employed to rid data of this ambiguity. A self-report approach was pertinent to this study in order to obtain information from the respondent in his/her natural setting without manipulations in a bid to respect “the centrality of the patient’s point of view in monitoring medical care outcomes” (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992, p. 473) as well as their reactions to health information. Self-rating also elicited sincere spontaneous responses

from the respondents on their perceptions of the gender, age, and socio-economic status of a source.

Finally, the study involved cross-sectional data gathering rather than a longitudinal one, which is more appropriate for instrument development and model testing. However, rigorous measures were taken to enhance research credibility. The instrument was subjected to pre-and pilot-tests for various forms of validations. Expert assessment meant that some items were reworded, and the number pruned down significantly for content validity. The pilot test administered to respondents with characteristics that were similar to the target respondents strengthened the reliability of the findings. Construct validity was established through reliability tests and exploratory factor analysis. Individual item's performance was tested for inter-item reliability (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article provides a basis for the potentially relevant associations between the demography of the source and information dissemination outcome. It is expected that if message recipients are convinced of this important association, they will be more attentive and responsive to the communicating-to-induce change process. Of the initial 50 items that were drawn from the pool of literature to examine the impact of the perceptions the gender, age and socio-economic status of the source on message effectiveness, 16 items strongly emerged as fit for measuring the constructs.

The consistent use of the same instrument can illuminate the comparison of findings across several studies and can contribute to source-scale credibility literature. Thus, the present scale can be adapted to a variety of situations. Researchers in political science can use the scale to investigate the credibility of a political candidate. In political campaigns, a candidate's success depends on his/her ability to acquire the voter's trust, approval, and confidence in his/her knowledge and ability from demographic perspective. In instructional settings, the scale can be used to evaluate the influence of the instructor's characteristics on student's evaluations of the teacher. The generated instrument has increased the array of measuring items that are available for source credibility and diffusion of innovation studies. The acceptable validity and reliability values of the instrument strengthen their replication in other studies and other context.

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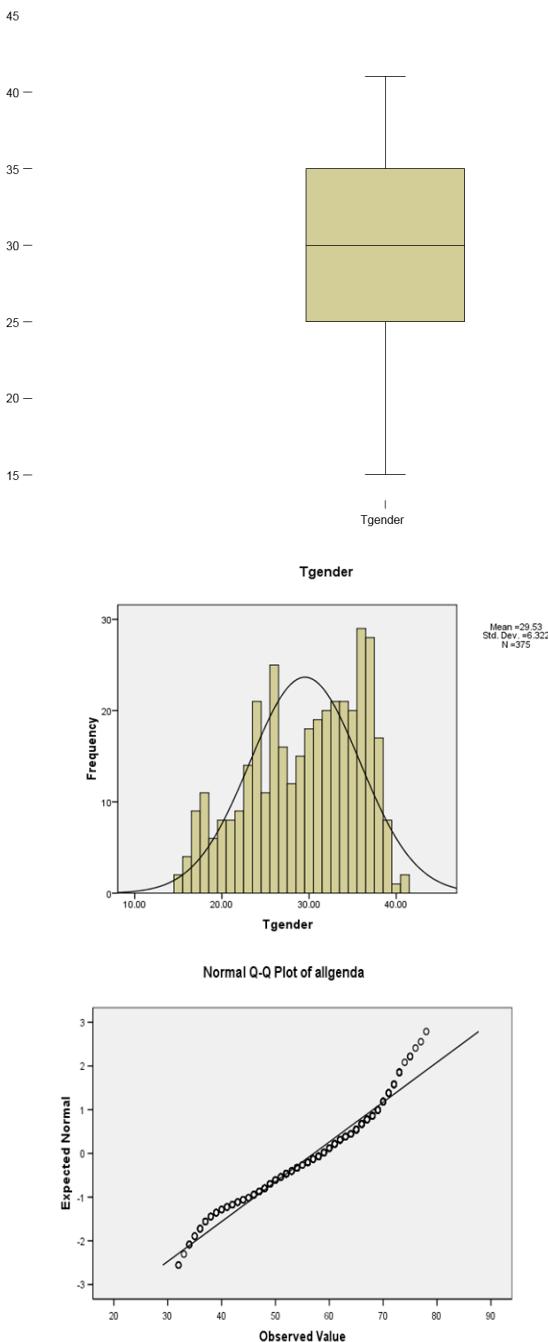
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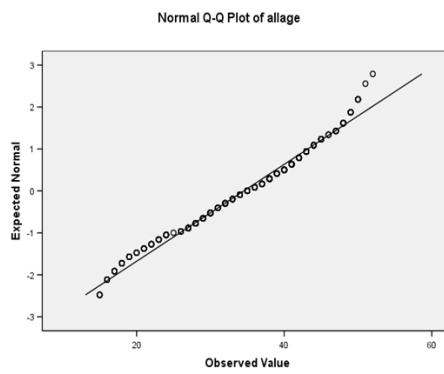
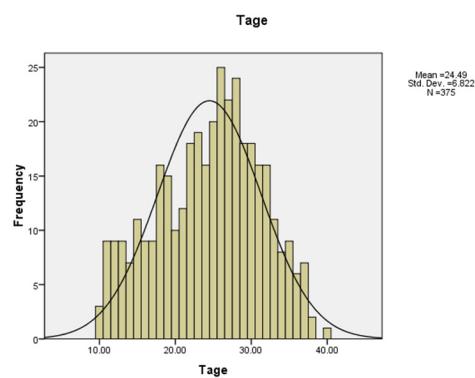
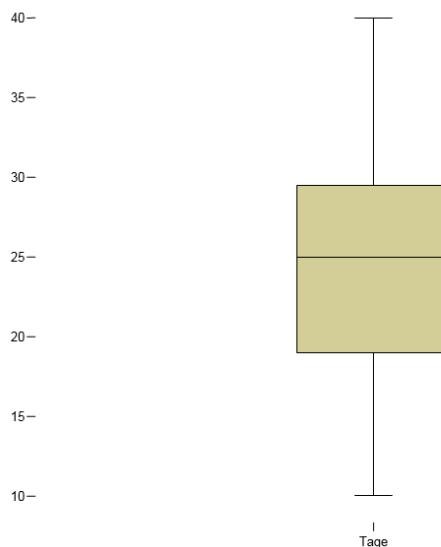
## APPENDIX A

### ASSESSMENT OF NORMALITY

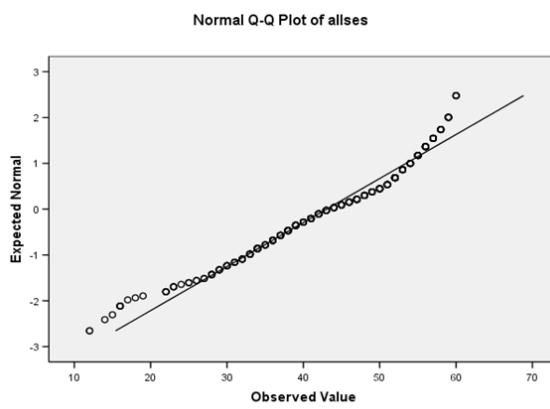
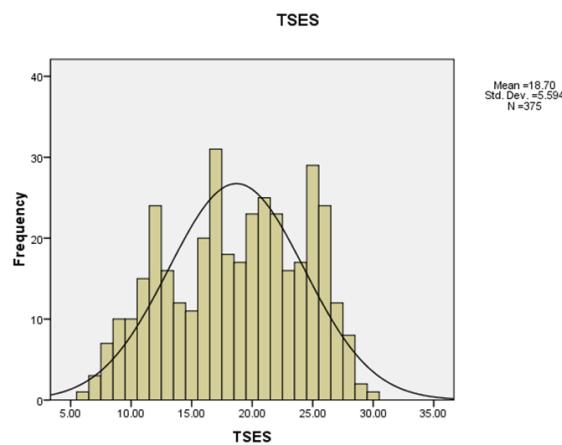
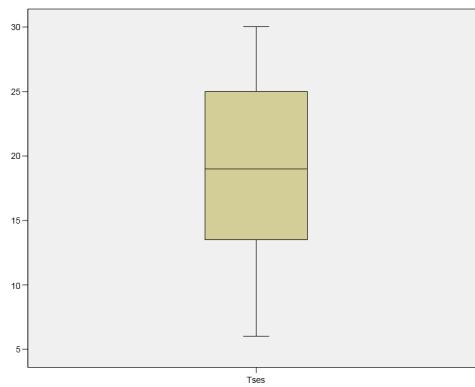
#### Perception of gender of the source box plot, histogram and normality plot



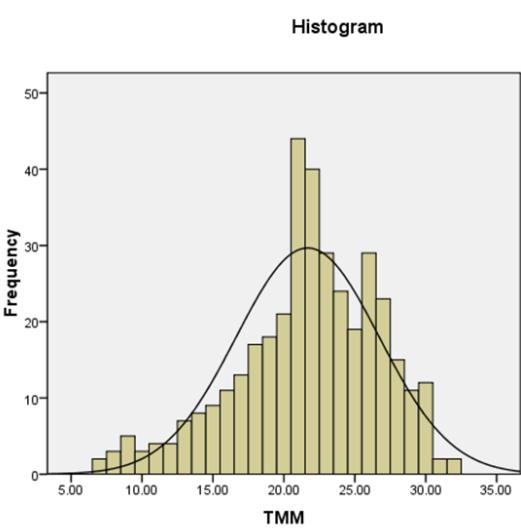
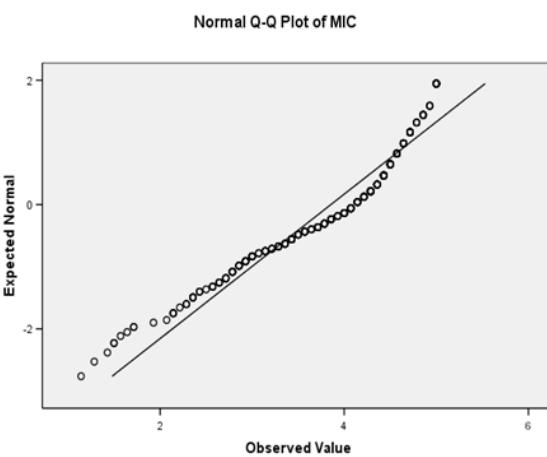
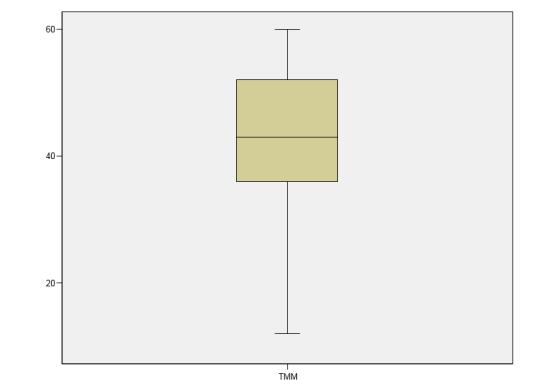
### Perception of Age of the Source's Box plot, Histogram and Normality plot



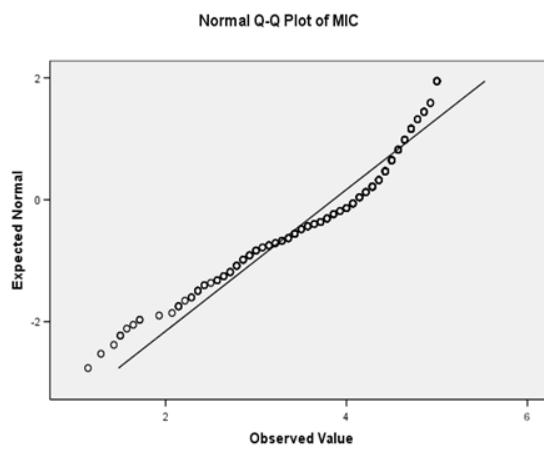
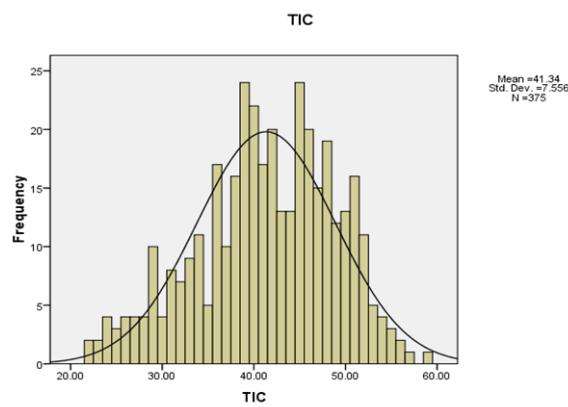
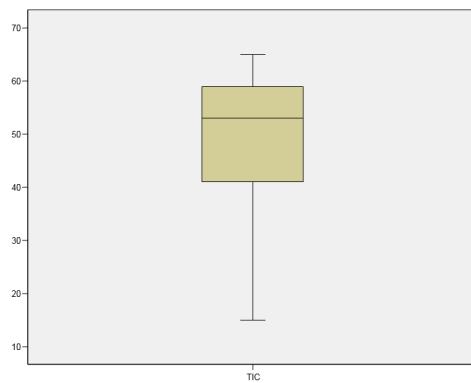
## Perception of Socio-Economic Status of the Source's Boxplot, Histogram, and Normality plot



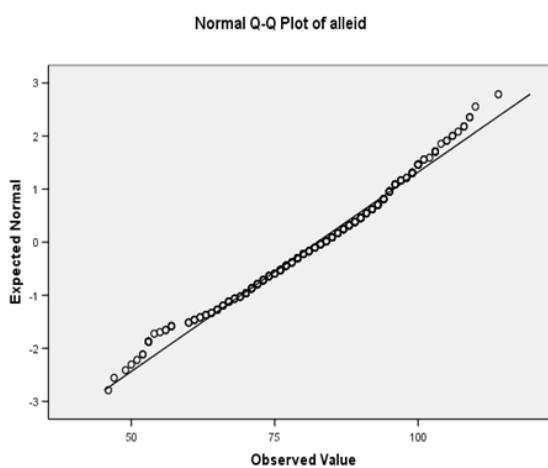
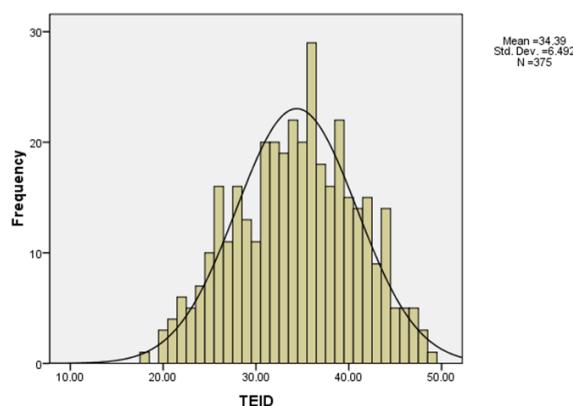
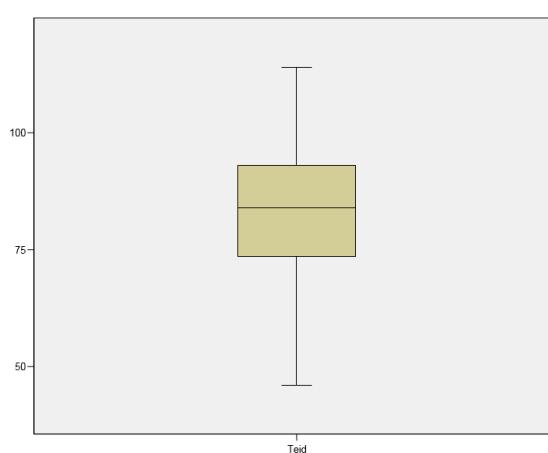
### Impact of Massmedia Boxplot, Histogram, and Normality Test



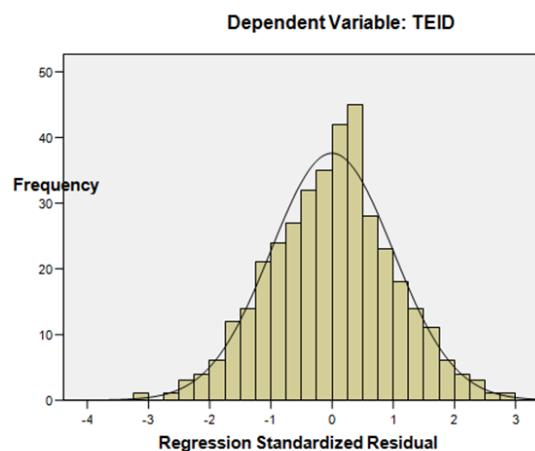
### Impact of Interpersonal Communication, Box spot, Histogram and Normality Plot



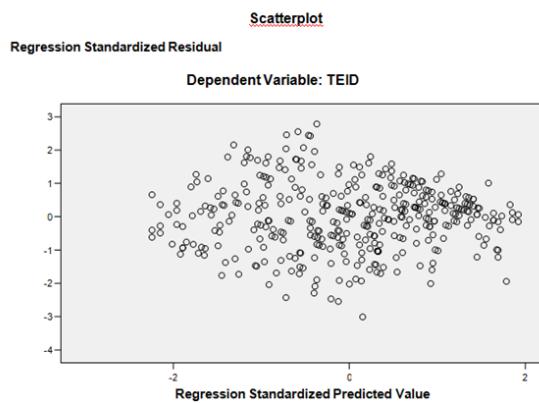
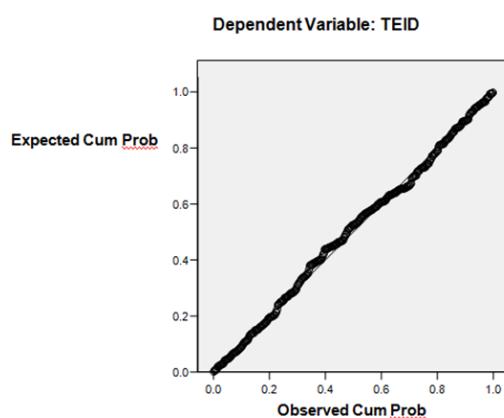
### Effective Information Dissemination; Boxplot, Histogram, and Normality plot



## Test of Linearity



Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



## Implementing Psychosocial Intervention to Improve the Neuropsychological Functioning of Students with Learning Disabilities: A Therapeutic Approach

Preeti Tabitha Louis<sup>1\*</sup> and Arnold Emerson Isaac<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Nursing, CMC Hospital, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>2</sup>School of Biosciences and Technology, VIT University, Tamil Nadu, Vellore-632014, India

### ABSTRACT

The present study describes and assesses the effectiveness of a psychosocial intervention. We assessed the Neuro psychological functioning of 10 adolescents between the ages of 13 and 15 in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade respectively. They visited the outpatient department of the clinic and were screened for learning disability. A psychosocial intervention that addressed concerns in academic skills, behavioural adjustment and sociability was designed and implemented for duration of six months. Standardised inventories namely Wechsler's Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV), the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS), the Draw-a-family test and The Connors Parent and Teacher Rating Scales (Short forms) were administered prior and post intervention. Participant and parent interviews were used in understanding underlying issues of concern. Prior to the intervention scores on the WISC-IV, Draw-a-family test and the Connors Parent and Teacher Rating Scale revealed significant deficits in intellectual functioning, interpersonal conflicts and behavioural problems. Post intervention, there were significant improvements in scores which clearly implied that the intervention was effective.

*Keywords:* Learning disabilities, adolescents, behaviour, cognition, socialisation

### INTRODUCTION

Learning disability can best be described as a disorder in which one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, manifests itself as an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations

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*E-mail addresses:*

preetilouis@hotmail.com (Preeti Tabitha Louis),

i\_arnoldemerson@yahoo.com (Arnold Emerson Isaac)

\* Corresponding author

(Rathus, 2008). The most common learning disability is developmental dyslexia that accounts for nearly 70%-80% of cases. This can affect any part of the reading process, including difficulty with accurate or fluent word recognition, word decoding, reading rate, prosody and reading comprehension (Peterson, 2012)

Common indicators of reading disability include difficulty with phonemic awareness also known as sound-symbol correspondence (Peer, 2014). Impaired ability in written language may include weak handwriting, spelling, organisation of ideas, and composition. This term was used as an overarching term to include all disorders of written expression. Organisations such as the International Dyslexia Association have used the term “dysgraphia” to refer to difficulties exclusively involving handwriting (Reynolds, 2007). Sometimes called dyscalculia, a math disability can cause impairments in learning math concepts such as quantity, place value and in understanding the concept of time. It may also characterise difficulties in memorising math facts, organising numbers and in understanding how problems are organised on a page (Flora, 2013). This often manifests as motor clumsiness, poor visual-spatial skills, problematic social relationships, difficulty with math, and poor organisational skills (Fletcher, 2007).

Learning disabilities are often identified by school psychologists, clinical psychologists, and neuropsychologists through a combination of intelligence testing, academic achievement testing,

classroom performances, social interaction and aptitude. The most commonly used comprehensive achievement tests are the Woodcock-Johnson III (WJ III), Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT III), the WideRange Achievement Test 4 (WRAT 4), and the Stanford Achievement Test–10th edition (Flanagan, 2005). Past investigations of children with learning disabilities (Emerson, 2006) have proven that psychosocial interventions are effective in helping borderline or mild intellectual disabilities, but are certainly less efficacious when used help those with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities as their abilities and communication skills are limited. Although a few available Randomised Controlled trials (RCTs) have provided some evidence for the efficacy of psychological interventions, generally the studies have been of poor quality due to lack of proper design and inadequate number of participants.

In India, about 12%-13% of children have been identified as having learning disabilities (Thacker, 2007). However, during the last decade, awareness of these children's behavioural, social and emotional problems have considerably increased. This awareness was demonstrated by Bender and Smith's (1990) meta-analysis that explored the relation between learning disability and behavioural problems and Kavale and Forness's (1996) investigations of the relation between learning disability and social skills deficits. Both studies provided convincing evidence that children and adolescents with learning issues experience

social problems such as low self-esteem, emotional difficulties such as depression and conduct disorders such as aggression.

### *The present study*

Adolescents with learning disabilities have enduring and unique characteristics that manifest in differing ways as development and setting demands change. Hence, it is important that we seek answers related to salient characteristics of these learners and the use of psychosocial interventions that lead to significant student outcomes.

Research has shown that adolescents with learning disabilities dramatically improve their use of a particular strategy when a certain methodology of teaching and learning is adopted and implemented (Ellis *et al.*, 1991). In the present study, the authors want to answer two questions, (a) Can adolescents with learning disabilities be trained to use simple strategies that facilitate communication skills, socialisation and better behavioural adjustment? (b) Is psychosocial intervention effective in helping children cope with their disabilities?

## **METHOD**

### *Respondents*

Participants consisted of five adolescent boys and five adolescent girls ( $N=10$ ) from Noida, Hoogly, Chhattisgarh, Manali and Calcutta in North India who have been accessing outpatient services in a private hospital in Tamil Nadu, India. Participants were randomly selected from a source list that was available in the clinic. All of them were screened for problems in reading,

writing and arithmetic and visited the outpatient services for therapy. Students belonged to the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades of municipal schools in their respective towns. Parents of the children and the teachers who taught them also participated in the study. They provided information regarding the child's behaviour, learning and social skills at home and school. All the participants were middle-class and participation in the study was strictly voluntary. All the children ( $N=10$ ) and their parents completed the standardised questionnaires and teachers participated by telephone conversations. The ages of the students ranged between 13 and 15 years ( $M=13.8$ ,  $SD=0.55$ ).

### *Procedure*

The children have been examined by paediatrician at private hospitals and diagnosed as having learning disability according to the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV edition) criteria axis I and were referred to a psychologist for further evaluation. Students ( $N=10$ ) completed the Wechsler's Intelligence Scale for children (WISC-IV), the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS), Draw-a-family test and a child interview schedule. Parents completed the Connors Parent Rating Scale (CPRS-Short form) and a parent interview schedule. Teachers completed the Connors Teacher Rating Scale (CTRS-short form) which was conducted via telephone and also participated in the teacher interview schedule. The assessment used for children comprised four sessions and each was used for administering the standardised

test. Two sessions were used for parents and two for teachers. All measures used were standardised inventories that took into account cultural considerations and deemed suitable for the Indian population. Three sessions were used post testing for each child to discuss intervention strategies. Informed consent was obtained from all of them prior to the testing. The tests would be repeated on the child, parents and the teachers after six months to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

A psychosocial intervention was planned to develop cognition, behavioural and social skills. Reading skills were enhanced by enabling the child to read short texts of information from story books on a regular basis. This was monitored by both parents and teachers. Researchers used special pens as highlighters to enable the child to read with better visual engagement and clarity. Children were taught to use computers with animated software that helped them receive and respond to feedback while typing words or sentences. Verbal reinforcements such as these helped in improving effort and enhance motivation. Computers also reduced the burden on writing as children could type the answers instead of using the notebook to write. Children were encouraged to learn from videos on science, English and arithmetic subjects to make it interactive and interesting. Both parents and teachers were asked to implement this regularly.

To develop vocabulary, the researchers introduced five new words to the children every day and encouraged them to talk

about an incident or an experience that they found pleasurable. Peer learning at school was also done on a regular basis to increase social skills and to instil self-confidence. Experience-based learning was implemented to understand concepts in arithmetic. Children were taught to play games at home that involved buying or selling and parents encouraged them to run small errands such as purchasing goods. Parents gave their children minor responsibilities at home such as watering the garden, feeding pets or cleaning the house. Appropriate reinforcements such as praises, surprise gifts and fun vacations were chosen as reinforcements for the efforts performed. At schools, they were reinforced by the teacher by giving them responsibilities such as being the pupil leader, or were made heads of small committees where they exercised decision making skills and leadership skills. The researchers reduced the tuition hours to between two and three weekly to enable them to have more time in play activities. Children were enrolled in co-curricular activities and the school authorities were urged to be more accommodative in understanding the academic difficulties encountered by these children. Teachers actively engaged the children by providing simple worksheets of the lessons taught in class. This helped in reducing the academic workload and by helping children stay focused to learn only what was necessary. This intervention was to be executed for six months after which the tests would be repeated to assess improvements.

## Measures

### The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV)

This test was developed by Dr. David Wechsler and is an individually administered intelligence test for children between the ages of 6 and 16 years (Wechsler, 2003). The WISC-IV takes 65-80 minutes to administer and generates an IQ score which represents a child's general cognitive ability. There are four indexes namely the verbal comprehension, perceptual reasoning, working memory and the processing speed index. The full scale IQ ranges from lowest 40 points to the highest 160 points.

### The Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS)

An Indian adaptation of the Vineland Social Maturity Scale was used to assess children aged 0-16 years in the areas of self-help general, self-help dressing, self-help eating, self-direction, locomotion, communication, occupation and socialisation (Malin, 1971). The scale yields a social age and a social quotient, which can be considered an approximate intelligence quotient.

### The Connors Parent Rating Scale (CPRS-short form)

This instrument is used for routine screenings in schools, mental health clinics, residential treatment centres, paediatric offices, juvenile detention facilities, child protective agencies, and outpatient settings (Connors, 1997). The test contains 27 items and covers a subset of subscales namely

the oppositional, cognitive problems or inattention, hyperactivity and the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) index.

### Connors Teacher Rating Scale (CTRS-short form)

The short form for teachers contains 28 items. The scale should be used when time is of the essence and when multiple administrations over time are desired. The scales include the oppositional domain, cognitive problems or inattention, hyperactivity and the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder index (Connors, 1969).

### The Draw-a-family test

This is a projective test that is used to subjectively analyse the child's perception of his relationship with his family (Burns, 1972). From the picture that a child draws, it is possible to make interpretations about his attachment patterns, underlying conflicts in relationships and family cohesiveness.

### Scheduled Interviews

These were specially designed short questionnaires that were used to gather information regarding school, home, family and peer environment (Ritchie, 2003). All questions were open-ended and non-confronting and sessions during assessment were confidential. Interviews held with the child focused on his or her perception of the difficulties, what he or she expected from himself or herself and how he or she was going to make a difference.

## RESULTS

### *The cognitive profile of children Pre and Post intervention*

On the verbal tests of WISC-IV, researchers observed that verbal quotients scores pre intervention ranged between 72 and 76 for boys and the mean verbal quotient ( $M=73, SD=2.23$ ) denoted that they had a “borderline” intellectual level of functioning. Post intervention, scores on the verbal quotient ranged from a minimum of between 7 and 79 and there was an improvement in the mean scores ( $M=78, 0.44$ ). The difference in pre and post intervention was found to be statistically significant ( $p<0.01$ ) at 99% confidence interval. On the performance tests, the scores ranged between 80 and 84 and the mean scores ( $M=82, SD=1.67$ ) for boys denoted that they had a “low average” intellectual level of functioning. Post intervention, we obtained scores on the performance quotient ranging from a minimum between 86 and 89 and a remarkable improvement was observed in the mean performance quotient scores ( $M=88, 1.09$ ). The difference between the means, pre and post intervention were observed to be statistically significant ( $p<0.01$ ) at 99% confidence interval, thus rejecting the null hypothesis (Table 1).

For girls, the verbal quotient scores ranged between 70 and 76 and the mean verbal quotient score ( $M=73, SD=2.23$ ) denoted that they had a “borderline” intellectual functioning. Post intervention, scores were found to range between 74 and 78 ( $M=76, SD=1.67$ ). The difference between the means were found to be

statistically significant ( $p<0.05$ ) at the 95% confidence interval. On the performance tests, scores on WISC-IV pre intervention was found to range from 80-84 and the mean scores ( $M=82, SD=1.67$ ) denoted a “low average” intellectual functioning. Post intervention, scores ranged between 86 and 89 and there was an improvement in the mean ( $M=87, SD=1.34$ ) scores obtained. The difference pre and post intervention was found to be statistically significant ( $p<0.01$ ) at 99% confidence interval.

### *The effectiveness of the intervention*

The obtained mean scores on the verbal quotients for boys and girls ( $N=10$ ) pre intervention ( $M=73, SD=2.10$ ) when compared to post intervention scores ( $M=77, SD=1.49$ ) were found to be statistically significant ( $p<0.01$ ) at the 99% confidence interval. The paired t-test was used in analysing data. On the performance tests, the obtained mean scores ( $M=82, SD=1.57$ ) for boys and girls pre intervention and mean scores ( $M=88, SD=1.17$ ) post intervention (Table.2) were again found to be statistically significant ( $p<0.01$ ).

The authors tabulated the level of difficulty ranging from 0-4 (Fig.1) on each of the verbal subtests for boys and girls on an average to distinguish clearly the problem areas that required intervention. A score of 0 would denote that the child experienced “no difficulty”, 1 indicates “mild difficulty”, 2 denotes “moderate difficulty”, 3 represents “severe” and 4 indicates the presence of “profound” problems.

Post intervention, the WISC-IV on repetition revealed improvements on the verbal tests for both boys and girls (Fig.2). There was a decline in the ratings of difficulties experienced across subtests and we observed improvements across picture completion, arithmetic and comprehension subscales.

Similarly, the authors determined the level of difficulty experienced in each domain of the performance test for each child with scores between 0 and 4 ranging from “no difficulty” to “profound” “difficulty (Fig.3). Findings revealed that timed tasks were more stressful as it involved more fatigue.

Post intervention, on the performance tests, the speed of executing a task had particularly improved. The researchers

tabulated the levels of difficulties experienced (Fig.4) and observed improvements across all domains such as coding, geometric design and object assembly subtests.

#### *The social skills profile of children Pre and Post Intervention*

On the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS), boys on an average obtained social age equivalents that were almost age appropriate (Table 3) on domains of self-help eating ( $M=13.03, SD=0.22$ ) and dressing ( $M=12.80, SD=0.24$ ). However they had difficulties in the domain of self-direction ( $M=13.04, SD=0.16$ ) communication ( $M=14, SD=0.14$ ) and social skills ( $M=13.52, SD=0.33$ ). The researchers noticed a developmental set back between the social ages ( $M=13.20,$

TABLE. 1

Represents the mean and standard deviations for the Verbal and Performance quotients for boys and girls Pre and Post intervention

Gender		Pre intervention M(SD)	Post intervention M(SD)	P value
Boys (N=5)	Verbal Quotient (VQ)	73(2.23)	78(0.44)	0.003**
	Performance Quotient (PQ)	82(1.67)	88(1.09)	0.002**
Girls (N=5)	Verbal Quotient (VQ)	73(2.23)	76(1.67)	0.02*
	Performance Quotient (PQ)	82(1.67)	87(1.34)	0.002**

Note. Superscripts denote significant differences as follows: \*\* $p<0.01$ . Statistically significant difference in mean

TABLE 2

Represents the Verbal and Performance Quotients Pre and Post intervention

(N=10)	Pre intervention M(SD)	Post intervention M(SD)	P value
Verbal Quotient	73(2.10)	77(1.49)	0.0002**
Performance Quotient	82(1.57)	88(1.17)	$8.49 \times 10^{-6}**$

Note. Superscripts denote significant differences as follows: \*\* $p<0.01$ . Statistically significant difference in mean scores is reported in the text.

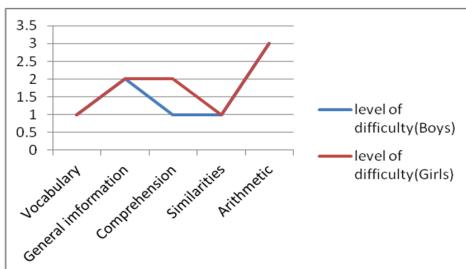


Fig.1: Represents the level of difficulty experienced by boys and girls on an average for each subscale of the verbal tests on WISC-IV Pre intervention.

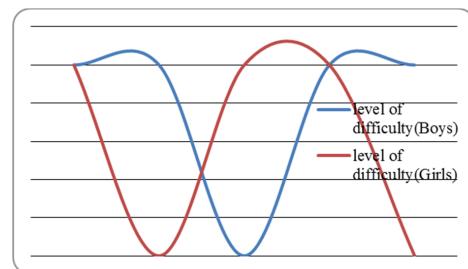


Fig.2: Represents the level of difficulty experienced by boys and girls on an average for each subscale of the verbal tests on WISC-IV Post intervention.

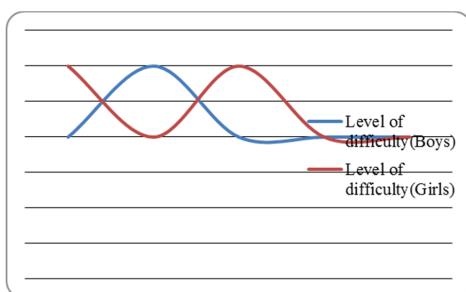


Fig.3: Represents the level of difficulty experienced by boys and girls on an average for each subscale of the performance tests on WISC-IV Pre intervention

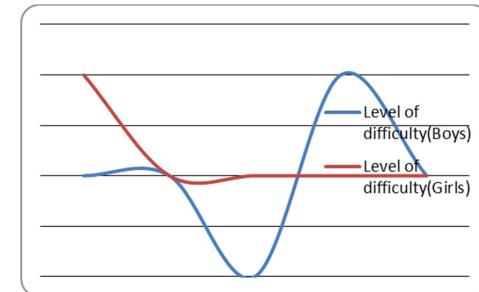


Fig.4: Represents the level of difficulty experienced by boys and girls on an average for each subscale of the performance tests on WISC-IV Post intervention

$SD=0.31$ ) and chronological ages ( $M=14$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ). Post intervention, we observed that they had significant ( $p<0.001$ ) improvements on almost all domains of the VSMS. They had improved mean scores on domains of occupation ( $M=14.27$ ,  $SD=0.17$ ), socialisation ( $M=14$ ,  $SD=0.14$ ) and on self-help general ( $13.40$ ,  $SD=0.4$ ).

The Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS) for girls revealed concerns in communication ( $M=13.96$ ,  $SD=0.16$ ), social skills ( $M=14.24$ ,  $SD=0.26$ ) and in self-direction domains ( $M=13.16$ ,  $SD=0.29$ ). Post intervention, we observed significant ( $p<0.01$ ) changes across all

domains. They had good communication skills ( $M=14.64$ ,  $SD=0.16$ ), understood social cues ( $M=14.24$ ,  $SD=0.26$ ) and were more independent on self-help domains ( $M=13.08$ ,  $SD=0.22$ ).

#### *The effectiveness of the intervention on the social profile*

The researchers evaluated the social skills of children pre and post intervention and on applying the paired samples t-test, and noted a significant improvement ( $p<0.01$ ) across all domains of social maturity (Table.4) The authors observed that children improved in their ability to communicate ( $M=14.6$ ,

$SD=0.24$ ), socialise ( $M=14.12$ ,  $SD=0.23$ ) and also in their independence in self-help ( $M=13.24$ ,  $SD=0.35$ ).

#### *Analysis from the draw-a-family projective test*

All children ( $N=10$ ) depicted negative facial expressions in the images drawn. Most children ( $N=8$ ) drew their images closer to the mother figures. The father figures appeared larger and more prominent in the picture ( $N=8$ ) and for two children, the father image was missing. Children narrated little when asked to respond to the pictures depicted ( $N=7$ ). Post intervention, though, most of them ( $N=7$ ) drew the father figure at the centre of the page, appearing more prominent depicting happy facial expressions.

#### *Underlying concerns and issues drawn from parent and child scheduled interviews*

We tabulated the observed factors that caused anxiety in parents and gave subjective percentage scores for each factor (Fig.5). To be more precise, the authors inter rated them among other therapists who worked in the outpatient department to be more objective.

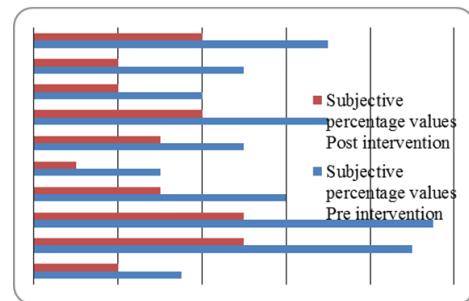


Fig.5: Represents the factors that caused anxieties in parents denoted by subjective percentage scores.

TABLE 3  
Mean age equivalents for boys and girls on each domain of the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS) Pre and Post intervention.

Sl.No	Domains	Age equivalents in Years and Months <i>M(SD)</i>		Age equivalents in Years and Months <i>M(SD)</i>		P values	
		Pre intervention		Post intervention		Boys	Girls
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls		
1	Self Help General	12.68(0.22)	12.36(0.16)	13.40(0.4)	$6.23 \times 10^{-5}**$	0.008**	$6.23 \times 10^{-5}**$
2	Self Help Dressing	12.80(0.24)	12.44(0.26)	13.44(0.29)	0.001**	0.004**	0.001**
3	Self Help Eating	13.08(0.22)	13.32(0.22)	13.84(0.16)	0.02*	0.002**	0.02*
4	Self Direction	13.04(0.16)	13.16(0.29)	13.60(0.14)	0.001**	0.002**	0.001**
5	Locomotion	13.36(0.35)	13.36(0.35)	14.04(0.16)	0.022*	0.006**	0.022*
6	Communication	14.00(0.14)	13.96(0.16)	14.48(0.30)	0.002**	0.030*	0.002**
7	Occupation	13.84(0.16)	13.60(0.14)	14.27(0.17)	0.003**	0.014**	0.003**
8	Socialisation	13.52(0.33)	13.84(0.16)	14.00(0.14)	0.04*	0.025*	0.04*
9	Social Age	13.20(0.31)	13.48(0.36)	14.32(0.36)	0.017**	$7.5 \times 10^{-5}**$	0.017**
	Chronological Age	14(0.67)	13.68(0.41)	14.56(0.71)			

Note. Superscripts denote significant differences as follows: \*\* $p<0.01$ ; \* $p<0.05$ . Statistically significant difference in mean scores is reported in the text.

Post intervention, parents have shown improvements in their attitudes towards their children. Similar interview schedule sessions with children revealed that they were anxious (Fig.6). There were anxieties regarding attention in school, lack of family times and also academic workload. Post intervention, the authors noticed that children appeared more at ease and stopped being fussy.

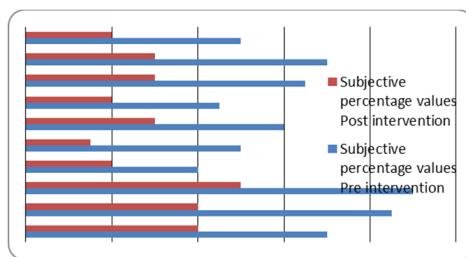


Fig.6: Factors that caused anxieties in children denoted by subjective percentage scores.

### *Concerns that teachers had at school*

Reports from teachers related to classroom behaviour were obtained through telephone conversations. The researchers tabulated the factors (Fig.7) provided by the teachers and gave a score between 0 and 4 depending on the level of difficulty they experienced with children at school. A score of 0 indicated “no difficulty”, 1 denoted “mild problems”, and 2 represented “moderate” and 3 indicated “severe” problems. A score of 4 indicated “profound” problems experienced. Pre intervention, teachers reported the children were generally inattentive, disturbed other children in class and were also unresponsive. Post intervention, teachers reported that the children felt more confident in class, did not withdraw when challenged and demonstrated improved visual and auditory attention.

TABLE 4  
Social profile on the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS) Pre and Post intervention

Sl.No	Domains	Age equivalents in Years and Months for boys and girls (N=10) M(SD)	Age equivalents in Years and Months for boys and girls (N=10) M(SD)	P value
		Pre intervention	Post intervention	
1	Self Help General	12.52(0.25)	13.24(0.35)	$1.14 \times 10^{-5}**$
2	Self Help Dressing	12.62(0.30)	13.50(0.27)	$5.15 \times 10^{-5}**$
3	Self Help Eating	13.20(0.24)	13.84(0.15)	0.0001**
4	Self Direction	13.10(0.23)	13.80(0.13)	$5.52 \times 10^{-6}**$
5	Locomotion	13.36(0.33)	14.08(0.21)	0.0004**
6	Communication	13.98(0.14)	14.56(0.24)	0.0002**
7	Occupation	13.72(0.19)	14.30(0.19)	0.0001**
8	Socialisation	13.68(0.30)	14.12(0.23)	0.002**
9	Social Age	13.34(0.35)	14.38(0.34)	$3.66 \times 10^{-5}**$
	Chronological Age	13.8(0.55)	14.12(0.42)	

Note. Superscripts denote significant differences as follows: \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ . Statistically significant difference in mean scores is reported in the text.

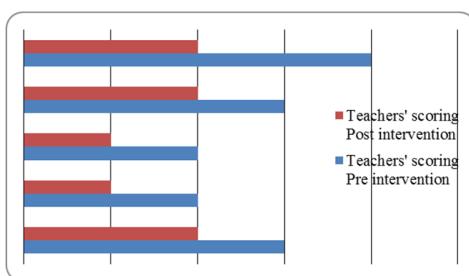


Fig.7: Teacher ratings of the levels of behavioural problems experienced within the classroom

#### *The behavioural profile of children as rated by the parents and teachers*

On the Connors Parent Rating Scale (CPRS-short form) scores pre intervention was found to be low on the hyperactivity domains but significantly higher on inattention and cognitive domains scores (Table 5) as they were above the 50th percentile. However, none of the children fulfilled the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) index. On The Connors Teacher Rating Scale (CTRS) findings pre intervention revealed that scores on the oppositional domain was low, but high scores above the 50th percentile were observed on the hyperactivity and the inattention subscales.

These indicate significant behavioural markers that required intervention. Post Intervention, on the Connors Parent Rating Scale (CPRS), lower scores on inattention were observed and scores on the cognitive subscale had improved. The CTRS scores on hyperactivity and inattention had improved since they fell below the 50th percentile.

## DISCUSSION

Prior to intervention, the children, both boys and girls, were observed to be slow in answering verbal questions when tested with WISC-IV. Post intervention, they responded well to verbal instructions. Their vocabulary had improved remarkably including their reasoning skills. Marked improvement was noted in use of expressive language and no difficulty was detected in pronunciation. The children were also able to provide better definitions and comparisons between objects. On the performance tests of WISC-IV, boys and girls showed improvements in ease of executing tasks and when arranging the blocks, they were quick to notice and correct it. According to studies, (Lerner,

TABLE 5

Percentile values of each behavioural domain of the Connors Parent Rating Scale (CPRS) and the Connors Teacher Rating Scales (CTRS) Pre and Post intervention.

Behavioural Factors on Connors Parent and Teacher Rating Scale	Scores on CTRS in Percentiles (N=10)		Scores on CTRS in Percentiles (N=10)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Oppositional	<25th	<25th	<25th	<25th
Hyperactivity	<50th	<25th	>50th	<25th
Inattention	>50th	<50th	>50th	<50th
Cognitive Problems	>50th	<50th	>50th	<50th
ADHD Index	<50th	<50th	<50th	<50th

2000) neurological defects create difficulty in comprehending written language and this could also trigger problems in understanding nonverbal communication. Post intervention, both boys and girls showed improvements in writing neatly and speed of executing the task.

On the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS) boys were found to have difficulties on the self-help domains, self-direction and in the communication skills. The researchers observed an average age equivalent of one year deficit across all domains. Girls had difficulties in the areas of self-direction, occupation and also on socialisation domains. The authors noticed deficits when comparing the mean social ages with the chronological ages. According to studies, children and adolescents with learning disabilities are less sensitive to the social meanings of gestures and facial expressions and have great difficulty discriminating vocal tones (Holder and Kirkpatrick, 1991). This lack of sensitivity could seriously undermine social interactions in individuals with learning disabilities (Smith *et al.*, 2004).

On the Draw-a-family test, boys and girls represented a lot of negativity in the images depicted. Father figures were prominent and placed at the centre of the page indicating they played more dominant roles in disciplining and in supervising academic work. Mothers were placed closer to the images children drew of themselves, since most of them ( $N=7$ ) indicated that mothers often were supportive and were ready to listen to them. The

children indicated that fathers were most often busy and unavailable. In addition, there was constant pressure and demand for them to perform well and failures were not appropriately dealt with ( $N=7$ ). The children felt they were misunderstood and burdened with expectations and parents compared their performances with siblings or with other children in the neighbourhood. Some children ( $N=6$ ) reported that they were often criticised for their failures and that they were coerced to study harder to please teachers and relatives. Interpersonal problems among those with learning disabilities may be viewed as the consequence of an impaired ability to understand and apply metacognitive rules and strategies (Henry, 2001). Children with learning disabilities tended to produce less varied and more rigid coping strategies as they are unable to adapt appropriate cognitive strategies to different social situations (Worling *et al.*, 1999)

According to a study (Lerner, 2000) neurological defects in children with learning disabilities have resulted in difficulties in organising spontaneous and efficient strategies that are directed to the achievement of social goals. Post intervention, on the Draw-a-family test, the authors noticed that the figures drawn depicted positive facial expressions. Though father figures were still prominent, they expressed more positivity. The children ( $N=8$ ) appeared to feel more at ease and also seemed more appreciative of the efforts parents were taking. Scheduled interviews pre intervention revealed that parents were quite distressed. They had high

expectations of their children and accepted that their children disappointed them. Post intervention, parents reported that consistent use of assistive techniques at home and school had led to improvements both in behaviour and in cognitive skills.

Scheduled interviews with children revealed that they were as distressed as their parents expressing concerns in coping in the classroom as they were unable to copy, write or do arithmetic calculations as well as the others. Children clearly did not pride themselves in any ability they had and were concerned that there was no time for co-curricular activities. They had too few friends in school and in the neighbourhood and families had not provided adequate social experiences. Children with learning disability were found to have higher total anxiety scores (Bender, 2002). One research showed that children with learning disabilities suffered from awareness disabilities as a result of a mild dysfunction in the brain processes which directly affect the child's learning capacity (Liddel & Rasmussen, 2005). The perception of non-verbal social communication tends to be less accurate (Nabuzoka & Smith, 1995). Children with learning disabilities display more psychosocial problems (Ochoa & Palmer, 1995). Some studies have suggested that children with mathematical disabilities or non-verbal learning disabilities (NLD) present higher rates of internalising behavioural problems (Osman, 2000). Post intervention, the authors observed that children appeared to be less anxious and willing to learn. They had begun to take

lessons from private tutors at home who understood their needs and who worked with them at their own pace. Extracurricular involvement made them happier. The children appeared to understand that "being different" was alright so long as they were attempting to make a difference.

Parent reports on the Connors Parent Rating Scale (CPRS) indicated that their child finds it difficult to sustain attention while learning and that they allowed themselves to be distracted easily. They also admitted that children did not complete academic work given to them and it was often rather messy outcome. Individuals with learning disabilities often have attention problems (Kotkin, Forness, & Kavale, 2001). During the early school years, there was a significant relationship between behavioural problems and reading disability. Post intervention, parents reported positive and encouraging behaviour at home. The children were deemed to be much calmer, willing to listen and were less distracted. They showed improvements in listening and paying attention and were less impulsive.

Reports from the teachers showed the children were usually quiet and shy in class. They did not converse in a group. Children with learning disability achieve less peer acceptance (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2001) and have fewer opportunities to engage in social interactions (McGrady *et al.*, 2001) and to accumulate social experiences (Hutchinson, Freeman, & Bell, 2002) that form the basis for interpersonal understanding. Students with learning disabilities often exhibit disorganised thinking that leads to problems

related to planning and organising their lives at home (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003). These children often lack the skills required for understanding text and have poor word-analysis skills (Hunt & Marshall, 2005) and are more vulnerable to emotional problems as well as display conduct problems. Many special education and general education teachers, especially those in middle and high schools, comment that students with learning disabilities are not motivated to learn which is consistent with research finding of this being a common characteristic (Fulk *et al.*, 1998) among the latter. Evidence indicates that children with learning disabilities have the highest scores of behavioural problems especially of the externalising type. Post intervention, teachers were much more positive in their feedback. They reported that the children were far more responsive and less distracted.

It is not simply a matter of teaching validated practices correctly, but it is also important that instruction be highly intensive. This (intensive instruction) involves helping students maintain a high degree of attention and response during instructional sessions that are scheduled as frequently and consistently as possible. A key factor affecting learning is both the amount of time spent in instruction and how effectively each instructional moment is used in engaging students in activities that contribute to their learning. The *implications* of the present study are: (i) there was an in-depth analysis of the cognition, behaviour and social functioning of children with learning disabilities, (ii) an

effective intervention that focused on all the key problem areas was designed, (iii) parents and teachers worked diligently in implementing the strategies, (iv) a follow up was done after six months and tests were repeated to analyse effectiveness of the intervention, and (v) the study used all the ethical considerations and did not disseminate any confidential information. The limitations of the study are: the sample size was small, b) parent and child ratings were used to gain a subjective understanding. However, the strengths of the study are: a) all problem areas were assessed, b) the intervention provided proved to be effective.

## CONCLUSION

Learning disability is neither a disease nor a disorder but can be overcome with appropriate support and care. Intervention programmes have to be tailored to suit the needs of the child focusing on his or her strengths and not weaknesses. It is also important to have regular and proper liaison with teachers and school authorities without whom efforts are futile. Therefore, helping a child is not just resolving problems but by continually supporting the family and the child in implementing the right solution.

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## Levi's Basic Anxiety, Conflict and the Search for Glory in Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*

Shima Shokri\*, Ida Baizura Bahar and Rohimmi Noor

Department of English Language, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

Literary scholars of Zadie Smith's novel 'On Beauty' (2005) have examined Levi, the youngest male character of the novel, based on his environment, a multicultural society, and have viewed him as a representation of a multicultural family. However, this paper analyses Smith's portrayal of Levi as an ordinary child who grew up in unfavourable conditions. For this purpose, Levi's character is analysed as a representation of neuroticism and his basic anxiety, need for detachment, self-idealisation and search for glory are explored using a conceptual framework based on Karen Horney's psychoanalytic social theory. Through textual analysis, this study attempts to explore the root of psychological anxiety in Levi to discover the role of basic conflict in his behavioural and emotional responses, and to examine how Levi copes with his anxiety through self-idealisation. The outcomes indicate that, as the root of his basic anxiety, Levi's relationship with his father, transforms him into a detached person attempting to prove himself. This paper clarifies that Levi's conflict is rooted in the manner of his nurturing, with some impact from other factors such as society, culture and racial issues. In order to justify that the difficulties faced by multicultural families are not only related to their cultural and racial identity, future research could apply Horney's theory for literary works categorised under multiculturalism and immigration.

**Keywords:** Basic anxiety, Karen Horney's psychoanalytic social theory, need for detachment, 'On Beauty', self-idealization, the search for glory, Zadie Smith

### INTRODUCTION

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##### E-mail addresses:

shima.shokri@gmail.com (Shima Shokri),  
idabb@upm.edu.my (Ida Baizura Bahar),  
rohimmi@upm.edu.my (Rohimmi Noor)

\* Corresponding author

This paper studies the psychological characteristics of the youngest male character, Levi, in 'On Beauty' (2005) by Zadie Smith (b. 1975). In this novel, Smith attempts to portray characters living in contemporary multicultural societies who

suffer from a lack of good communication with their fathers as they cannot understand their children and do not respond accordingly to their problems. Therefore, they face anxiety in their childhood, which then causes them difficulties and conflicts in their relationships with society and even in their psyche later on. Smith portrays her characters in a way that shows their problems manifesting in the environment, their relationships and also in their own psyche. As the story progresses, the characters have to overcome the complexities and uncertainties they face in society and in their own families.

In this study, the selected character, Levi, is analysed using Karen Horney's psychoanalytic social theory. He is analysed as an individual who has psychological problems that manifest in his relationship with his family and with society. The focus of this study is on the character's inner conflict and anxiety that are not related to multiculturalism and hybridity.

Smith in 'On Beauty' concentrates on two middle-class families: the families of Howard Belsey and his academic colleague, Monty Kipps. Belsey's mixed-race family includes a white Englishman and an African-American woman, who move to Boston. Howard and his wife, Kiki, have three children: Jerome, Zora and Levi. On the other hand, Trinidadian Monty and his Caribbean wife, Carlen, have two children: Michael and Victoria. Although the fathers of these two families have ideological differences and are academic rivals, the mothers become friends despite all the

tensions between them. Not interested in the familial relationships, Levi becomes friends with an African-American man, Carl, and later becomes involved with black Haitian street boys in order to have a life similar to theirs.

Based on previous studies, although it is known that the novel avoids penetrating into the characters' minds (Moo, 2005), it is suggested that Smith has depicted her characters with certain psychological conflicts. As multicultural fiction, Smith attempts to bring the discussion of the obsession with racism and the tendency to define identity (Lanone, 2007, p. 192), which is seen particularly in the characterisation of Levi, who has a collective identity and pretends excessively to be a person of African heritage, referred to as black street culture in the novel. However, through analysing Levi's behaviour and actions, it is hypothesised that, because of his basic anxiety, he moves away from his family and creates an idealised self within the street culture of the Haitian boys. Moreover, Lopez (2010), through analysing 'On Beauty' based on the theme of racism, has noted Levi's sense of being guilty as he enjoys his self-idealised life as a young black man who is wealthier than his peers (p. 352).

According to the review of this story in a British national daily newspaper, *The Guardian* (2006), the campus fiction deals with "the clashes between intellectual[s]" and ordinary people (Mullan, 2006). In Smith's narrative, academia deprives people of having a real sense of beauty or even

prevents them from discussing this subject freely (Lopez, 2010, p. 362). Thus, in this regard, Howard, Levi's father, is found to be a typical academician rather than a real person, and he does not seem able to enjoy the beauty of his life and his family. Here, the notion of beauty brings with it a sense of justice for Levi (p. 358).

In a comparative study, Meeuwisse (2011) finds that Levi is rebellious against his father, Howard. Children need "emotional outlets" and someone to talk to in order to be able to know themselves, something which Levi is deprived of. Thus, in order to cope with problems, Levi has a more extroverted manner in contrast to his parents' strategy. He argues that environment — where children live and grow — has the most influence on the sense of belonging. As a result, it does not matter where the children are born or how they grow up as much as how they think and interpret their being (p. 45). Thus, the characteristic differences are the consequences of "difference in character and opinions, not ethnicity" (p. 53).

In contrast, according to Krickl (2009), ethnicity, as part of social construction, cannot be omitted as an influence when it comes to differences between characters (p. 54) since, as human beings and as members of society, we are interrelated and cannot live alone (p. 1). Krickl states that the identity of the characters in this novel is shaped by the alternative world they live in (p. 8), which is characterised by binary opposition (p. 9). According to Jackson (2012), the novel consists of binary racial categories, which is understood through the

"family's spoken and unspoken conflicts" (p. 865). Characteristics of racism in terms of human skin colour, white or black, which shape the characters' identities, as the main contradiction in 'On Beauty', are exclusively realised through the characterisation of Levi. In order to be an authentic black and part of street culture, Levi adopts its special language and characteristics (Krickl, 2009, p. 12), and, because of the feeling of being uprooted, he looks for a "connection with the part of his identity" (p. 85) which is denied.

In her essay, 'Fail Better' (2007), Smith states that it is the responsibility of the author to understand the outside elements of the individual as well as the inside elements with the aim of transferring this understanding to the reader. She provides the possibility of portraying the characters' personalities, and "their inner feeling" (p. 22) regarding their personal relationship (Kakutani, 2005) in turn, leads us to concentrate on Levi's behaviour and reactions towards his family, enabling us to analyse his character according to Karen Horney's psychoanalytic social theory. Therefore, in this paper, the aim is to explore the root of Levi's basic anxiety to discover the impact of his basic conflict on his process of socialisation and to examine his psychological coping mechanism.

Findings from previous studies show that perhaps there is no common reason for Levi's tendency towards street culture as some scholars have identified ethnicity as his motive, while others have identified his environment as his reason. Indeed, providing

a good explanation of his communication with his family, especially his father, as well as his feelings and thoughts through the narrator indicates that there may be something psychological pertaining to his inner conflict.

### KAREN HORNEY'S PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIAL THEORY

In this section, it will be explained the major elements of Horney's theory which are relevant to this study and the chosen character, Levi, such as, basic anxiety, need for detachment, self-idealization, and the search for glory, in the following part.

Karen Horney's psychoanalytic social theory describes how people develop 'interpersonal' and 'intrapsychic' methods of defence in order to cope with the dissatisfaction of their psychological needs (Paris, 1997, p. 18). Horney believes that basic anxiety in people who do not have "favourable conditions for growth," causes them to develop "profound insecurity and vague apprehensiveness" (1950, p. 18) and results in feelings of isolation and helplessness in a hostile world. Consequently, such individuals would not be able to make a connection with others based on their real feelings and would attempt to find a new way to deal with them.

Being neurotic is accompanied by having certain needs, such as the need for affection and approval, the need for power, the need for prestige, the need for admiration, the need for personal achievement or the need for self-sufficiency and independence.

As a result of basic anxiety, and attempts to relieve it, these needs in neurotics lead them to move away from others in order to rescue themselves from that basic anxiety; however, a basic conflict is formed in the individual as a result of this.

The dynamic centre of the theory of neurosis as it relates to socialisation lies in the conflicts among the attitudes of "moving toward, against, or away from" people. Although an individual may be successful in creating an artificial balance, he would face newly developed conflicts which would require further attempts to eliminate. In this process, whatever the neurotic person does makes him encounter more difficulties and renders him more hostile, helpless, fearful and alienated from himself and others. As a result of this hostility and helplessness, he may come to make a sadistic decision which would increase his hopelessness and create new conflicts. In the process of socialisation, these conflicts are not specific for neurotics. In fact, conflicts are a result of the individual's wishes, interests and convictions, which are bound to those of others. Conflict could also occur as a clash between wishes and obligations.

The neurotic person attempts to find a way to cope with his difficulties and as he does not find anything in common with others, he decides to move away from people since he has a need for detachment. These individuals have a tendency to keep a distance between themselves and others, especially in the case of emotional feelings. Their need for "self-sufficiency" is generally seen as being "resourceful to live." As a result of their needs and preferences, they become independent individuals. According

to Horney, moving away from people “give[s] the individual a feeling of security as long as they function and that, conversely, anxiety is aroused when they fail to function. As long as the detached person can keep at a distance he feels comparatively safe” (1945, p. 91).

The need to lift himself above others is developed in the neurotic person living in a competitive society who feels isolated and inferior to others. The more he invents artificial strategies to cope with others in contrast to his real self, the more he becomes alienated from his real self. Gradually, he loses the understanding of who he is or where he stands. He seeks to find something to bring back his feeling of identity, something which could give him a sense of power and importance. The imagination could be the only way through which a neurotic person may cover his deficiency. Through imagination, he is able to create an idealised image in his mind and become a hero, lover, genius or saint. Self-idealisation gives the individual a sense of superiority. Eventually, the idealised image takes the place of the idealised self. Now, the individual identifies himself with his idealised image and not only does he want to express himself through this image, he also needs to prove it through actions in order to actualise his idealised self.

As one of the major ways to solve this basic conflict, Horney states that a neurotic creates a special image of himself as he is or he feels that he ought to be. While most of the time the created image is far from the reality, consciously or unconsciously the

sense of this creation is very real for him. Certain characteristics of the created image depend on the personality of their creator. It could be beauty, power, intelligence or whatever he feels he must be or have.

As the need for superiority and being above others can be found in all neurotic people, they then make it their goal to search for glory in their lives. One of the most destructive and hidden elements in this type of search for glory is the drive towards a “vindictive triumph”. This drive causes the neurotic to put others to shame and defeat them in order to feel more successful or powerful or simply better than them. Horney terms it “vindictive” because this drive is fuelled by revenge for whatever the individual has unconsciously suffered in his childhood, and, thus, the neurotic is unaware of this need.

Being imaginative is a general characteristic the neurotic exploits in his search for glory. The imagination plays a crucial role in the search for glory that is a part of the process of self-idealisation. Through the imagination, the individual reaches the truth of his self (productive), or moves away from it (unproductive) when it is in the service of neurotic needs.

According to Horney, in the search for glory, the neurotic cannot help wandering in his fantastic world. Therefore, he attempts to actualise his self-idealisation based on the “outside world”. He forgets his real self and becomes what he makes of his self, relying on how he ‘should’ be, how he should understand everything, how he should like others and should be liked by them.

Regarding the aforementioned, a neurotic person tries to be perfect although he cannot always obtain the self-confidence and self-respect that he desires. As he lives in his imaginative world and does not grow up in the favourable conditions of enjoying protection and feeling welcomed, he gradually becomes alienated from his self, and his real self gradually disappears.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As outlined in Horney's theory, the major cause of becoming neurotic, along with the associated characteristics, results from how children grow up and are treated by their parents. The development of neurosis in Levi can be seen in his movements from his troubled childhood to the serious troubles of his teenage years. Since, according to Horney, the role of parents is very important in the personality development of a child, the characterisation Levi's father, Howard, will also be discussed in order to discover the roots of Levi's basic anxiety. This paper is divided based on the concepts of basic anxiety, socialisation, which discusses the motives of Levi's need for detachment and the search for glory.

According to Horney, the major causes of neuroses and their accompanying characteristics result from how a child grows up and is treated by his parents. In the Introduction to her book, 'Neurosis and Human Growth' (1950), Horney states that the significance of self-knowledge in the process of growing up has an important role in childhood, providing a better understanding of self and moving to

healthy self-realisation. This self-knowledge originates from the family, which is known as the segment of society from which children's behaviour is formed (Davis, 1940, p. 523). In fact, a child needs "an atmosphere of warmth to give him both a feeling of inner security and the inner freedom enabling him to have his own feelings and thoughts and to express himself" (Horney, 1950, p. 18).

Horney believes that the minds of children who grow up under favourable conditions within the family setting develop and work well. Their potential energy is utilised towards having a better understanding of themselves and their motivations. Therefore, they will grow up as normal people who live well according to their real selves. If children have a good connection with family members such as their fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers, they will have the opportunity to talk about their desires and dreams. Otherwise, they prefer to live alone with their wishes.

The behaviour of parents also affects children's processes of personal development and helps them to have a better understanding of themselves. Parents might also be preoccupied with their own neurotic desires that prevent them from loving their children and giving them sufficient self-confidence as their attitudes toward them "are determined by [their] own neurotic needs and responses" (Horney, 1950, p. 18). Therefore, Howard's neurotic desires, such as the needs to be perfect and to have power or for personal achievement, among others, limit his son's life within narrow borders.

### *Basic Anxiety*

The youngest male character of Smith's novel 'On Beauty', Levi, is portrayed as having been deprived of a good relationship with his father, Howard, who is unable to love him as he himself is preoccupied with his own needs and desires. Howard lives under the pressure of his desires and is an irresponsible father who nurtures his need for personal admiration and achievement in the university where he works without a care for fulfilling his children's needs. In fact, not only does he prefer to escape from his wife, he chooses to set himself outside of his family (Meeuwisse, 2011, p. 14).

As a result of creating an idealised self of his own, Howard also loses his real self and lives particularly as an academician who does not have real passion for life and forgets about true love: "It was an old joke that Howard was only human in a theoretical sense. [...] Something about his academic life had changed love for him, changed its nature" (2005, p. 255). In this regard, Lopez (2010) points out that Howard is separated from his family and his friends due to his academic career which prevents him from being a human being who can feel beauty. Howard is so drowned in his dreams and idealised images that Kiki, his wife, attempts to remind him that whatever happens and whatever he is doing are the real facts and not imaginary ones:

*You're not Rembrandt, Howard  
[...] I was thinking: What is wrong  
with this man? Howard [...] this is  
real. This life. We're really here –*

*this is really happening. Suffering  
is real. When you hurt people, it's  
real. When you fuck one of our best  
friends, that's a real thing.* (2005,  
pp. 208, 394)

Henceforth, it is seen that Howard fails to be a good husband as well as a good father (Lopez, 2010, p. 363). As depicted in Smith's novel, 'On Beauty', there is no real father-son relationship and good understanding in this story as "he disliked and feared conversations with his children" (2005, p. 85), particularly with Levi. Furthermore, Meeuwisse (2011) also believes that Levi is deprived of a good relationship with his father because his father does not understand him and his feelings.

Through the narrative of the novel and the conversations between Levi and his family, we are told of the unfriendly atmosphere in this family. Levi lives under unusual circumstances where his parents do not love each other as well as do not talk pleasantly to or spend any time with each other. They argue most of the time in such a way that Levi complains and asks them to "stop arguing" (2005, p. 14). Howard is involved in affairs with his colleagues and students without considering his family's emotional reactions (2005, p. 13).

Throughout the story, we are informed that Howard keeps himself busy by competing with his colleague, Kipps, and trying to defeat him in everything as he sees himself in a competition with this colleague. Howard sees Kipps as his rival:

*For fifteen years these two men had been moving in similar circles; passing through the same universities, contributing to the same journals, sometimes sharing a stage – but never an opinion – during panel discussions.* (2005, p. 29)

To fulfil his “strong need to exploit others, to outsmart them” (Horney, 1945, p. 65), Howard writes some articles with the intent of outsmarting his colleague, Kipps in order to defeat him in order to show that he is better and more intelligent than him. Another example of his competitive streak is clear when, because Kipps writes books on Rembrandt, Howard decides he will do the same (2005, p. 21). Howard cannot tolerate being inferior to this person whom he perceives as being a professional rival and opponent. He needs to be superior, to be a winner. He also moves against others and tries to use them for his own advancement although he fails most of the time (2005, p. 29).

Therefore, the textual evidence on Howard’s behaviour indicates that Howard is in conflict with his desires and neurotic needs, which, in turn, affects his relationship with his son as well as the conditions in which Levi is growing up. Levi is 16 years old, and needs his family’s affection. Horney states that “the human individual needs favourable condition for growth, he needs healthy friction with the wishes and will of others” (1950, p. 18). However, Levi’s parents’ attention is drawn more to what

Levi wears, not to what he says or even who his friends are. For example, when Levi is speaking to his father, Howard’s attention is focused on his style of dressing and not on what Levi is talking about:

*Howard was surprised by Levi. Once again, this head-stocking business. [...] ‘What’s the deal with this?’ asked Howard, flipping the interrogation round and touching Levi’s head. [...] ‘Nothin’, Dad. It’s just what it is’ Levi said and shrugged. ‘just a thing that I wear.’* (2005, pp. 21-22)

Although his chosen accent also is very different from his family’s, their attention is on minor issues, such as his “head-stocking” which is really not that important (2005, p. 11).

These attitudes and behaviours illustrate that Levi’s father does not consider the basic needs of the personality development of his child. Therefore, on account of these indifferent attitudes toward him, Levi finds he has grown to be a different person who does not have anything in common with his family, and eventually becomes a stranger.

Since Levi’s parents cannot understand his behaviour and do not comprehend his way of living, he finds himself a helpless and lonely boy. The fact is that, according to Horney, the child feels helpless and isolated when he finds his family indifferent towards him, feels the lack of respect for his individual needs and feels the lack of real guidance (1945, p. 41). Therefore, in

Levi's case, he has to be responsible for his problems and must handle his conflicts and issues on his own, as he says, "I can handle it myself, don't worry about that" (2005, p. 24). Horney believes that the individual needs to find the proper conditions in which to talk about himself, his desires and his wishes. Moreover, "he needs the good will of others, not only to help him in his many needs, but to guide and encourage him" (1950, p. 18). However, because of the lack of such an atmosphere, Levi is not able to talk about his difficulties and friendships with his family.

Levi suffers from the lack of true love from his parents, which in turn results in his loneliness and isolation. Horney believes that "basic anxiety" or the "insecurity in a child" could be the result of many issues in his surroundings, which then affect his mental development, such as direct or indirect domination, indifference, ignoring his needs, absence of reliable direction, absence of real warmth, lack of admiration, isolation, and an unfriendly atmosphere (1945, p. 41). As a result of such surroundings, Levi also feels lonely and helpless within his family. Nobody cares for him. His father does not speak to him seriously and is so indifferent that, when Levi is talking about his feelings and attitudes, he has to ask his father "why you always got to make everything be a joke?" (2005, p. 63). Levi's parents do not know where he works, and his father guesses that he works in a "record shop," asking him:

*Are you going to work today? They let you wear it at the wotsit, the*

*record shop?"', Levi replies that 'It's not a record shop—I keep telling you—it's a mega-store. There is like seven floors' [...] Levi pulled back from his father (2005, p. 22).*

#### *Socialisation and the Need for Detachment*

The socialisation of children involves "pass[ing] through a series of stages of emotional development when basic attitudes are formed. Early childhood encompasses three of these: the stage of trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, and initiative versus guilt" (Norton, 1991, p. 18). These stages are clear in the development of a normal child who is raised in favourable conditions within a genuinely warm family without any hostile conditions. However, as discussed in the previous section, Levi has been deprived of nurturing under such positive conditions.

The factors that cause Levi to suffer from basic anxiety also threaten his feelings of security and his inner freedom. Therefore, because of this kind of basic anxiety, he does not grow up as a normal child and he encounters problems when it comes to socialisation. Based on Horney's description, Levi "cannot simply like or dislike, trust or distrust, express his wishes or protest against others, but has automatically to devise ways to cope with people and manipulate them with minimum damage to himself" (Horney, 1945, p. 219). The betrayal characteristic of Levi's father makes it difficult for him to trust his father as a supporter and guide since it is not reasonable to trust someone who has

shown his unfaithfulness before. So, he tries to be more autonomous and self-dependent, deciding to work on weekends in order to earn a little money to be independent as the first step of being away from his family.

As he fails in the process of socialisation due to his situation, he needs to find a way to solve his problem in order to be socialised and cope with others as well as with his situation. In order to cope with basic anxiety, Levi chooses to move away from his family; this is in line with Horney's view that the detached person "wants neither to belong nor to fight, but keeps apart" (Horney, 1945, p. 43). Therefore, Levi attempts to find a better life for himself far from his family and their ideals, since his mother also points out that "[t]o be honest, he's trying to lose us" (2005 , p. 66). Levi's decision to be away from his family and his eagerness for street culture in order to live based on his idealised self are as a result of having an indifferent family, which Horney calls the "adverse factors" (1945, p. 41) of lack of real respect for a child, absence of admiration, lack of reliable warmth in the house and discrimination in the family. Levi begins to fantasise about belonging to the black district and not to an academic village like Wellington and calls himself a "brother" who can "jump the fence" (2005, p. 63). Since the most obvious peculiarity of the detached person, according to Horney, is "a general estrangement from people" (1945, p. 73), Levi becomes a stranger in his family through his actions.

As a child usually does not have experience living in a real and bigger

society, he needs someone as a model of life or as a guide (Norton, 1991). However, Levi does not have such a real person in his life as a result of being deprived of having a good and reliable relationship with his family.

As I have discussed so far, he is not similar to his family, whose desires, wishes and lifestyles are different. In fact, as a detached person, Levi prefers to maintain the emotional distance between himself and his family. As a major need, a detached person prevents himself from "get[ting] emotionally involved" (Horney, 1945 p. 75). Hence, Levi does not interfere with his family's problems, which can be understood when Jerome, Levi's brother, talks about the conflict between their parents and tells Levi, "You have to be there all the time. It's like you're in the belly of the beast" (2005 , p. 236). However, Levi, because he is not very involved with his parents' relationships, indifferently and without any consideration replies, "It's all right man. I'm out a lot. You know" (2005 p. 236).

Levi, in his detachment, based on Horney's theory, has "a need for self-sufficiency" (1945, p. 75). Due to his lack of having a genuine and warm relationship with his family, he chooses to be friends with black men, his colleagues and the boys who live in that area, while his father does not appreciate this and fears of talking about them, since he relates it to the race issue: "He disliked and feared conversations with his children that concerned race, as he suspected this one would" (2005, p. 85). As a detached person, Levi needs to acquire his knowledge of race and street culture on his

own rather than believing what his father says. With regard to Horney's theory, the detached person has a strong desire to obtain his knowledge about any subject through his observation and interpretation, not based on what others have said or written (1945, p. 76). Thus, despite his father's fear, Levi invites his black street poet friend, Carl, to his family's anniversary party; however, his father does not allow him to come in (2005, p. 105). This action, according to Horney's theory, suppresses Levi.

Regarding the social development of a child, Norton believes that children "observe what other members of the family fear and how members of their groups react to people who belong to different racial or cultural groups" (1991, p. 25). As a result, they would be affected by this treatment and try to show reactions. Levi is a kind of child who is opposed to the despising of street boys and blacks as he finds himself similar to them and pretends to be one of them. He wants to be with street boys instead of with a family friend in Wellington:

*He left the city reluctantly, as always. He got back on the subway and then the bus. He looked out with dread at Wellington [...]. The pristine white spires of the college seemed to him like the watchtowers of a prison to which he was returning. He sloped towards home, [...], listening to his music. The fate of the young man in his earphones, who faced a jail cell that very night, did not seem such a world away from his own*

*predicament: an anniversary party full of academics.* (2005, pp. 79-80).

This action then fits into Horney's theory of how "he dislikes general gregariousness" (1945, p. 76). In order to be familiar with them and their culture, he wants to dress up like them; for example, he wears a "doo-rag" (2005, p. 87), speaks with their accent, a "faux Brooklyn accent" (2005, p. 11), or does his weekend job where they live and work, in Boston, not in "the toy-town that was Wellington" (2005, p. 79). In fact, he is trying to behave, talk and think similarly to street boys as though he really belongs to that street culture since "children's thoughts, feelings, and actions become similar to those of people they believe are like them" (Norton, 1991, p. 25).

#### *Idealised-self and The Search for Glory*

According to Horney, the "search for glory" is a child's response towards misrepresenting features of the family environment. It "springs from the need to actualize the idealised self" (Horney, 1950, p. 38). In Horney's opinion, children who are raised in a neurotic environment and are governed by neurotic needs and responses will become irritable, threatening and unreliable. The child tries to cope with his anxiety through rebellion, clinging to or shutting others out and withdrawing in an extreme way (1950, pp. 18-19).

Withdrawing from his family, Levi becomes interested in associating himself with the black Haitian street boys in Boston.

It begins unconsciously when he idealises his self to be a black American street boy. Thus, he first finds a job in a mega-store to sell hip-hop, R&B and urban music, which, according to Rabaka, originated from African Americans (2013, pp. 39-40). As a detached person, he believes that his knowledge and interest in these genres would be useful in order to help customers; however, nobody is interested in his knowledge, and it is also not appreciated by his family. Nevertheless, his job is not what he expects since his workplace is similar to the information desk where they answer questions, such as where the toilet is, or where "World Music" is. As a result, he becomes disappointed since his job does not satisfy his need to be useful and he does not enjoy it anymore. Finally, he leaves his job, as he believes that there is no respect for him in the mega-store.

According to Horney, through shattering the feelings of superiority in the detached person, a neurotic needs to find protection; otherwise, he would not be able to stand the solitude (1945, p. 79). Therefore, losing his job, which is the only way for him to actualise his idealised self of being black and independent, brings out in Levi feelings of hopelessness and insecurity: "Two fat tears welled up. On the practical side it was very bad—it was a nightmare" (2005, p. 192). As a detached person, Levi is not interested in his family and their concerns. Furthermore, as part of his idealised self, he could be normal as well as sane and black as long as he could be free from his family and make money on his own.

In order to have individuality, Levi needs to imagine himself as a black Haitian boy. He is afraid of ignoring his imagination because, according to Horney, "imagination itself may become of supreme value, regardless of the use to which it is put, since it allows its bearer to look down with contempt on the drab and pedestrian people who are concerned with truth" (Horney, 1950, p. 91). Moreover, for Levi, having money of his own "will give him a hold, a feeling of identity which could make him meaningful to himself and, despite all the weakness in his structure, give him a feeling of power and significance" (Horney, 1950, p. 21).

What Levi dreams of is having a black Haitian life. In fact, it is just a fantasy of Haitian boys since their lives are something more real and difficult than Levi's imagination:

*Even if the other guys didn't fully understand Levi's enthusiasm for what they did, they always smiled and played along, and they had learned a few of the artificial words that Levi likes to apply to their real-life situation. Hustler, Playa, Gangsta, Pimp. The reflection of themselves in Levi's eyes was, after all, a more than welcome replacement for their own realities. Who wouldn't rather be a gangsta than a street-hawker? Who wouldn't rather hustle than sell? Who would choose their own lonely, dank rooms over this Technicolor video,*

*this outdoor community that Levi insisted they were all a part of?*  
(2005, p. 245)

Therefore, Levi comes, based on Horney's theory, "to identify [himself] with (his) idealised, integrated image which becomes an idealised self" (Horney, 1950, p. 23).

Similar to the neurotic who has a need to express himself through his idealised self, Levi uses his energy with the aim of "actualising the idealised self" and "to prove it in action." Hence, there would be a "need for perfection," which means moulding the whole personality into the idealised self" (Horney, 1950, pp. 24-25). After losing his job in the mega-store and becoming a friend of a Haitian Anglo-Francophone group, Levi begins to read a book about Haitians in order to remould himself into the specific features of his idealised image (2005, p. 355). Moreover, he even attempts to look like the Haitians and is usually seen in hoods and jeans, and his language is particularly transformed by using words such as "yo," "man," and "brothers" in an unnatural accent. Throughout this attempt, and using his energy to be someone "black, a Haitian," he gradually loses his real self. He does not have extra energy in order to find himself and to improve his good qualities. Consequently, his real self is replaced by his idealised image. Krickl (2009, p. 63) also highlights that, for Levi, being black is everything as he attempts to represent himself as a black teenager. Therefore, he changes his cultural code in order to share

the same ideas as an authentic black young man. As a result, not only does his style of living as well as his manner change, he also denies his family.

The search for glory and need for perfection for Levi are revealed when, after spending time with the Haitian boys and reading books about them, Levi becomes aware of their miserable situation. As his idealised self is to be an authentic black boy and he has desires of living with black Haitian boys, he believes them and trusts whatever they say about their situation and actions. He discovers that to be a black means to be an inferior resident in America, the same as his situation in his family. Thus, as an independent and detached person, based on Horney's theory, he finds an obligation in himself; "he should be able to solve every problem of his own, of others, in no time" (Horney, 1950, p. 65). Understanding that his father's colleague, Kipps, "rob[s] the peasants of their [Haitian's] art and it makes [him] a rich man" (2005 p. 362) causes him to steal it from his office without considering the outcomes of his action. In fact, living in a dream of being different from others and finding himself alone and helpless in his family's condition, where he lives as an inferior and even a stranger, causes him to fight his situation and to seek revenge against his family and neighbours. In other words, as long as he lives in a self-sufficient dream, he cannot be true to himself and, consequently, cannot see the wrong side of his decision. This, then, fits into Horney's view that Levi, the neurotic, "blinds himself to the consequence of his actions" (Horney, 1950, p. 170).

Before Levi performs his final action, he unconsciously encounters intrapsychic conflicts between his idealised self and the despised self (2005, p. 408). In his real self, he is not a thief; however, he loses his real self as a consequence of his circumstances. However, after spending time during the day with the Haitian boys, at night he goes to the office and steals the painting in order to seek revenge against the superior residents and sell it and give the money to the Haitian boys.

## CONCLUSION

An analysis of Levi's situation in his family reveals that the root of his basic anxiety is due to his upbringing in unfavourable conditions, where his father displays neurotic behaviour, he lives as an inferior and he is different from other members of the family. Through being socialised as a neurotic, he needs to cope with his basic anxiety, which leads him to develop his basic conflict and move away from his family and look for his desires outside the family. Therefore, he finds himself more similar to the black street boys than to his family members. However, insisting on being detached, Levi unconsciously creates an idealised self-image for himself. Through living in his dreams, Levi establishes his idealised self as a black street boy who works with Haitians and adopts their lifestyle. Therefore, he loses his real self and externalises his self-idealisation. As a result, in his search for glory as an authentic black teenager, Levi decides to steal a valuable painting in order

to fight against his own inferiority as well as that of the black Haitian boys.

Furthermore, Smith portrays her character as a human being in a contemporary multicultural society who is searching for glory in a competitive world. In fact, everyone in the real world is trying to be superior and victorious in order to gain whatever they want, especially pride and glory. In her novel, Smith tries to portray what would happen if a person does not grow up in suitable and conducive conditions and what he or she would do in a competitive society in which everyone fights for glory and victory in order to be the most successful and appreciated person in the world.

Studying the characters of novels with the theme of multiculturalism through the lens of psychological theory provides an opportunity for readers to understand that the roots of the problems and conflict faced by the characters are not related to where they stand or live. Rather, it shows that those conflicts are firstly related to their minds and their personal development with some impact from society or the new country in which they live as immigrants.

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## Voices of the Burmese Rohingya Refugees: Everyday Politics of Survival in Refugee Camps in Bangladesh

**Kazi Fahmida Farzana**

*School of International Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies,  
Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

Many of the displaced ethnic Rohingya minority from Myanmar living in Bangladesh for more than two decades are as documented and undocumented refugees. Those living in two registered refugee camps are documented refugees, located in secluded areas, maintaining a safe distance from the locals and monitored by the appointed authority. How is life like for the refugees at these camps? How do the young refugees envision their present and future within the given environment? This paper examines the young Rohingya refugees' everyday politics of survival at one of the registered refugee camps, i.e. Nayapara, located in the Teknaf sub-district of Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh, in an effort to understand their interactions with the host state local society and international agencies within the framework of state-imposed boundaries. The paper takes people's perspective and the agency's approach and frames the refugee society as a political community. The ethnographic data for this research came from 30 respondents using qualitative methods of in-depth interviews, group discussion and participant observation. The paper argues that the critical voices of camp-based refugees often articulate narratives of dispossession and marginalisation that can, in one way or another, be explained as the outcome or consequence of their forced migration; however, notwithstanding adversity, the refugees learn to live and find ways to make a life, within the given situation, navigating through a complex process of contestation, negotiation, adjustment and manipulation. Some of the activities such as taking on the role of brokers between agencies and refugees, and seasonal work outside the camp boundary indicate refugees' delicate negotiation with their situation and individuals' aspirations to defy the imagined boundary of camps. This paper shows the dynamics of

contestation and collaboration within the camp situation and criticises encampment as a strategy of refugee protection.

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*E-mail address:*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the existing and rapidly growing literature on political refugees, refugee camps have been studied from various perspectives. Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, one of the major contributors to this field, asserts that a refugee camp is a “state of exception” (1998, pp. 166-171; 2000, p. 37). The preliminary condition of such “state of exception” is a relationship that binds and, at the same time, abandons, the living being to law.<sup>1</sup> What he meant was that the refugee camp is created by the modern nation-state and has many hidden norms and regulations that apply exclusively to, or that indiscriminately exclude, refugees; theirs is a naked or “bare life”; it is a “form of life” which has been depoliticised and is quite different from the politicised life that clearly manifests in the lives of citizens. This argument suggests that, to maintain its sovereignty, the politics of the nation-state system choose to include and exclude certain forms of life; it creates the insider-outsider dichotomy and excludes those whose lives and *being* “threaten the sovereign’s jurisdiction over a particular land space ... conceptually and at times physically, from ‘the norm’” (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2004, p. 34).

This paper looks at the Nayapara refugee camp in Bangladesh, located in the southernmost part of the country bordering

Myanmar, which has been home to an estimated 18,378 Burmese refugees<sup>2</sup> who crossed the border into Bangladesh from November 1991 to June 1992, when the Burmese military disregarded the general election results and mounted military operations on the Rohingyas in the Northern Arakan. The total area of the Nayapara camp is 3.234 sq km. The refugees are under the surveillance of several agencies. The Bangladesh government is the primary agency with sovereign authority to control the camp. The representative of the government, the Camp-in-Charge (CIC), takes care of the day-to-day governing of the camp. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) gave financial assistance and protection to registered refugees from forced repatriation to their country of origin. Unlike other refugee camps, where the UNHCR and other relief agencies have authority to govern the camp; here, the refugees are to remain under stringent restrictions within the “temporary shelter area,” surviving on relief aid until voluntary repatriation takes place. The real-life interplay between these three agencies—of state, international organisation and refugees—makes this exceptional place an interesting research site in which to focus fundamental questions such as: Does this camp offer opportunities to the refugees “to explore the making and un-making of public authority” (Turner, 2006), or does this force the refugees to live only a “bare life” outside the boundary

<sup>1</sup> For more details on refugee camp, see Agamben,(1998), Part 3.

<sup>2</sup> The data is based on the Bangladesh government’s Quick Facts of Nayapara Refugee Camp (estimated as of July 2013).

of national citizens (Agamben, 1998, 2000, pp. 37-49)?

The article focuses on the young Rohingya refugees' experiences in their day-to-day life at the camps. The rationale of this focus is that, despite the fact that the Rohingya issues have been addressed in a number of major studies (Yegar, 1981; Yunus, 1994; Habibullah, 1995; Razzaq & Haque, 1995; Wong, 1996; Karim, 2000; Rahman, 2005; Berlie, 2008; Saltsman, 2009; Bahar, 2010), none has addressed the refugee's life-politics from *their* perspective. Moreover, reports done by various international agencies such as the Human Rights Watch (2000), Medecins sans Frontières (2002) and Amnesty International (1997) have greatly contributed to document the deplorable living conditions of the Rohingyas in refugee camps, but the narrative reflects a one-sided presentation depicting the Rohingyas as helpless, passive recipients in need of food and shelter and other basic services. Such a narrative leaves out one very important element, i.e. the "other side's" perception: how the refugees themselves perceive their camp life. Unless this overlooked or neglected side is explored, our understanding of the Rohingya refugees' life and its various implications will remain incomplete. This paper analyses the refugees' everyday in-camp experience from the younger generation's perspective, viewed from their lens, on their interaction with the wider community. It explores the dynamic of contestation and collaboration within a camp situation.

## METHODOLOGY

The data for this article came from ethnographic fieldwork that was conducted as part of a large-scale research on the Rohingya refugees' identity perceptions and exile life in the south-eastern corner of Bangladesh adjacent to Myanmar over a period of six months between 2009 and 2010. The refugee experiences detailed in this article were from 30 selected respondents (14 female and 16 male) who are registered refugees in the UNHCR Nayapara camp located in Teknaf Upazila (sub-district) of Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. As the lists of registered refugees were inaccessible, probability sampling was not possible; therefore, non-probability selection techniques of sampling were utilised instead. The respondents were all above 25 year old because they were primarily selected for the interviews based on their recollections and social memory of their past (in Myanmar) and present (in Bangladesh). In order to capture the refugees' experiences and their narratives, I used in-depth interviews, group discussion and participant observation methods, which were then systematically analysed for key themes, patterns and contradictions. In addition, the author also used her ethnographic dairy and photo diary that were maintained during the fieldwork.

## RECAPTURING POLITICS

To situate the Rohingya's experience within a political and historical context, when the Rohingya refugees first entered the borders of Bangladesh in huge numbers (in 1977-78), they were sheltered in temporary camps.

At the time, it was intended to be a transitory arrangement; the Bangladesh government treated it as an internal and exclusive matter, and went about establishing camps to house the refugees. Official records suggest that in 1978, with the largest exodus of Rohingya refugees, the Bangladesh government was able to repatriate all the refugees back to Burma.<sup>3</sup> During the 1991-1992 exodus, which turned out to be the second largest wave of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh, the Bangladesh government adopted a similar approach; however, this received wider international attention and quickly escalated into “the Rohingya issue” because forces outside of Bangladesh were highly critical of the alleged forced repatriation process, thus, ultimately slowing, and eventually, in 2005, stopping, the repatriation altogether. Some of these refugees have lived as registered refugees in camps since; but a vast number of other refugees remain undocumented, residing in various unofficial makeshift camps in Teknaf, Ukhya, and Cox’s Bazaar of Bangladesh.<sup>4</sup> Sociopolitical conditions in Myanmar’s Arakan continue to remain unfavourable to the displaced Rohingyas, who have continued to illegally cross the border into Bangladesh, albeit on a much smaller scale, as the Bangladesh government

<sup>3</sup> For details on repatriation, see Chapter 4, Bangladesh section.

<sup>4</sup> An estimated 328,500 live in Bangladesh, a number of them since the early 1990s; of these 28,500 are listed as registered refugees in two camps, Kutupalong and Nayapara, located between Cox’s Bazar and Teknaf (UNHCR Annual Report, 2008).

maintains a very strict policy towards the new comers.<sup>5</sup>

The Bangladesh government has handled the refugee issue internally. The host government and its agencies have imposed and implemented a host of special rules, regulations and restrictions on the individuals living within the encampments. Bangladesh considers the refugees as extra-territorial *persona non grata*, and hence, a threat to the country; therefore, they are placed within restricted boundaries and controlled by specially designed rules and restrictions until official measures are taken to repatriate them. Bangladesh invited the UNHCR to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees but did not allow the Commission to operate freely; it can only operate within the authority of the Bangladesh government. The humanitarian agencies prefer easier terms so as to provide solutions to refugees’ basic and immediate needs. This can be understood from a statement by Christopher Beng Cha Lee, the then-UNHCR Representative to Bangladesh, that “the government does not allow us to make arrangements for minimum standard houses for Rohingya refugees, education for their children, plantation in their camps and

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<sup>5</sup> See “25 Rohingya Intruders Held in Teknaf” *The Daily Star*, February 1, 2007. More recent (post-June 2012) inter-communal violence in Arakan, between Buddhists and Muslims, has brought many more new refugees to Bangladesh. However, reports suggest that the Bangladesh government has tightened border controls and turned back refugees. For details, see The Equal Rights Trust, June 02, 2012.

teaching them Bangla language that they speak" (Shahid, 2005, p. 4).

It would be interesting to see if, and how, Agamben's concepts of "exceptional space" and "bare life" can explain the context of Nayapara refugee camp in Bangladesh. In order to understand what goes on within the camp, it is necessary to look at the dynamics of the individuals' everyday life from within.

### CAMP LIFE: YOUTHS' PERSPECTIVE

This section highlights the experience of young Rohingya refugees. The first section focuses on the background of the youths. The subsequent section discusses the dynamic of contestation and collaboration in dealing with the wider community – camp officials, local villagers and international agencies. This is followed by an analysis of the means of entertainment in camp.

*Background of the Studied Rohingya Youth*

The first impression one gets of the Rohingya refugee camps is that of order and control 'from above.' There are no erected boundary demarcations or fences around the Nayapara refugee camps to indicate the camps are within protected and restricted areas; nevertheless, state manifestation of security boundaries such as tightly restricted access through gates, military and para-military checkpoints and registration of visitors at front offices are indicative of a perceived defined boundary of the camps. As Agamben (2000, p. 40) observed, "[T]he camp is the

structure in which the state of exception is permanently realized." Outsiders require official permission to enter the camps. At the entrance, on a concrete structure (towards the camp), is a signboard (in Bengali language) that informs outsiders that this is, "Nayapara Refugee Camp: No Access without Permission" and on the other side of the structure (towards the main road) is another signboard directed at the refugees: "Attention: Refugees are not allowed to go outside the camp without the Exit Pass." The formal security vigilance is rigorous. In order to get from the entrance to the refugees, one has to go through various checkpoints: the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB); (Bangladesh Rifles<sup>6</sup>) security post; followed by the camp-in-charge's office; and only then is an outsider given access to the refugees' blocks.

During my ethnographic fieldwork at this camp, initially I was surprised to discover a seeming uniformity among residents' reported experiences. They shared similar stories of their past and circumstances surrounding their immigration from Arakan. Their collective memory indicates violence, persecution, expropriations and exploitations by various authorities (state, military and local neighbours). On their (current) exile lives in refugee camps in Bangladesh, their stories suggest that where they are, within enforced boundaries of the camps, are not much better than the lives they left behind. As I chatted with individuals at their tent homes and in tea

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<sup>6</sup> Until December 22, 2010, this was known as BDR.

stalls, time and again, I heard phrases such as, “Maybe the situation is a little better here, as the military is not coming to kill us, but here our life is like birds in a cage. They do not allow us to move freely. What future can we hold here, without work, and education for the children?” During my fieldwork, I found refugee families living in a 10 span by 10 span thatched-roof (*Jupri*) hut, which has a mud-floor with bamboo-sheet walls and a plastic-covered bamboo-sheet roof. Some families had up to 12 members living in these one-room huts. Refugees’ narratives indicate encounters with serious life-threatening dangers such as being killed by police firing squads, intimidation by camp security guards, rape and beating, torture by being tied with ropes, and many more. In this displacement, young refugees seem to be most disadvantaged; without education and skills training, their future is bleak. Yet, the longer I experienced life in the camp, I realised that within this perceived uniformity, there is heterogeneity of experiences, contentiousness, politics and diverse interests. In the midst of accurately-framed difficulties of exile life within the camp, they seemed to have transformed their experiences by giving it a semblance of simplified uniformity. I will explain these points as I go further.

The youths at Naypara camp<sup>7</sup> can be classified into three categories. The first, and most common, were the unemployed youths who spend their time playing cards or chatting with their friends at tea stalls.<sup>8</sup> During the day, they were allowed to gather in small groups; after dark, groups of five or six would be chased off or beaten up by security guards. Sitting around and chatting were a common scenario among young refugees, for whom there is no higher education beyond primary school, and they are not allowed to leave the camp for studies or work. These restrictions have vastly diminished their future, and they idle their time away. The second category of young refugees tries hard to fill their days with activities, and become involved with different kinds of work in the camp. During my fieldwork, I learned that many of them were aware and concerned about their gloomy future, and were keen to pursue

<sup>7</sup> Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh are neighbouring states that share a 270-km long international border. The source of the River Naff begins in the Arakan hills of Myanmar on the southeastern borders and flows into the Bay of Bengal. It is an elongated estuary in the southeast of Cox's Bazar district that separates the district from Arakan. The River Naff is 3.22 km wide; some parts of Arakan, especially the mountain ‘Arakan Yoma’ are visible from Teknaf.

<sup>8</sup> This research explores two groups of youth refugees; those who were between 25 and 35 years old at the time of the study and those who had crossed the border into Bangladesh when they were very young; and the second-generation refugees who were born in Bangladesh camps, and were teenagers and young adults (below 25 years old) at the time of the study.

further education and specialised training. I found the third category the most interesting, and was struck by the fact that some of them were seasonal workers, whereby for some months of the year, they go out to work, while the other months, they stay within the camp and depend on the food rations. My field data on 30 selected registered refugees (14 females and 16 males) at the Nayapara camp showed that they were involved in different occupations.

Fig.1 shows at least three categories of occupations. Those that are completely dependent on the food rations form the largest group, about 16, with more females (nine) than males (seven). The females were mostly housewives who took care of their families through various efforts. The second category—eight of 30 (five females and three males)—comprised small businesses within the camp. Men involved in small businesses tended to perform jobs such as camp committee members, school teacher,

religious teachers in the mosque, guards for the local NGO offices, or as vegetable sellers. The women were mostly involved in sewing clothes, weaving fishing nets, raising fowl (cows and goats are not allowed) and selling snacks. The third category involved jobs outside of the camp. This was the smallest group (six younger men), working as rickshaw-pullers, manual labourers (shovelling and carrying soil, uploading slat onto trucks for the salt industry), food servers at hotel restaurants, fishermen, working in the dry-fish business, and cutting and collecting firewood. I could not find any registered female refugees working in off-camp jobs, and this could likely be due to the risks involved in the entry-exit process, as well as the social stigma. It should be noted that off-camp activities were, in their context, illegal, but somehow they were able to make their way in and out without much difficulty.

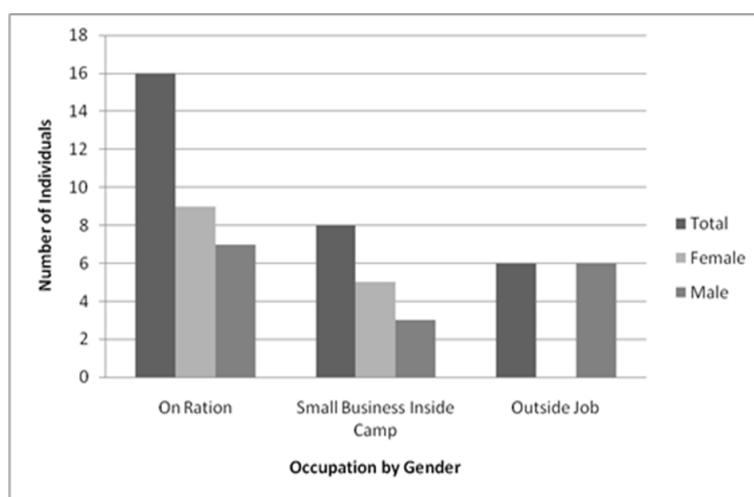


Fig.1: Nayapara Camp refugees' occupations (by gender)

Many of the young, unemployed refugees are totally dependent on food rations, and some become depressed and desperate. There are many news reports of young refugees becoming involved in gambling, drinking, drug taking, and more.<sup>9</sup> They often created trouble inside the camp. In 2009, during one of my interviews with the previous camp-in-charge (CIC), he mentioned a drug-related incident that took place in Nayapara camp. Three refugees pretended to be severely sick and were given official permission to go to Cox's Bazaar hospital, and an ambulance was provided for the transport. Later, however, it was found that the whole episode was a plot by the group to transfer drugs. They knew they could not pass through the three checkpoints to get to Cox's Bazaar district had they gone on their own and thus pretended to be sick so that they could use official transport services for their illegal activities.

Understandingly, many refugees did not want to associate with this group as they did not want to bring more trouble to their lives. Mothers kept a watchful eye on their

children and their playmates and placed restrictions on their children's movements. However, it was not easy to maintain regular and continuous monitoring when children did not have to attend school and parents were themselves not equipped or qualified to teach them at home.

Out of desperation, one group of young refugees is very much interested in government-sponsored, third country resettlement programmes; for the Bangladesh government, this is a durable and legal alternative to repatriating the refugees to Burma where, they would quickly turn around and find ways to cross back into Bangladesh. The programme selects refugee families (comprising husband, wife and children) as well as young unmarried male refugees.<sup>10</sup> The process is very slow, as inter-governmental negotiation tends to be a long, drawn-out process. As of 2009, only 262 Rohingya refugees have been resettled in various developed countries. Meanwhile, many accept the restricted camp life in hopes that one day, they may be offered the chance to resettle in another country where they will have legal rights and be recognised and respected as citizens.

The issue of resettlement creates tension within the community, where rumours are rife, and it is very easy for news or gossips to spread within the community. For instance, in May 2011, there was unverified news that the Bangladesh government's third country resettlement programme might

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<sup>9</sup> It is believed that there is a strong underground human trafficking racket actively working in the camps. A few cases have drawn wider attention from the news media. For instance, a three-member gang was arrested at Fakirer Pool in Dhaka on July 8, 2004 (*The Daily Star*, July 09, 2004, vol. 5, No 43); they were found with 18 Rohingyas, including eight children, mainly young girls, four women and six men. The victims said that they were from the Teknaf camps and had come to Bangladesh during the refugee exodus in 1991-1992, and had been living here since. They were about to be taken to Saudi Arabia when they were found with fake Bangladesh Passports.

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<sup>10</sup> This is a government process and only those registered camp refugees are eligible for the resettlement programme. See also Palma (July 14, 2007).

be discontinued. Those whose names were on the third country resettlement list feared it was a false hope. Some refugees shared their resentment and anger over the selection process. As one young informant said, “This (third country resettlement) is another matter of sorrow among all the ordinary Rohingyas. Especially among those of us who have better qualifications than others. For example, we have primary education and some basic skills training. Instead of selecting young, enthusiastic, qualified people from the camp, they are selecting those who already have family members in a foreign country.” Like others, this refugee was alluding to allegations that those who had already been resettled in a third country would send bribe-money (reportedly between BDT 100,000 to 200,000)<sup>11</sup> to be paid to Bangladesh brokers who work for UNHCR and knew how to manipulate the process so that the sender’s family members would be selected.

Due to the uncertainties and limitations to the government process, some young refugees often sought out illegal and risky ways to get themselves to third countries. As a result, in May 2015, thousands of Rohingya migrants landed in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia (Farzana, 2015). This illegal process is commonly known as the “boat line” which refers to a risky sea route mode of transportation. Refugees are very aware of the risks and dangers to their lives but still do so out of desperation. One young refugee informant who was planning to get on a “boat line” in the near future,

said, “I know that the boat line is risky. They [the broker] say that they will take us to Malaysia, but we never know where we will end up. They might take us to Thailand, Indonesia, or even Burma. If God is kind on me, I will survive on this sea journey ... If I don’t take the risk now, I have to live in refugee camp my whole life!”

However, refugee parents do not encourage their sons to choose this option as they do not wish to lose them; they would rather wait for the official resettlement process that sends refugees to a third country. Nonetheless, many young people do not want to wait that long in uncertainty and secretly get their documents processed without discussing with their parents. Some parents are aware of their sons’ intentions, and do not try to stop them. They are inspired by the stories of refugees’ successful cases where they have made it illegally to a third country where they can earn and send money to their families. There seemed to be a correlation between the Bangladesh government’s repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar and a coinciding increase in the number of refugees getting on the “boat line” (Lewa, 2003), signifying their preference for a third destination over their homeland.

In this section, we have seen how people live their lives in the refugee camps. In their mundane and routine lives, the refugees are expected to behave in a prescribed way. Any form of political activities, negotiation on rights or attempts to influence the authorities, is prohibited. Without prior official permission, they are not allowed

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<sup>11</sup> 1,200 to 2,400 USD equivalent.

to gather in groups of more than five. They are to stay within the camp vicinity as passive dwellers, and are expected to remain contented with their allotted food and shelter, and wait patiently for repatriation. However, within their everyday life, they also have interactions with the wider community, including camp officials, local villagers, as well as humanitarian organisations. These interactions indicate that refugee life in camp may not be as static as it appears. The following section looks at the nature of the interactions, with particular interest on the aspects of everyday life that is reproduced in the community.

#### *Refugees' Interaction with the Wider Community*

#### **Interaction with the Camp Authorities**

Some young refugees choose to live their lives quietly within the camp, but were enthusiastic to do something good for others. Many are keen to return to Myanmar if they could be afforded equal rights to education and living. Some worked inside the camp, while others were able to obtain work outside of the camp, which raised questions as to how they were able to negotiate with the authorities. The following case study illustrates their everyday life negotiations with various authorities:

#### **Faruk Kabir: Manager in a hotel outside the camp**

Refugee Faruk Kabir lives in Nayapara camp; he is 21 years old and speaks Bengali reasonably well, along with some

ungrammatical English. Language skills are very important to refugees to enable them to communicate with the people outside of the camp such as the Bangladeshis and foreigners. With his language ability, Faruk enjoys many advantages over those who do not speak Bengali or English.

Faruk maintains social contact with people outside the camp. Through this network, in November 2010, he was offered a managerial position with a hotel in the popular tourist destination of St Martin's island<sup>12</sup> for three months, for a total of 5000 taka (approximately US\$65). This was not his first outside job. Every year, from November to January, he looks for work outside of the camp. His work is seasonal, available only during the winter months, when tourists visit this beautiful, exotic and rustic island, when tornadoes are absent, and the sea is comparatively calm. For the hotel's Bangladeshi owner, there is comparative advantage to hiring a Rohingya refugee as payment is far less than a Bangladeshi's asking rate of 10,000 (US\$130) to 15,000 taka (US\$195).

How is Faruk able to leave and work for three months outside of the camp when we already know that this is prohibited? This is made possible by unwritten laws that coexist within the official laws and other "helping hands" that work for the Camp-in-Charge (CIC) as clerks, managers, gate-keepers, that create in-trade opportunities for the refugees

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<sup>12</sup>This is a 7.3 km Bangladesh island, commonly referred to by the locals as Narikel Jinjira; it is located northeast of the Bay of Bengal, about 9 km south of the Teknaf peninsular tip of Cox's Bazar district.

to go out, out of which they demand their cut from wages earned. Faruk pays 800 taka (US\$10) bribe money to a manager who works closely with the CIC; in turn, he is given permission to submit a one-page written document stating his name, block number and description of his outside job. He said, “I know that manager for a long time. He knows me very well, too. I just need to give him my name for his own list. He would not give me trouble.”

Within the camp, clerks, managers and gatekeepers play very important roles in managing and manipulating things in a very different way. Those who try to bypass the established but covert system are punished; their ration cards are confiscated and they are physically tortured, and so on. Therefore, the refugees bribe these agents, the amount to be paid depending on the nature and closeness of their relationship and the refugee’s status within the community. Bribes can exceed 1,000 takas (US\$12) to 1,500 takas (US\$18). Sometimes, their ration books are held as collateral, which are returned only when the refugees go back to the camp and pay the agreed bribe to the manager. Sometimes, the managers use the collateral as a bargaining tool to ask for more. According to the refugees, the gatekeepers are the main “troublemakers” as the refugees are required to pay bribes to get in and out of the camp. Depending on the bargaining process, some gatekeepers are willing to accept 20 to 50 takas (US\$0.26 to US\$0.65) from ordinary refugees.

The above two case studies show that some young refugees are able to manage extraordinarily well with and work around the existing camp management authority’s plans to extract bribes from displaced refugees. This is the “politics of survival” (Scott & Kerkvliet, 1973) that they gradually learn, after having, in some cases, lived more than two decades in the camps. Nevertheless, bribery is not a permanent solution as the rules could alter at any time; often when something negative occurs outside of the camp involving registered refugees, and security is tightened for those that remain. Those with outside work would then need to wait until the situation returns to normal before approaching the gatekeepers again with bribe offers in exchange for temporary outside “passes”.

### **Interaction with the Local Villagers**

Economic resources are always contesting arenas in which people make competing claims; the relationship between camp dwellers and the surrounding local villagers is also affected by such contesting economic resources. Local villagers regard the refugees as lazy freeloaders because they receive free food and household items. According to Md. Ismail, a local villager, “these refugees in camps do not do any work. They just sit, eat and produce many children.”<sup>13</sup> There is clearly a strained and contentious relationship between the refugees and the

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<sup>13</sup> Personal communication with a local educated professional in Teknaf (December 29, 2010).

local villagers.<sup>14</sup> This is manifested in the number of local resistant movements that consider the Rohingyas a threat. One such movement, named Rohingya Hotao (Expel the Rohingyas), is based in Ukhya, and maintains that the Rohingyas are creating all kinds of social problems and that criminal activities have increased because of their presence (Prothom Alo, January 10, 2010).

Ironically, the refugees have unofficially become part of the economic resources for the locals. Within the local community, the Rohingyas work in farming, fishing and other low-skill jobs—providing cheap labours to local villagers. In this sense, this has become a symbiotic relationship in that both groups depend on one another.

The following case study illustrates how interactions with the local villagers may go wrong.

**Jamila (aged 24).** Jamila's mother is ill. The camp clinic's doctor diagnosed possible breast cancer that would require immediate treatment. Jamila's two other sisters are married and live apart from

her family. Her father is old. This family of three is entirely dependent on the food rations. Jamila's fiancé was working in Saudi Arabia, and had sent her some gold jewellery, via his family, as a token of their formal engagement. Jamila's family is awaiting his return and the marriage ceremony will take place then.

Meanwhile, Jamila decided to sell the jewellery to pay for her mother's medical treatment and went with a younger male neighbour to a jewellery shop in Teknaf bazaar. Instead of buying the gold ornaments, the shop owner offered to pawn her jewellery for 20,000 taka (US\$258). Jamila could reclaim the ornaments a year later after repaying the capital and interest.

Jamila accepted the offer as she believed it was an opportunity for her to double her money. It was almost the end of the year (2010), and a neighbouring village was organising a New Year fair; the village chairman's son and his group promised to double any money invested in the fair, which would be paid immediately after the fair. Desperate for money, Jamila thought this would be a good opportunity for her to use her gold so she accepted the jeweller's offer and used the money to invest in the New Year fair. She expected that 40,000 taka (approximately US\$600) would be sufficient for her to repay the loan with interest, redeem her jewellery and pay for her mother's medical treatment.

Like Jamila, many others were deceived as well. Immediately after the fair, the Chairman's son disappeared from the village. The Chairman refused to be held responsible, claiming that he was not

<sup>14</sup> We experienced similar tension while working in Jalaiapara. When we were preparing the household list for our study, some local villagers thought that relief materials would be given to those whose names were on the list. So the locals started coming to us to make sure their names were also on the list. We explained the purpose of work, but were not able to convince them. Some started shouting that they would not allow any relief distribution to the "Burmaiayas" in the area unless they (the locals) were also included. The local villagers in the fishing community were very poor, and understandably upset that the international organizations do not provide them with financial aid.

involved in the deal. Several individuals who had helped his son organise the fair were still around and promised to return the money but had not done so yet. Jamila is at a loss. She is unable to redeem her jewellery as she has no money to repay the amount with interest. When she told me her story in April 2011, four months had already gone by and she had not made any monthly instalments. She is afraid that her fiancé will be upset if he came to know that she had done this without consulting him. If he found out, he could end his marriage proposal as the jewellery symbolises an engagement present. Jamila felt helpless, seeing her mother suffer.<sup>15</sup>

This case study shows that while young refugees are willing to take on challenges to improve their lives, in reality, their rights and means are extremely limited and success stories are few and far between.

In terms of intermarriages between registered refugees and local Bangladeshis, from my data, I found only two cases of refugee women married to Bangladeshi men, but I was told that the number is increasing. I thought it is interesting to note that it was always refugee girls marrying Bangladeshi men; but not vice versa<sup>16</sup>. This suggests that this kind of marriage may be a calculated move by refugee women to stay outside of the camp, with the possibility of becoming Bangladeshi citizens sometime

<sup>15</sup> Jamila's mother passed away in 2013, and she did not get her money back.

<sup>16</sup> Intermarriages between undocumented Rohingyas and local Bangladeshis are quite common and they live scattered within the local Bangladesh community.

in the future as she would bear children for her Bangladeshi husband and live with his family, and thus fulfilling many of her basic needs. Moreover, external connections through such marriages are expected to bring added advantages to the refugee family in terms of access to the local social security.

### **Interaction with Humanitarian Organisations**

With permission from the Bangladesh government, there are few humanitarian organisations that support the refugees through various initiatives to improve their lives.<sup>17</sup> That interaction with refugees manifests through providing them with basic skills training occasionally brings entertainment opportunities. Some of the NGO-initiated training programmes are intended to make refugees self-reliant such as teaching women how to make soaps, dresses, handicrafts and knitting. However, these are small-scale income generating projects and involve only a few hundred women (Khan & Sharfuddin, 1996). Unfortunately, there is no single women's organisation that represents refugee women's needs and rights.

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<sup>17</sup> In 2014, the UN agencies involved in the camp are UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP. Other major NGOs involved in the camps are Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS); Technical Assistance Inc. (TAI); Research, Training and Management (RTM) International; and Action Against Hunger (ACF), Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB), and BRAC Bangladesh, Handicap International.

Many of these training programmes target the young refugees. Some progressive-minded refugees who dream of a better future are trying their best to utilise resources provided by the NGOs, through which they learn about maternity safety, hygiene and helping the disabled. The broader purpose of this is to train refugees who can then be useful within their own community.

However, not all training is meaningful for the refugees. For instance, the male and female refugees were offered a three-month course to teach them computer skills. During my field trip, I talked to several who had attended the course. They did not appear confident at all about using computer. It is important to understand the refugees' needs from their perspective. They would like to receive training for skills they can put into use immediately to earn some money. To them, computer training is not relevant as they do not have access to computers nor are there opportunities for outside employment. As they are semi-literate and their basic needs in life are not met, providing computer training simply does not help their situation. Policies on the refugees' situation should take into consideration their immediate needs and accessibility to employment opportunities.

#### *Entertainment in the Camp*

Within the refugee camp, the means of entertainment is rather very limited. There are only two football and volleyball courts that the boys can use, and one community centre that all refugees of Nayapara camp

can use to organise functions with prior permission from the camp-in-charge. Having a centralised community centre may have two different implications. Firstly, it can be used as a common ground where refugees can gather and enjoy performances with other fellow refugees. It may help to improve their interpersonal relationships and provide them with more opportunities to communicate with each other. Secondly, it comes with a prohibition on programmes outside the centre; this suppresses their natural expressive values that are deeply rooted within their cultural traits and norms. Moreover, trying to put together a cultural show in the community centre comes with attendant prerequisites such as finding the right NGO(s) to help them organise the programme(s), getting help from refugee leaders and obtaining permission from the camp authority. The requirements would mean fewer functions being organised and less freedom for the refugees. These formalities and restrictions affect the female refugees most, as coming from conservative families, they prefer not to draw attention to themselves by mingling with the crowd to enjoy songs and drama. Thus, in the camps, the little entertainment they had in their traditional way of performing is no longer available to them.

Another important feature of their cultural life is drama performance. Previously, performances were at a football field inside the camp, but now, it can only be staged in the community centre. Performances revolve around real-life social

issues such as dowry and rape; these help spread moral messages to create awareness among refugees through entertainment and also strengthen community bonds. Nonetheless, restricting the refugees' ability to perform other than at the community centre confines their creativity. Like many traditional cultures, the Rohingya refugees also have abstract needs such as entertainment, but these needs are not articulated or fulfilled except as allowed by authority. The legitimate question that arises is: should the refugees have a right to decide on those needs?

During my ethnographic fieldwork, I was made aware of some of the artistic expressions common in the Rohingya culture; for this marginalised population, songs (*taranas*) and drawings are one of the last vestiges of a lost lifestyle (Farzana, 2011). The refugees use these songs and drawings to document their reflections on their lives, their beliefs and visions of the past, present and future. These help keep their memories alive - to be passed over to the next generation. The major themes of their *taranas* are of love, patriotism (memories of Arakan), Rohingya identity and solidarity, reminders to stay united within the Rohingya community and not to fight with each other. They use songs to vent their frustrations and to pass over their message to others, particularly when played at community functions. Thankfully, their production and themes used in the art forms have not resulted in altercations with the authorities (Edelman, 1995), which could have dangerous and costly consequences for

them.<sup>18</sup> For now, it remains at the stage of raising their consciousness (Denisoff, 1983; Qualter, 1963). Yet, such drawings evidently illustrate the power of visual symbols, as they recount from their perspective, the situation in Arakan and in Bangladesh, as well as the anguish and frustrations of finding themselves caught between the politics of two sovereign states, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Therefore, the music (poems and songs) and the art portray a poignant narrative of everyday refugee life and resistance in the camps in which both the real and imagined sense of displacements are revealed through music, poetry and art.

The above discussion on the refugees' interaction in camp clearly demonstrates how a refugee community has grown over the years at the site of this exceptional space. It has all the characteristics of a community in that it consists of all types of individuals, its intra-community relationships and its relationship with various agencies and the outsiders. The internal power play in the camps is ubiquitous and complex. The features of power politics in the camps reinforce the nexus between the various stakeholders. Those profiteering agents try constantly to keep their power unchallenged through social negotiation and renegotiation, tacit understanding, compromise and off-

<sup>18</sup> Kerkvile in his study on Everyday Resistance to Injustice in a Philippine Village shows that in everyday form of resistance, the target may not necessarily be aware of it. As he noted: "The target may eventually discover what the resister has done but that need not be the intention of the ones resisting. Indeed, those resisting, often perceiving themselves to be extremely vulnerable," (1986a, p. 109).

the-stage social contracts. In this continuous process of contestation, the UNHCR remains the dominant player whose rules are uncontested by ordinary refugees, but are manipulated by unscrupulous community leaders for their own ends. However, there were also indications, reported by the respondents, that the landscape of internal power relations is fast changing, with the rise of young middlemen who are producing alternative power blocs and interest groups. Some of them are reportedly even more skilled in social negotiation. What emerges from the political power play in the camps is that the refugees are not a homogenous category with the same problems and risks. There are power blocs and interest groups among them who claim authority and legitimacy to represent the refugee population.

Although refugee camps are considered exceptional space, there are several observed activities in the Nayapara camp that can conceivably undermine the concept of the “state of exception.” Those who regularly commute between the camp and its outside world through negotiated terms highlight the fact that they can defy the authority and any imposed restrictions on their movement. The second type of activity is the intermarriage between Bengali and Rohingyas, which extends the Rohingya family into the Bangladeshi community. Therefore, even if the Rohingyas from the camp are repatriated, they still have family members living in Bangladesh. Many refugees are now learning the Bangla language as part of their intended hidden integration process.

These tendencies undermine the concept of exclusivity of the camps and their perceived notion of “exception.”

### **A REFUGEE COMMUNITY UNDER TRANSFORMATION**

The camp life from the young generation’s perspective provides an understanding into the Nayapara refugees’ everyday life. Refugees’ interaction with the wider community shows the aspects that can or cannot be reproduced on a day-to-day basis under such constraints. Their social relations and ordinary experiences of refugee life show various dimensions of refugee life that are neither monolithic nor static. Some of these experiences may be relevant to an understanding of refugees from other parts of the world such as Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, where people face hardships under protracted situations (Weiner, 1993).

The discussion presented in the preceding sections makes a number of points clear. Firstly, the situation in Nayapara camp indicates that, over time, various power-blocs have emerged to maintain and protect special interests, and it is nearly impossible for camps to remain as non-political spaces. As such, refugee camps become highly contested political spaces where multiple authorities of varying degrees interact with each other. According to the respondents, the most obvious power-bloc is the Rohingya leaders/representative groups that mediate between ordinary refugees and other agencies. Some of the Block Committee heads and the

Camp Management Committee members reportedly maintain close relationships with the previous leaders. These leaders are reportedly corrupt and take advantage of their leadership positions by creating a relationship of mistrust and suspicion between the leaders and the ordinary refugees. The space is not just about the distribution of relief materials to refugees that are content with the supply of basic needs; it is a complete political society with its own peculiarities.

Secondly, over time, the camp dwellers stop being passive recipients of supplied subsistence and turn into active adventurers looking for ways and means to meet their strategic and practical needs. The refugees are discontent with the limited supply of basic needs and initiate economic endeavours such as a revolving fund or petty businesses to meet their immediate practical needs of everyday life. Simultaneously, they venture out, if capable, to seek better or more permanent solutions to their strategic needs and try to end their refuge lives by escaping the imposed authority. Assimilation with the local economic forces or making inroads to a third destination is foremost on their minds as they plan their escape routes. To get to their desired ends, the refugees learn to employ skills of negotiation, deception, persuasion and reward. Gradually, they come to notice that the authorities are sometimes negotiable, at least in exchange for money, and thus, they learn to actively exploit the situation, both inside and outside the camp. Due to this rent-seeking facility, the camp leaders certainly favour maintaining the

status quo of the camps and refugee lifestyle. This means that only a handful of the camp leaders may work as preventive agents to devise any permanent solutions to the refugee problems. That is “the politics of survival” (Scott & Kerkvliet, 1973), through which the marginalised community secures its economic and physical well-being against the claims and threats of either the state or local elites.

Thirdly, case studies in this paper suggest that the younger generation is picking up various survival skills. They learn to speak the official languages of Bengali as well as some English so that they can communicate with officials from UNHCR and the Bangladesh government. By using these skills and applying other connections such as knowing those in position or knowing who to bribe to make things work, these refugees are able to work the system. Such dynamics also challenge the system, which purposefully puts the refugees in camps and excluded them from local citizens who regard them as threats. When refugees and villagers depend on each other, and when refugees create networks and channels they can utilise to advantage, it indirectly challenges the whole system and the authority. At that point, the distinction between a “politicised life” (the citizens) and “bare life” (the refugees) becomes blurred. Many of the young refugees I talked to showed their keen awareness that their lives had drastically changed when they became refugees and that their future is uncertain. Many identified illiteracy and inability to find suitable jobs as important

issues among the younger generation who are afraid of facing their future.

Rajaram and Grundy-Warr criticised Agamben's attempts to politicise the concept of "bare life", suggesting that "[A]gamben's work can demonstrate that the detention of refugees may be linked to ongoing processes of the constitution of politics and the borders of the national community" (2004, p. 40). This perspective allows one to approach the refugee historically. This is a genealogical understanding that takes note of the production of meaning for refugees. In so doing, it provides a counter to the simple paeans about the eternal condition of abjection and loss that the refugees have to somehow come to terms with (Malkki, 1995). Furthermore, it distorts the simplistic sense of the refugees as the ones "forgotten" by the international community of nations; rather, the refugees are integrally tied into the practices of excluding and including that constitute and maintain the faceted "system of the nation-state" (pp. 38-39). Moreover, they suggest that the boundary between the inside and outside is not always distinct, especially when inside (the citizens) relies on outside (the migrant workers or illegal economic immigrants). The authors have taken the rights-oriented perspective in the case of irregular migrants and refugees in detention camps in Australia, Malaysia and Thailand (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2004).

Finally, despite being an exception to the "state of exception" of Agamben, camp life officially remains an exception. The public transcript of the narrative is that the camps are to remain in a secluded space,

maintaining safe distance from the locality and monitored by the appointed authority. Indeed, such features of the camps are indisputable in the case of Nayapara camps. At the same time, however the "naked life" is not that naked, if we really see how the refugees negotiate with the situation on the ground and aspire to defy the imagined boundary of camps. They cope with the enforced circumstances and live through it, moving on with what they have. There are restrictions. There are security officials and other officials who misuse their power; yet within this, we have seen people making their lives work and finding alternatives in the process.

## CONCLUSION

This study has argued that the refugee camps are contested spaces where ambiguity and exceptionality are commonplace. As these individuals have been living together for such a long time, a social arrangement has gradually emerged, which is at the same time conflicting and multi-dimensional. There are various layers within the society: ordinary refugees, leaders, followers, Camp-in-Charge (CIC), CIC officials, camp police, international organisations and local NGOs. Each layer is complexly intertwined with the others. On the vertical level is the conflict between state official and refugees; and on the horizontal level, it is among refugees, refugee leaders, as well as neighbouring villagers. In their internal power politics inside the camp, the refugees are constantly involved in fights and struggles to establish their rights. In

this process, they constantly negotiate with various agencies and authorities that exist surrounding them. Often, they fail, but their endeavour never stops. It has become part of their everyday lives. Moreover, the clearer picture that emerges from this everyday experience of camp life is the systematic and constant reminder that the refugees are outsiders and foreign in origin. Therefore, in the course of everyday life, their identity of “otherness” is constantly reproduced.

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## Efficiency of Commercial Banks in India: A DEA Approach

Mani Mukta

*Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jaypee Institute of Information Technology,  
Noida (U.P.), India*

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to study the efficiency of commercial banks operating in India. Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) technique has been applied to a sample of 57 banks. Data had been gleaned from the annual reports of banks on input variables namely Capital, Total assets, Advances, Number of employees and Cost to income ratio and the output variables namely Return on assets, Interest spread, Non-interest income, Deposits to advances ratio and percentage decrease in non-performing assets. The study covers a period of four years from 2009-2010 and 2012-2013. Results indicated an overall level of inefficiency in commercial banks at 47%. This implies that the commercial banks have the scope of producing 1.88 times as much output from the same inputs. The overall Capital utilisation needs to be increased and the number of employees and Advances should be reduced. Further, the study suggests that very large size and very small size banks are more efficient compared with medium size banks. In India, foreign banks are the most efficient while private Banks operate at a higher level of efficiency compared with public banks. The study may help bank managements and banking regulators in addressing issues relating to efficiency of commercial banks and identifying the causes of inefficiency in the banks. However, since the study is covers only Indian commercial banks from 2009-10 and from 2012-13, the results and findings cannot be generalised to beyond this group of banks or to a different study period.

*Keywords:* Commercial banks, data envelopment analysis, efficiency

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*E-mail address:*

mukta.mani@jiit.ac.in (Mani Mukta)

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### INTRODUCTION

Economic liberalisation in India has resulted in the Banking sector to undergo enormous changes. Until 1991 public sector banks have been the major players in banking sector but liberalisation catalysed the

growth of private banks and eased the entry of foreign banks. Currently, there are four major categories of banks, namely public sector banks, private sector banks, foreign banks and regional rural banks. The Public sector banks (PSBs) are bigger with a major share in the banking business and where a majority stake (more than 50%) is held by the government. However, the PBSs are facing tough competition from private and foreign banks which are growing rapidly. The overall exponential growth in the banking sector has resulted in a highly competitive environment in the banking industry. The banks are required to perform better than their competitors for survival and growth. It has become important to re-evaluate how efficient the banks are from time to time. The banks are cognisant of their efficiency level vis a vis their peers and strive to improve it by reducing inputs and increasing outputs. A comparative analysis of bank efficiency provides useful feedback for investors, customers, and policymakers.

According to Rickets and Stover (1978), a firm's performance has traditionally been analysed through ratio analysis. Various financial ratios have been calculated to measure performance and hence, efficiency of a firm. However; it has been observed that analysis of a bank's financial data differs significantly from other companies due to differences in structure and operating systems. The ratios such as ROA, ROE, Net profit margin, Debt-Equity ratio among others are valuable and suitable measures of performance for other business organisations. For banks, some of these ratios may give different meanings and therefore, deserve different interpretations. For example, a

high debt-equity ratio in a business organisation indicates an undesirable high financial leverage. For the banks, a high financial leverage is a norm since deposits are the bank's main liabilities while equity forms only a small portion of the bank's liabilities and capital. Thus, different parameters and techniques are needed in place of financial ratios analysis in order to measure bank efficiency.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review on the subject reveals that substantial research efforts have been devoted in assessing a bank's performance. Many studies however, used financial ratios, which were fairly similar, although with different analytical techniques.

Liliana (2001) argues indicators of banking problems, which are appropriate for industrialised countries, do not work in emerging markets, because of severe deficiencies in the accounting and regulatory framework and lack of liquid markets for bank liabilities and assets. She emphasised the traditional CAMEL system of bank rating works where the quality of data and the supervisory framework are effective. Liliana conducted an empirical study on three Latin American countries and three East Asian countries. On the basis of the findings, she suggested an alternate set of indicators of bank strength: Implicit interest rate paid on deposits, spread between lending and deposit rates, rate of loan growth and growth of inter bank debt. Joshi and Joshi (2002) in their article on SWOT analysis of Balance sheets believe it is of paramount importance for bankers to look critically at the various tools for analysing the balance sheets and

use them as audits of their management capabilities. The authorities assessing bank performance are accustomed to using CAMEL (Capital adequacy, Asset quality, Management, Earnings and Liquidity) rating ratios to assess performance on the basis of capital adequacy and asset liability management. These progress cards related to good management highlight strengths and weaknesses, and point to the tasks ahead. Raghunathan and others (2003) have found that performance management in many banks has been largely synonymous with measuring financial performance vis-à-vis the CRAMEL framework or its variants. However, they state that these financial measures are primarily lag indicators, a post mortem view of the business, rather than lead indicators that assess the banks' ability to create value in the future. They affirmed this by saying that emergence of business segments such as retail assets, fee-based services, and delivery channels have required the banks to manage traditional consumer goods businesses with a focus on active 'customer acquisition' and 'customer retention' rather than passive 'service'. There is an increasing need for banks to focus on methods to increase income, improve quality of service and reduce cost of operations. These strategies require measurement in a manner that extends beyond CRAMEL and stand-alone non-financial measures. Berger et., al. (1997) in their study on Problem Loans and Cost Efficiency in Commercial Banks found problem loans precede reductions in measured cost efficiency; cost efficiency

precedes reductions in problem loans and that reductions in capital at thinly capitalised banks precede increases in problem loans. Hence, cost efficiency may be an important indicator of future problem loans and problem banks.

Sensharma and Ghosh (2004) found that ownership structure, proportion of investment in government securities, proportion of lending to priority sector, CRAR, and NPAs have a significant impact on the net interest margin of a commercial bank, which is considered to be an indicator of bank performance and efficiency. Saumitra and Shanmugam (2005) studied the performance of banks after the banking sector reforms. In their analysis, they looked at Return on asset, operating profit ratio, net interest margin, operating cost ratio and staff expenditure ratio as performance indicators. The results of analysis showed that foreign banks were superior in terms of performance on return on assets, operating profit ratio and net interest margin. The performance of PSBs has also improved. The operating profit ratio and net interest margin fell in the case of private sector banks; however, they have managed to maintain their status by reduction in operating expenditures particularly those related to staff. Chipalkatti and Rishi (2005) critically analysed post reform performance of Indian banks by examining quantitative data on bank profitability and risk. They considered the following parameters: Profitability- spread, return on equity, return on assets, total assets-to-total shareholder equity ratio, capital adequacy ratio; Credit risk- Gross

NPA to total assets, gross NPA to total advances, net NPA to total assets ratio, net NPA to total advances ratio, allowances as a percentage of total assets, total allowances to gross NPA ratio; Interest Rate Risk-asset liability mismatch; net worth-to-total assets, net NPAs/total assets, cushion/ total assets.

Thus, Return on assets (ROA) was the most common ratio used to measure bank performance by many researchers such as Wu, Chen and Shiu, (2007), Sharma and Mani, (2012). A high ROA ratio indicated a well-capitalised bank and that the bank operated with a low cost-to-income ratio (Kosmidou, 2008). Size was also used and had a positive and statistically significant impact on a bank's performance. Cost efficiency to some researchers was highly important and was inversely related to problem loans in the bank. It was found that cost efficiency would fall with the increase in impaired loans since the latter (impaired loans) were costly to recover as well as to write them off as bad loans (Berger & Young, 1997). In India, the Priority sector advances significantly contributed to problem loans and thus, had an impact on the banks' profitability. A study on the banking sector's performance in India from 1980 to 2005 measured its performance on the basis of ROA, nonperforming assets, spread and non-interest income (Verma & Verma, 2002). It was discovered that spread, which is the difference between interest rate earned and interest rate paid, was a significant factor that has affected banks' profitability. A study on banks' performance employed two types of parameters: the operational parameter which included total

income, interest earned, interest spread, net profit as percentage of interest spread, interest income as percentage of working funds, non-interest income as percentage of working funds, non-performing assets as percentage of net advances, capital adequacy ratio; the Productivity parameter on the other hand is represented by the profit per employee, ROA and business per employee (Ramasastri & Samuel, 2006). Arora and Verma, (2007) found that a reduction in operating expenses from rationalisation of employee costs was another parameter that could have significant impact on a bank's profitability.

Based on literature review, the author selected the following variables for the study: Capital, Number of employees, Advances, Total assets, Cost-to-income ratio, Spread, Non-interest income, Return on assets, Deposits-to-advances ratio and Non-performing assets.

In search of a suitable analytical technique, it is observed that many researchers have found that the Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is an appropriate technique for evaluating a bank's efficiency (Dell'Atti, *et al.*, 2015; Balfour *et al.*, 2015). Kumar and Verma (2002-03) used the DEA for measurement of technical efficiency of public sector banks. In the calculation of efficiency measures, physical capital, labour, loanable funds as inputs and spread and non-interest income as output were used. Grigorian *et al.* (2002) estimated indicators of commercial bank efficiency by applying the DEA to 515 banks in 16 transition economies. Using the Tobit analysis, they found that foreign ownership

with controlling power and enterprise restructuring enhances a commercial bank's efficiency while the effects of prudential tightening on a bank efficiency vary across banks based on different measures adopted. They established a strong relationship between profitability and lending behaviour of banks. Excessive risk taking in lending would point to the possibility that banks are trading off greater short term accounting profits at the expense of long term gains. Spread, non-interest income, physical capital, labour and loanable funds have been used as input and output variables in the DEA technique. Soteriou and Zenios (1999) claimed that based on the DEA technique, a bank's efficiency could be studied by examining its operations, quality and profitability.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The study, based on literature review, adopts the main parameters to measure the performance of a bank: Capital, Number of employees, Advances, Total assets, Cost-to-income ratio, Spread, Non-interest income, Return on assets, Deposits-to-advances ratio and Non-performing assets. The objective of this study is to measure and compare the performance of banks operating in India by calculating their scores and categorising them into: relatively best-performing banks and relatively worst-performing banks. The study will also attempt to suggest the peer group of the efficient and inefficient banks and the changes in inputs and outputs needed to turn the inefficient banks into efficient banks.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### *DEA Technique*

The DEA technique has been successfully used to assess the relative efficiency of banking institutions. It is a linear programming method that measures the efficiency of multiple decision-making units (DMUs) when the measurement involves multiple inputs and outputs. The DEA further compares individual observation with the others for calculating a discrete piece-wise linear frontier. The DMUs that lie on the linear frontier are the most efficient units, each having an efficiency score of one. An inefficient DMU is inefficient because either it uses too much input and/ or it does not produce enough output.

Many models of DEA have evolved over the period. The most basic one is Charnes, Cooper & Rhoades' input-oriented constant returns to scale (CRS) model. However, the CRS model is limited in that it is only reliable when all DMUs are operating at an optimal scale. To address this limitation, Banker, Charnes and Cooper (1984) proposed a variable returns to scale (VRS) model. The VRS model is able to calculate the technical efficiencies of the selected parameters without being affected by the efficiencies of other parameters (such as size and scale). There are two ways to improve the performance of inefficient DMUs. One is to reduce its input so it can reach the efficient frontier, and the other is to increase its output to reach the efficient frontier. As a result, DEA models will have two orientations: input-oriented and output-oriented. Input-oriented models are used to

test if a DMU under evaluation can reduce its inputs while keeping the outputs at their current levels. Output-oriented models are used to test if a DMU under evaluation can increase its outputs while keeping the inputs at their current levels. The DEA technique is popular in measuring performance efficiency, as its input-oriented feature is able to accurately calculate the amount by which inputs should be relatively reduced to achieve efficiency by keeping the outputs fixed.

The input-oriented variable return to scale DEA model is chosen for this study, since it is also capable of taking into account the correct convexity of DMUs when ratio variables are used (Emrouznejad & Amin, 2009). To calculate the overall efficiency of the banks, this study chooses input and output variables that serve to measure production efficiency, intermediation efficiency and profitability of the banks.

The following DEA model is an input-oriented model (Banker *et al.*, 1984)

$$w^* = \min w$$

subject to

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j x_{ij} \leq w x_{io} \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, m;$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j y_{rj} \leq w y_{ro} \quad r = 1, 2, \dots, s;$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j = 1$$

$$\lambda_j \geq 0 \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

where  $x_{io}$  and  $y_{ro}$  are the  $i$ th input and  $r$ th output for  $DMU_o$  respectively. If  $w^* = 1$ , then the current input levels cannot be reduced (proportionally), indicating that  $DMU_o$  is on the frontier. Otherwise, if  $w^* < 1$ , then  $DMU_o$  is dominated by the frontier.  $w^*$  represents the (input-oriented) efficiency score of  $DMU_o$ . The efficiency scores range between 0 and 1. By using the linear frontier as bench-mark, the DEA provides a performance measurement score for each DMU relative to other DMUs (Kumar & Verma, 2003). If a DMU is efficient, its outputs will be best produced using all of its own inputs. On the other hand, if DMU is inefficient, its outputs will be best produced by a mixture of other DMUs using a fraction of all its inputs. The optimal value of  $w$  is

$$w^* = \text{Max}\left[\left(\sum_{t=1}^q \mu_{tm} c_{tk}\right) / \left(\sum_{t=1}^q \lambda_{tm} a_{tk}\right)\right] \quad [1]$$

$\lambda_{tm}$ ,  $\mu_{tm}$  are the weightings which it should use for its inputs and outputs in order to maximise its ratio of weighted outputs to inputs. Where,  $a_{ij}$  is the amount of input  $i$  used by  $DMU_j$  for  $i = 1, \dots, p$  and  $c_{tj}$  is the amount of output  $t$  produced by  $DMU_j$  for  $t = 1, \dots, q$ . (Gautam, A. & Williams, H. P., 2002). Calculation of  $w$  for inefficient banks brings forth the formation of their respective reference-set banks. The reference-set allows a bank to determine based on its own efficiency number, the amount of inputs it needs to change in order to raise its efficiency level to that of the bank in its reference-set.

### *Sampling*

In India, the banking sector is divided into four major categories namely Public Sector banks (PSBs), Private Sector banks, Foreign Banks and Regional Rural banks. This study is focused on PSBs, private sector banks and foreign banks operating in India from 2009-2010 and 2012-2013. The Regional Rural banks are excluded from the study since their scope of work and size of operations are not comparable to those of other banks. There were 26 PSBs, 20 Private Sector banks and 41 foreign banks operating in India in March 2013. Out of the total 87 banks, 57 banks were examined in this study. It included all 26 Public Sector banks, all 20 Private Sector banks and 11 Foreign banks (shown in Table 5). The other 30 foreign banks were excluded because their complete dataset for the study period was not available. Banks omitted from the study include those which started operations after 2009-2010 and a few older ones that ceased to operate or merged with some other banks before 2012-2013.

### *Data Collection*

This study uses accounting data of individual bank from the data sets obtained from the annual publications of Reserve Bank of India from 2009-2010 and from 2012-2013.

Data was collected based on 10 variables gleaned from literature review. The input variables are Capital, Labour, Loans, Size and Cost to Income ratio where Capital indicates total capital of bank, Labour means the number of employees in the bank, Loans indicate total advances and the Size

is measured by total assets of the bank. The output variables are Spread, Non-interest income, Return on Assets, Deposits to advances ratio and percentage of decrease in non-performing assets. The Spread is the difference between interests earned and interest expended and Non interest income indicates fee based income. Details related to variables are given in Table I.

## **EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

Results of the input-oriented VRS model are provided in Table 2 which presents the efficiency scores obtained from the DEA model for individual banks and their respective reference-set banks. The results indicate presence of a marked deviation of the efficiency scores from the best-practice frontier.

The third column in Table 2 indicates the efficiency score of sample banks relative to their peers. From the table, it can be observed that out of 57 banks, 30 were found to be relatively efficient (score equal to one), while 27 are relatively inefficient (scored less than one). The lowest efficiency score is 64.61% for Bank of Maharashtra. The 30 efficient banks are Pareto-Koopmans efficient i.e. having the efficiency scores of one and the slacks of zero. These are the banks that operate at high levels of efficiency. The average efficiency score of all the sample banks is 92.75% which implies that except for a few banks, the majority of the sample banks are operating at high levels of efficiency during the study

An in-depth analysis of the relatively inefficient banks reveals the development

and content of their respective reference-set banks (Calculated according to eq. 1). As reflected in column 4 to column 17, a bank defined as inefficient carries its own efficiency-weight relative to the other banks in its reference-set. The reference-set allows a bank to determine based on its own efficiency-weight the amount of inputs it needs to change in order to raise its efficiency level to that of the banks in its reference-set. For example, given that bank B1 (Allahabad Bank) is 82.22% as efficient as its reference set (banks B17, B24, B26, B38, B40 and B47), bank B1 can become equally efficient as its reference-set banks by simply reducing its inputs by 17.78% (i.e.,  $100 - 82.22 = 17.78\%$ ). Against the individual bank in its reference-set, the efficiency objective of bank B1 is to raise its efficiency level by 57.85% of B17, 4.13% of B24,

9.23% of B26, 8.85% of B38, 18.57% of B40 and 1.37% of B47. Since the efficiency-weight of B17 (City Union Bank) is highest, it is suggested that Allahabad Bank should emulate the management style and practice of City Union Bank in order to become more efficient.

This study further analyses the value of slacks to find out the reasons that account for inefficiency of the 27 banks in the sample. Each of the banks can achieve overall efficiency by adjusting their inputs to the suggested levels of inputs. The efficiency scores and the optimal slack values as given in Table 3 provide the target points on the efficient frontier that the inefficient banks can reach by adjusting its input and output levels. The slack values can be subtracted from or added to the value of inputs or the outputs in order to put the inefficient banks

TABLE 1  
Variables description

Variables	Description
<i>Input variables</i>	
CAPITAL	This is the total capital of the bank. It shows the amount of equity to absorb any shocks that the bank may experience.
LABOR	Indicates the total number of employees in the bank.
LOANS	This is the total amount of advances extended by the bank
SIZE	The accounting value of the bank's total assets
COST	This is the cost-to-income ratio. It provides information regarding the operating expenses relative to the revenues generated by the bank.
<i>Output variables</i>	
SPREAD	This is the difference between the amount of interest earned and the interest expended by the bank in that year. A high amount indicates high profitability.
NII	It is the Non interest income earned by the bank from fee-based activities.
ROA	The return on assets of the bank
DEPADV	This is Deposits to Advances ratio. It is a measure of liquidity. Higher figure indicates high liquidity
NPA	This is the percentage decrease in Non-performing assets of the bank

TABLE 2  
Efficiency Scores, efficient peers and weights

Bank	Name of Bank	Scores	Bank	Weight												
B1	Allahabad Bank	0.8722	B17	0.5785	B24	0.0413	B26	0.0923	B38	0.0885	B40	0.1857	B47	0.0137		
B2	Andhra Bank	0.8711	B10	0.1558	B17	0.3824	B24	0.0508	B38	0.2096	B40	0.1221	B44	0.0793		
B3	Antwerp Diamond Bank	1.0000	B3	1.0000												
B4	Axis Bank	1.0000	B4	1.0000	B7	0.9825	B17	0.0080	B20	0.0013	B42	0.0062	B44	0.0020		
B5	Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait	0.7096														
B6	Bank of Baroda	1.0000	B6	1.0000	B7	1.0000										
B7	Bank of Ceylon	1.0000	B4	0.0024	B24	0.0046	B26	0.2301	B38	0.2205	B40	0.4861	B44	0.0562		
B8	Bank of India	0.8990	B17	0.8067	B24	0.0473	B31	0.0240	B38	0.0340	B40	0.0880				
B9	Bank of Maharashtra	0.6461														
B10	Bank of Nova Scotia	1.0000	B10	1.0000	B10	0.3867	B10	0.4939	B20	0.0616	B36	0.0175	B37	0.0403		
B11	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ	0.9428	B7													
B12	BNP Paribas	1.0000	B12	1.0000	B17	0.1644	B26	0.1190	B38	0.4304	B40	0.1932	B47	0.0929		
B13	Canara Bank	0.9635	B7	0.4541	B42	0.1071	B52	0.4388								
B14	Catholic Syrian Bank	0.7890														
B15	Central Bank of India	0.7481	B17	0.3642	B31	0.0241	B38	0.4500	B40	0.1362	B47	0.0255				
B16	Citibank	1.0000	B16	1.0000	B17	1.0000										
B17	City Union Bank	1.0000	B4	0.0733	B10	0.0027	B17	0.8179	B25	0.0319	B26	0.0232	B46	0.0221	B47	0.0289
B18	Corporation Bank	0.9584	B17	0.7530	B31	0.0382	B38	0.1898	B40	0.0139	B47	0.0052				
B19	Dena Bank	0.7657	B20	1.0000	B7	0.5384	B20	0.0203	B37	0.3539	B42	0.0563	B44	0.0310		
B20	Deutsche Bank															
B21	Development Credit Bank	0.6988	B7													
B22	Federal Bank	0.8781	B10	0.0818	B17	0.7100	B23	0.0088	B40	0.0695	B44	0.0784	B52	0.0516		
B23	HDFC Bank	1.0000	B23	1.0000												

TABLE 2 (*continue*)

Bank	Name of Bank	Scores	Bank	Weight										
B24	HSBC Bank	1.0000	B24	1.0000										
B25	ICICI Bank	1.0000	B25	1.0000										
B26	IDBI Bank Ltd.	1.0000	B26	1.0000										
B27	Indian Bank	0.9394	B10	0.1200	B17	0.3681	B24	0.1271	B38	0.0236	B40	0.2493	B44	0.0580
B28	Indian Overseas Bank	0.7588	B10	0.1450	B17	0.3288	B24	0.0196	B38	0.2104	B40	0.2581	B57	0.0381
B29	IndusInd Bank	0.7292	B10	0.0823	B17	0.5195	B23	0.0098	B44	0.1586	B52	0.1915	B57	0.0384
B30	ING Vysya Bank	0.8206	B4	0.0592	B17	0.4929	B42	0.1317	B44	0.0739	B52	0.2423		
B31	Jammu & Kashmir Bank	1.0000	B31	1.0000										
B32	Karnataka Bank	0.9193	B17	0.2831	B25	0.0114	B31	0.2529	B37	0.3368	B57	0.1158		
B33	Karur Vysya Bank	0.8854	B17	0.5396	B37	0.0390	B46	0.0480	B52	0.2212	B57	0.1521		
B34	Kotak Mahindra Bank	1.0000	B34	1.0000										
B35	Lakshmi Vilas Bank	0.8877	B10	0.1453	B17	0.1684	B37	0.3404	B52	0.3250	B57	0.0208		
B36	Mizuho Corporate Bank	1.0000	B36	1.0000										
B37	Nainital Bank	1.0000	B37	1.0000										
B38	Oriental Bank of Commerce	1.0000	B38	1.0000										
B39	Punjab and Sind Bank	0.7653	B10	0.2885	B38	0.2034	B46	0.0350	B52	0.0380	B57	0.4350		
B40	Punjab National Bank	1.0000	B40	1.0000										
B41	Ratnakar Bank	1.0000	B41	1.0000										
B42	Sonali Bank	1.0000	B42	1.0000										
B43	South Indian Bank	0.9707	B17	0.1857	B37	0.2148	B46	0.0943	B52	0.2475	B57	0.2576		
B44	Standard Chartered Bank	1.0000	B44	1.0000										
B45	State Bank of Bikane & Jaipur	0.8211	B17	0.1717	B40	0.0806	B46	0.0079	B47	0.0080	B52	0.7190	B57	0.0127

TABLE 2 (*continue*)

Bank	Name of Bank	Scores	Bank	Weight												
B46	State Bank of Hyderabad	1.0000	B46	1.0000												
B47	State Bank of India	1.0000	B47	1.0000												
B48	State Bank of Mysore	0.9254	B10	0.0251	B17	0.0425	B40	0.0816	B46	0.0798	B52	0.7710				
B49	State Bank of Patiala	0.9539	B17	0.1024	B31	0.0049	B38	0.1065	B40	0.0599	B46	0.0669	B57	0.6595		
B50	State Bank of Travancore	0.9059	B40	0.0110	B46	0.3774	B47	0.0066	B52	0.5191	B57	0.0859				
B51	Syndicate Bank	0.8401	B10	0.0380	B40	0.2396	B47	0.0139	B57	0.7084						
B52	Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	1.0000	B52	1.0000												
B53	UCO Bank	1.0000	B53	1.0000												
B54	Union Bank of India	1.0000	B54	1.0000												
B55	United Bank of India	1.0000	B55	1.0000												
B56	Vijaya Bank	1.0000	B56	1.0000												
B57	Yes Bank	1.0000	B57	1.0000												

*Source: Author's calculations*

TABLE 3  
Input / Output Slacks

Bank	Name of Bank	CAPITAL	LABOR	LOANS	SIZE	COST	SPREAD	NII	ROA	DEPADV	Dec in NPA
B1	Allahabad Bank	1,169	0	0	55,188	0	0	0	0	0	24
B2	Andhra Bank	0	0	2,62,183	0	0	0	10,438	0	0	24
B3	Antwerp Diamond Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B4	Axis Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B5	Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait	0	0	3,133	0	0	0	219	0	0	2
B6	Bank of Baroda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B7	Bank of Ceylon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B8	Bank of India	0	0	12,52,132	21,94,222	0	0	0	0	0	28
B9	Bank of Maharashtra	12,543	0	1,607	0	0	0	5,822	0	0	11
B10	Bank of Nova Scotia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B11	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ	87,678	0	22,362	0	0	0	2,554	0	1	0
B12	BNP Paribas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B13	Canara Bank	3,335	0	12,93,377	16,89,737	0	0	6,837	0	0	21
B14	Catholic Syrian Bank	0	962	0	16,807	0	1,078	490	0	0	16
B15	Central Bank of India	1,07,272	3,707	0	1,57,609	0	0	0	0	0	16
B16	Citibank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B17	City Union Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B18	Corporation Bank	0	0	14,47,396	24,70,425	0	0	0	0	0	0
B19	Dena Bank	8,153	50	39,416	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
B20	Deutsche Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B21	Development Credit Bank	0	844	29,083	0	0	1,244	0	0	0	0
B22	Federal Bank	278	0	48,629	0	0	0	10,526	0	0	0
B23	HDFC Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B24	HSBC Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B25	ICICI Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B26	IDBI Bank Ltd.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B27	Indian Bank	0	0	2,01,496	0	0	0	13,734	0	0	0
B28	Indian Overseas Bank	8,447	0	0	7,986	0	0	6,269	0	0	0

TABLE 3 (*continue*)

Bank	Name of Bank	CAPITAL	LABOR	LOANS	SIZE	COST	SPREAD	NII	ROA	DEPADV	Dec in NPA
B29	IndusInd Bank	7,291	1,898	70,718	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B30	ING Vysya Bank	0	2,054	13,878	0	0	6,415	0	0	0	0
B31	Jammu & Kashmir Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B32	Karnataka Bank	2,996	896	0	8,284	0	17,547	0	0	0	0
B33	Karur Vysya Bank	0	925	22,537	0	0	1,676	3,541	0	0	0
B34	Kotak Mahindra Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B35	Lakshmi Vilas Bank	0	745	0	9,424	0	2,346	1,225	0	0	0
B36	Mizuho Corporate Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B37	Nainital Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B38	Oriental Bank of Commerce	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B39	Punjab and Sind Bank	0	0	6,19,791	8,85,576	0	0	9,058	0	0	0
B40	Punjab National Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B41	Ratnakar Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B42	Sonali Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B43	South Indian Bank	0	1,296	47,041	0	0	2,854	7,821	0	0	0
B44	Standard Chartered Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B45	State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur	0	782	61,815	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B46	State Bank of Hyderabad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B47	State Bank of India	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B48	State Bank of Mysore	0	1,250	51,551	0	0	0	4,431	0	0	0
B49	State Bank of Patiala	0	2,668	1,07,417	0	0	0	7,379	0	0	0
B50	State Bank of Travancore	0	1,870	1,18,277	0	0	0	4,430	0	0	0
B51	Syndicate Bank	6,654	1,303	3,69,795	0	0	0	27,697	0	0	0
B52	Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B53	UCO Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B54	Union Bank of India	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B55	United Bank of India	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B56	Vijaya Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B57	Yes Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Author's calculations

on the efficient frontier. It can be observed that all efficient banks show zero slack for all the input and output variables. Zero slacks in some banks suggest that no change is required in the inputs and output variables of such banks as the banks are already on the efficient frontier. For this reason, the inefficient banks would show slack values in some variables.

Adjusting the input and the output variables against their respective slack values will yield the values of Virtual Inputs and Virtual outputs for all the sampled banks. These virtual values tell how much changes in the input variables are needed in order to achieve a higher level of efficiency. For instance, from Table 3, the virtual value of CAPITAL for bank B1 is 24,404 (Current value of Capital of 25,573 – Capital slack value of 1,169) while its value of virtual SIZE is 7,737,721 (7,792,909 – 55,188). These two values imply that, at current levels of outputs, bank B1 is not utilising its capital and labour efficiently. Hence, the virtual values suggest that bank B1 needs to reduce its capital by 24,404 Rupees and its size by 7,737,721 in order to improve its efficiency. In fact, this suggestion confirms earlier findings that smaller capitals are attributes of efficient banks in Europe (Dell'Atti *et al.*, 2015) and that capital is

inversely related to efficiency in Bangladesh banks (Miah & Sharmin, 2015).

On the output side, similar adjustment shows that the virtual value of NPA for bank B1 is 10 - 24 or 13, which indicates that bank B1 may move to the efficient frontier by reducing its non-performing assets by 13%. The other output variables for bank B1 namely SPREAD, NII, ROA and DEPADV, have zero slack values, which mean these output variables can no longer be increased by mere reduction in input variables. A similar interpretation can be made for other inefficient banks.

An overall analysis of input and output variables in Table 4 shows the required reduction in the input variables and increases in the output variables in order to achieve maximum efficiency for all the inefficient banks. Thus, efficiency is maximised by reducing the overall capital by 11%, number of employees by 2% and advances by 3% and by increasing the overall non-interest income by 3%, return on assets by 41%, deposits-to-advances ratio by 3% and decreasing the NPAs by 9%. From this overall analysis, it can be said that two major variables must be addressed in order to maximise efficiency. First, the banks should utilise their capital fully and efficiently in order to generate a higher ROA. Second,

TABLE 4  
Changes required in Input and Output Variables as per DEA

Variable	Input variables					Output Variables				
	CAPITAL	EMPLOYEES	LOANS	SIZE	COST	SPREAD	NII	ROA	DEPADV	NPA
Change required	11%	2%	3%	2%	0%	0%	3%	41%	3%	9%

the banks should focus on quality loans in order to reduce non-performing assets and improve profitability.

### *Comparative Analysis*

A comparative efficiency analysis of the public sector, private sector and foreign banks in Table 5 reveals that foreign banks, with 9 out of 11 or 75% of them lying on the efficient frontier, are the most efficient banks, followed by private sector banks (55% on efficient frontier), and public sector banks (38% on efficient frontier). This finding is consistent with results of a study that private banks have taken over from public banks as drivers of efficiency in the Indian banking system (Nguyen & Nghiem (2015).

Table 5 also shows that among the public sector banks, Bank of Maharashtra, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and Dena Bank are the most inefficient banks. Among the In-private sector banks, the Development Credit Bank, IndusInd Bank, Punjab and Sind Bank and Catholic Syrian Bank are the most inefficient banks. In the Foreign banks category, Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait remains the most inefficient bank among the foreign banks.

Table 6 categorises bank efficiency by size in accordance with their respective sectors. The inefficient banks, having an efficiency score of less than 1.0, is written in bold letters. It can be observed that, with 87% of them sitting on the efficient frontier, Very Small banks are the most efficient banks, followed by Very Large banks (with 73% sitting on efficient frontier). The large-,

the medium- and the small-sized banks are mostly inefficient. This finding is generally in agreement with another finding that large banks that are able to capitalise on economies of scale are more efficient than the smaller banks. (Dell'Atti *et al.*, 2015; Miah & Sharmeen, 2015).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study provides empirical evidence on the efficiency of 57 commercial banks operating in India between 2009 and 2010 and between 2012 and 2013. The overall level of inefficiency in the commercial banks has been found to be 47%. This implies that the commercial banks have the scope of producing 1.88 times as much output from the same inputs. It has been noted that Non-performing assets, underutilisation of capital, underutilisation of employees are the major causes of inefficiency in commercial banks. Further, the study suggests that very large-size and very small-size banks are more efficient compared with medium- and small-size banks. Foreign banks are the most efficient while Private Banks are operating at higher level of efficiency compared with PSBs in India.

With the use of DEA technique, this study provides a deeper understanding on the major determinants of bank efficiency, which would not be possible when using the conventional ratio analysis. Nevertheless, with a limited number of banks included in this study over a broken, four-year period, the findings should not be generalised to beyond this group of banks or to a different study period. Further research involving

TABLE 5  
Category-wise Efficiency Scores

S.No.	Public Sector Banks	Score	S.No.	Private Sector Banks	Score	S.No.	Foreign Banks
1	Bank of Maharashtra	0.6461	1	Development Credit Bank	0.6988	1	Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait
2	Central Bank of India	0.7481	2	IndusInd Bank	0.7292	2	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ
3	Indian Overseas Bank	0.7588	3	Punjab and Sind Bank	0.7653	3	Antwerp Diamond Bank
4	Dena Bank	0.7657	4	Catholic Syrian Bank	0.7890	4	Bank of Ceylon
5	State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur	0.8211	5	ING Vysya Bank	0.8206	5	Bank of Nova Scotia
6	Syndicate Bank	0.8401	6	Karur Vysya Bank	0.8854	6	BNP Paribas
7	Andhra Bank	0.8711	7	Lakshmi Vilas Bank	0.8877	7	Citibank
8	Allahabad Bank	0.8722	8	Karnataka Bank	0.9193	8	Deutsche Bank
9	Federal Bank	0.8781	9	South Indian Bank	0.9707	9	Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation
10	Bank of India	0.8990	10	Axis Bank	1.0000	10	Mizuho Corporate Bank
11	State Bank of Travancore	0.9059	11	City Union Bank	1.0000	11	Standard Chartered Bank
12	State Bank of Mysore	0.9254	12	HDFC Bank	1.0000		
13	Indian Bank	0.9394	13	ICICI Bank	1.0000		
14	State Bank of Patiala	0.9559	14	Jammu & Kashmir Bank	1.0000		
15	Corporation Bank	0.9584	15	Kotak Mahindra Bank	1.0000		
16	Canara Bank	0.9635	16	Nainital Bank	1.0000		
17	Bank of Baroda	1.0000	17	Ratnakar Bank	1.0000		
18	IDBI Bank Ltd.	1.0000	18	Sonali Bank	1.0000		
19	Oriental Bank of Commerce	1.0000	19	Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	1.0000		
20	Punjab National Bank	1.0000	20	Yes Bank	1.0000		
21	State Bank of Hyderabad	1.0000					
22	State Bank of India	1.0000					
23	UCO Bank	1.0000					
24	Union Bank of India	1.0000					
25	United Bank of India	1.0000					
26	Vijaya Bank	1.0000					

TABLE 6  
Category-wise list of Banks with Efficiency Indicator\*

Size	Foreign Banks	Private Banks	Public Sector Banks	(Amounts in millions INR)
Very Large (Above 100,00,000)	Axis Bank HDFC Bank ICICI Bank	Punjab and Sind Bank	Central Bank of India Bank of India Canara Bank Bank of Baroda IDBI Bank Ltd. Punjab National Bank State Bank of India Union Bank of India	100,00,000
Large (50,00,000 to 100,00,000)	Citibank HSBC Bank Standard Chartered Bank	IndusInd Bank ING Vysya Bank Karur Vysya Bank Karnataka Bank South Indian Bank Jammu & Kashmir Bank Kotak Mahindra Bank Yes Bank	Bank of Maharashtra Dena Bank State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur Federal Bank State Bank of Travancore State Bank of Mysore State Bank of Patiala United Bank of India Vijaya Bank	50,00,000 to 100,00,000
Medium (10,00,000 to 50,00,000)	Deutsche Bank			10,00,000 to 50,00,000

TABLE 6 (*continue*)

Size	Foreign Banks	Private Banks	Public Sector Banks
Small (2,00,000 to 10,00,000)	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ Bank of Nova Scotia BNP Paribas	Development Credit Bank Catholic Syrian Bank Lakshmi Vilas Bank City Union Bank Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	
Very Small (below 2,00,000)	Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait Antwerp Diamond Bank Bank of Ceylon Mizuho Corporate Bank	Sonali Bank Nainital Bank Rajinakar Bank	

\* The banks highlighted in bold are the inefficient banks (with efficiency score less than one).

a larger sample and over a longer period should shed more light on the efficiency attributes of Indian banking industry.

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## A Comparative Study of Portrayal of the Girl Child in Short Stories by Select Indian Women Writers

Alla Ratna Malathi

Department of Sciences and Humanities, Vignan University, Vadlamudi, Andhra Pradesh, 511213 India

### ABSTRACT

This paper is written on the comparison of the Girl Child protagonists in short stories of selected Indian Women Writers: *Her Story So Far* (Monoca Das), *Merry Killing and Other Stories* (Kamal Kumar) and *The Inner Courtyard* (Lakshmi Holstrom), which are translated from regional Indian languages into English. In particular, this work studies the stories and compares: how girl children are doomed from the day they are born; how they are physically and emotionally exploited; how they are sucked sexually and how they are treated in the traditional land of India. The comparative study of the girl child protagonists proves that the plight of the girl child is the same and pathetic irrespective of community, caste, religion to which they belong and they are treated in a kind of 'apartheid' milieu. Furthermore, the paper presents an analysis on how the fictional girl children have been a victim to exploitation, giving scope for the further study of the plight of real girl child in the society.

**Keywords:** Girl child, physical, emotional, sexual exploitation, plight of the girl child, traditional land of India, short stories

### INTRODUCTION

#### *The girl child*

*Who tells the story of  
the unfortunate girl,  
poor, dump, ugly and weak  
who passed away frustrated?*

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##### *E-mail addresses:*

malathi.alla@gmail.com, radhikaalla.alla@gmail.com  
(Alla Ratna Malathi)

Kamal Singh

Till the beginning of the twentieth century, there was hardly any memorable representation of the girl child in the Indian Literature. A few writers like Sarat Chandra and Kapila Vatsayan, who are most incisive and sensitive authors, could penetrate into every layer of the woman's psyche to deal with an adolescent woman as a mistress, a wife courtesan or a rebel with rare insight, but girl child does not hold his attention. Muniruddin Qureshi and Viney Kirpal, in their book entitled, '*In Social Status of Indian Women*' argue that in the twentieth century literature of pre-independence period, "In the ancient times, girl children are not represented as girl children. This chronological age might place them as children but they appear in those works as miniature women---child brides, child wives, child widows. The girl may be young in age but the responsibilities she is depicted to be taken up are those of grown womanhood" (p. 7). All the three books, *Her Story So Far; Mercy Killing and Other Stories* and *The Inner Courtyard* deal with the plight of the girl child in various situations in the society, as well as how the birth of a girl child is hailed as inauspicious and unwelcome, and how customs, rituals, traditions and practices frequently make a girl child the "lesser Child" who is denied optimal opportunities and means required for the growth and development during various stages of childhood and belief of parents that education is of little value for girls. The struggles of a girl child start from 'womb to tomb'. It is a struggle to exist, a daily struggle to live with dignity and to be

treated as a human instead of a burden or a cheque waiting to be cashed or an object to provide pleasure or a machine to work and produce sons.

Girl child characters in *Her Story So far; Merry Killing and Other Stories, and The Inner Courtyard*, which are translated stories, are studied with the aim of analysing the situation of the girl child in different communities, patriarchal dominated and gender inequality societies. Although the short stories presented in these books could not be more different in terms of style, feel, storyline and outcome, a number of similarities make them comfortable. Different girl child protagonists in short stories have been analysed particularly for how the girl child is doomed from the day she was born and how she is physically and emotionally exploited. Each character has been analysed in every short story, i.e. how they are treated in the traditional land of India. The other reason for analysing these short stories is to look at the reasons why it does not matter what the girl child does, she cannot escape from her destiny and from being exploited since she lives in a patriarchal society. Another purpose is to investigate whether the situation of the girl child improves or if it becomes worse as time rolls.

#### *Literature reviews of the portrayal of the girl child:*

*'The girl-child is discriminated against from the earliest stages of life, through her childhood and into adulthood. In some areas of*

*the world, men outnumber women by 5 in every 100. The reasons for this discrepancy includes harmful attitudes and practices such as female genital mutilation, son preferences-----early marriage---- Violence against girls in food allocation and other practices related to health and well being. As a result, fewer girls than boys survive into adulthood*

(Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995)

Radindranath Tagore is one of the first, if not the first writer, to treat the girl child with consummate artistic skill. Some of his short stories *Post Master Kabuliwala*, *Sampat Subha* and *Strir Patra* (The wife's letter), in particular, present the girl child belonging to different social situations. Harrison (1983) says that "life events have affected Girl Child, what people have been through - pain, suffering, happiness, child birth." In the story *Strir Patra* (wife's letter), the protagonist Mrinal, a village girl married to a rich urban family, who finally revolts against the authority of her husband and leaves the family, describes the physical aspects of the girl's existence which are both discriminatory and undignified.

In the short story *Subha*, when the girl is given the name of Subhashini, who can guess that she will be dumb when she grows up? She is called Subha for short. Her two elder sisters have been married with the usual difficulties in finding husbands and providing dowries, and now the youngest

daughter is like a silent weight upon the heart of her parents. Night and day, her parents' minds ache with anxiety on her account.

Her mother especially looks upon her as a deformity. To a mother, a daughter is a more closely intimate part of herself than a son, but for Subha's mother, her dumbness has become a source of personal shame. Her mother almost hates her as a stain upon her own body. Subha never plays with other children. She is silent and companionless as the noontide. The thought of her marriage fills her parents with anxious care. People blame them, and even talk of making them outcasts. They married Subha off with a person, without revealing her dumbness and returned home. Thank God, their caste in this world and their safety in the next are assured. After ten days, when her husband finds that Subha is dumb, he marries other woman who can speak. The story portrays the feelings of parents who look at a girl child as a burden.

In *Postmaster*, the story portrays the plight of an orphan girl child's struggles of marriage, where marriage being obligatory for the Hindu women, as sanctioned by Dharma Shastra, the life of a woman revolves around marriage and her position is determined by it. Once the girl, whatever her age might be, is married she is not treated as a child anymore; the marital status obliterates as it was her childhood. The following comment of Lakhmi Khilani on Lalchand Amardinomal's Sindhi short story of *Nandri Nina* (1946) strengthens the situation. A suitable match was soon found

and Nina was married to Ratan, the only son of Seth Biharilal, and the childhood of Nina thereby ended abruptly and she graduated to womanhood without passing through adolescence.

A close study of the twentieth century literature reveals the taboos and prejudices against the girl child and the discriminating treatment between male child and female child. Although the psychological and sociological restriction that want to keep the girl child distinct from the boy child is not challenged by the writers, the awareness of the existence of those restrictions has begun to surface in some of the literature since the beginning of this century. The initial representation was more romantic than analytical. The child may appear as the embodiment of sweetness or the cruel world, the incarnation of joy or passivity created by writers, whatever is the form, and the basic mould remains romantic and sentimental.

Vallathol's Malayalam (Regional Indian Language) poem *Kochusita* (1928) is inspired by a newspaper report on suicide of Devadasi girl, who took this extreme step to protect her chastity. Despite the poet's concern about the girl child's misfortune and humiliation, Vallathol, the national poet, is equally concerned about the national idea of Indian women.

One of the finest projections of the girl child is to be found in the celebrated Bengali (Regional language of India) novel *Pather Panchali* (1929). Durga is juxtaposed against her world. She is the symbol of the Indian girl child with all her charm and sweetness, as well as humiliation and

agony. The child lived only for ten years and during these ten years, she was a part of poverty and meanness was all around her. She was a victim of social prejudice and discrimination, cruelty and love and affection that bind the society together.

Bibhutibhushan has created more girl children than any other Bengali writer of his time. There is pathos and compassion but hardly any protest or challenge. One of his memorable stories, *Puraaca* (1925) projects the helpless rural, uneducated little girl with a weakness for food. Born in a poor family, however, she cannot even afford one square meal a day, not even the cheapest vegetable. She is married and is resigned to the fate of oppression and future, as silently she accepts her premarital life. She dies without any complaint, not to speak of protest. Death appears to be a logical culmination of the suffering caused by poverty and human insensibility. The story records voice of suffering of countless Indian girl children tortured and muffled neglected and brushed aside.

About the girl in Tamil (Regional language of India) literature, writer Prasad (Sisir Kumar Das, 1995) states that 'she is neither to be heard nor to be seen nor even to be talked about'. A girl is of no use to the writer of mindless romances and soft pornography. A passing reference must be made to Pillaiattamil, a literature form dealing with the life of a child, the boy and girl. An example for pillaiattamil is Minaksiammi pillaiattamil, compassion of the eighteenth century. Bharati wrote a poem *Pappappattu* (a song of a girl child), where

she asks the child to be free as a sparrow, and more significantly, in consonance with his devotion for 'Shakti', says do not be submissive and, do not be afraid of the evil doer: Moti mittitu vitu / Mukattii umilntuvitu (dash and kick them / spit on their faces).

The Telugu (Regional language of India) short story, *Putra Santhamam* (The Male Child) by Sri Adhi Narayanaswami (1907) is one of the finest examples of the father's attitude towards the daughter. The father is delighted when his wife Sitamma gives birth to a male child after four daughters. The son is pampered and spoilt by the father who is extremely cruel and contemptuous to his daughters. The story ends with a didactic note as the father in his old age depends on the care of his daughters. The story aims at a realistic portrayal of the male attitude towards girl children and conjures it very strongly. Gurajada Venkata Appa rao (Telugu writer) of the famous play, *Kanyasulkam*, wrote a memorable poem entitled, *Puttadi Bomma Purnamma*, a tragic story of a young girl given in marriage to an old man by her parents. The girl commits suicide. In 1914, the great Telugu poet Rayaprolu Subbha Rao wrote a poem *Shehalatha Devi* based on an incident in Bengal, where a girl committed suicide as a protest against the dowry system and to protect the honours of her poor parents.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Cornelia Sorabjis' novel *Shubala, a Child Mother* (1920) presents the young girl Subhala's plight as she is married at an

early age. The story is narrated by her aunt who protests against the marriage and then expresses her deep resentment as Subhala goes through early pregnancy, ill-health and other forms of suffering.

'An un-finishing song' marks Swaran Kumari's development as a novelist. She moves towards a story of psychological development of a young girl, shown from the age of eight to adolescence in search of love that becomes the goal of her life, is presented with lyrical sensitive touches of language. Attia Hosian's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) is about a Muslim girl, Laila. Laila, the narrator, lives under the care of her aunt and uncle since her parent's death. The young child, Laila, reacts angrily to the gross social injustice that she observes within the family circles. Her aunt, Adida reasons with her and tells her that the traditional values require one to show respect forage, social status and relationship (Attia Hosian, 1961). Laila watches the old changing gradually, though many of the men and women refuse to change. Towards the end of the novel, Laila visits the old house, now empty, full of ghosts of the past.

Socialisation plays an important role in the construction of gender and bares the link between social values and the paradigms which suppresses her real self. The growth of the girl child in an Indian society is seen mainly in relation to her attitude towards her family and her duty towards it, coming into sharp conflict with the sense of family duty, the girl's burgeoning feeling of self identity. It is in the course of this conflict that the full identity of the girl is formed; the successful

formation of this identity depends upon the delicate balance that maintains between submission and revolt. Growth into maturity and selfhood in the course of confrontation with adults, the burden of the female child is more irksome than that of the male child because aspects of her body, the function of her body, the function of her femaleness intrude upon the growth of her personality. Not only parents, but the society as a whole is influenced by the physical appearance of the girl child. This is a great hindrance to the inner growth of the girl child. It is in the adjustment that the family makes to the changing biological progress, and the girl's attitude towards the family and the parents that the identity of a child gets defined and firmly established.

"Childhood is considered so important a period for the formation of the character and for the emergence of the value structure has largely been ignored as an area of human experience - specially where the girl characters are concerned" (Sharada & Iyer, 2007). This reflects both literary and social reality. Girls are silent part of the family. Shashi Deshpande has portrayed a girl child with deliberation. One girl child or more, her personality has been determined by how they are brought up in her family. In the Indian family, despite its patriarchal character, there exist many taboos such as women should not interact with men; if so, they abide to rules, etc. It is here that the female child is acculturated into her social role of daughter, wife and mother. Sarita, the protagonist of *The Dark Holds No Terror*, grows up as a victim of

her mother's sexist and gender bias. Sarita observes that her mother gives preference to Dhruva, her brother and the importance attached to his birthdays. She wonders why her mother shows partiality. The birth of a son, after sixteen years, which should have embarrassed Kshama's father in *Come up and Be Dead*, fills him with pride, which bewilders her. In *The Long Silence* (Shashi Deshpande: 1988), Jaya notices that her name has not been included in the family tree. "How can you be here? You don't belong to this family, you are married - you have no place here". Does this not show the importance of the girl child in a family?

The girl child in India has been and is continuous to be portrayed as an orphan in society and popular culture, and grows up vulnerably despite there being several schemes for her benefits, said a child right activist. According to the noted Bengali writer, Nabanita Debsen, this biased portrayal has been reflected in poetry, proverb, prose and cinema of both yesteryears and the so-called modern variety. Sen quoted a sixteenth century Bengali poem, where Sita, god Rama's wife, says "I have no parents, I was found at a tip of a plough", and this shows Sita as an orphan, not as a prince. It underlines the insecurity of a girl child who grows up without an identity (The Hindustan Times, 2006). According to Sister Namibia, the youngest victim of globalisation is girl child. The tales of girl child is one of the immense tragedies. Out of 400 million children (in India), at least 63 million are out of school, two thirds of them are girls. The structural

gender inequalities of society make the girl child very vulnerable (High Beam Research, 2002). Socialisation plays an important role in the construction of gender and bears the link between social values and the paradigms of male domination. N. Sharda Iyer, in her book entitled *Mussing on Indian Writing in English* (2005), says that “One gets to know how a girl child is indoctrinated to a certain extent, she withdraws, conceals and suppresses her real self - growth of a girl in Indian society is seen mainly in relation to her attitude towards her family and her duty towards it”.

Writers like Mita Bhadra (1993) focused on the prevailing inequalities, discrimination against the girl child and gender discrimination, child marriages and child prostitution, as well as victims' living conditions such as exploitations. The Indian society is plagued by victimisation of girl child through performances of child marriages. Meta Bhandra's *Girl Child in Indian Society* aims at analysing the situation of the girl child emphasises on the rightful share of girl child—a concept which has found an appropriate place in the plan of action for implementing the world declaration on survival protection and development of children 1990s. The Chairperson of National Commission for Women, Dr. (Mrs) V. Mohini Giri (1999), says that even after many legal provisions, many girl children are dragged into prostitution. She gives valuable insights into the system of exploitation by citing many incidences in the book, *Kanya: Exploitation of Little Angels*. Maya Das

claims that the Indian society is still plagued by victimisation of girl child through performance of child marriage being signed in the Beijing Summit focussing on women's right (1989). In the article, *Where Daughters are Unwanted* (1995), Kishwar Madhu emphasises the magnitude issue of the selective abortions of thousands of female foetuses. Anuradha (1993), in the article *In the name of the mother*, brings out the importance of education rights for prostitute children and a judgement being passed to that effect by the Supreme Court of India in January 1993, granting permission for the admission of prostitute children into schools without having to state the father's name, which was the customary practice in school admission procedures. Dhar (2009) comments that 40 per cent of the world's child marriages take place in India, resulting in a vicious cycle of gender discrimination, illiteracy and high infant and maternal mortality rates. Sinha S. (1997) narrates that the girl child is deliberately deprived of love, affection and care, where she is treated as a second class citizen. Sinha M. (1995) says that girl child's life is shackled by the deep-rooted, inbuilt social prejudices. This review explains that the girl child leads a life of multi-curse, multi-abuse and multi-neglect, and it probes to compare how the girl child has been a victim to various exploitations.

### **COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ‘THE PORTRAYAL OF THE GIRL CHILD’**

In this comparative study of the portrayal of the girl child, protagonists like Shanichari, Munshi, Rukmini, Gauri and little girls in

'Death Comes Cheap' are victims of poverty. The story makes privy to the life of a young girl called Sanchari, who belongs to a tribal community and is sucked by various cycles of exploitation by poverty. Due to tribal movement and agitation, Sanchari and her family lose their livelihood. To rescue her parents and defend herself from shame, she gives up on herself to a whore, Guharman Bibi. Shanichari grieving mother's song:

"My girl could live on tubers. Wear leaves and buds in her ears Alas! Tree can't grow clothes "Dear ma", my girl said "so, the brick kilns I must go. "The brick kilns I must go". She says that their lower status makes them vulnerable accepting the circumstances and later she becomes the victim of male seducers. Rahmat uses her and throws her away after she conceives. In the same way, Gauri, in the story, *The Compulsion*, agrees to do domestic household work in a rich family. Her mother also agrees to send Gauri to the Memsahib (owner) family because the money they pay is high and so she can feed other children at least once a day. Gauri, a clever girl, learns all skills that help to do domestic work in Memsahib's family. They show a lot of affection for Gauri because of her efficiency in her work. However, she faces sexual harassment from Sahib. When Memsahib is out of town, they throw her out when she gets pregnant. Thus, these girls as child labours, faced sexual harassments from their employers.

As poverty is a primary factor that leads to violence, it affects the life of a girl child in different ways. It forces the girl child to

adopt prostitution as their vocation. John Ashbery's poem - And the stars were shining (p. 76) and Abid Merhti's Poems by Street Children, Bombay, YUVA , corroborate the pettiest position of the girl child.

*"The stars were still out in the field,  
and the child prostitutes plied their  
trade, the only happy ones, having  
learned how unhappiness sticks and  
will not risk being traded in for a  
song or a balloon."*

*"The moon is laughing at us, the  
stars weeping for us. We had tried to  
reach for the sky but we are sleeping  
on the earth. When we wake up  
darkness still looms all around us.  
Our morning lies far beyond in the  
horizon....."*

(Poems by Street Children,  
Bombay, YUVA )

Either the parents or the circumstances make the girl child travel in the worst way of life, which is prostitution. While comparing the girls in the story "*Death comes cheap*" and the girl child Rukmini in '*A Doll for Rukmini*', it is the parent's passions for wealth that make the life of the girl, worse. Here, the father of the little girls and Anasuya, mother of Rukmini, exploited the girls for personal needs. Bakhu forced her elder daughter into prostitution and enjoyed with the money. When she elopes with someone, he forces his younger daughter into that perilous path which lays a brutal path for her death. His younger daughter is

raped and killed by gangsters. One character, Sita, in “A Doll for Rukmini”, whose parents passed away has no other alternative but to approach a whore house and become a child prostitute. She gets pregnant before her puberty. This leads to the death of the little innocent Sita, for which she does not know what she really does with a man. The main protagonist, Rukmini, is raped by her stepfather and her mother sells her to a whore house rolling the dirty currency notes and goes away without even saying goodbye to her daughter. An aged police inspector who plays with the life of the small girl child and visits Ayee (whore house owner) is shown Rukmini and pounces her like a wild hunger lion. Rukmini cries, but is unable to escape from his hands. When the Inspector leaves the room, Rukmini comes out with dull face and starts playing again with other children shouting that she has won the game, without bothering what happened before. The old Inspector develops a great fancy for Rukmini and attends her every day. One day, for the first time, she asks the inspector about the death of Sita and says “Oh papa, take me away from here”. It shows that Rukmini does not know what the relation is with an inspector; she goes with him in a fear that Ayee (owner of whore house) does not give food to her. The story gives a vivid picture of the girl’s innocence and depicts her pathetic plight in the society, and how the girl nullifies the enjoyment of her childhood and fundamental rights, oppressed by the society and people. The life they are leading is worse than any other living being in the world. They are

physically and mentally assaulted by men in this male chauvinistic society.

Another girl child protagonist, Mushi, also suffers a similar exploitation by her parents in the name of marriage. Mushi, who is married to a person who hired her womb for money, becomes a mother at a very tender age. She not only loses her childhood and becomes a machine in doing household chores but also loses her life by giving her son to her husband.

Gender discrimination practices of gender inequality greatly influence the socialisation process of women in India. Most households, even today, prefer male children to female because ‘they will carry on the family name’ (“Girls” StudyMode.com.). Cultural norms and family livelihood strategies place girls’ education at a greater risk than that of boys. Though nowadays parents are enthusiastic about sending girls to school for reasons that are economic, as well as socio-cultural, they are relatively more concerned with the education of sons as compared to daughters. Geetha B. Nambissan, Associate Professor at Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, says the ‘temporary’ status in their natal homes, the informal social contract that obliges sons to provide for the economic security of parents in their old age, the sexual division of labour within the family and the relatively greater burden of household and survival tasks placed on girls” are the order of the day.

Gender inequality prevailing in the society puts the girl child away from education. Though education is a primary

necessity for children, it is far away from her. The two stories *Rebati* and *The Library Girl* portray the struggle of girls for education. Girls, Rebati and Talat, are the best examples of suffering from lack of support from their family members regarding education. They both have similarities in their insatiable appetite for education, but social norms, communal norms and gender discrimination have stopped them from getting it. Rebati's father has desire to educate Rebati but her grandmother and her customs prevent her from getting any education. Talat, the library girl, wishes to be a tiny ant that moves between the letters of the words. But her father stops her schooling. Though her mother supports her education, her father rejects and says that his son, Tahir, needs education, and that the daughter, Talat, does not deserve any education. She is meant to learn to do household work. Gender difference is clearly seen in this short story. It is clear that boys like Tahir, though not showing interest in studies, his father supports his education. For girls like Talat, who has a thirst for knowledge, is deprived of education. The father presents a Burkha (black veil) as a gift to Talat; it symbolises that girls are prisoners in the blackveil of gender discrimination that hinders them from formal education.

Even in this global era, child marriages where the age of girls may be increased compared to earlier times, a perilous custom that is prevailing in the society will ultimately ruin the pleasant life. The short stories *Kanjak* and *Munshi* deal with the girl child suffering from child marriages. It is the

childhood which is precious for children, but when compared to a boy, girls lose health, wealth, education, etc. Daropati in *Kanjak* is brought up with the strict traditional rules of getting married at the age of ten. She becomes widowed within one year because of the death of her husband due to an illness, from a child Kanjak . She becomes a child widow who observes fasting on nauvratra days for the sake of her deceased husband and serves other Kanjaks irrespective of her age. As a child widow, she does service to her brother-in-law's family throughout her life, whereas Munshi parents have hired her womb in the name of marriage to a person who wants a baby for the survival of his family lineage. They hide the secret from her. At the end of the story, Munshi dies with an incurable disease. As per the analysis of the two stories, both Daropati and Munshi become victims of child marriage in two different ways.

Beauty 'myth' also plays a vital role in the life of a girl child. If she is beautiful and pretty , it will cause one sort of disturbance in her life or raise another problem. Two girl protagonists 'Sankina' in the short story *The Meeting* and 'Munshi' in another short story *Munshi* are both dark in colour and they look like servants. For this reason, Sakina's father does not bother about his daughter, who expects a fatherly love from him. He arranges to get her married without bothering about her decision, as permissible by the custom. He feels that performing her marriage is a great thing to do. Munshi's mother, Keli Bhabhi, feels that she does not get married due to her dusky complexion so

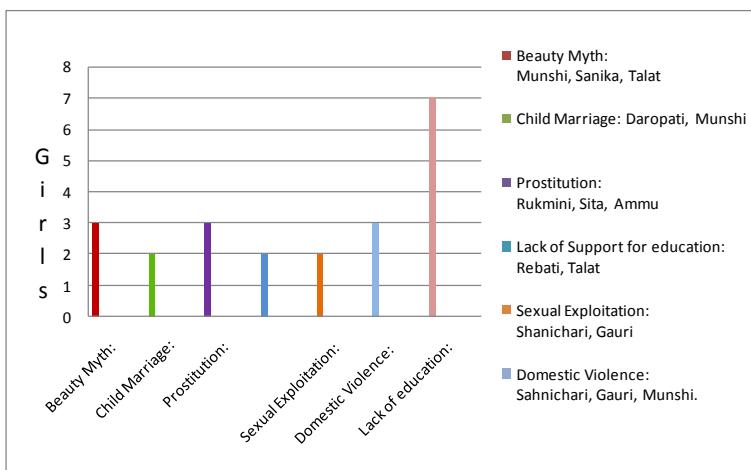
she sells her daughter's womb in the name of marriage. On the contrary, Talat faces problems due to her beauty. Her father brings Burkha as she is on the threshold of her adolescence. Her freedom and happiness are kept under control by making her wear Burkha, a traditional dress of the Muslim community.

As discussed earlier on, all the protagonists of the short stories, Sanichari, Rebat, Munshi, Daropathi, Ammu, Sakina, Gauri, Talat, Priti, Rukmini, Sita and unnamed girls from *Death Comes Cheap* are the victims of social and traditional roles, and all of them are exploited physically and emotionally. They are blind followers of their parents and customs of society. However, some characters like Ammachi in *In Memory* called, the girl child in *Girls* and Asha the daughter of Nirmala in *The Defeat* are not similar to the above characters as they question the society as to why they are ill-treated. Ammachi questions her

mother why she depends on Venkappayya and bears his domineering ways. The girl child in Mrinal Pandey's *Girls* questions her grandmother as to why they worship the girl child only during Astami days and why not daily. Similarly, Asha questions her mother about her self identity in the family. These girls protest the suppressive restrictions made by the family, society and tradition.

As per researcher's analysis, the girl child in the society is a victim of various factors. This happened not only in the olden days but also in the modern era. These short stories have been compared to real-life stories to examine whether the writer's portrayal of a girl child in literature reflects the real life of the girl child in the society, the struggling event to acquire primary necessities like education, food and care of parents. Are they still treated as secondary citizens in the society? After colonialism and its aftermath, partition and exile and changing social conditions provide the

#### *Analysis of victimisation of the girl children:*



specific background to universal themes of poverty and loneliness, childhood and age, sexuality, death and regeneration. Many of the stories are written from women's and girl child's perspective (Holmstrom, 2002, p. 11).

## CONCLUSION

In these short stories, it is discerned that the girl child protagonists have many common features that engendered the exploitation of them. The way the authors have portrayed the characters is different, but the factors causing or leading to the exploitation of the girl child are the same. The common factors such as poverty, birth in lower community, parents' negligence, lack of interest to educate the girl child, lack of importance in the natal group, child marriages, prostitution, sexual harassment, social and traditional restrictions and beauty of girl child, etc. have been identified. Unfortunately, in the study, only a few protagonists are portrayed as revolutionaries who questioned why the girls have to abide by age-old traditions and bear the harassment and torture, be it is domestic, physical or emotional. All the stories presented here have a denseness and richness of details of the actuality of daily life. A close examination of the socioeconomic parameters concerning the status of the girl child shows that the chronically deplorable situation is staring us in the face. India is a land of myth and fable, of tradition and modernity. The reality of modern India is its struggle for development, with people striving to overcome the problems of overpopulation, poverty, gender

discrimination, ecological degradation and urban decay. Girls are consistently short-changed in their share of resources, and implicit or explicit justification is given for this (for example, 'girls need less food than boys because boys work harder' and 'looking after girls are like ploughing other people's fields'). Hence, sensitisation about the value of girls' education and their equal rights to education, as well as eradication of misery and the betterment of the condition of girls, is very crucial to the survival of the girl child.

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## The Preparation, Knowledge and Self Reported Competency of Special Education Teachers Regarding Students with Autism

**Toran, H.<sup>1\*</sup>, Westover, J. M.<sup>2</sup>, Sazlina, K.<sup>3</sup>, Suziyani, M.<sup>1</sup> and Mohd Hanafi, M. Y.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

<sup>2</sup>*Exceptional Education Department, State University of New York College at Buffalo, New York, USA*

<sup>3</sup>*Faculty of Health Science, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 50300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

Over the last decade the prevalence of autism has increased significantly. This drastic increase has resulted in a significant increase in students with autism in schools. Therefore, it is imperative that special education teachers have the necessary technical skills, general knowledge and self reported competency regarding the educational needs of students with autism in order to meet the unique needs of this diverse population. This study investigated Malaysian special education teachers' self-reported amount of training, knowledge and self reported competency in regards to students with autism. A survey instrument was developed and distributed to 312 special education teachers in Malaysia that asked about their pre-service and in-service preparation in autism, general autism knowledge and self reported competency in providing instruction and support for students with autism. Results indicate that the current teacher preparation programs may be inadequate in preparing teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach students with autism. Additionally, in-service training is not currently addressing current teachers' needs for knowledge and skills related to autism. Implications of these results include the need for further investigation into the autism specific content of both pre-service and in-service training of special education teachers throughout Malaysia.

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#### *E-mail addresses:*

hasnahto@ukm.my, hasna1@yahoo.com (Toran, H.),  
jenniferwestover@gmail.com (Westover, J. M.),  
sazlina@gmail.com (Sazlina, K.),  
suziyanimohamed@yahoo.com (Suziyani, M.),  
mhmy65@gmail.com (Mohd Hanafi, M. Y.)

\* Corresponding author

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## INTRODUCTION

Autism is a developmental disorder that results in difficulties with communication and social interaction (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Students with autism often demonstrate limited interests and/or repetitive behaviour or movement (Wing & Gould, 1979). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2012) in 2008, the incidence of autism was five times higher in boys than in girls. Autism is a lifelong disability and the cause or causes are unknown.

Previous studies on autism suggested that there is an increase in the prevalence of autism (Volkmar *et al.*, 1997; Croen *et al.*, 2002). In the early 1970s, the prevalence of autism was three or four cases in every 10,000 children. However, the latest statistical report based on data from 2008 suggested that prevalence of autism in the United States is 1 in 88 children (CDC, 2012). The Malaysia Ministry of Health (2004) estimates the prevalence of autism in Malaysia is 1:600. However, given the more recent U.S. data, the Malaysian prevalence of autism may be much higher. The cost of lifelong care and education of a person with autism can have an impact on families, communities and countries. A study by Ganz (2006) calculated the lifetime expenditure for a person with autism as 3.2 million U.S. dollars. Furthermore, it is estimated that the total number of individuals with autism in the United States is 1.5 million, resulting in an annual expenditure of 35 billion U.S. dollars (Ganz, 2006).

Inclusion of students with autism in government public schools and training of special education teachers to meet the needs of these students in Malaysia are relatively new in comparison to more developed countries (Hussin *et al.*, 2009; Lee & Low, 2014). These students may be rejected from public government schools and labeled as unfit for standard education (Hussin *et al.*, 2009; Lee & Low, 2014). This leaves families of students with autism in search of private services to provide educational services and supports for their students with autism. In the last decade, however, there has been an expansion of educational practices proven to be effective for students with autism. These practices include behavioural approaches, naturalistic teaching, joint attention, peer mediation and story-based interventions (Iovannone *et al.*, 2002). The United States National Autism Center (2009) describes eleven instructional strategies that are effective for students with autism. The abundance of research and practice literature, along with a growing national campaign to educate the public on the characteristics and strengths of people with autism, leaves one to question why the majority of these students are still denied access to public education in Malaysia. Certainly a lack of preparation and knowledge among special education teachers in Malaysia may be at fault.

Thus, in order to provide effective education for students with autism, special educators need to be instructed in basic knowledge, pedagogy, and evidence-based practices for teaching students

with autism in both inclusive and special education settings (Simpson, 2004). This knowledge must include understanding of the characteristics of autism, how to conduct educational assessments and determine effective interventions to meet individual student needs. In addition, field-based experiences are critical in the development of the technical aspects of the delivery of evidence based practices and behaviour management of this population (National Research Council, 2001; Barnhill *et al.*, 2011).

Simpson (2004) recommended the following components that should be included in the preparation and training of teachers of students with autism: (a) strategies to increase social interaction skills, communication skills and adaptive skills; (b) strategies to support sensory issues; (c) management methods and environmental accommodations; and (d) positive behavioral interventions based on functional assessment. Furthermore, the National Research Council (2001) suggested that family involvement, systematic instruction and specialised curriculum content be included in programmes for students with autism of all ages. Lastly, teachers for students with autism also must have strong collaboration skills to work with general education teachers in providing inclusive education and working closely with parents and other professionals (Scheuermann *et al.*, 2003).

Stone and Rosenbaum (1988) conducted a study on the understanding of autism among parents and teachers in the United States.

The authors found that the respondents had misconceptions about autism. Different understanding between parents and teachers may have a negative impact on their collaborative efforts. Mavropoulou and Padeliadu (2000) conducted a study using a questionnaire developed by Stone and Rosenbaum (1988) to compare perceptions on autism between teachers of general education and special education in Greece. Results of this study showed that both groups were confused about some aspects of autism. However, the special education teachers were better at identifying autism characteristics. Based on the results of this study, suggestions were given to improve in-service training for general education and special education teachers in Greece so that their knowledge and skills regarding autism could be improved.

Schwartz and Drager (2008) adapted a questionnaire by Stone and Rosenbaum (1988) to study the effectiveness of training and the level of knowledge about autism among speech therapists in the United States. The results showed that although the respondents had a sound knowledge about autism characteristics, they were still confused about the diagnostic criteria. The results also showed that the speech-language therapists who were involved in the study did not receive adequate training and thus lack the confidence in their ability to provide services to children with autism. In a similar study by Hendricks (2011), 498 special education teachers in Virginia (United States) were surveyed on their general knowledge regarding

autism and implementation of evidence based practices. The results indicated that respondents had low to intermediate knowledge regarding autism and low to intermediate implementation rates of evidence based practice.

In Malaysia, a study by Philips (2005) examined the level of knowledge about autism among general education teachers and found that teachers in schools in Malaysia were poorly informed about the aspects of cognitive, social and emotional development of children with autism. In more specific, eighty four percent of the respondents in the study could not identify the type or types of support services needed for students with autism. A study by Toran, Mohd Yasin, Tahar and Salleh (2010) also examined the self-reported training, knowledge and confidence of 112 special education teachers regarding students with autism. This study indicated that Malaysian special educators, although confident in their abilities to meet the needs of students with autism, reported a lack of pre-service and in-service training in the subject and had many misconceptions about autism.

This current study is a replication of the earlier study by Toran *et al.* (2010). Both studies examined the self-reported training received by special education teachers in Malaysia regarding autism, their general knowledge about autism and their confidence (now referred to as self reported competency) to educate children with autism. The purpose of this study was to determine the following:

- 1) Do special education teachers agree that their pre-service and in-service training opportunities included content regarding autism and the needs of students with autism?
- 2) Do special education teachers have general knowledge regarding autism?
- 3) How do special education teachers report their competence in educating children with autism?

## METHOD

### *Instrument*

A questionnaire by Schwartz and Drager (2008) was adapted and translated into Malay language to identify the level of training, knowledge and confidence of special education teachers in educating children with autism. Originally this questionnaire was used with speech-language pathologists. Adaptation consisted of changes to questions to refer specifically to classroom settings and special education teachers. For this study, the questionnaire consisted of four main areas: respondents' demographic information, teachers' preparation in autism, the level of teachers' knowledge regarding autism, and teachers' self reported competency in teaching children with autism (referred to as confidence in the previous studies). In total, there were 32 items in this questionnaire.

Items in the demographic information section identify factors that may influence the answers of respondents in other parts of the questionnaire. These include gender, age, ethnicity, position, level of education, fieldwork and experience as a teacher. The

section regarding teachers' preparation in autism contains eight questions about teachers' training or the courses attended by the respondents. The respondents answered on a four-point Likert scale. The items in this section had been modified to suit the teacher-training programmes in Malaysia. The teachers' knowledge section consisted of nine questions using a true or false answer format. The final section, teachers' self reported competence in teaching children with autism, contained nine questions about respondents' competence in their ability to educating children with autism. Questions in this section used a four-point Likert scale. For all Likert scale items, a response of 1 indicated strong disagreement, 2 indicated disagreement, a response of 3 indicated agreement with the statement and a response of 4 indicated strong agreement.

#### *Procedure*

Three hundred and twelve special education teachers were recruited for this study using purposeful sampling. The respondents were the participants of a workshop on autism organised by the Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Sets of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents prior to the workshop and they were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

## **RESULTS**

This study adopted a quantitative design. Teachers' responses to questionnaire items were analysed to determine areas of need in special education teacher preparation, as

well as current in-service needs for current special education teachers. Themes and categories that emerged from the analysis were presented under three categories: Teachers' Preparation in Autism, Knowledge of Characteristics of Autism, and Teachers' Self Reported Competence in Teaching Children with Autism.

#### *Participants*

A total of 312 respondents from the states of Johor, Selangor and the Federal Territory of Malaysia were involved in this study. Majority of the respondents (63.5%) were working in the state of Johor, with the remaining respondents working in the state of Selangor (20.8%) and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur (12.5%). Meanwhile, five respondents (1.6%) were working in the Federal Territory of Putrajaya. Majority of the respondents were female (86.9%) and between the ages of 20 and 40 years (84%). Ninety-two percent of the respondents reported to be Malay.

**Placement and Experience.** When asked about the positions that they held, most respondents (94.7%) stated that they were special education teachers (72.6%) or teacher coordinators (22.1%) working in primary or secondary school special education integration programmes (94.3%). Over half of the respondents were novice teachers (55.5%), with 66.3% of them reporting 1 to 5 years of special education teaching experience. Furthermore, 77.6% of the respondents reported having 1 to 10 students with autism in their classrooms and 78.2% of the respondents reported

to have had experiences with 1 to 10 students with autism during their teaching careers. Meanwhile, seventy-five percent of the respondents reported to have interest in working with students with autism. The respondents had varying levels of education. Teachers holding a bachelor's degree (49.7%) or a master's degree (22.4) made up the majority of the respondents. The remaining respondents had teaching diplomas (17.0%), teaching certificates (10.6%), higher certificate of education (1.9%) and Malaysian certificates of education (0.6%).

#### *Teachers' Preparation in Autism*

As shown in Table 1, 312 participants were asked a series of questions regarding the information and training for working with students with autism in their teachers' preparation programmes. The respondents were asked about the knowledge and skills that were covered in their prior teachers' training and when they had received the training (pre-service or in-service). Items in this section were analysed by calculating the weighted average of respondents' answers.

#### *Knowledge and Skills*

The questions in this section addressed knowledge and skills. As shown in Table 2, all the respondents generally disagreed that either their pre-service or in-service training included information regarding any of the knowledge addressed in the questionnaire, with a total mean response regarding all questions across both types of training of 1.76. Furthermore, when broken down by question, the respondents disagreed that they had training in autism that addressed recognising characteristics, assessment, teaching strategies, direct experience or collaborating with parents or other professionals during either pre-service training or in-service training.

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TABLE 1  
Teachers' Responses to Topics included in Training on Autism

Topic	Participants' Responses (n=312)	
	Pre-service training	In-service training
	Mean	Mean
Recognising the characteristics of autism	2.37	2.00
Assessing children with autism	2.06	1.78
Teaching strategies for children with autism	2.00	1.78
Direct experience (hands-on) with children with autism	2.29	1.83
Collaborating with parents and other professionals	2.00	1.76

1.76. Furthermore, when broken down by question, the respondents disagreed that they had training in autism that addressed recognising the characteristics, assessment, teaching strategies, direct experience or collaborating with parents or other professionals during either pre-service training or in-service training.

**Direct experience.** One question asked the respondents if they had either pre-service training or in-service that involved direct experience (hands-on) with children with autism. The respondents disagreed that hands-on experience with students with autism was part of their pre-service ( $M=2.29$ ) or in-service ( $M=1.83$ ) training.

**Pre-Service vs. in-service training.** The responses were analysed for any differences in pre-service and in-service training regarding autism. The respondents showed a slightly stronger disagreement

that their in-service training included the knowledge and skills regarding students with autism ( $M=1.83$ ) versus pre-service training ( $M=2.14$ ). Furthermore, when analysing the responses by question, a slightly stronger disagreement was always present for the in-service training (Table 1).

#### *Teachers' Knowledge Regarding Autism*

The third section of the questionnaire addresses teachers' knowledge regarding autism. Findings regarding the level of teachers' knowledge about autism showed that the respondents had good knowledge about some characteristics of autism (Table 2). The results indicated that the respondents had correct knowledge about communication problems in children with autism (88.5%), *over-sensitivity* and *under-sensitivity* to pain in children with autism

TABLE 2  
Teachers' Knowledge of the Characteristics of Autism

Statements	True (%)	False (%)	No response
Children must exhibit impaired social interaction to receive a diagnosis of autism.	237 (75.0%)	67 (21.5%)	5 (1.6%)
Children must exhibit self-injurious behaviour to receive a diagnosis of autism	142 (45.5%)	167 (53.5%)	2 (0.6%)
Children must exhibit behaviour and interests that are repetitive and stereotyped to receive a diagnosis of autism.	297 (95.2%)	11 (3.5%)	3 (1.0 %)
Children must exhibit impaired communication skills to receive a diagnosis of autism.	276 (88.5%)	29 (9.3%)	7 (2.2%)
Some children with autism exhibit over-sensitivity or under-sensitivity to pain.	278 (89.1%)	28 (10.0%)	5 (1.6%)
More boys are diagnosed with autism than girls.	262 (83.0%)	43 (13.8%)	6 (9.1%)
Some children with autism demonstrate uneven gross motor and fine motor skills.	284 (91.0%)	22 (7.05%)	6 (9.1%)
Children with autism never make eye contact.	226 (72.4%)	77 (24.7%)	8 (2.6%)

(89.1%), social interaction problems in children with autism, the higher prevalence of autism in boys (83.0%) and that gross motor skills and fine motor skills are not equal among children with autism (91.0%). Similarly, the act of repetitive stereotyped behaviours and/or limited interests were identified by most respondents (95.2%) as the criteria for autism. However, there were high levels of misinformation regarding the characteristics of autism among the respondents. Self-injurious behaviour is not a diagnostic criterion for autism, but 45.5% of the respondents agreed that self-injurious behaviour must be present in order to receive a diagnosis of autism. Finally, 72.4% of the respondents agreed that children with autism never make eye-contact, even though most children with autism demonstrate this skill to some degree.

#### *Teachers' Self Reported Competency in Teaching Children with Autism*

The final section of the questionnaire addressed teachers' self-reported competency regarding autism and their desire for different supports and training opportunities. When analysing the responses to competence regarding determining appropriate intervention goals for students with autism, a mean average of 2.79 was derived (Table 3 ).

When asked to respond to their confidence regarding the amount of training they had received being sufficient, majority of the respondents ( $M=2.28$ ) disagreed that they were confident that their training had prepared them to deliver effective services. Furthermore, the respondents reported only moderate competency ( $M=2.82$ ) in their comfort level with counseling parents or guardians of students with autism.

TABLE 3  
Self Reported Competency in Autism

Statements	Mean Response Participant
I feel competent in my ability to determine appropriate intervention goals for children with autism at all stages of therapy.	2.79
I am comfortable counseling parents and guardians of children with autism.	2.82
I usually like having assistance and direction from another professional or "autism specialist" when developing appropriate programs for children with autism.	3.65
I feel competent I have enough clinical and educational training to deliver effective services to children with autism.	2.28
I feel that I could benefit from receiving additional coursework and training in the area of autism.	3.70
I feel the existence of more post-graduate learning opportunities in the area of autism would be beneficial to the field.	3.64
I feel that schools, in general, could benefit from "autism specialists."	3.68
If I knew that an "autism specialist" was available in my school district, I would use that person as a resource.	3.69
I would be interested in becoming an "autism specialist" even if it meant participating in additional training.	3.32

However, as shown in Table 3, higher levels of agreement were noted when the respondents were asked questions regarding future training and support opportunities. A mean of 3.70 was derived when the respondents were asked if they felt they would benefit from additional coursework and training, while a mean response of 3.32 was obtained when they were asked if they would be interested in becoming "autism specialists". Furthermore, the means of 3.68 and 3.69 were derived when the respondents were asked about their agreement regarding the benefits of autism specialists to the field and school district.

Finally, the respondents were found to support efforts to create opportunities to undergo postgraduate studies in the field of autism, as indicated by a mean average response of 3.64 to this particular question.

## DISCUSSION

The drastic increase in the number of students with autism calls for well-trained teachers who can deliver effective instruction to help these children achieve their optimal potential. Teachers need to be able to understand autism and its characteristics, implement educational assessment, design individual education plans, teach systematically and monitor progress. The findings from this study can be used to identify the preparation, knowledge and self-reported competency of special education teachers regarding autism. Additionally, the findings can serve as a starting point for the analysis of content in teachers' preparation programmes

related to autism and to develop pre-service and in-service programmes that prepare teachers effectively. The implications of this study are important to policy makers, school administrators and teacher trainers as guidance to improve teachers' preparation in Malaysia.

Although a majority of the respondents in this study have a bachelor's degree in special education (49.7%) and another 22.4% have a Master's degree in the field, the findings suggest that they do not have a comprehensive knowledge of autism. For example, they do know that students with autism have impairments in communication and social interaction but they seem to have misunderstandings regarding diagnostic criteria of autism when they included injurious behaviour and lack of eye contact as parts of the diagnostic criteria. This finding is similar to those of the studies by Mavropoulou and Padeliadu (2000), Hendricks (2011), and Toran *et al.* (2010). In particular, Mavropoulou and Padeliadu (2000) reported confusion in Greek special education teachers' knowledge of autism, while Hendricks (2011) reported low to intermediate levels of knowledge of autism among special education teachers in the state of Virginia in the United States. Toran *et al.* (2010) found confusion among special education teachers in Malaysia regarding the diagnostic criteria for autism.

The respondents in this study also reported a moderate level of self-reported competency in determining appropriate intervention goals for these children and delivering services to them. This is alarming

given the fact that the teachers had low level of knowledge on autism and the self report that their pre-service teacher training did not provide adequate information on the characteristics of autism, assessing children with autism, teaching strategies for children with autism, nor did it provide them with direct (field-based) training experience with children with autism and collaborating with parents and other professionals. The previous study by Toran *et al.* (2010) also yielded similar results. Additionally, this finding is similar to that of Hendrick (2011) who reported that special education teachers in the state of Virginia in the U.S. have low to intermediate levels of implementation of effective teaching practices for students with autism.

Therefore, one of the main implications of this study is the need to improve special education teacher training in order to increase the level of knowledge in autism and effective use of evidence based teaching strategies. Hendricks (2011) also highlighted the need for increased content related to autism and evidence based practices during pre-service training. Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot, and Goodwin (2003) criticised teacher training programmes in the U.S. that did not focus on teaching strategies for specific disabilities and instead only covered special education in general. It appears that special education teacher training programmes in Malaysia also need to specifically look at the content of these programmes, as they do not include in-depth topics on autism or if these topics are included. Furthermore, opportunities for

direct experience and hands-on activities with these children need to be provided to these teachers so that they are able to transfer theory into practice.

The findings of this study also highlight the importance of in-service training. Majority of the respondents (77.6%) have students with autism in their classroom but lack the experience and self reported a lack of training. Therefore, there is a dire need for effective in-service training. Novice teachers made up 55.5% of the respondents, while 66.3% of them reported 1-5 years of experience as special education teachers. However, these respondents also reported that the in-service teacher training had not been able to compensate the inadequate training they received during the pre-service period. In addition, due to the rapid growth of research and evidence based practice regarding instructional strategies and interventions for students with autism, the importance of in-service training for teachers is critical. Evidence suggests that attention must be paid to the quality and effectiveness of in-service training for teachers. Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot, and Goodwin (2003) suggested that consultations might provide stronger lasting effects on teaching practices than other methods of instruction like typical workshops. In addition, Hendricks (2011) suggested supervision, feedback and consultation, while Barnhill (2011) proposed distance learning via on-line instruction.

Positive findings of this study include the willingness of the respondents (74%) to have students with autism in their classroom,

the desire to undergo further training and to accept support from autism specialists, as well as the belief that specialists would benefit their instruction and the field in general. With these encouraging findings, there is a high probability that in-service training may be effective in enhancing the knowledge and skills of these teachers.

However, there are some limitations in this current study that should be taken into consideration. The respondents in this study were purposively recruited and limited to those from a few states in this country. Furthermore, the respondents in this study were attending a workshop on autism and might have been more interested and educated in autism than the general special education teacher population in Malaysia. Therefore, these findings may not be generalised to the population of special education teachers in Malaysia. Another limitation is that the research questionnaire did not seek to investigate teachers' knowledge and efficiency in specific instructional strategies known to be effective with students with autism.

Considering the findings and limitations of this study and other similar studies, further examination of the issues in teacher preparation related to autism in Malaysia is warranted. Further research should explore the knowledge and application of evidence-based interventions and strategies of special education teachers and where this knowledge was obtained. Moreover, further investigation of the self-reported competency of special education teachers in the application of evidence based practices

is necessary. This kind of information will be able to guide policy makers and teacher trainers in developing effective teacher preparation programmes for future teachers of students with autism. Barnhill *et al.* (2011) proposed that these programmes contain clearly defined minimum standards for personnel qualifications and experience in order to ensure that teachers are equipped with requisite knowledge and skills needed to teach effectively.

Students with autism are perhaps the fastest growing population of students with disabilities in schools today. Furthermore, the range of needs of the population of students with autism is large; including students with unique and diverse educational needs. However, it appears that there is a global need for improved special education teacher education programmes to meet the needs of these students. Until institutions of higher education are able to design programmes that adequately prepare special educators to teach this diverse population, students with autism will continue to struggle to reach their full potential.

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## Teaching Presence in an Online Collaborative Learning Environment via Facebook

Annamalai, N.<sup>1\*</sup>, Tan, K. E.<sup>2</sup> and Abdullah, A.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Menden, 11800 Penang, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the interactions of the teacher with her six students in an online collaborative learning environment to complete their narrative writing task. Data sources were the online interactions archives and the teacher's reflection. The interactions were coded based on the descriptors related to teaching presence in the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model by Garrison, Archer and Anderson (2000). Findings indicated that the descriptors suggested by the CoI model were present in the interactions. The interactions related to the teaching presence encouraged students to improve their narrative writing. Additionally, other descriptors such as code-switching, exam-centeredness and teacher-centredness were also evident in the data. The teacher's reflection indicates that interacting in online collaborative learning is a good practice to encourage narrative writing.

**Keywords:** Online collaborative learning, online writing, CoI model, social interactions, CALL and teaching presence

### INTRODUCTION

With the advent of Web 2.0, a number of platforms are available to encourage online collaborative learning (Lim *et al.*, 2010; Mercer *et al.*, 2010). The processing

power of these platforms permits learners to efficiently store, search and display information (Turoff, 1995), while they are engaged in an online collaborative learning environment. All these abilities are effective in closing the gap between the level of performance and the level of individuals' potential in collaborative and interactive learning processes (Rikki *et al.*, 2010). Collaborative learning involves sharing of thoughts, material, critical thinking, positive attitudes, group cohesion and social

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*E-mail addresses:*

naga@usm.my, nagalax1@yahoo.com (Annamalai, N.)  
ketan@usm.my (Tan, K. E.)

amelia@usm.my (Abdullah, A.)

\* Corresponding author

relationships. In other words, collaboration involves social interactions (Yeh, 2014). There is no collaboration without social interactions (Garrison *et al.*, 2000).

Any online collaborative teaching and learning activities require teachers' effective supervision (Koh *et al.*, 2010). Grouping students without appropriate instructions does not guarantee collaboration (Palloff & Pratt, 2010) For this reason, the presence of the teacher is pertinent in online teaching and learning activities. In collaborative learning environment, teacher is the facilitator, while teaching and learning activities are shared experiences (Anderson *et al.*, 2001). Garrison *et al.* (2000) have suggested an online learning model that encourages interactions between teachers and students with the objective of building, facilitating and validating understanding among student-student and teacher-student. The model is termed as the Community of Inquiry model (CoI).

This study aims to explore the interactions of the teacher with her six students in an online collaborative learning environment. The students were instructed to complete their narrative writing task. Their online interactions were categorised based on the teaching presence descriptors suggested by the CoI model. This online writing instruction is quite necessary in the Malaysian ESL setting as limited time is allocated in school for students to train and immerse themselves in the English language (Darus & Ching, 2009). Limited time does not provide the opportunity for the teacher to personally attend to the students' needs

and interests and more so in continuous writing (Marimuthu & Goh, 2005). It is hoped that the online environment will give opportunities to the teacher to guide the students effectively and help them enhance their narrative writing. There is also a pressing need for more research in Malaysian classrooms to explore the use of the online collaborative learning environment (Koo, 2008). Understanding what the interactions are when learners are online is valuable. The immense popularity of the Facebook, coupled with the amount of writing produced by the learners, illustrates the potential of Facebook as an effective writing platform. For this reason, students in this study were instructed to collaborate in the Facebook environment. Three researchers were involved in this study.

The objective of this study is to investigate the descriptors found under the teaching presence and the teacher's reflection in the online collaborative learning environment. The research questions are:

1. What are the descriptors of teaching presence found in the online collaborative learning environment?
2. What is the teacher's reflection of the social interactions in the online collaborative learning environment?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature concerning the online collaborative learning environment and the Community of Inquiry model will be discussed in the following section to situate the study in a broader perspective.

### *Online Collaborative learning Environment*

A more in-depth analysis of online collaborative learning needs to consider the community in the online learning environment. The importance of community to encourage collaboration has been emphasised by a number of researchers (Salmon *et al.*, 1995; Garrison *et al.*, 2000).

A strong sense of community encourages information sharing, group commitment, collaboration and achievement of learning outcomes (Dede, 1999; Wellman, 1996). The community formed in the online teaching and learning environment is short lived and involuntary (Wallace, 2003). Rovai (2002) highlights important characteristics of the online community. They are “feelings of connectedness among community members and commonality of learning expectations and goals” (p. 322). He further elaborates that classroom community is successful when learners:

- feel connected with each other and to the instructor.
- manifest the immediate communication behaviours that reduce social psychological distance between people.
- share common interests and values.
- trust and help each other.
- are actively engaged in two-way communication.
- pursue common learning objectives.

(Rovai, 2002, p. 322)

Palloff and Pratt (2010) reported that students need ‘community’ to express their social, emotional, academic and intellectual experiences. One model that identifies the cognitive, social and teaching dimensions for studying the online collaboration is the model suggested by Garrison *et al.* (2000). The model is named as Community of Inquiry.

### *Community of Inquiry*

The Community of Inquiry model suggested by Garrison *et al.* (2000) fits ideally with the constructivism theory. The model has also been employed to get a better understanding of what is missing in the online learning environment (Perry & Edward, 2005). Additionally, it is used to understand the challenges faced by first-time online learners (Cleveland-Innes, Garrison, & Kinsel, 2007). Researchers found that the CoI model is an easy and effective model to illustrate communication (Batruff & Headley, 2009). The CoI model offers an environment for students to interact, share, receive feedback and learn together (Garrison *et al.*, 2000). Garrison *et al.* (2000) designed three presences to categorise the interactions. The three presences are social, cognitive and teaching presences. The present study focused on the teaching presence of the CoI model in the Malaysian context.

Researchers have recognised that the CoI model is useful in guiding research in the online learning environment (Cerbin, 2009). For example, a study by Kupezynski *et al.* (2010) found that appropriate feedback

is pertinent in teaching presence. Abas and Fadzil (2009) found that teachers need to be trained to pose questions and encourage students to carry out effective discussion while engaging in the online learning environment. However, more research is needed to document the challenges and issues that are useful for educational experience (Aykol *et al*, 2009; Cerbin, 2009). Shea *et al.* (2010) reported that the studies have been more concerned about the level of the online discussion and surveys. Also, researchers rarely consider the work of the students and instructors in the undergraduate settings (Toth *et al.*, 2010). Thus, more research is needed to determine the appropriate indicators in a different context. It is for this reason that this study was undertaken to look into the nature of interactions in the Malaysian context. In this study, the researchers only considered the teaching presence. According to Anderson *et al.* (2001), teaching presence is “the design facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes” (p. 5). Teaching presence is necessary in stabilising the cognitive and social issues in the educational environment (Garrison *et al.*, 2000). Teaching presence consists of the coding scheme for instructional design and organisation, coding scheme for facilitating discourse and coding scheme for direct instruction. The codes and descriptors for teaching presence are illustrated in Table 1.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study research design to explore the teaching

presence in the collaborative learning environment.

### Participants

The study was carried out in an urban Chinese Girls’ school in Penang. Six students and a teacher were involved in this study. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants. These students were willing to participate and were able to access the Internet and Facebook either at home or at school. The teacher participant was a teacher in the school and took part in the study on a voluntary basis. She is an experienced teacher who is familiar with the expectations of the public examination format (*SPM - Malaysian Certificate of Examination*). Pseudonyms were given to the participants to ensure anonymity.

### Research Procedures

The researchers created a Facebook group account named Narrative Writing II. The two hypothetical terms of tutor and learner platforms are virtual spaces embedded within Facebook. In the tutor platform, the teacher provided instructions, as well as titles, model essays, tips and suggestions. In the learner platform, the students wrote their initial essays, interacted with their peers and teacher, and finally wrote their final essays. In both the platforms, students were given the opportunity to express their opinions and comments. The comments were provided by the teacher and the peers for the students to improve on their essays. The students had to write their own essays after their online collaborative learning

**TABLE 1**  
Descriptors of Teaching Presence

Codes	Indicators	Examples
TPA	Coding Scheme for Instructional Design and Organization	
TPA 1	Setting curriculum	“This week we will be discussing...”
TPA 2	Designing methods	“I am going to divide you to groups, and you will debate...”
TPA3	Establishing time parameters	“Please post a message by Friday”
TPA4	Utilising medium effectively	“Try to address issues that others have raised when your post”
TPA5	Establishing netiquette	“Keep your message short”
TPB	Coding Scheme for Facilitating Discourse	
TPB1	Identifying areas of agreement/disagreement	“Joe, Mary has provided a compelling counter-example to your hypothesis. Would you care to respond?”
TPB2	Seeking to reach consensus/understanding	“I think Joe and Mary are saying essentially the same thing”
TPB3	Encouraging, acknowledging or reinforcing student contributions	“Thank You for your insightful comments”.
TPB4	Setting climate for learning	“don’t feel self-conscious about thinking out loud on the forum. This is a place to try out ideas after all.”
TPB5	Drawing in participants, prompting discussion	“Any thought on this issue?” Anyone care to comment?”
TPB6	Assess the efficacy of the process	“I think we’re getting a little off track here”
TPC	Coding Scheme for Direct Instruction	
TPCI	Present content/questions	“Bates says... what do you think “
TPC2	Focus the discussion in specific issues	“I think that’s a dead end. I would ask you to consider...”
TPC3	Summarize the discussion	“The original question was ... Joe said Mary said... we concluded that ... We still haven’t addressed...”
TPC4	Confirm understanding through assessment feedback	“You’re close, but you didn’t account for... this is important because ...”
TPC5	Diagnose misconceptions	“Remember, bates is speaking from an administrative perspective, so be careful when you say...”
TP6	Inject knowledge from diverse sources, e.g. textbook articles, internet, personal experiences	I was at a conference with bates once, and he said... You can find the proceedings from the conference at <a href="http://www...">http://www...</a>
TP7	Responding to technical Concerns	“If you want to include a hyperlink in your message, you have to ...”

Source: Anderson *et al.* (2009)

sessions. The interactions involved student-student interactions and student-teacher interactions (Anderson, 2003). Students were given three writing tasks. They were given two weeks to complete each task. Table 2 indicates the schedule for the writing task. Before the interactions, the students were given initial and final tasks. For Tasks 1 and 2, the students were provided with model essays and suggestions to write their narrative essays. For Task 3, however, the students were not given any guidance. They were instructed to write their own narrative essays. It was hoped that the students would be familiar with the narrative writing style as they were guided for the earlier tasks (Tasks 1 and 2). The schedule for the writing task was published in Annamalai *et al.* (2013)

## DATA COLLECTION

In the present study, the online interaction archives found in the closed group set up within the social networking site of Facebook were coded to identify the patterns of interactions based on the CoI model (2000). The online interaction archives were printed out and coded by the researchers and two other coders. The two selected coders were trained by the researchers to analyse the patterns of interactions based on the model. Miles and Huberman's (1994) percentage and Cohen kappa inter-rater reliability were used to measure the agreement between the coders in categorising the interaction patterns. The kappa value for teaching presence was 0.8, which is a very high agreement. In analysing the patterns of interactions, the researchers analysed all the messages posted by the

TABLE 2  
Schedule of the online interactions, initial and final tasks

Week	Task	INITIAL TASK			
Week 1	Writing in class	Platforms			
		Tutor Platform	Learner Platform	Learner Platform	Learner Platform
Weeks 2-3	Task 1 Title Material 1		First draft (1)	social interaction in the online collaborative learning environment	Final draft (1)
Weeks 4-5	Task 2 Title Material 2		First Draft (2)	Online Collaboration with peers and teacher	Final draft (2)
Weeks 6-7	Task 3 Title No materials		First Draft (3)	Online Collaboration with peers and teacher	Final draft (3)
Week 10	Writing in class		FINAL TASK		

teacher. All these messages were analysed based on the descriptors and sub-categories of the teaching presence. The teacher wrote the reflections in the 12th week after the interactions in the online collaborative learning environment. The reflections were interpreted based on Creswell's (2009) data analysis and interpretation procedures. The steps are: 1) organise and prepare the data of analysis, 2) read through all the data, 3) begin detailed analysis with a coding process, 4) use the coding process to generate themes for analysis, 5) advance how description and themes will be presented in the qualitative nature, and 6) interpret the data.

## FINDINGS

### *Descriptors of Teaching Presence*

The most frequent descriptor in teaching presence was related to facilitating discourse, followed by direct instruction and instructional design and organisation. The prevalence of teaching presence for facilitating discourse was clustered most heavily on encouraging, acknowledging or reinforcing students' contributions. The data revealed that the teacher was able to maintain the interest, motivation and students' engagement by regularly reading and attending to their doubts and comments.

In Task 1, the teacher commented that "*I will read through your essay and comment*". The teacher acknowledged the students' contributions and assured the students. She wrote, for example, "*don't feel so bad Deer Tommy. You are doing great*" and "*We are here to help each other and improve to be*

*better... You can improvise your essay better. We are here*".

In Task 2, the teacher made concerted efforts to continue giving confidence and encouragement by complimenting their work. She has been actively supporting and scaffolding the students to extend their ideas and improve their narrative writing. This was eloquently expressed in the following post:

*interesting story yet you could make it better by developing more details. I find that the story is kind of dry without development. You can use similar story but add on some interesting development into paragraph with idiomatic expression and higher level vocabulary.*

*Interesting story girl but I feel you have the potential to write even Better than this. This narration lack of creativity. Try to improvise in your improved draft later. HERE ARE SOME ERRORS.....*

The teacher also responded well to the students' individual ideas and meaning making. The teacher remarked, "*you have provided good vocabulary*", "*good suggestion*" and "*I noticed that you have minimised your errors in tenses. Good job done, girl!*". When the teacher experienced limited students' engagement in the discussion, she provided more opportunities for them to interact by writing, "*Peony Moon, Catelite Nina, Joyce Chee, Valentini*

*Belbo and Deer Tommy, what do you think about Monster Kblue's essay?"* and "Maybe you could improvise your essay to be more interesting". The teacher was actively supporting and scaffolding students' ideas to extend their learning. She even recommended a few websites to improve their writing. She asked the students to "Try to practice on this simple exercise by finding meaning of the idiomatic expressions". The teacher also stimulated the discussion by drawing in students and prompting discussion. For example, "*Joyce Chee, Monster Kblue, Valentino Belbo and Peony Moon and Catelite Nina... read through deer Tommy's essay and check into her word choices, expressions used, tenses and punctuation. Please give your comments by comparing Deer Tommy's previous essays*"... There was no post that was related to assessing the efficacy of the process category.

In the domain of direct instruction, most of the interactions were related to focusing discussion on specific topics. The teacher responded well in the individual ideas, meaning making and the organization of the essays. She stated that a good essay "should be well structured (the organization of your ideas)" and "an excellent essay should have good paragraph organization so use the Labov and Waletzky's Narrative Structure". In fact, she identified the students' weaknesses and scaffolded them in the use of tenses. For example, "all of you are having problem in knowing the correct tenses to use in your essays. Here is a link which contains variety of online exercises and tests all of you".

The next frequent type of post in the domain of direct instruction was the one where the teacher injected knowledge from diverse sources such as textbook articles and personal experiences. The teacher was able to provide learning materials linked to narrative writing to assist the students in their construction of knowledge. The links provided by the teacher were related to proverbs, colloquial expressions, vocabulary, grammar, famous phrases and idioms. The teacher also corrected the wrong assumption of the students that writing a narrative essay is a difficult task. She explained that "*narrative essay is easy to write because factual essays need true facts as substance to make your essay to be outstanding. in narrative writing you need to be creative...*".

Within the direct instruction domain, there were more posts focusing on specific issues and injecting knowledge from diverse sources. The posts related to instructional design and organisation domain were moderate in number. The teacher specifically encouraged all the students to read their friends' essays and provide ideas from various perspectives. For example, "*Joyce Chee, Deer Tommy, Monster Kblue, Valentini Belbo and Peony Moon read through Deer Tommy's essay and look into her word choices, expressions used, tenses and punctuation. Please give comment by comparing Deer Tommy's previous essays*". Additionally, the teacher demonstrated the desire to provide supplementary exercises that were related to narrative writing to encourage students' learning and discussions. These websites

offered exercises related to idiomatic expressions, tenses and sentence structures.

The teacher was seen focusing the discussion on some specific issues of narrative writing. She emphasised that “*... a good essay not only should have good expression words and phrases, variety of sentence structures... It should be well structured (organization of ideas)*”. The students were encouraged to reach an understanding by exposing and encouraging them to consider their friends’ ideas and opinions. This point was exemplified in the following comments, “*... you can use the suggestion of Peony Moon to describe the situation when students and teachers lurch forward during the collision*” and “*Joyce gave some word choices...*”. The teacher also took the responsibility to summarise and give confidence to the students to continue writing by stating, “*it is o.k .... you can add the part in your improvised version*”. To tap into the world of knowledge, the students were exposed to ideas from various links and websites and not only confined to text and reference books. The references were basically adjectives, phrases, proverbs and colloquial expressions. All these links had helped the students to improve their narrative writing. The teacher had a highly visible role in the online learning environment to encourage students to write.

The descriptor related to instructional design and organisation had the least number of posts. The teacher, as the subject matter expert, injected instruction by setting the titles as well as giving tips and

suggestions for them to write their narrative essays. The teacher also provided model essays based on the Labov and Waletzky’s narrative structure. The time parameter for the students to complete their writing task on time was also established by the teacher. The sub-categories on utilising the medium effectively and establishing netiquette were not found in this study. In Task 3, the teacher continued to set the title, suggestions and tips. The teacher reminded the students to complete their essays much earlier they would be busy with their examination soon. Some examples of the descriptors of teaching presence are shown in Table 3.

#### *Other Emerging Descriptors*

There was also a number of interactions that were not directly related to the teaching presence. The interactions were related to code-switching, teacher centredness and exam-centredness. Malaysian students are exposed to a unique language environment as Malaysia is a multiracial and multicultural society. Therefore, code switching is quite common in Malaysian school settings. For example, “*stayed at school means tinggal di sekolah*”, its better to write “*stayed back at school*”, *stunned means terkejut n donno what to say*”. In this study, the students and the teacher were able to convey and explain certain ideas in the essays to accomplish their narrative writing task using code-switching. Nonetheless, the use of code switching was not evident in their narrative writing. Evidently, the students were aware of the examination genre and avoided code switching while composing their essays.

TABLE 3  
Online Interaction Pattern of Teaching Presence

Codes	Descriptors	Example
TPA	Instructional Design and Organization	
A1	Setting Curriculum	 <b>FIRST TASK :</b> The title of this week's essay is: Describe the most embarrassing experience you have had.
A2	Designing Methods	
A3	Establishing Time Parameters	 Hi students. Hope all of you are fine. I had read through your essays and all of you had also read your friends essays and commented while helping each other to correct the mistakes and recommending each others to improve in your writing. Please review your essays respectively and upload your final draft essay by Saturday (7 July 2012). ALL THE BEST

Exam-centredness was evident in this study as the teacher was seen reminding the students to consider certain aspects of writing expected in the *SPM* examination. Thus, the students were constantly reminded to maximise their scores by looking closely at the *SPM* requirements. The teacher was seen to be predominantly concerned about the lexical and grammatical errors instead of helping the students to explore and discover other areas of narrative writing. Malaysian students are generally trained to pass their public exams for them to be able to enrol at tertiary education institutions. Some of the examples are “*students, in SPM an ‘A’ essay must have good sentence structures, good use of higher vocab*” and “*that how your essay will be graded as an ‘A’ band essay*”.

The element of teacher-centredness is very much related to exam-centeredness in the Malaysian context. There were glimpses of interactions where the teacher often stepped in during the discussion to indicate

errors without detailed explanations about the errors. Meanwhile, clarification was only given for certain errors. Basically, we could see the teacher’s effort in editing and revising their essays without giving any detailed explanation related to vocabulary, sentence structures, organisation and content. Similar errors were very likely to occur in the students’ future essays because the teacher did not explain any further by relating to vocabulary, language and organization aspects. Furthermore, the students were not encouraged to negotiate and construct meaning with their friends. The teacher was more inclined to be in the commenting mode rather than encouraging critical thinking in the collaborative learning environment. Hence, the role of the teacher is rather authoritative and distancing the students interactions in constructing ideas and knowledge. Table 4 illustrates descriptors related to code-switching, exam-centredness and teacher-centredness.

TABLE 4

Emerging themes related to code-switching, exam-centredness and teacher-centredness

Code-witching
 <b>Nanthini Maniam</b> Joyce Chee ... stayed at school means tinggal di sekolah, its better to write "stayed back at school" July 4 at 10:05pm · Like
 <b>Monster KBlue</b> stunned means terkejut n dono what to say? July 29 at 7:47am · Unlike · 1
 <b>Deer Tommy</b> 其实那个小孩是男主角回忆里的自己... July 31 at 3:09pm · Unlike · 2
Exam-centeredness
 <b>Nanthini Maniam</b> Students, in SPM an 'A' essay must have good sentence structures, good use of higher level vocab and expressions. Not only that, students must know how to write their essay interestingly because the reader's interest should be aroused to read further and the interest must be sustained through out the essay. Do more reading and write good and creative essays. Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · July 4 at 10:08pm
Teacher-centredness
 <b>Nanthini Maniam Peony Moon...</b> Interesting story girl but I feel you have the potential to write even better than this. This narrate lack of creativity. Try to Improvise in your improved draft later. HERE ARE SOME ERRORS MADE: After head counting at the school gate, we were (set) off to go!  We sat (on) our school bus and I think (thought) there was (we around four buses on (for) that trip.  So (never begin a sentence with 'so' because it is a conjunction. Conjunctions are used connect ideas of two sentences and it will function as a sentence connectors).  We have (had) our breakfast in a coffee shop of (in) Ipoh. My tummy was bloated after I (had) finished my meal as the food was too delicious.  After 2 hours and a half (two and a half hours), we had finally reached the top of Cameron highlands.  The bus made its first stop in (at) a strawberry shop.  The strawberries were made into fine cakes, (and) tarts with appealing decorations which were very appetizing desserts.

### *Teacher's Reflection*

The teacher expressed her satisfaction in using the social interactions in online collaboration as a learning strategy. She explained that the students were basically excited and curious when they were asked

to write their essays in the collaborative learning environment. They were able to overcome their fears as they were engaged in the interactions with teacher and students. In addition, the teacher pointed out that the students in the traditional classroom were usually shy when they interacted and had the

tendency not to speak confidently. Another point given by the teacher was that they shared the resources when they were engaged in the social interactions in the collaborative learning environment. The teacher also pointed out that she had encouraged students to use idiomatic expressions, proverbs, word choices, compound sentence structures, metaphors and personification that made the narrative essays to be outstanding. She found that the students improved their tenses, word choices, sentence structures and story line. She concluded by stating that the social interactions in the online collaborative environment as an effective learning practice for writing.

As mentioned earlier students are required to write an initial and final task. In the initial task the errors made by students were related to organisation, content, vocabulary, language and mechanics. However, in the final task there were improvements in all these aspects. Table 5 indicates the scores for the initial and final tasks. Table 5 has been published in Annamalai *et al.* (2013). The letters O, C,

L, V, M and T refer to organisation, content, language, vocabulary, mechanics and total, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

In terms of teaching presence, the teacher being the subject matter expert was seen to direct the students' attention to the important aspects of the tasks. She successfully set the title and the time frame for the task to be completed by the students. The teacher constantly encouraged, acknowledged and reinforced students' contributions. This motivated and encouraged them to stay engaged in their tasks. Similarly, Koh *et al.* (2010) and Murphy (2004) claimed that teachers must consider and comment on their students' post to encourage them to engage in the interactions. The teacher's effort of scaffolding by providing materials, sub-tasks and exercises related to narrative writing helped the students as well. There was also evidence that the teacher had incorporated the sub-tasks that were involved in teaching narrative writing such

TABLE 5  
Scores of initial and final tasks

STUDENT	SCORES FOR THE INITIAL AND FINAL TASKS											
	INITIAL TASK						FINAL TASK					
	O	C	L	V	M	T	O	C	L	V	M	T
S1	12	12	18	12	6	<b>60</b>	17	17	23	18	7	<b>82</b>
S2	17	17	20	16	6	<b>76</b>	18	17	26	16	7	<b>84</b>
S3	14	14	19	12	6	<b>65</b>	18	19	24	18	7	<b>86</b>
S4	12	13	17	12	6	<b>60</b>	18	16	25	16	7	<b>82</b>
S5	13	12	18	12	6	<b>61</b>	17	16	18	15	7	<b>73</b>
S6	15	16	23	17	6	<b>77</b>	18	18	23	18	7	84

as grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, idioms and phrasal verbs. In fact, she instructed the students to complete extra online exercises related to narrative writing. This encouraged students' critical thinking and aligned them with the task given to them. Consistently, literature supports the view that introducing sources of information and giving directions for useful discussions assist students' knowledge to higher level (Richardson & Swan, 2003; Ice *et al.*, 2007 ).

Thus, interactions related to teaching presence encouraged students to continue writing in the online collaborative learning environment. In other words, the teaching presence is an "online instructional orchestration" (Shea & Bidjerano, 2010, p. 17), where the teacher successfully brings together elements of cognitive and social presences harmoniously in an attempt to achieve the learning outcome (Anderson *et al.*, 2001). The social interactions had indeed increased the students' awareness of the importance of the comments.

The emerging descriptors found in this study indicate that the existing CoI model and the descriptors for teaching need to be modified according to the context. As the descriptors suggested by the CoI model are more applicable for online discussion in the Western culture, there is a need to add and subtract certain descriptors for students who are engaged in the online learning environment based on the task and context. For example, in the Malaysian context descriptors such as code switching, teacher centeredness and exam-centeredness can be included.

The teacher absolutely affirmed that the online collaborative learning environment made a significant difference in the teaching of narrative writing. The interactive nature of the environment, in terms of sharing ideas and giving comments, was appealing to the teacher. It was a medium that allowed students to share opinions and ideas without much restriction. The students were more confident and independent when they were engaged in the social interactions online. Such an environment afforded an opportunity for teaching and learning activities to be carried out accommodating various "individual traits based on their knowledge, background and interest" as suggested by Danchak (2004, p. 93). This is in fact a positive departure from the traditional teaching learning activity specifically related to the aspect of narrative writing.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the CoI model is suitable for studying a community in the online virtual environment and it is a simple as well as efficient model. The teacher must know his /her pedagogical role to play in the online environment. The teacher must also know when to intervene and what to intervene about. In this study, the teacher played a dominant role and this behaviour is an extension of teacher-centred behaviour in the traditional learning environment to the online learning environment. In the online environment, students should be encouraged to ask questions that motivate them to seek new insights.

The emerging descriptors point to the social and cultural differences. Although the CoI model is an established and tested model in many studies in the past decade (Archer, 2010; Shea & Bidjerano, 2009; Akyol & Garrison, 2008), it does not mean that this model is completely refined and applicable worldwide. In fact, there are always opportunities to further refine the model. Whenever models are used in different settings and for different types of tasks, there are always new emerging findings that can be used to improve the model further. Such a situation has arisen in this study. This study is considered different from the previous studies as it explored the experiences of teachers and students in the Malaysian ESL context. Most of the previous studies related to the CoI model centred on undergraduate students in institutions of higher education (Toth *et al.*, 2010). This study placed the model in a new environment and attempted to break new grounds involving the application of the CoI model in a specific secondary school. The study found conformity as well as divergence from the principles and application of the CoI model. It should be noted that the study was conducted in a specific setting with a small number of participants. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to other English teaching contexts. More studies should be conducted to investigate the robustness of the findings.

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## Debate as a Pedagogical Tool to Develop Soft Skills in EFL/ESL Classroom: A Qualitative Case Study

Aclan, E. M.<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Noor Hashima Abd Aziz<sup>2</sup> and Valdez, N. P.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*University Research Center, Adventist University of the Philippines, Puting Kahoy, Silang Cavite, Philippines*

<sup>2</sup>*School of Education and Modern Languages, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

Soft skills development is seen as paramount in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy but pedagogical tools to realise it are scanty. Thus, this study describes how debate, as a pedagogical tool with three stages (i.e., pre-debate, actual debate and post-debate), can develop the soft skills prescribed in the Malaysian Soft Skills Development Module (MSSDM). The key informants were five debate experts with debating experience and have taught All-Asians Parliamentary Debate (APD) for at least two years in the EFL/ESL contexts in the ASEAN region. A semi-structured one-on-one interview was used to gather the data. To triangulate the debate experts' perspective, a focus group interview was conducted with six classroom debate students from three ASEAN countries. The transcribed data were analysed using data analysis flow model where the data were condensed, sorted out, focused, organised and presented using the participants' verbatim words. In the findings, the participants discussed how the pre-debate, the crucial foundation stage to outline the team's case and arguments supported by evidences from rigid research, can develop all the soft skills in MSSDM, especially the teamwork and critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They also described how the actual debate, the most challenging stage because of the time limit in both speech and Point-of-Information, can develop soft skills, particularly quick critical thinking and effective communication skills. They also explained how the post-debate can develop the various soft skills by highlighting lifelong learning and information management and communication skills. From the findings, a debate pedagogical model to teach soft skills was developed.

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#### *E-mail addresses:*

nice\_aclan@yahoo.com (Aclan, E. M.),  
noor934@uum.edu.my (Noor Hashima Abd Aziz),  
nenzvaldez@yahoo.com (Valdez, N. P.)

\* Corresponding author

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## INTRODUCTION

In this highly competitive globalised 21<sup>st</sup> century, human resource units have changed from choosing employees who are well equipped with only technical skills to those with a certain degree of both desirable soft skills known as employability skills and hard skills. In fact, many companies worldwide nowadays put a greater weight on soft skills over technical skills, while others consider them equally important or complementary to each other (Cranmer, 2006; Young & Chapman, 2011). Soft skills are “abilities and traits that pertain to personality, attitude, and behavior rather than to formal or technical knowledge” (Moss & Tilly, 2001, p. 44). They form a cluster of personal and people-oriented skills such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, creativity and research skills, which increase individuals’ chances for employability, job promotion and success. However, even if soft skills’ crucial role is recognised in the workplace worldwide, in reality, there is a mismatch between graduates’ acquired soft skills and the jobs’ requirements.

In a survey conducted by the American Management Association (AMA) with 2,115 managers and executives worldwide, critical thinking was found to be a crucial skill for workers to have in order to contribute to their company’s growth (The Nation, 2011). Workers need to have excellent critical thinking skills among other soft skills for them to adjust to new roles, identify and understand issues quickly and provide solutions effectively in the ever changing economy and job environment. However,

critical thinking is decried lacking by business people, experts, scholars and academicians among Thai students and graduates (Buranapatana, 2006; The Nation, 2011). Communication skill in English is another soft skill that Thai students and graduates reported to lag behind compared to their ASEAN counterparts (The Nation, 2013).

A study by People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) found that four out of 10 new graduates seeking for a job were not hired because they lacked key skills such as critical thinking, initiative and effective communication skills (Rosero, 2012). It is not only in the Philippines, Thailand and other Asian countries that the lack of soft skills is a pressing societal problem but also all over the world, even in highly developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Buranapatana, 2006; Schleicher, 2012).

Research done in Malaysia discovered that there is a mismatch between the job market requirements and the acquired employability skills or soft skills of the graduates leading to unemployment (Hairuzila *et al.*, 2009; Hasyamuddin *et al.*, 2009; Riam, 2012). This mismatch is associated with the education sector imparting the wrong knowledge from basic education to higher education producing graduates who are generally technically skilled but lacking of soft skills such as communication and critical thinking skills (Hasyamuddin *et al.*, 2009; Shakir, 2009). With Malaysia’s former Prime Minister,

YAB Dato' Seri Abdullah Bin Haji Ahmad Badawi's recognition of human capital development as a vital driving force to push forward the country's economy, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) declared that all government universities of the country should include soft skills in the curriculum of their undergraduates (Shakir, 2009). Thus, MoHE developed the Malaysian Soft Skills Development Module (MSSDM) for higher educational institutions (HEIs) to implement. Universiti Teknikal Malaysia (UTeM) lists the following seven components adopted from MoHE: communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, teamwork skills, lifelong learning and information management skills, entrepreneurship skills, professional ethics and morals, and leadership skills. MSSDM was therefore used as *a priori* framework in conducting this qualitative case study focusing on how debate could develop these soft skills after pilot studies had shown that these seven MSSDM soft skills could be developed through debates.

It is the responsibility of HEIs to develop soft skills such as those laid down in the MSSDM among their students in order to narrow the gap between graduates' acquired soft skills and the jobs' requirements in the ASEAN region. Narrowing such gap will help realise ASEAN's vision to push an integrated economy forward through the ASEAN Economic Cooperation (AEC). The region should give priority in developing its human capital just like the initiatives done in Australia and the European Union, which mandate the development of soft

skills. Preparing the labour force to be attuned to the needs of the growing demand of the region for well-equipped human resources will greatly help realise the AEC 2020 objectives. For example, improving infrastructures, services, products and so on requires application of soft skills such as critical thinking and problem solving skills, teamwork and especially communication skills in English considering that each country in the region has its own languages other than English.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Even if soft skill frameworks such as the MSSDM are in place, the success of their implementation is still bleak for the lack of clear direction on how they would be taught, given the nature of soft skills which are so broad and subjective. Universities take their own initiatives in developing their own ways of implementing MSSDM as evident in the various literatures by Hairuzila *et al.* (2009), Hasyamuddin *et al.* (2009), Riam (2012), Ruhanita *et al.* (2012), and Sulaiman *et al.* (2008). Shakir (2009) pointed out that "the development of soft skills amongst undergraduates remains a difficult task as it involves less measurable elements..." (p. 310). Shakir further depicted the lack of critical thinking skills due to rote learning. She also explained the deterioration of English communication skills among Malaysian graduates brought about by the changes in the medium of instruction. She said, "This concern is well founded considering the expansion of the Malaysian economy in the era of globalization where

the use of English is universally required..." (p. 310). The studies of Ahmad and Siti Nur Kamariah (2009) and Hasyamuddin *et al.* (2009) used Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as an approach in developing soft skills in the HEIs. Although Hasmayuddin *et al.* (2009) concluded that PBL is an effective learning method in their mixed-method study, they mentioned only communication, leadership and problem-solving skills as the soft skills developed by PBL. The study by Ruhanita *et al.* (2012) used industrial training to enhance soft skills among accounting undergraduate students. Their study found that the top three soft skills the respondents enhanced during the 6-month industrial training were time management, oral communication and working in group. Critical thinking skill, which is considered a very crucial soft skill in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy and is associated with debate in the literature, was ranked only 11<sup>th</sup> by the respondents. Thus, there is a need to explore more approaches, specifically a stand-alone pedagogical tool that may teach all the soft skills in MSSDM in one course or activity.

Debate, "the process of inquiry and advocacy, a way of arriving at a reasoned judgment on a proposition" (Freeley & Steinberg, 2012, p. 6), has been known in the literature for its benefits particularly in developing students' multiple soft skills. For instance, Hall (2011) found that debate can enhance critical thinking and communication skills that include organisation of ideas, listening and confidence. Similarly, Yang and Rusli (2012) also discovered that debate

as a pedagogical tool enhances critical thinking and higher order thinking and study skills compared to traditional teaching methods such as lecture. Goodwin's (2003) findings also revealed that debate can develop communication skills, critical thinking, teamwork and collaboration, and open-mindedness. Nakano and Inoue (2004) and Akerman and Neale (2011) reported that debate could develop communication skills in English if it is not the first language of the students. However, debate is more commonly used as a competitive activity limited to just a few students, usually the proficient and advanced ones, rather than a pedagogical tool used in the classroom (Parcher, 1998; Snider & Schnurer, 2006; Akerman & Neale, 2011; Yang & Rusli, 2012).

Pedagogy is defined by Hardman (2008) as "a structured process whereby a culturally more experienced peer or teacher uses cultural tools to mediate or guide a novice into established, relatively stable ways of knowing and being within a particular, institutional context, in such a way that the knowledge and skills the novice acquires lead to relatively lasting changes in the novice's behaviour, that is, learning" (p. 65). Debate as a pedagogical tool adheres to the Activity Theory developed by Vygotsky, Leontiev and Ergestrom (cited in Hardman, 2008), which considers all parts of the whole activity leading to the student's learning or what Hardman calls "lasting changes" (p. 65). It is also supported by Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning as debate uses both lower order and higher order

cognitive skills including knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis. Higher order skills are not covered in many classroom activities causing the students to end up in just remembering the facts but are not able to apply them to create new things.

Debate, as an ancient teaching method used by the Greeks 4,000 years ago (Darby, 2007), has been widespread as an extra-curricular activity in Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, usually in the form of competitions but not as a classroom activity. It is one of the co-curricular activities mentioned by Sulaiman *et al.* (2008) to develop soft skills in Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. The preparation and delivery of arguments in debates give students the chance to develop their research skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, communication skills and self-confidence (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2008). Hairuzila *et al.* (2014) identified these as the skills emphasised by lecturers when integrating soft skills in the teaching of hard sciences in their preliminary study. Hairuzila *et al.*'s study also found that cooperative learning, problem-based learning and teacher-centred approach were the top three teaching approaches regularly used by lecturers in integrating soft skills. They explained that traditional teacher-centred approach in the form of lecture is used by lecturers handling big classes to cover the syllabus. However, the necessary soft skills that should be acquired by the students are neglected. One of Hairuzila *et al.*'s lecturer participants said:

*Some of the technical courses especially engineering core subjects are 'highly technical' in nature. These are required and necessities to become professional engineers. Most of them are involved with 'technical mind challenge'. So it's not easy to blend all soft skills needed.* (p. 29)

In order to address the issue of the lack of time to develop the soft skills in MSSDM by integration, as indicated in the studies by Hairuzila *et al.* (2009, 2014), more approaches in teaching soft skills aside from integration which is not feasible for large classes need to be explored. This study thus explored how soft skills could be developed through debates as a stand-alone pedagogical strategy in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL)/English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts, where opportunity to practice English is limited. Hairuzila *et al.*'s study did not specify as to what medium of instruction that relates to communication skills was used in their study. Shakir (2009) pointed out that English is universally required for employment in Malaysia as graduates who are highly proficient in English "are able to make presentation to an international audience" (p. 310). However, one of the participants in the study of Zubairi *et al.* (2011) on English competency for entry-level employment in Malaysia said, "Nowadays, getting 7As and 8As is normal, and somehow it does not translate into an actual ability...it's a baseline but it does not really translate

into performance" (p. 17). In fact, some of the industries in their study made their own in-house impromptu assessment and training of English proficiency because recruited graduates might have scored high in national standardised tests but could not perform in actual English communication that incorporates critical thinking. Debate has the potential to address both actual performance in communication and critical thinking and problem-solving skills contrary to rote learning and learning for the test as evidenced in the literature (Goodwin, 2003; Kennedy, 2009; Hall, 2011; Yang & Rusli, 2012).

Furthermore, previous studies used quantitative and mixed methods which limited the understanding of how debate could develop soft skills. Goodwin (2003), using end-of-course evaluation through essay to find out the perspectives of students on classroom debate, reported that the preparation stage in debate was perceived by her participants as the best opportunity to listen to each other and they said that, "the real learning happened in the discussion" (p. 160). Goodwin's study conducted in the US, a native English-speaking country, led to the conceptualisation of this reported study in that the researcher extended the use of debate to the EFL/ESL context and critically examined not only the pre-debate and actual debate but also the post-debate stage which was not given attention in past studies. The paucity of literature analysing debate's three stages not given attention by researchers dealing with debate led to the conduct of this study in order to eventually

propose an alternative pedagogical model of teaching soft skills. Moreover, Yang and Rusli (2012), who researched on the use of debate to enhance pre-service teachers' learning and critical thinking, pointed out that the implementation of debate as a pedagogical tool and research on it is relatively limited.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As there is no single way and clear direction found so far to teach university students all the soft skills prescribed in MSSDM, as indicated in the previous studies, more approaches in teaching soft skills need to be explored. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe how debate, as a pedagogical tool with three stages (i.e., pre-debate, actual debate and post-debate) can develop the soft skills prescribed in MSSDM in the EFL/ESL contexts. From the perspective of five debate experts and six debate students from ASEAN countries, it emerged that the pre-debate stage is the most crucial as it is the foundation stage to outline the team's case and arguments supported by evidences from rigid research. The pre-debate stage can develop all the soft skills in MSSDM especially teamwork, leadership, lifelong learning and information management, as well as critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Another important pedagogical part is the actual debate, which is described by the participants as the most challenging stage because of the time limit in delivering their speech and raising and addressing POIs very quickly. The participants described

in details how this pedagogical stage can develop soft skills, particularly quick critical thinking and effective communication skills in English. They also described how the post-debate stage could develop the various soft skills by highlighting lifelong learning and information management and communication skills in English.

Bellon (2000) and Akerman and Neale (2011) stated that if debate was used in the non-English speaking context, it could improve students' communication skills in English. However, they recommended that more studies in the EFL/ESL context need to be done; thus, this study was conducted. Furthermore, the paucity of literature analysing debate's three stages led to the conduct of this study in order to propose an alternative pedagogical model to teach soft skills.

## METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research design, selection and characteristics of informants, data gathering procedures and data analysis. It also presents how the study's trustworthiness was ensured and ethical issues were considered.

### *Research Design*

As the study's purpose was to describe how All-Asians Parliamentary Debate as a pedagogical tool with three debate stages (i.e., pre-debate, actual debate and post-debate) can develop soft skills, it used the qualitative case study research design. Qualitative case study, according to Baxter and Jack (2008), "is an approach to research

that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources" (p. 544). Baxter and Jack explained that using a variety of sources ensures that the issue is explored not through a single lens but through multiple lenses to allow a deep understanding of the various facets of the phenomenon. Taking from constructivist paradigm, truth is relative and it depends on one's perspective (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003 as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). This study used the descriptive case study type as it describes how debate can develop the soft skills in MSSDM. Descriptive case study type is used to portray a phenomenon in its real-life context (Yin, as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). As an in-depth understanding of how debate as a pedagogical tool can develop soft skills, qualitative case study research design is appropriate as case study would "allow researchers to capture multiple realities that are not easily quantifiable" (Hancock & Algozzine, p. 72).

### *Informants of the Study*

The key informants of this study are debate experts who have been teaching debate using the All-Asians Parliamentary Debate (APD) format for at least two years. APD is the appropriate format for classroom debates with mixed English proficiency. As a simpler format with only two teams debating at one time, it allows the students to focus on the development of soft skills, particularly communication skills in English rather than on the complicated format. British Parliamentary (BP), for example, with four teams in each round is used by

advanced debaters usually in competitions. Other debate formats such as the classic Oxford-Oregon allows memorisation of speech; thus, it may encourage rote learning, while APD is highly interactive as POI may be raised and should be addressed during the delivery of the speech.

The five debate experts who also have prior debating experiences are from the ASEAN region in EFL/ESL contexts. Two are from Malaysia (ESL), two from Thailand (EFL) and one from the Philippines (ESL). Table 1 shows the demographic profile of this study's key informants.

In order to triangulate the debate experts' perspectives, a focus group of six students from the debate class in a university in north Malaysia was formed. The students took debate as a Listening and Speaking course taught intensively for four months, four times a week at 1.5 hours per day. The participants have few opportunities using English as they come from various countries in the ASEAN region, i.e. Thailand, Myanmar and Indonesia. Their average institutional Test of English as a Foreign Language (ITP-TOEFL) score is 391, which is categorised as elementary or basic user, which is far below the minimum

English proficiency entrance requirement in the western universities (usually 500-600). Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the focus group participants.

The debate experts are from both ESL and EFL contexts, while all the focus group members are from EFL context in the ASEAN region. Using separate groups of individuals in a case study is supported by Creswell (2012). The main purpose of the representation is not to generalise so as to gain a better understanding of each represented case so that the various contexts to be richly described in the findings will increase their transferability to the readers or researchers who will be using this study.

#### *Sampling Procedures*

For a qualitative case study, purposive sample should be drawn to build a variety of perspectives from different samples, acknowledge intensive study opportunities (Stake, 2005) and increase data richness and scope from multiple perspectives (Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Patton, 2015). Formal sampling in the selection of participants, which required criteria, was therefore necessary. These criteria include prior debating experience with at least two years

TABLE 1  
Demographic Profile of the Debate Experts

	Debate Expert (Pseudonym)	Country	Number of Years Debating	Number of Years Teaching Debate/ Coaching Debaters
1	Job	Thailand	6	4
2	Eric	Philippines	4	10
3	Prasit	Thailand	5	6
4	Joyce	Malaysia	3	2
5	Sonya	Malaysia	4	3

of debate teaching/coaching experience in the ASEAN region using the All-Asians Parliamentary Debate (APD). APD is a simpler debate format with three speakers on each side more appropriate in the EFL/ESL context with students of mixed English proficiency levels so that they will not deal with too many complexities. Similarly, the criteria for focus group consisting of debate students included from at least three different ASEAN countries in ESL/EFL context, with at least one semester of classroom APD experience, from three different intakes and from both genders.

The desired sample size for the one-on-one interview was two for each four ASEAN countries including Indonesia; however, it turned out that the other two who agreed to be interviewed in the Philippines have taught the more complex British Parliamentary (BP) format, instead of the simpler APD. This is the same with those contacted in Indonesia who revealed that they had used BP in teaching debate, and thus they were eliminated so that only those (five) who fit in the criteria and agreed to interview became the key participants of this study. For the focus group interview, there

were only eleven ASEAN students within the three intakes that debate was offered in the study locale. Although eight confirmed to participate in the interview, only six students participated in the actual interview. Nevertheless, three to five participants are more manageable particularly to avoid confusion on identifying speakers and on the data transcription and analysis as many participants may confuse the data transcriber (Creswell, 2012; Tracy, 2013; Patton, 2015).

The best sources of data for qualitative research are those who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Although there were only five key participants in this study, they provided rich data as all of them are experienced debaters excellent at supporting, explaining and substantiating their points extemporaneously. Data saturation desired to answer the study's research question was already reached on the third participant. Data saturation is an important factor to consider in data gathering and this is achieved when the participants say almost the same thing and any new data will no longer make a difference (Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Creswell, 2012; Tracy, 2013; Patton, 2015).

TABLE 2  
Demographic Profile of the Focus Group Participants

Focus Group Participants (Pseudonym)		Gender	Country	Entrance ITP-TOEFL Score
1	Nisa	Female	Thailand	353
2	Intan	Female	Indonesia	387
3	Myo	Male	Myanmar	417
4	Kittipat	Male	Thailand	420
5	Chatri	Male	Thailand	393
6	Andre	Male	Indonesia	377

### *Data Gathering Techniques and Procedures*

Semi-structured one-on-one interview (OOI), with the five debate experts who did not only debate but have taught debates, was the main data source to answer the research questions posed in this study. The participants were given a copy of the MSSDM framework a week before the interview to ensure understanding of soft skills. The one-on-one interview was based on a semi-structured interview guide allowing flexibility. Probes and follow-up questions were asked when the prepared questions were not satisfied, as suggested by Creswell (2012). The OOI, which lasted for an average of one hour 25 minutes, was audio-taped for higher fidelity and trustworthiness.

For the focus group interview (FGI), the participants were first asked to sign a consent letter and provide their demographic information. Then, the participants were told of the conduct of the interview, the approximate duration of the interview and that they should elaborate their answers in details as much as possible. They had been given a copy of the MSSDM framework a week earlier and also understood that probes or follow-up questions would be asked further for a more in-depth and rich information. The FGI as well as OOI were then transcribed and analysed.

### *Analysis and Interpretation of Data*

The transcribed one-on-one and focus group interview data were coded using the template approach suggested by Crabtree and Miller

(1999). In this analytical approach, the template was developed a priori based on a theoretical or conceptual framework and on the research question. In this study, MSSDM was used as the framework, thus the coding was based on MSSDM's seven soft skills which had been identified by the participants as developed by debating in the preliminary studies. King (2004) suggests that a priori code be developed after some preliminary exploration of data. The a priori codes developed in this study after the pilot interviews were communication skills (CS), critical thinking and problem solving skills (CTS), teamwork skills (TS), lifelong learning and information management (LL), entrepreneurship skill (ES), professional ethics and morals (EM), and leadership (LS). Meanwhile, the research question that guided the analysis was "How can debate as a pedagogical tool with three stages, i.e., pre-debate, actual debate and post-debate, develop soft skills indicated in MSDDM?" After two weeks, the coded data were revisited for recoding and evaluation of results. Following Miles, Huberman and Saldaña's (2014) data analysis flow model, the data were condensed, i.e. selected, focused and organised from the interview transcripts. Then, the condensed data were displayed using the participants' verbatim words and from these, conclusions were drawn. Data were interpreted following Boeije's (2010) and Creswell's (2012) definition of interpretation. Interpretation in qualitative research means that "the researcher steps back and forms some larger meaning about the phenomenon

based on personal views, comparisons with past studies, or both" (Creswell, 2012, p. 257). For Boeije (2010), findings are the "outcomes of the researcher's analytical activities (not the activities themselves) and consist of data and everything the researcher makes out of them, whether descriptions, theoretical models or explanations" (p. 196). In this study, the data were interpreted in the light of previous studies, theories and the researcher's personal views and explanations applying reflexivity.

#### *Ensuring Trustworthiness*

To ensure trustworthiness in this study, Guba's (1981, as cited in Krefting, 1991) model of trustworthiness was employed. Guba's model consists of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Triangulation, peer-debriefing, member check and appropriate interpretation were used to ensure credibility, the key strategy to achieve trustworthiness (Krefting, 1991) in this study's data gathering and interpretation. To increase the transferability and dependability of this study, thick description and data source triangulation and environmental triangulation with the participants from various countries were used. To fulfil confirmability, triangulation and reflexivity were applied in this study. Two types of triangulation used in this study include different methods (one-on-one interview and focus groups) and different types of groups (debate experts and students). Reflexivity is minimising bias by the researcher's focusing on the participants' meaning on how debate

can develop soft skills, not the researcher's own perspective, experience or meaning.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the findings of the study to answer the following research question: "From the perspective of the debate experts, how does debate as a pedagogical tool with three stages, i.e. pre-debate, actual debate and post-debate can develop soft skills prescribed in MSSDM?" Consequently, from the findings of the study, a pedagogical model for teaching debate is proposed.

### *Pre-debate Stage*

**Teamwork skill.** All the five debate experts consider teamwork as the top soft skill learned during the preparation stage. Job, Expert 1, a top debate adjudicator in tournaments in Thailand, debated from high school to college for six years and has been coaching university competitive debaters, teaching classroom debate to ESL/EFL students for four years and administering international programmes in a leading university in Bangkok. Job said, "Basically debate is a team sport. During the pre-debate task, the members of the team should help each other in gathering information and in brainstorming itself. So, teamwork is very important."

Sonya, a debate expert who is also one of the top national debate tournament adjudicators in Malaysia, highlighted proper coordination of team members as a crucial aspect during the preparation time. Sonya described how teamwork could be practiced

at the pre-debate stage, “Once we get the topic, we first discuss as a team as to how we gonna prepare like who’s gonna research on this. Then, we start our research for a fruitful brainstorming and outlining of our model and arguments.”

As described by the debate experts, preparation time is the most important part of the debate that necessitates collaboration as one member alone cannot be successful in the actual debate. The perspective of the debate experts on the importance of teamwork during the preparation stage is supported by the focus group interview with the debate students. Andre, a student from Indonesia, states, “Debate is like playing a football. Someone must do a specific job. And if someone is not prepared, he will affect the whole team.” He further describes how teamwork is practiced during the pre-debate stage, “It’s not good to debate if you don’t have any idea about the motion. So we must research and discuss with our team, we choose information relevant to make our argument strong, which evidences support our side. We prepare together.”

The perspective of Andre on classroom debating in terms of his description of how teamwork can be developed in pre-debate is not different from the view of debate experts who mostly shared about their tournament debating and coaching experiences. This finding is similar to that of Goodwin (2003) in terms of teamwork. Goodwin (2003) described well about how important pre-debate stage was although her analysis did not focus on stages. She reported that the small meetings were a comfortable

place to brainstorm, ask questions and “bring different thoughts together” “to expand our limited capacities” (p. 160), allowing students to better work together than doing individually. One of Goodwin’s participants said, “The debate and the small group preparation that preceded it was an extremely effective way to facilitate me actually doing the work” (p. 160). Goodwin’s participants described the pre-debate stage as the real learning stage that is better than the actual debate. Although Darby (2007), Inoue and Nakano (2004), Kennedy (2007) and Lieb (2008) reported that teamwork is one of the many benefits of debating, they did not explain how it is developed.

**Critical thinking and problem-solving skill.** The other soft skill developed during the pre-debate is critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Prasit, a debate expert, explained:

*Critical thinking is the core identity of debate. Debate is all about squeezing your brain, to be logical, to give reasons and evidences, to outwit the opponents... we have to solve a certain problem, define the motion, address the issues on the given motion so we've got to analyze a lot.*

Prasit underscored the importance of analysis to solve the problem in the given motion or topic. He also mentioned the paramount value of preparing for both sides and predicting the possible arguments of the

opposing side. From Prasit's point of view, problem-solving cannot be separated from critical thinking when it comes to debating. As part of the pedagogy, the pre-debate stage necessitates a great deal of analysis or critical thinking as students need to solve a problem in a motion they choose or assigned to them. In the Activity Theory, all parts of the activity should lead to learning and even the pre-debate stage of the debate realises this due to the nature of debate itself that requires systematic preparation.

Job, who is also a debate expert, shares the same idea with Prasit when he describes the aim of debate, "We need to scrutinize issues. We should identify how we're going to attack the other team. So, it's very important to have critical thinking skills and eventually problem solving because the aim of every debate is to solve a problem." Job defines and describes the relationship between critical thinking and problem-solving as used in MSSDM. Intan, from Indonesia, supports this relationship from debate students' perspective. She said, "The team will be thinking of a solution to a problem and how they can handle the arguments of the other team. So basically, they must prepare for two sides –how they can attack what the other side will be saying."

The experience of debate experts and the debate students do not differ. They both provide an understanding how the pre-debate stage can be an important platform for developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For both debate experts and students alike, it is not only

about preparing for both sides of the debate but providing "a better solution." Proving that a team's solution is better than the other team's requires a lot of critical thinking skills in that the team members need to analyse what makes their model better by providing evidences, as well as comparing and contrasting the team's model against the opponents' model. If debate is introduced in the classroom, rote learning, as Shakir (2009) calls for to be changed in the educational system, can be addressed. Davies (2006) argues that infusion (embedded or partial) approach to critical thinking is better than no treatment approach but not better than full treatment approach, i.e. teaching of reasoning and logic like debate. Therefore, debate as a pedagogical tool realises all the levels of Bloom's taxonomy in that students use the knowledge and information they research, analyse and synthesise information and create models to solve a problem. Critical thinking and problem-solving that uses higher-order cognitive skills is what Munzenmaier (2013) said as the taxonomy is intended for, i.e., what teachers have to reach when designing teaching objectives so that critical thinking, a highly needed skill to survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy, will be realised.

**Lifelong learning and information management.** Sonya describes her experience on how lifelong learning and information management can be developed during the preparation stage of the debate.

*When we prepare for our arguments,  
we need to research a lot to gather  
information from various sources*

*and decide which info is relevant to our case or strongly support our case. We prepare for both our case and the possible arguments of the opponent so we need to open up our mind to ideas for or against our case.*

Lifelong learning and information management is associated by both debate experts and students to research skill. Research skill is one of the top benefits of debating that emerged in the findings of Akerman and Neale (2011) and the participants of this study justified how it can be synonymous with lifelong learning and information management. From the perspective of the study's participants, the pre-debate stage requires debaters to research and manage relevant information from various sources with the topic assigned to them. This necessity leads to the development of this important soft skill, lifelong learning and information management.

**Communication skill.** The participants explained how communication skill is developed during the preparation stage. Job, for example, emphasises on the need for coherence during the actual debate which can be achieved only through proper communication during the pre-debate stage. When students prepare for the debate, they indeed develop their communication skills as they need to talk with each other so that their arguments will cohere or link to each other and that they will not duplicate the points of their team-mates. Sonya, who is

also a debate expert like Job, shares a very important pedagogical aspect of learning English in her statements below.

*In the preparation for the debate, I need to read a lot and reading not only increased my knowledge or my ideas but also improved my vocabulary. Because when I read, I get lots of new information and meet new words and I try to remember them. I write the new words I learn and try using them during the debate and even after.*

Sonya's improvement in communication skills, particularly from reading and specifically her gaining of vocabulary by the necessity to research prior to debate, is also confirmed by Kittipat. As a Thai student who has limited opportunities to practice English, Kittipat attributes his learning of unfamiliar and difficult words in English to his debating. He said, "In debate, especially when we're given academic topics we never know before, we have to research a lot. By reading a lot, we got a lot of information[s] and new words, new vocabulary to improve our English."

Vocabulary development is what Sonya and Kittipat attributed as a major aspect of the pre-debate stage mainly achieved by the extensive reading required during the pre-debate. Vocabulary is necessary not only in reading but also in speaking, listening and writing. According to Wilkins (1987), "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can

be conveyed" (p. 135). Sternberg (1987) said that it is common knowledge that people learn most of their vocabulary by reading. Furthermore, Krashen (1993) stated that, "reading is the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers" (p. 23). Like Krashen (1993), Hadley (2000) believes in contextualised language learning and teaching. In debate, the unfamiliar words are used in context that facilitates learning. Sonya writes the new words she learns and uses them in context during the debate.

Andre also said, "Debating helped me not only with my speaking and listening but also in reading and writing. Obviously, we have to speak and listen a lot, and of course, read a lot before the debate. But for writing, it helps me to quickly organise my ideas and support my points with evidences to make it [them] strong. Also I gain a lot of ideas and words by debating that can help me a lot when writing." Participants also said they have to remember not only the ideas but also the new words they have learned to be more effective in delivering their speeches. This finding is related to the Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1987), i.e. that once learners are exposed to comprehensible inputs, they acquire those and incorporate them with their interlanguage system. This is also supported by the Noticing Hypothesis of Schmidt (1986, as cited by Richards, 2008) proposing that for learners to acquire new forms from inputs, it is necessary to notice such forms in the input. If the students

are conscious in gaining more words to add to their repertoire or in improving their grammar, for example, they notice unfamiliar words and new structures they encounter while reading or listening.

#### *Other soft skills developed in the pre-debate stage*

Leadership is another soft skill that can be developed during the pre-debate stage according to the debate experts and debate students. Sonya described the role of a leader in the context of debate as someone who sets the direction of the preparation stage, which predicts the success of the team in the actual debate. Prasit, on the other hand, explained how redundancy and overlap of arguments can be avoided during the debate through the direction of a good leader at the preparation time. He said that it is the leader who sets the team split prior to the debate so that there will be no overlap in the arguments to be delivered by the team members. Like the debate experts, Nisa points out that if there is a team, there should be a leader to guide the group particularly on the assignment of topics to prepare. Intan also said that "If there's no leader when we prepare it's not well organized, no clear direction." How leadership can be developed was not described in the previous literature; thus, this finding will provide illumination on how debate can develop leadership. Parcher (1998) admits the dearth of studies relating debate to the development of leadership. He only mentioned the survey conducted by Klopff in 1967 in Freedom and Union magazine. Klopff found out that

among the 160 leaders as respondents, 100 had debated and 90 of these 100 believed that their debating experience helped them a great deal in their leadership role although there is no explanation how it helped them.

Professional ethics and morals (EM) is covered in debate by certain choices of motions, i.e. in the principle or value-judgment debate, according to the participants of this study. Sonya describes how EM can be developed during the pre-debate stage using LGBT issue as an example. She said, "We tackle ethical and moral issues, understanding why people do what they do and why people believe what they believe and how we can tell whether it's morally right or wrong." For the participants, EM can be developed by discussing both sides of moral and ethical issues. Sonya further explained that, "We're given the opportunity to evaluate the issues, not necessarily supporting or condemning LGBT...we know it's a taboo in Islam religion...and standards for morality and ethics always come in the discussions to promote understanding and respect." Sonya also shares that debating can make students open-minded, not just conforming or condemning but deeply understanding both sides of the issue to make well-informed ethical choices.

Chatri, an engineering student, also showed how EM can be developed by looking into the possible effects of unethical practice to the society or the humanity. In debating on human cloning, Chatri said he realised that people should be responsible to the society and be concerned on the effects

of human inventions that might possibly ruin humanity. Clarkeburn (2002, as cited in Ozolins, 2005) posited that higher education should train students to be ethically sensitive and be able to be logical or to reason well because ethics courses by themselves are not enough to inculcate good characters and good virtues. Debate can develop this sensitivity as Goodwin (2003) reported, as well as logical reasoning based on what the participants of this study described. Ozolins (2005) believes that ethics training among university students will expose them to handling moral dilemmas they might face within their chosen fields of profession when they graduate. Indeed, debate can develop students' characters and concern to moral issues not only affecting them but also their fellowmen through carefully designed motions. It is the responsibility of educators to develop not just critically thinking individuals but also ethically sensitive and morally upright citizens who think not only of their own benefits but of the humanity.

Like professional ethics and morals, entrepreneurship skill (ES) can be developed by debating with certain motions or topics, according to the participants of this study. The participants describe how it can be developed at the pre-debate stage. Prasit explained that ES can be developed with any motion related to business or economics or even politics that may touch on creation of business opportunities such as the motion, "This house would appoint Myanmar as future ASEAN chair." He said that this motion deals not only about the political condition of Myanmar in relation

to ASEAN, the debaters discussed about the business opportunities for the Burmese people and for the whole ASEAN block that may be opened if the country would be chair. Debaters discussed how the motion could create jobs if investors would be allowed to enter the country should leaders change their political ways. Prasit said that it is through the discussion during the brainstorming that ES can be developed particularly the ability to identify business opportunities and create jobs. This study's finding does the groundwork in terms of entrepreneurship skill as it is able to establish and describe that, indeed, debate as a pedagogical tool can develop entrepreneurship skill which is not identified in previous studies on debate.

#### *The Actual Debate*

The participants of this study consider the actual debate as the most challenging part. They claimed that the actual debate is equally important as the pre-debate stage in terms of developing soft skills although the way these skills are developed vary in each stage. Communication skills and critical thinking skills are more important during the actual debate while teamwork and lifelong learning, critical thinking and information management are crucial in the preparation stage. However, the participants recognised that the seven soft skills in MSSDM can be developed during the debate although they vary in the way they are practiced. This section will discuss only on how the top two soft skills prescribed in MSSDM can be developed at the actual debate stage.

**Communication and critical thinking skills.** Communication skill and critical thinking skill emerged as among the top two soft skills in MSSDM identified by the participants of this study developed at the actual debate stage. Job explained, "Students have to be able to effectively discuss their own analysis in their arguments. Because no matter how good they are during the preparation stage if they cannot relate the information to the set of judges then they will still not win." Job portrayed the inseparable function of communication skill, critical thinking and problem-solving skills as debaters need to analyse in presenting their arguments. This connection between communication and critical thinking skills is also described by Myo, a debate student from Myanmar.

*Before, I closed my eyes to remember what I memorized before the debate. But this is not good because if we debate, we interact with our opponents. They stand up to ask POI [Point of Information] so I don't see them. Then if you memorize what you say, you will lose everything. My teacher in debate said I should not to read what I write, only see it or, or glance sometimes. Then I also answer POI and I like it. I'm not afraid anymore like before in my first time.*

Not only Job and Myo did present the relationship between communication and critical thinking skills, Chatri, a debate

student from Thailand, also said, “During the debate, you will learn how to solve a problem and communicate with others. I have no chance like this before in my high school, so I’m afraid to say what I think but in debate class, I learn to say my opinions.” For Chatri, communicating and thinking critically go simultaneously to show the complexity of debate as an activity. He also needed to remember what he read during the preparation time to present at the actual debate when he speaks and listens to his opponents. Debaters also outline their points by writing notes during the preparation stage. Thus, there is an integration of skills that Brown (2001) suggests for communicative language teaching and learning, as well as task-based language teaching, i.e. incorporating the four macro-skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) when teaching the target language. Ellis (2003) points out that language learners need to solve a problem and practice complex language functions like they use the language in the real world. Chatri further shared his experience about learning English communication skills implying his need for a more complex and challenging communication activities other than just games back in high school, as follows:

*I hate my teachers in English always playing game all the time. I could not learn much in playing only in the class like the teacher was lazy and teach us very simple. But in debate, we have to think a lot and speak very long and response to*

*the POI. It’s very good way to learn real communication and best way of thinking solution for problem very fast and speak more effectively.*

Chatri pointed out a very relevant point to classroom pedagogy, particularly in language teaching when playing games is involved. While playing game is a fun way of teaching language, it could not occupy all the learning time particularly for advanced students who need more challenging lessons so they would not plateau in their learning (Richards, 2008). Munzenmaier (2013) suggests that Bloom’s Taxonomy be fully used in any classroom activity if meaningful and useful learning is desired. Chatri claimed that debate is a good way to learn communication skills as it requires a great deal of critical thinking skills, which means the activity itself encourages the natural way of using language and language use does not separate lower and higher cognitive skills as they are intertwined. For Chatri, communication involves responding to interlocutors such as answering POI which uses analytical skills at the same time applying previously acquired knowledge and improving fluency in speaking which cannot be achieved by games alone.

The participants of this study claimed that POI is the most challenging part of the debate as they would not be able to determine what point would be exactly raised by their opponents yet they need to address it on the spot during their speech; otherwise, they would lose points for not engaging with their opponent. Andre

said, "What I like most about this debate is the POI because asking and answering question smartly in just seconds, within the allowed time, is so challenging." Andre implied that POI is challenging because the speaker may be disrupted anytime during his speech to answer a POI raised so he/she must answer and this will distort the flow of any prepared speech requiring focus. The time pressure is considered by students as a good motivation for them to practice their communication skills within limited time. This can be related to Dornyei's (2001) language learning motivation theory in which learners could be motivated by challenging activities. If the activity is too easy, such as in the game described by Chatri, students would not be interested in learning, so the time pressure and the complexity of the activity could push them to perform because they are challenged. Although some students might see POI or debate in general as threatening at first, quick analysis of challenging situations in the knowledge economy is highly required. Thus, Torff (2006) recommends the explicit teaching of critical teaching skills.

Debate's interactive nature fits in the ASEAN EFL/ESL classroom well because in the real world, memorised speech is not the norm as people communicate with each other in a spontaneous way without reading a note. Richards (2008) argued that for students with advanced proficiency not to plateau in their language, they should be provided with learning opportunities that would make them motivated to learn and improve. Debate prepares students

to be communicative in the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market when communication is of utmost importance in presenting ideas and answering on-the-spot questions. Even if engineers and entrepreneurs have brilliant ideas, if they are not able to communicate them to their stakeholders, such plans will not work as teamwork is necessary and communication is indispensable in any organisation.

### *The Post-Debate Stage*

The post-debate is the stage when adjudicators give oral adjudication, comments and suggestions to the debaters intended to make the debaters improve in their next debate rounds. In this section, three major soft skills will be discussed as to how they can be developed at this stage.

**Lifelong learning and information management.** The participants of this study described how lifelong learning and information management can be learned at the post-debate stage. Sonya shared her perspective as follows:

*At the end of every debate, we're excited and curious what the adjudicators would tell us. Of course, we learn a lot from them as they are trained in adjudicating. Secondly, when adjus [adjudicators] tell us our strengths and weaknesses during the debate, we become open-minded in order for us to improve in the next rounds. They also tell us how we can improve managing our information like what relevant*

*info we could have highlighted or the irrelevant info we should have omitted from our speech.*

Sonya mentioned about becoming open-minded in order to learn and understand different sides of what debaters believe in or the ideas they hold for themselves. This finding is consistent with that of Goodwin (2003), Hall (2007) and Kennedy (2009), who reported that debates could make students broad-minded and open to new ideas because debating open up for many possible interpretations of issues. Without such open-mindedness, students could be one-sided and would not respect others' ideas and opinions. This open-mindedness, according to Goodwin (2003), leads to empathy. Sonya also said debaters are eager to listen to how the judges assess their performance. It is the time when debaters are presented their strong points as well as their weak points so that they can improve in the next debates. Thus, debate as a pedagogical tool satisfies this curiosity for learning from various sources including from the adjudicators who serve as the mirror of the students' debating performance. The post-debate stage is the debriefing after an intense argumentation so it is the stage intended for 'enlightenment', as Darby (2007) refers to it. Darby said that after the completion of each week's debate, learners and their instructor leave the classroom better in expressing their personal opinions on issues affecting them being enlightened by both sides of the debate.

**Critical thinking skill.** Job said that assessing the entire debate can help debaters to be critical and open-minded to see how they performed. Metacognition is necessary in learning as it is the way individuals evaluate themselves after performing or doing a certain task. It can also be related to Gardner's (1983) Intrapersonal Intelligence when people have the ability to assess themselves to reflect and monitor their own progress, thoughts and feelings, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. This monitoring needs critical thinking as it is an evaluation or assessment of oneself. In Bloom's Taxonomy, assessing, comparing, monitoring and evaluating fall under the higher order thinking skills which are suggested to avoid rote learning and achieve meaningful learning outcomes.

**Communication skills.** Communication skill is seen as very important in the actual debate and the participants of this study still consider it important at the post-debate stage. Job described the process of communication in terms of listening that involves processing of information. Moreover, Job also mentioned about the chance given to debaters to ask questions to the adjudicators and interact with their teammates and opponents at the post-debate stage. In the interaction model of language teaching, interactions of teachers with their students or among small group of students help learners perform better academically as genuine dialogue or interactions are more beneficial than traditional teacher-centred classrooms. Interaction model facilitates language learning of students

rather than controlling it while encouraging the development of higher-order cognitive thinking skills (Levine & McCloskey, 2013).

This study's participants recognised the importance of communication skills in terms of listening to the adjudicators they viewed as a source of learning. In the Input Hypothesis by Stephen Krashen (1987), language input from listening or reading is considered very important in learning the target language. Krashen states that the best language input (*i*) is something that is understandable to the language learners but should be a step beyond their current level of understanding or competence (*i + 1*). Krashen encourages a natural way of using the language, thus the teacher's role is to provide enough input that will make the students interact with one another to promote understanding and use of language. Communication activities should include negotiation of meaning for students to practice more complex structures to enhance the language acquisition process. If better and more learning outcomes are desired, more inputs should be provided and debate qualifies as good quality and abundant input not only for language learning but also in terms of content.

The findings derived from the analysis of the interview data focused on the soft skills developed through the debate format with three stages, namely, pre-debate, actual debate and post-debate. The findings highlighted the themes or the specific pedagogical techniques and method as pedagogical tool for enhancing soft skills.

#### *Proposed three-stage debate pedagogical model*

From the findings on how debate can develop the soft skills prescribed in MSSDM from the perspective of the debate experts and triangulated by debate students, the following pedagogical model was developed to teach soft skills using debate in the EFL/ESL classrooms with mixed language proficiency. It is an alternative model in teaching multiple soft skills in the EFL/ESL classroom or whatever context it may be applicable. This pedagogical model is a major contribution of this study to the body of literature to teaching both debate and soft skills. As pedagogy means a structured process in the teaching-learning situation designed by an experienced individual to teach a novice (Hardman, 2008), pedagogical tasks in this study refer to the specific activities required in each debate stage to perform the main task, i.e., debate. Adhering to Vygotsky's Activity Theory, debate requires the performance of inter-related pedagogical tasks towards the completion of the main task, and in this case, the actual debate. Even the post-debate stage is geared towards improvement of debating skills and eventually development of soft skills. All the mini-tasks such as the researching and brainstorming are directed to soft skills development.

As shown in Table 3, the first column shows the three stages of debate with the corresponding pedagogical tasks in the second column and the target skills for each stage in the third column. In the pre-debate stage, team discussion on what to research

is crucial. Once the team-members have gathered relevant information through research, they brainstorm to identify issues, design and propose solutions and models and outline their arguments and counter-arguments. The leader will assign the

team split so there will be no overlapping of arguments and consistency, and thus, coherence among members will be achieved. The team members will have to structure their speech, deciding which ideas to come first and next, and how they will signpost

TABLE 3  
Three-Stage Debate Pedagogical Model to Teach Soft Skills

DEBATE STAGE	PEDAGOGICAL TASKS	TARGET SOFT SKILLS
PRE-DEBATE	Team discussion on what to research Researching collaboratively and individually on the topic Brainstorming with team-members to identify issues, design and propose solutions and models Preparation/Outlining of arguments and counter-arguments /Team-split Speech preparation – structuring, prioritising, signposting	Teamwork Lifelong learning and information management Critical thinking and problem-solving skills Leadership Communication skills Professional ethics and morals* Entrepreneurship*
ACTUAL DEBATE	SPEAKER Speech delivery with rebuttals/ presentation of case/ model/ arguments/counter-model/counter-arguments Accepting Point of Information (POI)/Quick analysis and response to POI NON-SPEAKER/TEAM-MATE Note-taking while listening to the speech Collaboration with team-mates for consistency NON-SPEAKER/OPPOSITE SIDE Note-taking and analysis to outline rebuttals/counter-arguments Raising POI to weaken a strong point given by the speaker Sharing of ideas in response to important points raised by the speaker	Communication skills Critical thinking and problem-solving skills Lifelong learning and information management Teamwork Leadership Entrepreneurship* Professional ethics and morals* (= Depending on the choice of motions)
POST-DEBATE	Listening to the adjudicator's comments and suggestions on how to improve debating techniques, speech structure/organisation, delivery and effective language use  Debriefing and discussion with team-mates, adjudicator, and opponents for improvement of analysis, use of information, logic, raising or responding to POI, etc.  Reflection on how to address issues; define the motion; improve research, preparation teamwork and other aspects of the debate	Communication skills Critical thinking and problem-solving skills Lifelong learning and information management Teamwork Leadership

so that they will be easily followed by their audience.

In the actual debate, each team member will take turn to deliver a speech in seven minutes. While one debater delivers a speech, any of the opponents can raise a POI which the speaker needs to address if he/she decides to accept it. Based on APD rule, every speaker needs to accept at least two POIs and this aspect is where interaction is ensured and memorisation is discouraged. The speakers are also required to give a rebuttal during the speech which requires active listening, engagement and quick analysis among the debaters. Collaboration among team members is also necessary at this stage and the leader facilitates the flow and order of the debate.

The post-debate stage is the debriefing session where the adjudicator presents the strengths and weaknesses of both sides and each speaker. It requires the debaters to listen to comments and suggestions for their improvement in the next rounds, and thus they need to reflect on their own performance in terms of matter, manner and method as the criteria for judging. At this stage, the debaters are also given the chance to ask questions to the adjudicator and discuss with their team-mates and opponents.

With each debate stage serving different purposes to develop the various soft skills in MSSDM and requiring the debate participants different roles to perform, this pedagogical model adheres to the Activity Theory that considers the entire learning community with specific and congruent

roles to play at a time. For example, while one speaker is delivering a speech, others are listening, note-taking and analysing for their rebuttals or POI and the adjudicator is doing the same things for her/his comments and suggestions later. It also conforms with Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning in that the students go through certain stages of learning. The preparation stage is laying the foundation for the whole debate process as the learners acquire knowledge through research and brainstorming then they actualise such knowledge to build their case supported by evidences during the debate. They compare and contrast their models to defend their side and weaken the other side's arguments by rebuttals and POIs, and strengthen their own side through reasons, examples, analysis and synthesis. Applying the knowledge the learners gained during the preparation and analysing, synthesising, evaluating and creating models during the actual debate, as well as evaluating and analysing at the post-debate are higher order cognitive skills in Bloom's Taxonomy.

## CONCLUSION

The participants of this study consider the pre-debate stage as the most crucial in terms of laying the foundation of the team's case and arguments supported by evidences from rigid research and they have shown how the soft skills in MSSDM can be developed at this stage. They consider the actual debate as the most challenging part because of the time limit in both speech and POI that require fast critical thinking and effective communication skills. They described how

these skills can be developed during the actual debate. They have also shown how the post-debate can develop the various soft skills. Thus, to answer the Research Question, "How can each debate stage – pre-debate, actual debate and post-debate - as a pedagogical tool develop the soft skills prescribed in MSSDM?", each stage can develop various soft skills prescribed in MSSDM in different ways as described by the participants. In this paper, only the top soft skills for each debate stage were presented with the participants' verbatim words, except in the pre-debate stage where all the seven soft skills in MSSDM were described. For the actual debate, only the top two soft skills (i.e., communication and critical thinking skills) were presented in the findings due to space limits although the participants described how debate could develop all the seven soft skills. In the post-debate, the participants described how the five soft skills, i.e. lifelong learning, critical thinking, communication skills, teamwork and leadership, can be developed. In this paper, however, only the first three were presented.

As the participants described how debate can develop multiple soft skills using the three-stage debate, a pedagogical model was developed and proposed to be used not only in the ASEAN countries but in any EFL/ESL classrooms, where the soft skills mentioned in this study are needed and applicable. The issue that debate is seen appropriate for advanced learners in both critical thinking and communication skills which are commonly used in tournaments with usually well-developed students

have been addressed in this paper as the focus group participants were from the elementary language proficiency level. Not only this pedagogical model can develop communication and critical thinking skills, but all the soft skills outlined in the MSSDM. Therefore, debate can be used as a stand-alone pedagogical tool to develop soft skills. If used in the classroom, it can prepare graduates to face the challenging 21<sup>st</sup> century globalised workplace, particularly in the ASEAN region.

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## A Case Study of Blog-Based Language Learning: An Investigation into ESL Learners' Interaction

Zarei, N.\* and Supyan, H.

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics. Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

Language learning is a continuous process that takes place not only in the classroom but also beyond the walls of the classroom with the help of technological tools. One of such tools includes the use of blog as an easily accessible gadget that can facilitate learners' language learning and improve their autonomous learning. The present study explores how the use of language learning materials and interaction in the Learning Management Blog (LMB) contribute to the language learning process. The samples of the study consisted of 14 ESL students studying at a local university in Malaysia. The researchers used the Response Analysis Tool (REAT) as a research instrument and data were analysed qualitatively through content analysis. The results of the study showed that the ESL students made use of meaningful interaction among them in LMB forum and improved their language learning. In addition, the findings of the study revealed that the students were eager to get involved in online interactions and develop different language skills and language patterns as well.

*Keywords:* Learning Management Blog, E-learning environment, ESL, interaction

### INTRODUCTION

Since the 90's, online environments such as blogs, podcasts and web forums have provided learners with interactive environments to facilitate language learning

anywhere and anytime. These technological tools can be integrated into English language classes as a scaffolding system to support learners' language learning. As an online learning platform, Learning Management Blog (LMB) can create opportunities for sharing information and providing rich inputs and supportive learning materials that learners can benefit from. Previous researchers emphasised the importance of sufficient language inputs in L2 acquisition

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*E-mail addresses:*

nafiseh\_zarei@yahoo.com (Zarei, N.),

supyanukm@yahoo.com (Supyan, H.)

\* Corresponding author

and learning, and highlighted the roles of interaction, participation and communication among learners and between learners and instructors in enhancing learners' L2 (see Collentine & Freed, 2004; Gore, 2005; Churchill, 2006; DuFon & Churchill, 2006). LMB can be used to share information and views through interactions which take place among LMB members. In addition, it can be a collaborative learning that provides an environment in which learners can learn in groups.

Blogs expand the opportunities for student interaction and the horizon of that "learning space" (Williams & Jacobs, 2004, p. 232; Blackstone *et al.*, 2007) exponentially, and provide student writers with a far greater audience both within and outside their classroom. Dieu (2004) reaffirms this by stating that blogging gives a learner the chance to "maximize focused exposure to language in new situations, peer collaboration, and contact with experts" (p. 26). Learners can improve their collaborations by posting their tasks on blogs and make use of the online discussions with their peers. Wu (2005) also highlighted the effectiveness of using blogs in English writing as EFL (English as a Foreign Language). In Wu's report, he stated that students are posting more than eight articles online during one semester. The majority of the students are happy with that method of teaching the English Language. Flatley (2005) also pointed out that blogs give learners a social space in which they can actively be involved in interaction with their peers, therefore, providing the learners with

an encouraging environment in which they pursue discussing various topics and issues and have almost an equal voice to speak or express their thoughts and knowledge. A blog is dynamically able to play a role of being a meaningful communicative platform for not only individual self-expression but also social connectivity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are different studies that have been carried out regarding the use of blogs in language teaching and learning. For instance, Eidswick (2007) examined students' attitudes towards using weblogs for English Language learning. He focused on the students' attitudes to teacher-independent, collaborative creation of weblogs. The samples of his study involved forty-nine sophomore students at a private university in Osaka, Japan. The students created their own blogs and wrote weekly entries on their weblogs during one semester. They were not allowed to work individually in order to support interdependence. Data were collected by using a Japanese-Language survey, with Likert-scale and open sections. The findings revealed that the students perceived the activity as enjoyable and useful. However, Eidswick's study has some limitations as the writing produced by the weblog groups was not examined for grammatical accuracy, lexical sophistication, word count, or other markers of proficiency. He did not focus on group and individual production of blogs and learners' feedback to them, and their impacts on the learners' learning.

A study by Hsua *et al.* (2008) investigated how the use of audio-blogs could help to meet an instructor's need to improve instruction in English as a second language. Data were collected via Likert-scale survey, open-ended questionnaires, interview and analysis of students' audio-blogs. The findings of the study showed that the use of audio-blogs met the instructor's instructional needs, provided an efficient and effective way to evaluate students' oral performance and permitted individualised oral feedback. Learners enjoyed the ease of using audio-blogs and believed that audio-blogs assisted their language-learning experiences. Moreover, the findings revealed that the instructor should use the audio-blog to give assignments regularly. The instructor should also provide the learners with constructive and accurate feedback which helps them correct their mistakes and problems. Dippold (2009) evaluated the usefulness of blogs for peer feedback on second language writing among German students. The focus of the study was on the students' perceptions as well as their peer feedback. The results of the study revealed that blogs were potentially valuable and helpful tools for the students' peer feedback.

Similarly, Yang (2009) investigated the use of blogs as reflective tools in the training processes of English as a Foreign Language among student teachers. The teachers made use of blogs as platforms to critically reflect on their learning processes. One of the focuses of the study was on the teacher trainers' roles in the process of blog. The samples of the study consisted of forty three

EFL student teachers in two teacher training programmes at two Science and Technology institutions in central Taiwan. The class was to prepare prospective students the ability to converse in English at the workplace. The researcher applied the qualitative method and data collection was carried out via survey questionnaires and blog posts. Based on the results of the study, the blog played a significant role in a community of practice in that it was used by the participants as a discussion space. The student teachers participated actively in the discussion forum provided in the blog, and learned from each other via interacting with others.

In addition, Noytim (2010) carried out a study on learners' perceptions and attitudes towards using blogs in the Thai context. The focus of the study was on the potential value of blog use on English Language learning. The samples of the study consisted of twenty undergraduate English major female students in the Reading and Writing for Academic Purposes II course. Data were collected through questionnaires, interview questionnaires, as well as the students' blogs entries. The results of the study indicated that the learners perceived the blogs as a tool for the improvement of their English Language, with regard to aspects such as writing, reading, vocabulary, as well as recording their learning experience. In terms of students' perceptions towards using language learning blogs, Halic *et al.* (2010) also explored whether or not the use of blogs in a large lecture class would enhance students' perceived language learning. The samples included sixty seven undergraduate

students. The findings of the study showed that while a majority of the students reported that blogs enhanced their learning and led them to think about course concepts outside the classroom, fewer perceived value in their peer comments.

It is worth stating that Luo and Gao (2012) also examined students' learning experiences in a set of structured micro-blog-based class activities in an exploratory study with a small sample size. Data were collected via in-class discussion transcripts, micro-blog posts, pre- and post- survey results, and the after-class blog posts. The results of the study indicated that the structure provided by the instructor in the micro-blog activities allowed the learners to focus on the learning content as well as participate actively. Although all of the above studies were carried out among various contexts, they shared almost the same findings in terms of learners' attitudes and perceptions towards using blogs as English Language learning tools.

The above researchers agreed that the students perceived blogs as an enjoyable, beneficial and valuable platform for them to improve their learning. In addition, the students showed positive attitudes and perceptions towards the use of blogs for improving their English Language skills. Although there are existing studies and reviews on the use of blogs as an educational setting, further studies still need to be conducted especially with respect to the use of blogs in the second or foreign language learning and language acquisition processes outside of the classroom. This is because

most of the above-mentioned studies have focused on the "product of language learning" or language performance rather than the process of language learning and language acquisition.

In classifying these previous studies, Supyan (2011) suggested three different models of language learning using blogs in education as illustrated in Fig.1. Model 1 emphasises the students' search for already designed blogs and using the information for learning (blog uses as a source of information). Model 2 emphasises the learners' development of their own blogs for their prescribed assignments and tasks, and requires them to comment on their works posted in these blogs (blog used as a sharing tool). Model 3 focuses on teachers' or instructors' management blogs to scaffold language learning and language acquisition processes (learning management blog). Thus, most of the studies on blogs followed either Model 1 (Pramela *et al.*, 2010; Álvarez, 2012) or Model 2 (Nadzrah & Kemboja, 2009; Aljumah, 2012; Marsden & Piggot-Irvine, 2012; Sun & Chang, 2012). Only a scarce number of previous studies carried out focused on Model 3 (Izaham, 2008; Yang, 2009; Supyan *et al.*, 2010; Supyan, 2011), in which instructors create the blogs and scaffold learners in their learning processes. Model 3, which forms a theoretical framework for the study, is closely related to Vygotsky's (1978) idea of zone of proximal development (ZPD) that argues learners should achieve their learning objectives within their Actual Development Zone and yet, be able to extend their learning

process in the Potential Development Zone enhanced by scaffolding facilities. The present study, which adapts Model 3, attempts to investigate how the supporting learning materials and interaction in the LMB contribute to the language learning process.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study investigates how the supporting learning materials and interactions in the LMB contribute to the language learning process among a particular group of ESL students. The supporting learning materials in the LMB offer videos, audios and texts regarding English Language skills, as well as English Language tests and a forum. The students posted comments and provide their feedback to the administrators and classmates. They were also able to use the supporting learning elements in the LMB and improve their knowledge. In addition,

the students got involved in interactive communications in the forum and exchanged their opinions and information.

The methodology used in this study was qualitative analysis. The researchers used purposive sampling involving 14 undergraduate Malaysian ESL students who registered in the Academic Communication Course at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). The students' level of English proficiency was categorised as intermediate according to the coordinator and instructor of the course offered at the Centre of Liberal Arts, which is now known as CITRA. The intermediate level/modest user of proficiency, according to the Centre, refers to band 3 score that the learners gained in their MUET. It is worth mentioning that the students were familiar with using online environments as social networks such as blog, Facebook and Forum. Although they were acquainted with such online

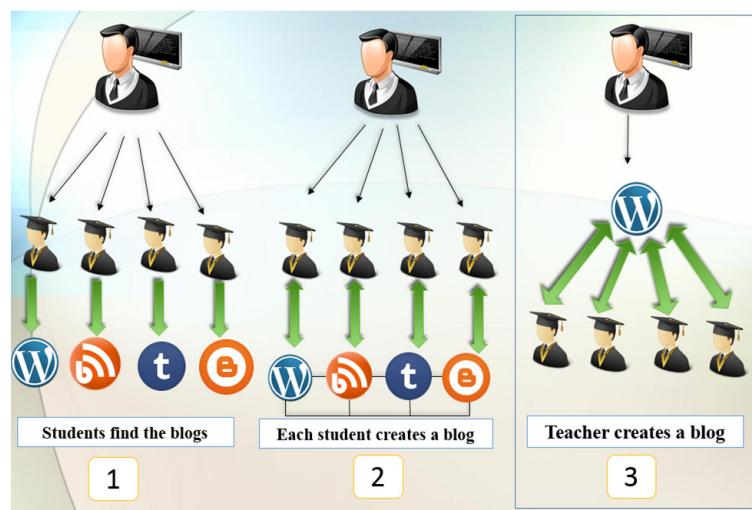


Fig.1: Models of language learning using blogs in education  
Supyan (2011)

environments, a training session on how to use the LMB was still provided for them. Data collection was carried out via the Response Analysis Tool (REAT). REAT was employed through the students' online interactive or commentary exchanges and investigation of the students' comments in the discussion forum. REAT (see Appendix A. p. 256) included three categories, namely: A: students 'responses to the administrator's questions; B: students' inquiries; and C: students' small group discussions. The REAT was designed in order to collect data that would determine pattern of the students' participation and engagements in the LMB activities.

The researchers acted as participant observers and observed the students' activities, comments and posts everyday in order to complete the REAT during the 14 weeks of the semester. The observation was according to the REAT prepared beforehand. The researchers monitored the students' participation, engagements, communications and interactions in the LMB and updated the instructor of the course on the students' performance and engagements weekly. The researchers noted the data in the REAT every day. The data obtained from this study were analysed qualitatively using content analysis. For analysing the data, the researcher used the REAT to find out how frequent the participants communicated or interacted with each other and figure out the numbers of time that they posted their comments and answers on the LMB or responded to each other's messages. However, it is

worth stating that the researchers' focus was more on the contents of the students' posts in the LMB because the quality of their comments was more significant than the quantity of their participations in the LMB activities. The LMB was designed using the learner-centered approach, which allowed the students to decide on the frequency of their participation and also to decide when and how to use the English Language learning guides provided in the LMB in order for them to learn. The course required the students to participate in the LMB and the students were advised that by having 'meaningful' contributions in the 14-week period of the unit they could earn 10% of the total mark for the course from the teacher. In other words, the LMB observation was implemented through observing the participants' comments virtually and the researchers as participant observers frequently (every day) observed the forum in the LMB in order to collect rich and in-depth data needed for the present study. Therefore, the researchers monitored the participants' activities and interactions, as well as described the learning process in the LMB environment by using the REAT.

## FINDINGS

The findings are presented in four major themes. The first theme, A, which emerged from the analysis through the REAT included the students' responses to the administrator's questions. For theme A in the REAT (the students' responses to the administrator's questions), the students were asked 18 questions by the administrator.

The questions are related to the students' course objectives and assignments, as well as supportive language learning materials in the LMB. Based on the researchers' observations, it was concluded that all of the students replied to all of the questions during the 14 weeks. Some of the students' original excerpts to the administrator's questions are given in the following conversations:

*Administrator: Have you read the tips on "How to Create a PowerPoint Presentation" in the blog? If so, please share your ideas about them.*

*R4: Yes, I had read the tips. From my reading, the article reminds me on what should I do and what should I not do during the presentation also the preparation for presentation. The main point should be state out clearly so that the audience can understand the purpose of your presentation.*

*R8: Yes, there are many ways to make effective presentation. First is the text must be big so that people able to see our slide clearly. The text must be simple and don't put so much details in it. Then, put some sound effects and picture to attract your audience's attention. The font, capitalization, number, bullet must be clear.*

*R10: Yes, I already read the tips in the blog. Most of the tips based on the preparation to make the better*

*slides and we are well exposed about the importance and uses of Microsoft PowerPoint.*

The second emerged theme was the students' inquiries in the LMB. Based on the obtained information via the REAT, it is obvious that the students were interested in commenting on their friends' posts, as well as answering the administrator's questions and getting involved in the interaction in the discussion forum. For theme B in the REAT (the students' inquiries), the researchers observed the questions that the students asked each other or the administrator during the semester. 11 out of 14 students asked questions regarding their class assignments and the supportive language learning guides in the LMB environment. The students asked for some guidance in order to improve their writing for their assignments. By asking questions, they gained some ideas on how to improve their course tasks. Some of the students' questions are as follows:

*R8: Hi guys. Is anybody here to tell me my outline is correct? I am not confident. Thank you. Based on my article and outline, what do u guys thinks of our national crisis management in Malaysia? Is it efficient or should we really need to polish our management structure as it is not effective to this issue? Is there any other good way to handle this crisis if it involved the whole country, not only in Sabah?*

*R4: Based on your article, I agree with her idea on how to restructure the national crisis in Malaysia. We should have a specialist to advice government on our country safety. It is really important to protect our home land. Just imagine, we have nowhere to go if they take our home land. Same goes to the Lahad Datu's issues, we have to find best way to protect Sabah because it is part of our home land! Don't let them find out a single part of our weakness.*

*R6: <http://esllearners.wordpress.com/2013/03/21/group-2-stage-1-searching-for-information/comment-page-1/-comment-168>  
Hi. I have some suggestion. Your outline good but why don't you put it in number form, so that it make us easier to read your outline. Thank you :)*

*R5: <http://esllearners.wordpress.com/2013/03/21/group-2-stage-1-searching-for-information/comment-page-1/-comment-240>*

*I'm agree with NSR. Better in numbering form make us more easy to distinguish the main point and supporting details.*

The third theme was the students' interaction to improve their course tasks and assignments. The students were eager to participate in the forum and share their opinions, ask questions and state

their difficulties in order to have a better understanding on how to come up with their course tasks and writing. It is worth stating that the students showed their interest and willingness to participate in the LMB by sharing their ideas about each other's tasks. The students read each other's writing and commented on them. The interaction among them made them think twice and deeply about what they had written. Several of them changed their writing and posted on the forum again after revising their writing based on their friends' suggestions and opinions. The interaction among them helped them to have a better understanding of what they were asked to write for their course assignments.

*R10: I think this is good but I need to know which part in your article that show the point of your outline. Can you add the article's sentences that show your point?*

*R12: Your outline is good but I think maybe you can add supporting detail for your outline like giving an example. Conclusion on how I improved my article.*

*R14: I have finished my final draft according to "Outline Tips and Videos tips" that is provided in this blog and also some suggestions in forum from my classmate and I have improve my outline better than my previous outline because I had put a few of supporting details for the main points in my outline. I used the materials in this blog to come*

*out with better outline and easy to understand because I have used the roman to numbered my main points and using alphabets for the supporting details.*

The fourth emerged theme was “the students’ small group discussions in the LMB”. The students showed the willingness to participate in the forum in the LMB. According to their feedback, the reason that motivated them to get engaged in the discussion forum was the interactive communication that led them to improve their learning, course tasks and projects. The students’ exchanging thoughts and opinions in the LMB were observed as well. Theme C in the REAT consisted of the students’ small group discussions in the LMB. All the students participated in the interactive discussions with each other with regard to their posts and course assignments. They shared their opinions and views about each others’ tasks and tried to help each other by reading each others’ tasks and leaving comments about them. Several students mentioned that they improved their writing and tasks with their friends’ help via the discussion in the forum. For example, two of the students’ questions are as follows:

*“For me the blog helped me to write a better assignments, because I read some lessons and I also improved my writing skill and English vocabularies by the blog. By improving my vocabulary and writing I improve my assignments”.*  
(R1)

*“The blog was a good place for me to know about my friend assignments. Everybody posted their work in forum. I look at some of them and I got some ideas for my outline also. It was very good to see their writing and write comments for each other. I improve my writing and my class assignments with reading my friend writing and based on their comments and also the learning materials in our blog”.*  
(R6)

Some parts of the students’ discussions in the LMB are given as follows:

*R11: SBS this is a good article which our government and police should do. We should build a special bureau for missing children so that the bureau will only focus on the missing children cases.*

*R5: I agree with you AFA. If there is a special bureau for missing children, of course missing children problem can be minimise and also solve as well.*

*R12: I agree with your point that we should build a special bureau for missing children, but I think we can also build a bureau with the help of volunteers because we cannot expect 100% the helps from the government.*

*R3: Hi AFA, base on your article, I like the part on how to keep your children safe because the tips seems*

*simple but I think it is very useful to parents to keep their child safe.*

*R5: I agree with NSR. Better in numbering form makes us easier to distinguish the main point and supporting details.*

*R12: I think this is good for childrens to learn all these steps because sometimes we cannot depend only on one party, we all should think about something to prevent from this missing issues.*

*R5: You have a lot of points. I think this is good outline. But maybe you can add more supporting detail.*

Based on the students' responses, it can be summarised that the students obviously improved their knowledge and information by interacting with each other in the discussion forum. They posed questions to each other in order to complete their tasks and improve their learning, shared their opinions about the tasks and guided each other in order to improve their writing.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Based on the data collected from the interactions that were taking place among the students in the forum as well as their ideas with regard to the provided language learning materials in the LMB, it can be concluded that the students enhanced their language learning process by sharing their ideas and information with each other in the discussion forum. They had the opportunity to post their class assignments and tasks

in order to get their classmates' opinions and views regarding their writing. At the same time, they were able to correct their mistakes either in terms of content or format. The interaction among them improved not only their understanding of the issues taught by the instructor in the classroom but also the tasks and assignments given. In addition, the language learning materials provided in the LMB were helpful for the students since some of them were used to enhance their language learning process. This phenomenon is a manifestation of the learning process as prescribed by Supyan's and Vygotsky's models. According to the data obtained from the students, they took the opportunity to go through the language learning materials they needed to improve their English Language skills. By reading the tips and techniques, watching the videos and doing exercises and drills in the LMB, they learned and acquired knowledge and gained extra information to improve their English Language and complete the course assignments.

Based on Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist theory, learners as active participants achieve understanding and make meaning from their surrounding environments. Supyan's (2011) models of language learning using blogs stated that the learners would be able to explain their Actual Development of learning into the Potential Zone of learning if they took the opportunity of using the scaffolding facilities provided by the instructors in the language course. The students participated in the LMB activities and interacted with

each other in the discussion forum, one of the scaffolding facilities.

The interaction among them improved their understanding of the lessons and assignments. They learned and acquired from each other, corrected their own mistakes and finally improved their writing and tasks. In other words, participating in the forum and having language learning guides in the LMB provided the students the opportunity to have access to more information and to do more practices on what have been taught by their teacher in the classroom. Therefore, the opportunity to use the supportive scaffolding enlarged the size of the ZPD and led them to enhance their language learning and language acquisition processes. In other words, the language learning materials in the LMB acted as external supportive learning mechanisms to support language learning and language acquisition processes. The students made use of the scaffolding materials to learn more, apart from learning from the teacher in the classroom. Based on Vygotsky's idea of constructivism, once the students have learned or acquired more input via the LMB, their potential zone will become wider and bigger.

Considering Vygotsky's ZPD and with the support of the LMB as a learning platform outside the classroom, the students took the opportunity of acquiring more input (information and knowledge) that complemented their language learning process within the potential zone. Applying the ZPD to the content classroom addresses process issues rather than product issues.

Students can learn most effectively by becoming active participants in their own learning process via exchanging ideas and information through interaction. Students can progress to their fullest potential when they are provided with scaffolding and supportive instruction. As a matter of fact, within the potential zone, language learning was enriched because the students made use of the language learning materials provided in the LMB as scaffolding. They exchanged their ideas and thoughts with each other in the discussion forum, which led them to gain feedback from one another through the interactions.

Flatley (2005, p. 77) stated that the technological medium provides a space where learners can interact with each other, and it can open up the classroom space "where discussions are continued and where every student gets an equal voice". Moreover, blogs can promote collaboration (Oravec, 2002; Williams & Jacobs, 2004; Flatley, 2005). Vygotsky (1978) also believed that humans are social creatures. That is how people live and how they are best able to learn. Based on his theory, the students can learn more if they are able to discuss and share their ideas and thoughts with each other. In other words, depending on the social context of the classroom, learners may benefit from being able to interact socially with their classmates as they learn. According to Vygotsky's theory the socio-cultural context of learning and the environment outside the classroom must be considered.

The LMB, as a language learning platform outside the classroom, plays a significant role to enhance the students' language learning and language acquisition processes by giving them the opportunity to share ideas and information via the discussion forum as well as provide the language learning materials as scaffolding. That is where Vygotsky (1978) asserted that a teacher should be more of a guide and a facilitator, and not an instructor who merely dictates and dispenses information. Zaini *et al.* (2011) asserted that blogs offer students a high level of autonomy to interact with their peers and benefit them by allowing them to share their collaborative writing in an interactive social environment. As mentioned earlier, learners can develop their understanding and information through sharing their opinions. Vygotsky also emphasises that learners gain knowledge through the process of interacting with the teacher, fellow classmates and the socio-cultural environment. In other words, the major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. New paradigms in language teaching and learning are needed to encourage students acquire and improve their second language or foreign language proficiency in a social context (Vygotsky, 1978), which affects the nature and quality of language learning.

There are also other previous studies which showed that blogs can be used as a tool to improve language learning. For example, Kavaliauskienė *et al.* (2006) conducted a

study on applying innovative techniques for written and oral communication in English classes. The results of the study revealed that the experience of writing for an audience gave a significant opportunity for learning the English Language. Moreover, Kang *et al.* (2011) investigated whether or not the blog-based instruction became an effective technology-enhanced learning environment. The findings of his study showed that the blogs provide the learners with the opportunities to socialise and construct their knowledge based on the social constructivist learning theory and a community of practice theory. Zarei and Al-Shboul (2013) found that EFL learners perceived the blog as an interesting and helpful learning tool since interacting via the blog helped them improve their English Language skills as well as their communication skills based on peer feedback. Finally, a study by Zarei and Supyan (2014) showed that the learning management blog assisted the learners to develop their independent learning interest and motivation to use the English Language learning materials in the blog.

In summary, based on the students' feedback, the LMB apparently plays a significant role in providing an environment for the students to exchange their tasks, thoughts, ideas and suggestions with each other. The interactions in the discussion forum helped them enhance their language learning. They made use of their classmates' experiences and views to correct their mistakes in their tasks. Nor Fariza, Afendi, and Embi, (2012, p. 251) also stated that "most tertiary students are able to learn well

via an online forum that even with minimal intervention from the lecturer, the students participated actively in the online forum". Moreover, they were able to read the English Language lessons, watch the videos, and listen to the audios provided in the LMB to enrich their knowledge and understanding of the issues taught by the teacher in the classroom. In addition, they gained more information with regard to the English Language skills to enhance their language learning and language acquisition processes. They were willing to take part in the LMB activities and post their ideas because they felt comfortable during the learning process. Getting engaged in the LMB activities and making use of the language learning materials in the LMB enabled the students to personalise their language learning process and finally make it meaningful and relevant to them. In addition, the students were able to make use of the discussion forum and become autonomous learners. Noriah *et al.* (2013) also asserted that the special e-forum activities not only assist the learners to be autonomous in learning but also enjoy their learning process.

The findings of the study are applicable to all ESL tertiary learners who are learning English Language, as well as English Language instructors and lecturers who are striving to present a better and more effective way of teaching English language.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study is limited to 14 undergraduate Malaysian ESL students studying at UKM. Therefore, the findings of the present study

cannot be generalised to other groups of Malaysian ESL students and to other groups of students in other countries. The students' level of English proficiency was categorised as intermediate. Thus, generalisations of the findings obtained by the researcher are restricted and limited only to a particular group of the undergraduate Malaysian ESL context.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of the study indicated that the language learning guides and the forum provided in the LMB played significant roles in order to enhance the students' information, knowledge and interactions. As a language learning platform, the LMB contributed positively towards the students' language learning process. The students were enthusiastic in making use of the supportive language learning guides as well as the forum and had eagerly participated in the LMB. They found the forum section as the most helpful feature in the LMB due to the advantageous interactive communications. The interactive communications among the learners not only motivated them to improve their learning, but also helped to enhance their language learning processes. Therefore, it is recommended that lecturers and teachers use such online learning platforms such as the LMB in their language courses. Teachers and lecturers should be well-trained in preparing sufficient comprehensive and rich input in the LMB or any other online learning tools in order to enhance the students' learning processes.

As the present study adopted a qualitative method, i.e., a case study, similar research should also be carried out using other methodologies, including the quantitative approach to allow for richer and more in-depth findings to come forth. Moreover, the focus of this study is on learning aspect therefore, more research on using the LMB considering teaching aspects is required in order to have a more holistic view of teaching process using the LMB. Thus, it will be beneficial to find out the effects of using the LMB considering teaching aspects.

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## APPENDIX A

### RESPONSE ANALYSIS TOOL (REAT)

Respondents	A:	B:	C:
	The students' responses to the administrator's questions	The students' inquiries	The students' small group discussions
R1	18	3	5
R2	18	4	10
R3	18	4	6
R4	18	4	14
R5	19	5	17
R6	19	6	12
R7	18	6	7
R8	18	4	10
R9	18	5	12
R10	20	4	11
R11	18	4	6
R12	18	6	12
R13	18	2	2
R14	18	5	10

## The Malaysian Chinese Diaspora in Melbourne: Citizenship and Belongingness

Low, C. C.

*History Section, School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Minden,  
Penang, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the relationship between citizenship and belongingness among the Malaysian Chinese diaspora in Melbourne. It draws on migration and transnationalism theory in understanding the relationship between citizenship and the notion of home. The analysis shows that the Chinese diaspora still regards Malaysia as their “home” and equates “home” with “family.” In order to preserve the sense of belongingness to their home, the Chinese diaspora adopts the strategy of maintaining Malaysian citizenship while preserving Australian permanent residency status. Transnational mobility has shaped their understandings in which they appreciate their Malaysian passport as a travelling document to their place of origin, while bringing their family to Australia for vacations. The idea of travelling back to their home country with a tourist visa seemed to be unacceptable to the Malaysian diaspora. This article suggests that the diaspora desires flexibility in their citizenship choices and inclines to maintain the status quo when it comes to the question of belongingness.

*Keywords:* Citizenship, belongingness, transnationalism, Chinese diaspora, Malaysia

### INTRODUCTION

The ever increasing global migration of Malaysians has raised important questions about their citizenship and belongingness. As reported by the World Bank, there

are between 0.8 million and 1.4 million Malaysian diaspora members living across the globe in 2010 (2011, p. 103). Singapore has the largest community of Malaysians overseas, followed by Australia, Brunei, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, India, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and China (World Bank, 2011, p. 140) (Refer to Table 1). Australia has recorded a 2.0 thousand permanent Malaysian population (2000),

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2.5 (2001), 2.6 (2002), 3.9 (2003), 5.1 (2004), 4.7 (2005), 4.8 (2006), 5.1 (2008), 5.4 (2009), and 4.9 (2010), accordingly (OECD, 2012, p. 293). With a high number of Malaysians abroad, it is useful to examine the impact of the state's single nationality policy. While several prominent studies on the topic have been done on Malaysian immigration – Devadason and Chan (2014), Hedman (2008), Jones (2000), Kassim (2014), Nah (2012), and Ramasamy (2006) – less research focuses on emigration, settlement, and citizenship involving the Malaysian diaspora. Given the limited scholarship on the Malaysian diaspora – with the notable exception of the work by Joseph (2013), Koh (2010), Koh (2014), Lam, Yeoh and Law (2002), Lam and Yeoh (2004), and Robertson (2008) – our knowledge of their identity and belonging is quite limited. The aim of this paper is to contextualise what citizenship and belongingness mean for Malaysians abroad.

In the Malaysian context, the Malaysian emigrants are: 1) comprised of highly educated and skilled migrants, and 2) made up of students-turned-migrants (Hugo, 2011, p. 227). A report by World Bank indicated that a mixture of the sending country and receiving countries' policies influenced the migration decisions of the Malaysian diaspora. Among the motivations to emigrate among the skilled diaspora include the prospect of higher wages, the opportunity of high-productivity employment opportunities in the professional field, the perceptions of social injustice particularly among the younger population, the quality of life,

the access to high-quality education, and finally, the existence of a well-established diaspora network (2011, p. 120). The World Bank in its economic report on the brain drain in Malaysia (2011, p. 121) pointed out that "economic incentives and social disincentives" played the most crucial role in determining the migration choice.

International migration "raises more complex questions about political membership" (Bauböck, 2010, p. 297). Due to the "mismatch" between the frontiers of national territories and citizenship, cross-border movement between states has produced citizens abroad (and also foreign citizens in the state) (2010, p. 297). Barabantseva and Sutherland are right to point out that "Many of the debates surrounding diaspora and their politics also turn on the issue of loyalty...loyalty is seen as one of the duties of citizenship in return for state rights, security, and protection" (2013, pp. 2-3). If the sending state does not allow dual citizenship, citizens abroad have to choose a political membership. Being a diaspora "complicates the terms and practices of belonging" (Laguerre, cited in Esman, 2009, p. 6).

In this article, the term diaspora is used to refer to "national groups living outside an (imagined) homeland", while transnationalism refers to "migrants' durable ties across countries" (Faist, 2010, p. 9). Diasporas are made of migrants, who maintain a strong attachment to the homeland (Cohen, 2013, p. 11). Members of a diaspora share a common bond to their place of origin. In the words of Cohen, "they

retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland including its location, history and achievements" (2013, p. 6). Diasporas broadly include more settled expatriate communities, migrant workers temporarily based abroad, expatriates with the citizenship of the host country, dual citizens, and second and third generation migrants (International Organization for Migration, 2013, p. 210). Esman (2009) rightly points out that any undertaking of the studies of the diaspora need to take into consideration the relationship between their country of origin, their host country and the diaspora community. In explaining the links between migrants and the state, Esman reminded us that the different categories of diaspora have to be differentiated as "not all diaspora maintain a sympathetic attachment to their former homeland" (2009, p. 8).

In Australia, there are a considerable number of Malaysians holding Malaysian passports with Australian permanent residency (Robertson, 2008, p. 99). Not all individuals choose to give up their Malaysian citizenship and to become Australian citizens. How does the state's single nationality principle affect the choice of their citizenship? Could it possibly be explained by the strong attachment and bond, which the Malaysians have developed in relation to their home country? How do Malaysians abroad perceive their sense of belongingness? The starting point of this research is the hypothesis that there are some common experiences shared among Malaysians abroad. An interesting question to ask is how their experience

transformed them and led them to redefine what they considered "home." This study is based on the Australian case (Melbourne) because Australia houses the second largest Malaysian community abroad.

The study offers insight into a number of important questions. Firstly, how does the 'Malaysian diaspora' makes their choice of citizenship and identity following the official single nationality principle? Secondly, how they negotiate their identity and belonging within two cultures? Thirdly, what is the perception of the Malaysian diaspora towards their national identity and belongings? Fourthly, what are the common experiences of Malaysians abroad in their search of a place called 'home'? This research suggests that the politics of belonging of the Malaysian diaspora – who are affiliated with two countries – is not decisive and may change in the future.

TABLE 1  
The Malaysian Diaspora (2000 and 2010 estimates)

	Diaspora (0+)	
	2000	2010
Singapore	303,828	385,979
Australia	78,858	101,522
Brunei	60,401	76,567
United Kingdom	49,886	65,498
United States	51,510	61,160
Canada	20,420	24,063
India	14,685	18,179
Hong Kong	15,579	16,123
New Zealand	11,460	15,995
China	7,278	9,226
Taiwan	6,635	8,411
Japan	5,849	6,170
Viet Nam	4,813	6,101

TABLE 1 (*continue*)

	Diaspora (0+)	
	2000	2010
Philippines	3,991	5,059
Indonesia	3,146	3,988
Germany	2,945	3,733
Netherlands	2,739	3,471
France	1,718	2,563
Ireland	2,398	2,277
Pakistan	1,618	2,051
Egypt	1,944	1,430
Sweden	961	1,370
Thailand	1,290	1,261
Switzerland	916	1,161
Denmark	390	672
Spain	230	535
South Africa	393	487
Norway	304	468
Korea	353	447
Austria	332	424
Finland	224	362
Turkey	266	337
Italy	214	295

Source: World Bank. (2012). *Malaysia Economic Malaysia: Brain Drain*, 140

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The Malaysian diaspora has been a subject of growing importance with most of the literature focusing on two countries: Singapore and Australia. The study of the Malaysian Chinese diaspora in Singapore by Lam and Yeoh (2004) found that Malaysians abroad maintain a strong transnational family as well as social ties. This phenomenon explains why the majority of Malaysian emigrants choose to retain their Malaysian citizenship. With the possession of a Malaysian passport, they venture overseas to acquire economic, educational

and social capital, while regularly returning home to Malaysia. Based on conducted surveys and interviews, Lam and Yeoh concluded that the majority of Chinese-Malaysians were attached to the notion that "home is where the family is" and they look to Malaysia as "home" (2004, p. 150). For those who do not immediately relate "home" with family, they relate "home" with "their birthplace and where they had spent their childhood" (2004, p. 152). Their status of Malaysian citizens and Singapore permanent residents enable them to enjoy the best of both worlds. It is a strategy to survive in the transnational world while maintaining their much cherished childhood and familial experiences.

Examining the journey of international students-turned-migrants in Australia, Robertson (2008) also concluded that emotional attachment to the country of origin is common among her student respondents (especially Malaysians). Her Malaysian respondents are proud to be Malaysians. Maintaining their Malaysian citizenship is seen as an identification of their Malaysian-ness. In analysing how individuals negotiate their decisions about their citizenship status, she proposed that the main motivations behind their choices about permanent residence or citizenship include a personal sense of belonging, security, political rights and mobility. This sense of belonging challenges liberal-individualist theories of citizenship, which determine the choice of citizenship being based on the social, legal, or the economic benefits of citizenship (van Gunsteren,

1998). This does not mean that Malaysians abroad do not make a choice based on pragmatic reasons. Indeed, Malaysians prefer keeping their Malaysian passport because it provides greater global mobility. Malaysian passports enable its holders to travel to 166 countries without a visa. Based on the 2014 Visa Restrictions Index Global Ranking, Malaysian passports were ranked the eighth best in the world for travellers (*Malay Mail Online*, 26 September 2014).

Ziguras and Law (2006) examined the recruitment of international students as skilled migrants in Australia. Among the large pool of Asian students, Malaysian students top the list since the 1950s. The student movement contributes significantly to the steady enlargement of the Malaysian population in Australia. According to the study by Ziguras and Law, the number of Malaysian students studying in Australian universities has increased steadily since the 1950s and “a large proportion of the Malaysian students who are graduating from their studies are obtaining permanent residence” (2006, pp. 65-66). One of the reasons is the successful Australian migration policy in attracting skilled workers by offering permanent residence to international students upon completion of their studies. Graduates of Australian universities are awarded extra points in the point-based system of Australian skilled migration (2006, pp. 61-62). On the other hand, the Malaysian efforts to lure its diaspora back home have not been successful. There are more Malaysian scientists and IT professionals who migrated

to Singapore compared to those actually returning home permanently. They tend to venture into other developed countries when opportunities are not promising in Australia (2006, p. 70). Ziguras and Law suggested that “the Malaysian diaspora is perhaps better understood as a subset of the Chinese, Malay and Indian diaspora” (2006, p. 70).

The hypothesis that the Malaysian diaspora is culturally attached to their home country is supported by a study by Koh (2010). Her fieldwork conducted in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur shows the significance of “family” in the Malaysian consciousness. The familial tie is then incorporated into their citizenship and migration decisions. This is evident when some Malaysians abroad make their citizenship choice based on their family consideration and some even make citizenship decisions as a family unit. More often than not, the choice is not an individual choice. In her more recent study, Koh concluded that the concepts of insecurity and primordial belonging to Malaysia have informed the citizenship practices among Malaysian-Chinese transnational migrants in the UK and Singapore. By primordial belonging, she referred to “one’s childhood memories, personal and familial social networks, and/or imagined ethnonational community” (2014, p. 14). Migrants sought to retain their Malaysian citizenship - after the acquisition of other citizenship and PR statuses - as a “security measure” within the context of the differentiated citizenship regime (2014, p. 11).

This paper aims to further contextualise the relationship between citizenship and belongingness by focusing solely on the case of Melbourne. My research is grounded on two perspectives: national and transnational. By the “national” framework, I am referring to the hierarchical citizenship regime. In contrast with the citizenship model of liberal democracies, the constitution of 1957 provides differentiated citizenship rights for the sons of the soil and non-Bumiputera (Verma, 2002, pp. 54-55). As Verma suggests, Malaysia follows a “different path of nation-building” and adopts “new principles of citizenship” in its constitution (2002, p. 58). Koh (2014) coined the term “Bumiputera differentiated citizenship” as referring to the historical legacy of the hierarchical citizenship regime.

The national factor alone, however, could not sufficiently explain the migration and citizenship choices of the emigrants. I suggest that their choice of citizenship cannot be grasped by looking at the domestic factors alone, but must be studied within the broader framework of transnational politics. The immigration and citizenship policies of the receiving countries play an equally important role in influencing the citizenship choice of the Malaysian diaspora. I proposed to employ Bauböck’s theory of transnationalism to demonstrate the dynamism of transnational ties in explaining the citizenship choice of Malaysian diaspora. As a result of the expansion of international communications, globalisation and the development of the global economy, many migrants maintain economic or political ties

with their home countries. Transnational citizenship is coined by Bauböck to refer to political membership in a nation-state with the citizens having social ties across state borders (2004, p. 197). Transnational citizenship allows migrants to “forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc-Szanton, 1994, p. 6). As cross border movement takes place, multiple ties between the state and the individual could not be adequately explained by the national perspective.

In this paper, I wish to suggest that citizenship transnationalism practiced by the diaspora creates a fundamental imperative in redefining the state’s migration regime. Under the existing citizenship regime, undivided allegiance is demanded and dual citizenship is not allowed. Given the exclusive citizenship regime, diasporas turn to a more flexible practice of citizenship: transnational citizenship. This practice resonates with the Malaysian state’s effort in tapping diasporic talent and serves as an added impetus to the state’s project on return migration. The growing importance of diasporas to the state’s development programme may serve as an important element in the reorientation of the state’s attitude toward emigration. Emigration is no longer viewed as an act of disloyalty. The state is now initiating diaspora engagement policies through various initiatives, which will be discussed later.<sup>1</sup>

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is based on a survey conducted among eight Malaysian diaspora in the city of Melbourne, Australia. The survey was carried out through an online questionnaire between June and October 2013. The diaspora members in the respondent pool are engaged in professional occupations such as engineering, medicine, auditing, marketing and programme coordinating. All of the eight respondents have stayed in Australia for three years and above. Seven out of the eight respondents are Malaysian citizens holding Australian PR status. The respondent pool also showed that all, except for one respondent, have stayed for four years and above, and are thus qualified to apply for Australian citizenship, yet none of them has given up their Malaysia citizenship – Malaysia practices single nationality. Among those surveyed, four of them are student-turned-migrants, while four other respondents migrated to Melbourne as skilled migrants (Refer to Table 2). The author acknowledges that the small sample size precludes the formulation of hypothesis for testing. There are limitations on online surveys, which do not allow probing and free open discussion. The research findings presented here aim to serve as a preliminary study based on a selected case study, rather than to offer a firm conclusion.

This article is an attempt to understand the common characteristics shared by the respondents in terms of their sense of belonging. Both open-ended and close-ended questions are utilised to elicit information

about their sense of belongingness and citizenship. The questionnaire was formatted into three sections. Section A contains respondents' information. Section B (the path to Australian PR or citizenship) aims to examine how the Malaysian diaspora makes their choice of citizenship following the official single nationality principle. Section C (a place called home) evaluates the common experiences of Malaysians abroad in their search for "home." (Refer to Table 3). Based on the survey, two themes emerged: the path to Australian PR (and citizenship) and defining a place called home.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The Choice of Citizenship*

Changing one's PR status is often considered a very difficult decision. An important question to ask is when they start to think about the possibility of applying Australian PR. The results of the analysis showed that all the four respondents who are student-turned-migrants had not thought of Australian PR prior to their emigration (often being viewed as a temporary move) to Melbourne. It was only when they had eventually settled down that they started to consider the question. The questionnaire managed to elicit responses such as "when I have graduated," "when I need to get a job," or "during my study in Australia" prompting their future decision. For the four skilled migrants, their decision-making process took place much earlier; as one Malaysian (34 years old) commented, "After working

TABLE 2  
Research Participants

Occupation	Age	Duration of stay in Australia	Current national status	Pathway to Australian residency	Family status	Ethnicity	Gender
Program Coordinator	34	3 years	A Malaysian citizen holding an Australian PR	Skilled migrants	Single	Chinese	Female
Geotechnical engineer	27	9 years	A Malaysian citizen holding an Australian PR	Student-turned-migrants	Married	Chinese	Male
Auditor	30	7 years	Returned to Malaysia with an Australian PR	Skilled migrants	Single	Chinese	Male
Engineer	27	8 years	A Malaysian citizen holding an Australian PR	Student-turned-migrants	Single	Chinese	Male
Marketing	28	5 years	A Malaysian citizen	Student-turned-migrants	Single	Chinese	Female
Engineer	25	5 years	A Malaysian citizen holding an Australian PR	Skilled migrants	Single	Malaysian	Female
Engineer	35	8 years	A Malaysian citizen holding an Australian PR	Skilled migrants	Single	Chinese	Male
Doctor	29	10 years	A Malaysian citizen holding an Australian PR	Student-turned-migrants	Married	Chinese	Female

in Malaysia for 3 years, I have thought of moving out from Malaysia to experience a different working culture.”

The path to securing an Australian PR is not an easy one at all. The respondents stated cultural differences and employability as the main challenges. For one of them, who had returned to Malaysia with an Australian

PR (30 years old), “securing a decent job in Australia seems more challenging than securing an Australian PR.” Another Malaysian, who has yet to obtain PR status, lamented that PR is “limited to those with desired skills in Australia.” For one respondent, who managed to obtain PR, the process is “getting tougher to apply as

TABLE 3  
Questionnaire Items

Items
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When did you start thinking about the possibilities of applying Australian PR?</li> <li>2. What are the challenges in securing an Australian PR?</li> <li>3. What are the factors affecting your choice of PR?</li> <li>4. What do you hope to obtain most from your new PR status?</li> <li>5. What are your aspirations as a Malaysian Diaspora member in Australia?</li> <li>6. In your humble opinion, what are the opportunities and constraints offered by a Malaysian passport?</li> <li>7. For those who are Australian PR (and do not intend to apply Australian citizenship), could you share with us why you are not considering Australian citizenship?</li> <li>8. As a Malaysian diaspora member, what are the dilemmas faced when making the choice of citizenship? For example: benefits of Australian citizenship versus a sense of attachment to the country of birth.</li> <li>9. How do you define a place called “home”? Which country that you see as your home?</li> <li>10. In your opinion, what does citizenship mean to you?</li> <li>11. How do you describe your sense of belonging in Australia?</li> <li>12. As a Malaysian diaspora member, what would you like to share with the newcomers, who have are still considering which citizenship to be taken?</li> <li>13. How do you/your family maximise your own interests in both countries without the benefits of dual citizenship?</li> <li>14. As the Malaysian government is luring back its overseas nationals, is there any possibility that you will return to the country as an expatriate?</li> </ol>

Australia is one of the better places to live.” Similarly, a respondent who recently got her PR, described the process as follows:

*Back then, obtaining Australia PR for me right after university (2010) without working experience was not easy due to the immigration policy changes for Skilled Migration. My qualification does not fall directly in the Skilled Occupation List (SOL). I had to submit a complicated engineering assessment to be assessed as one that is under the SOL. That required writing career episodes of 2000 words with supportive documentations. And yet that does not guarantee you'll get it. But I did.*

Nonetheless, only one respondent stated “money” as the main challenge. For the others, cultural barriers (or gaps) present the most important challenge as “most Malaysians working and living in Australia will have to cope well with local culture and environment.” Half of the respondents agreed that one of the key motivations behind PR choices is the desire for mobility and flexibility. For them, better education and scholarship opportunities for their children are decisive. They hope to secure the future of their children from their new citizenship status (though the respondents are not married yet). There are also two respondents indicating the right to stay permanently and the right to vote as the important criteria behind citizenship choices. In terms of their

aspiration as a Malaysian diaspora member in Australia, they are longing for “a peaceful living in Australia”, “life stability”, “better environment”, “work life balance”, “further training”, “better working opportunity and fairer treatment” and other reasons that are “political.” It is evident that the Malaysian political regime does not constitute the sole reason to migrate. Rather, the emigrants tend to look for a “work life balance.”

Mixed reactions were obtained when the respondents were asked about the opportunities and constraints offered by a Malaysian passport. More than half of the responses (five of the respondents) received are negative, citing restriction to travel to certain countries as the reason. Travelling overseas, according to one of them, requires foreign visas, which can be costly and time consuming. They saw minimum opportunities and more constraints, particularly in getting a visa to travel abroad. There are “more complications” in getting a visa (for example to the US) compared to Australian passports. The negative perception mostly stemmed from the belief that Malaysia is “wrongly perceived as an Islamic country that is associated with terrorism” resulting in unnecessary questioning at foreign customs. Another assumption made by the outside world is the perception of Malaysia as a “third world and poor country.” However, not all the respondents agreed with the above-mentioned responses. Some appreciate their Malaysian passport as one firmly attested, “There is no [constraint] as I see. The Malaysian passport gives me flexibility

to be employed to the world.” For some, the questions of cost and benefits (of their Malaysian passport) are not important as long as Malaysian passports provide the indefinite right to return whenever they choose to do so.

Nevertheless, the research found that all the respondents were actually not aiming to apply for full-fledged state membership in Australia. Though they were not planning to get Australian citizenship at that moment, they might consider it a future prospect. The following statement accurately recapitulates the mind of Malaysians abroad:

*I currently have no plan to take Australian citizenship and will maintain my PR as long as I live and work here. Thus I also have the convenience and flexibility of returning to Malaysia if I decide to do so in future. However if it means better stability and security for my future children I will strongly consider to apply for Australian citizenship.*

In order to be eligible to gain an Australian (or any other) citizenship, immigrants have to go through three processes. According to Hammar (in Robertson, 2008), firstly they need to obtain a temporary residency through a student visa or a working visa. This is then followed by the process of applying permanent residency. After fulfilling the residency requirement, emigrants proceed to apply to naturalise as an Australian citizen.

However, not all individuals choose to complete the whole process. Some choose to remain as Australian permanent residents and maintain their original citizenship. Hammer defines this category of person as denizens, i.e. “persons who are foreign citizens with a legal and permanent resident status” (2008, p. 99). In Australia, there is a considerable number of Malaysian ‘denizens’ holding Malaysian passports with Australia permanent residency. Why do Malaysian denizens not apply for Australian citizenship?

The tough admission procedure, however, may not be the main consideration in the decision-making process. The rationale of them maintaining their Malaysian citizenship could be explained based on emotional and subjective grounds as well as pragmatic considerations. A sense of attachment to their birth country is related to having family and friends back in their hometown. In a particular case, a respondent’s mobility is deeply influenced by his/her partner’s choice to remain in the home country. Pragmatic considerations such as benefits associated with their Malaysian citizenship (the ability to inherit Malaysian properties and to return to Malaysia to live and work) are also important. This is also indicated in the study by Koh (2014, p. 15). This article suggests that it is relatively easy for the Malaysian diaspora in Australia to make the decision to retain Malaysian citizenship and remain Australian permanent residents.<sup>2</sup>

Surprisingly, all the surveyed participants (except two) were not

considering Australian citizenship although they cited their sending country’s (Malaysia) policies as the factors affecting their choice of citizenship [as well as migration]. The reasons given are “unwilling to give up Malaysian citizenship,” “attachment to home,” “planning to go back to Malaysia when the time is right,” “haven’t settled down yet,” and “still have family assets back in Malaysia, so it’s more convenient to keep my Malaysian citizenship to ensure the assets are secured.” A 27-year-old engineer, who has been staying in Australia for 9 years, made the following remarks:

*We still believe Malaysia is our home. We do not see the future in Australia because the education does not fit to the Malaysia moral beliefs. We also believe that our future generation is better for them to be in Malaysia because Malaysia will prepare them to be more competitive and also Malaysia is the center point between East and West, and hence they may have a brighter future...*

#### *Home and Belongingness*

The following section of the conducted survey aims to examine the relationship between the Malaysian diaspora members and their home country. Two central questions were asked. First, “how do you define a place called “home?” Second, “which country do you see as your home?” Surprisingly, all the respondents [single or married] shared a similar notion of

belongingness: where there is the family, there is a home. It seems that family ties are treasured by the respondents. Accordingly, their answers are outlined as follows:

1. “Home is where my family members live and my home country will be Malaysia.”
2. “Home is a place where my culture belief fit into local communities. I still call Malaysia home.”
3. “Currently I still see Malaysia as home. However this may change in future due to: settle down in Australia for children’s education and social welfare has not improved in Malaysia.”
4. “A home is where I find comfort and sense of belonging. It is where my blood families are and where I still find familiar languages, cuisine and cultural practices. For these reasons I still see Malaysia as my home.”
5. “A place which I choose to stay permanently.”
6. “Home is where my families are. In this case, they are all in Malaysia, so home is still Malaysia. For now, until I settle-down and start up my new family. That then, will be called home.”
7. “Safe to stay and have future prospects for next generation.”
8. [simply] “Malaysia.”

The respondents were also asked about what citizenship meant to them. Six of the respondents chose “individual identity and cultural belonging” rather than “rights” or

“obligations and moral responsibilities” or “a matter of convenience.” The importance of citizenship as a shared identity is highly valued by the Malaysian diaspora in my study. Their conceptualization of citizenship is framed within the understanding of national belonging. A sense of identity with the Malaysian communities was chosen rather than a rational calculus of the costs and benefits derived from one’s citizenship status. This finding corresponds with the previous research of Robertson who found that emotional attachment to the country of origin is common among her student respondents (2008, p. 103). The research of Koh also informs a similar conclusion, i.e. “their negotiations of citizenship, identity, home and belonging, shaped simultaneously by institutional and everyday life processes, subsequently inform their citizenship and migration decisions. In other words, these decisions are not purely based on cost-benefit balances as economic-based migration theories suggest” (2010, p. 3).

Though “a sense of national belonging represents one of the key sources of legitimacy and loyalty for states,” we must be careful to delineate the differences between loyalty to the state and loyalty to the family (Barabantseva & Sutherland, 2013, p. 1). Vanessa Fong reminded us that “filial nationalism” or “family loyalty” plays a more decisive role in explaining the “subjective loyalty” of the Chinese diaspora. In research conducted among her Chinese students in the U.S, Chinese diaspora members treasure their home country’s citizenship and are “loyal”

to their ancestral home. Loyalty in this context refers to family loyalty, rather than political loyalty (Fong, 2011, p. 52). There is a need to differentiate between loyalty to the state and loyalty to the family. In the Malaysian context, citizenship is perceived as loyalty and belongingness to Malaysia and “insecurity” towards the Malaysian government. These two factors combined to explain why citizenship is “primarily interpreted and practised culturally, and not politically” (Koh, 2014, p. 1).

There are three main definitions of citizenship based on three different citizenship theories. Liberalism sees citizenship as a matter of rights; republicanism views citizenship as practice; while communitarianism regards citizenship as identity (Schuck, 2002; Dagger, 2002; Delanty, 2002). The participants in my study do not perceive citizenship as a matter of right or a matter of practice, but tend to see citizenship as a matter of identity. They think of citizenship in relation to “home.” From the author’s personal observation of the Chinese diaspora in Melbourne [during her stay in the city for four years], the sense of “Malaysian-ness” is very strong in their post-migration experiences. In some ways, they are engaging within two different cultures, yet seeing themselves as “Malaysian first.” Strategising their citizenship choice meant negotiating their sense of belongingness across their experience with their homelands and host lands. The findings suggest that there are common experiences of the respondents in their search of a place called “home.”

This construction of home informs their choice of citizenship and their perception of national belonging. For them, “citizenship means much more than gaining a passport” (Barabantseva & Sutherland, 2013, p. 5).

They chose to identify themselves as “Malaysians.” This situation is only normal taking into consideration of the next survey question: “How do you describe your sense of belonging in Australia?” Half of the participants have great intricacy in blending with the Australian cultures [amidst the multicultural notion of the state]. All the respondents wished to be able to identify with both cultural entities; they share the Malaysian way of life and at the same time, wish to assimilate into the Australian cultures. However, the respondents expressed difficulty in assimilating into Australia cultures when they were asked to describe their sense of belonging in Australia. Their responses ranged from “I do not feel that I belong here” (two respondents), “Being treated as a second class citizen” (two respondents), “I could blend in with the rest” (three respondents) and “I feel I am part of them” (one respondent). What happened is the presence of the sense of alienation when they are away from their self-defined construction of “home.” Thus, the author suggests that Malaysians abroad are still attached to “Malaysian” made substances [tangible or intangible alike]. A research on Malaysian culture reported that identification with Malaysian culture is higher among Malaysians abroad compared to local Malaysians. Malaysians abroad look for “Malaysian” food and “share

a distinctive spoken English Language derogatively called ‘Manglish,’ which may sound horrible but is easily understood by all” (Ang *et al.*, 2015, p. 78).

Next, this article surveys the suggestions of the existing diaspora if they have any advice to share with the newcomers, who are still considering which citizenship to be taken. Their replies are outlined as follows:

1. “It’s important to know what one wants in life in order to determine which country to choose to be a citizen.”
2. “Don’t forget what make you today. Australia may not be the way you have seen or heard from somebody else. Working in a big corporate like Rio Tinto, I strongly believe that my Malaysian background has made [me] to be a better person among other nationalities.”
3. “Well, go for a place that happiness is found.”
4. “Make use of their time here to understand themselves and what they really want. They can do it through studying, working or travelling here. Take as much time as they can because it can be a decision that brings the major changes to their lives.”
5. “Choose what you like to do.”
6. “I think Permanent Residency of 5 years is quite sufficient for any newcomers. Some Malaysians have been here over 30 years with their new family, but still remained as a PR, as they cannot take idea of simply applying Visa to go back to your home-country.”
7. “Political stability of a country is very important factor for the country prospect.”
8. “No difference.”

As a result of the state’s single nationality principle, the Malaysian diaspora is strategising their citizenship rights across national borders. Without the benefits of dual nationality, a Malaysian diaspora member in Australia can still enjoy their current status: maintaining Australian PR whilst keeping Malaysian citizenship. For them, the issue of dual nationality does not affect their [as well as their family’s] mobility. As expressed by one respondent: “I travel frequently back to my family and they would do the same so we can share the best of both countries.” The others also enjoy travelling between Malaysia and Australia for holidays and visitation. Australian PR is considered good enough: “Permanent Residency will do for me at this stage.” For the moment, the respondents seemed to be satisfied with the status of Australian PR and Malaysian citizenship which both offer flexibility for them (and their family as well). Coining Aihwa Ong’s notion of “flexible citizenship,” the diaspora members in my study preferred to stay flexible by selecting different countries for residence, work, investments, family reunions, and retirement.

Finally, the article surveys the willingness of the diaspora to return home. All the respondents replied a definite “yes” (one respondent had already returned to Malaysia after staying overseas for seven years) when asked about the possibility

that they would return to the country as an expatriate as the Malaysian government is luring back its overseas nationals. What does this suggest for the government's effort to resolve the brain drain? Since 2001, Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad has sought to encourage return migration of Malaysian professionals working abroad (under the so-called "Returning Experts Programme"). The REP facilitates the homecoming of Malaysian professionals (including their foreign spouses and children) in order to transform the state to become a developed nation by 2020. Among the incentives offered include fast-track approval of permanent resident status for foreign spouses and children, tax exemption for all personal effects brought into Malaysia, tax exemption on cars, and an optional 15% flat tax rate on chargeable employment income (TalentCorp, 2011).

TalentCorp's sessions in Melbourne recognised the fact that "ninety-nine per cent of the Malaysians living overseas that TalentCorp encounters in its drive to get professionals to return are still patriotic towards Malaysia" (*The Malaysian Insider*, 7 October 2012). Recognising the strength of the Malaysian diaspora in Australia, the state launched the Malaysian Scientific Diaspora Network (MSDN) in Gold Coast to promote collaborative research between non-Malaysian researchers working in Australia and researchers in Malaysia and between Malaysian and non-Malaysian researchers working in Malaysia (*The Malaysian Insider*, 15 November 2012).

A report by the World Bank (2011) suggested that Malaysia could take more action in encouraging the contributions from the diaspora community. It is a known fact that the global diaspora community has been contributing to trade, foreign direct investment and transfer of knowledge in their home country. Considering that the Malaysian diaspora comprises highly skilled migrants, Malaysia is advised to pursue a more extensive set of diaspora policies. According to Hugo, "the diaspora is predominantly non-Malay, and this discrimination will remain a barrier to return just as it has been a factor encouraging the emigration of many in the first place" (2011, p. 238). Meanwhile, Ziguras and Law pointed out that "one possible reason for Malaysia's lack of apparent success in luring its diaspora back home is that the diaspora chiefly consists of ethnic Chinese and Indian Malaysians, many of whom have left Malaysia because of limited options available to them in employment in government and public educational institutions, including universities" (2006, p.70). Although such policies would seem less likely to succeed given the dynamic communal politics in Malaysia, there are some prospects considering that the diaspora maintains a sympathetic attachment to their homeland.

## CONCLUSION

This article offers two explanations for the citizenship choices of the Malaysian Chinese diaspora. First, the idea of a place called "home" informs their decision.

Second, they understood the citizenship strategies that would enable them to maintain their flexibility and mobility across the two countries. Many of them would keep the option open as to facilitate the entry and exit to both countries. Enjoying the best of both worlds, for most of the diaspora members in my study, does not necessarily mean obtaining two citizenships. As Cohen advocates, diaspora members are highly mobile in a global age. New forms of international migration do not result in “permanent settlement and the exclusive adoption of the new citizenship of a destination country.” Instead, international migration is taking the form of “intermittent stays abroad and sojourning.” (Cohen, 2013, p. 141).

While economic incentives and social disincentives have been identified by the World Bank (2011, p. 121) as the factors of Malaysian skilled migration, these factors do not sufficiently influence the change in national status. “Malaysianness” remains a key consideration in shaping the citizenship choice. It is relatively flexible for the respondents to stay permanently in Australia while choosing to return to Malaysia. The preservation of home country citizenship serves as bridges to facilitate their return for family visitation and reunion. Diasporas’ transnational practices in the Malaysian case study demonstrated that the state has strong collective identities and the diaspora reconfigures their senses of belongingness in the post-migration period through the shared “Malaysian” identity. The state timely

responded to the diasporic imaginary in its effort to tap overseas talent.

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## ENDNOTES

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## The Impact of Health Care Expenditure and Infectious Diseases on Labour Productivity Performance in Africa: Do Institutions Matter?

Hassan, A. M.\*<sup>,</sup> Norashidah, M. N. and Nor, Z. M.

Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

This study was rooted from the findings that for many years infectious diseases remain the major cause of death around the globe especially in Africa. Economic theory also predicts among others that HIV/AIDS reduces labour supply and productivity, and the GDP of Africa declines by 2-4% annually. In addition, institution is one of the reasons for slower growth in Africa. The study, therefore, examined the impact of health care expenditure per capita and infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) on labour productivity performance in Africa using System GMM Estimation methods for 50 panels of African countries from 2002–2011. The results show that health-care expenditure per capita is positive but insignificant to labour productivity performance in the region. The results also confirm the negative impact of infectious diseases on labour productivity performance in the region. Government effectiveness and control of corruption are positive and significant to the improvement of health care expenditure in Africa. In addition, the study also revealed that political instability and conflict also contribute positively to the spread of infectious diseases in the region. Thus, it is recommended that African governments and health-related development partners increase the financial amount allocated to the health sector. At the same time, more efforts are needed to curb and control the spread of infectious diseases through strengthened institutions to improve health-care expenditure in the region.

*Keywords:* Health care expenditure, infectious diseases, labour productivity, Africa

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##### *E-mail addresses:*

adoyeyya93@gmail.com (Hassan, A. M.)  
norashidah@upm.edu.my (Norashidah, M. N.)  
lehnoor@upm.edu.my (Nor, Z. M.)

\* Corresponding author

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### INTRODUCTION

For many years, Africa remains one of the lowest regions with health care expenditure in the world despite being the worst region affected by infectious diseases (IDs) such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB). These IDs

play a critical role in negatively affecting labour productivity and economic growth. In 2011, Africa recorded an estimated 60% of the global HIV burden (UNAIDS, 2012). A similar report by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2013) showed that Africa recorded more than double the world's average of TB cases (122 per 100,000 people). At the individual country level, two African countries, South Africa and Swaziland, had the highest incidence rates of per capita TB cases, with about 1 new case for every 100 people a year. On health care expenditure, the World Health Organisation (2011) reported that Africa has the lowest expenditure compared with other regions. The report further showed that average health care expenditure per capita (HEXPC) was \$1,405 and total

health care expenditure (as a % of GDP) was 5.9 % in Africa, while in the regions of the Americas and Europe, HEXPC was more than double that in Africa (\$3,534 and \$2,367, respectively). The trend of both health expenditure and IDs in the African region are depicted in Fig.1.

As reported by WHO (2012), most of the African countries had low health care expenditure but higher TB and low LP. Fig.1 presents these relationships.

From the above figure, countries with higher IDs (TB) cases tend to have lower value of labour productivity per worker as opposed to countries with lower cases of IDs. For example, Burundi recorded the lowest value of labour productivity with low health care expenditure but high TB cases. The figure also shows a high value

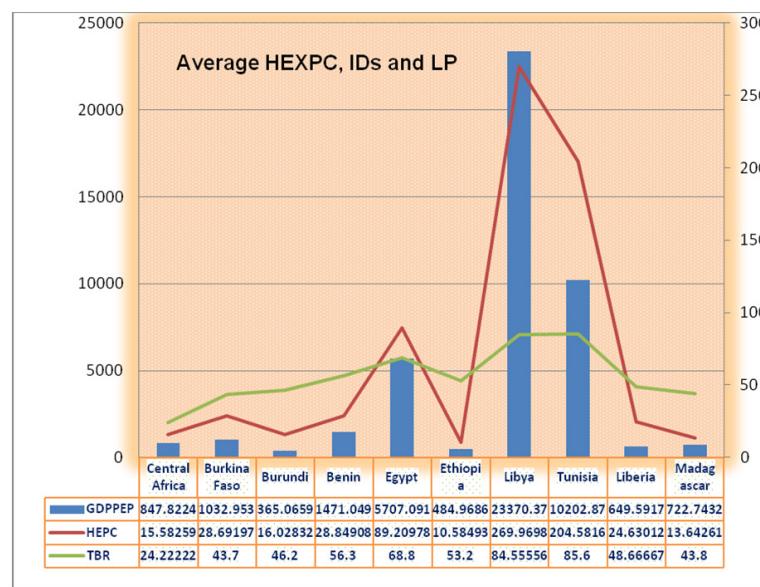


Fig.1: Relationship between Health Expenditure, Infectious Diseases and Labour Productivity in Africa

Source: Researcher Design. GDPPEP is GDP per worker, HEXPC is health expenditure per capita both as \$ 2005 Constant price), TBR is TB rate total detection (all form). Data from WDI (2003)

of labour productivity recorded by Libya with high health care expenditure but lower TB cases. Another country with similar relationship is Tunisia, where the level of labour productivity superseded the rate of TB cases recorded at the same time, showing a high health care expenditure during the period of the review.

The low health care expenditure and high burden of HIV/AIDS in Africa could be due to poor institutions in the region. These context institutions, as defined by the World Bank, refer to sets of formal and informal rules governing the actions of individuals and organisations as well as the interactions of participants in the development process (Kumssa & Mbeche, 2004). More elaborately, institutions can be formal and informal. While a formal institution relates to adherence to the established rules and regulations in society, an informal institution refers to trust and networks, which define informal rules or constraints for economic activities and self-mechanism (Ibrahim & Hook, 2014).

The institutional index used in this study includes government effectiveness, control of corruption and political stability, as well as war and conflicts. Government effectiveness is defined as the government's capability to formulate and implement sound policies that could foster social and economic interactions between people and the state. It is concerned with the perception of public service quality, government credibility, the degree of independence from political pressures and policy implementation. Government effectiveness measures the

level of bureaucracy, quality of personnel, and institutional failure (Kaufmann, Zoidolobatón, & Aart, 1999). Political stability and the absence of violence are other institutional qualities defined as propensity for government change in a given period of time, which measure the average number of coups and revolutions per year (Gurgul & Lach, 2013). Control of corruption is also regarded as a measure to reduce the tendency towards corrupt practices.

In light of the above, the motivation of this study is rooted from the study by Boutayeb, (2006) who asserted that for many years, IDs remain the major cause of death around the globe especially in Africa and LDCs. Economic theory also predicts that HIV/AIDS increases import but reduces labour supply, productivity and export. These result in the decline of the GDP of Africa by 2-4 % annually, (Dixon *et al.*, 2013). A weak institution was one of the reasons for slower growth in Africa, (Campos & Nugent, 2000). Similarly, reports from WHO, UNAIDS, Grigoli and Kapsoli (2013) and Conference Board (2013), indicated low health expenditure, high rate of IDs, inefficiency of health expenditure and low labour productivity in Africa over the years, respectively. This study was to find out whether the poor labour productivity performance in Africa could be attributed to the afore-mentioned indicators.

Most studies conducted on health care expenditure and productivity have either focussed on one country analysis such as Nigeria (Umoru & Yaqub, 2013) and Spain

(Rivera & Currais, 2003), or examined a particular sector of the economy (Aggrey, 2012). More so, there are a few studies done on the role of institutions on economic growth and development (Osman, 2012), Acemoglu and Robinson (2010), and Siddiqui and Ahmed (2009). Therefore, this study focuses on health care expenditure and IDs on labour productivity compared with the role of institutional quality in the entire African region. In specific, the objective of this study was to empirically examine the above issues in Africa. The study included a panel of 50 African countries covering a 10-year period (2002–2011) using endogenous growth theory and the system GMM estimator as its theoretical base and methodological approach, respectively.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Theoretical and Empirical Literature*

This study relies heavily on the endogenous growth theory and human capital model. Some studies (Lucas, 1988; Romer, 1990; Barro & Sala-I-Martin, 1995) have applied the Augmented Solow Model to determine the relationship between human capital and growth. Endogenous growth theory argues that economic growth is an endogenous result of an economic system rather than the result of external forces (Romer, 1994). Additionally, in endogenous growth theory, government policies are regarded as technological changes that improve growth. Government policy can affect the growth rate of aggregate output and consumption by affecting the efficiency of human capital accumulation technology (e.g., government

policies that make educational systems more efficient). This might be accomplished through the implementation of better incentives for performance in the school system (Williamson, 2011).

On the other hand, the human capital model is widely used in the field of health. This model was developed by Grossman in 1972, as one of the versions of the endogenous growth model. Grossman (1972) shows that his model draws heavily on the human capital theory developed by Becker (1965), Ben-Porath (1967) and Mincer (1974). The idea of health, as a part of the human capital stock of the person is not new; in fact, the first health demand model was created by Grossman in 1972, which provides a framework for modelling human capital accumulation and its relationship to health (in terms of health care expenditure and IDs). Therefore, the incorporation of institutions into endogenous growth theory is one justification for adopting the theory as a basis for the assessment of the impact of institutions on health care expenditure and IDs in Africa. As such, this study relies on endogenous growth theory as well as human capital theory.

### *The Impacts of Health Expenditure on Labour Productivity and the Economic Impact of Infectious Diseases*

The empirical relationships between health care expenditure, health outcomes and labour productivity have been previously established. Some studies have found a positive relationship, while others have concluded the existence of a negative relationship between health expenditure and

health outcomes and output. For example, Bloom *et al.* (2003) and Bloom, Canning and Sevilla (2004) disclose that health capital indicators positively influence aggregate output, with 22–30% of the growth rate attributed to health capital. Rivera and Currais (2003), in a panel data analysis, suggested that current government health spending has a positive effect on productivity in a Spanish region.

On the economic impact of IDs, several studies have empirically examined the impact of IDs such as HIV/AIDS and TB on economic growth and development. For example, Grimard and Harling (2004), in panel data estimation using an augmented Solow growth model, found that countries with a lower burden of TB recorded faster growth than countries with a high incidence of TB. The results showed that those countries recorded between 0.2% and 0.4% lower growth for every 10% increase in the TB incidence. In another study assessing the impact of HIV/AIDS on FDI in developing countries using panel data GMM estimators, Asiedu, Jin, and Kanyama (2011) found a negative relationship between HIV/AIDS and productivity in terms of FDI, where FDI diminishes as the prevalence rate increases. The study, however, shows that 1% increase in HIV prevalence is expected to reduce FDI by about 0.0811 and 0.111% in short-run and long-run periods, respectively.

#### *The Impact of Institutions on Infectious Diseases*

The complementary effects of institutional quality and technological progress are the

main reasons for the very low growth in productivity in Latin America; therefore, institutional quality is one of the key determinants of growth by providing incentives to invest in technology (Franko, 2007). Researchers (Siddiqui & Ahmed, 2013; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2010) have posited that the quality or effectiveness of institutions has a stronger effect on long-term growth. It was also empirically established that institutional factors have a significant influence on total factor productivity and that countries with better institutions exhibit higher productivity (Méon & Weill, 2013).

Further, Hall and Jones (1999) reported that institutions and government policies increase capital accumulation and productivity per worker. They found that in 127 countries, a positive relationship exists between output per worker and the measure of social infrastructure. Accordingly, a change in the effectiveness of governance and social infrastructure is associated with a 5.14% change in output per worker. Hence, war and conflicts contribute immensely to the increase in HIV/AIDS infection. For example, a decade of ethnic war, with mass movements of refugees from conflict in Rwanda, has led to an escalating rate of HIV that has spread from cities, such as Kigali, to the rural parts of the country (Smallman-Raynor & Cliff, 1991). Away from Africa, Wollants *et al.* (1995, as cited in Smallman-Raynor & Cliff, 1991) showed that the high HIV infection rates in El Salvador soldiers were attributed to the high levels of risky sexual behaviour by soldiers associated

with the 12-year civil war and numerous prostitution centres surrounding military posts. Corruption, on the other hand, was found to affect growth and productivity; more specifically, institutions that protect property rights are crucial to economic growth and investment (Knack & Keefer, 1995).

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### *Empirical Framework*

To assess the impact of health care expenditure, IDs on labour productivity performance, as well as the role of institutions on health care expenditure in Africa, the following assertion is in line with the main focus of this study. Thus, the basic argument in human capital and endogenous growth theory is that an increase in workers' quality through improved education and health improves productivity. This study therefore adapts from Oluwatobi and Ogunrinola (2011), the augmented Solow model, which is in line with literatures from Barror & Sala-I-Martin (1995), Romer (1990) and Lucas (1988). The endogenous growth theory assumes that output is a function of stock of labour, capital and human capital in the form of stock of health and level of education. The study therefore adapted endogenous (augmented Solow) model in the form of:

$$Y = A K^\alpha (hL)^\beta \quad (1)$$

where; Y=Output level; K=Stock of physical capital; h=Level of Human Capital; L=Labour, measured by number of workers;

A=Level of Total Factor Productivity;  $\alpha$  =Elasticity of capital input with respect to output; while  $\beta$  =Elasticity of labour input with respect to output.

Econometrically with the introduction of error term, the model becomes;

$$Y = AK^\alpha (hL)^\beta + u. \quad (2)$$

Transforming (2) into a log-linear form, and taking the natural log of some variables, as well as augmenting the model to include other control and relevant variables of the study, the final model for achieving objectives 1 and 2 becomes:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \ln K_{it} + \alpha_2 \ln h_{it} + \alpha_3 L_{it} + \alpha_4 \ln \delta Z_{it} + u_{it} \quad (3)$$

Where,

Y=Output level representing productivity per worker as dependent variable in the cases of the estimation of the impact of health-care expenditure and LP. Similarly, it also stands for both HEXPC and HIVPR as dependent variables used in the estimation of the role of institutions on both health-care expenditure and IDs in Africa.  $\alpha_0$  is a constant term and  $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_4$  are coefficients of the explanatory variables. While K is Stock of physical capital; h represents level of human capital in the form of school enrolment; L is labour supply and A theoretically stands for Total Factor Productivity. Additionally,  $\delta Z$  is a vector of parameters of other control variables, while letters  $i$  and  $t$  represent vectors of countries and time respectively, and U is the random error term.

### *Variable Measurements and Data Sources*

The variables used in this study include the following; GDP per worker ( $\ln LP$ ) measured in PPP 2005 constant prices (proxy of labour productivity per worker). HEXPC measured in 2005 constant prices. Population Growth (POPG) was measured as the % of annual growth (proxy of labour supply). Gross Capital Formation (CP) measured as the % of GDP (proxy of physical capital). GDP per capita (GDPC) was measured in 2005 constant prices. Gross Enrolment Secondary (HCP) was measured as the total enrolment of both sexes (proxy of human capital). Gross National Income (GNI) was measured in 2005 constant prices. HIVPR was measured as total detection cases among the population aged 15–49 (example of IDs). TB detection rate (TBDR) was measured as the % of all forms. Trade Openness (OPN) was measured as the % of GDP [(exports + imports) / GDP]. Gross National Income ( $\ln GNI$ ) was measured as PPP in the 2005 constant prices. All data for the above variables were obtained from WDI, World Bank (2013). The study used three indexes of institutional quality: Govt. Effectiveness (GEFTVS), Control of Corruption (COCRP), and Political Instability, Violence & War (PSAV). Data for all three institutional indexes were sourced from WGI (2013).

### *Econometric Model*

To achieve the objectives of this study, relevant variables as discussed in subsection 3.2 are specified in line with the theory endogenous growth model and human

capital model, as described in subsection 2.1 above. The variables are also specified in line with the dynamic panel data approach, which accounts for the dynamic adjustment among the variables. Using the above framework (equation 3) and taking the natural log of some of the variables of interest, the final econometric models of the study are specified in equation 4.

$$\begin{aligned} \ln LP_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln LP_{it-j} + \beta_2 \ln CP_{it} + \beta_3 POPG_{it} \\ & + \beta_4 \ln HCP_{it} + \beta_5 \ln HEXPC_{it} + \beta_6 ID_{it} \\ & + \beta_7 \ln OPN_{it} + \beta_8 \ln GNI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Where, other components of the model are as defined in equation (4). LP is the dependent variables proxy to GDP per worker/person employed, CP and POPG represent Capital and labour supply, respectively. HCP is the control variable representing human capital; HEXPC is health care expenditure per capita and IDs stands for (HIVPR and TBDR). Also, OPN is used as a policy variable to account for the economies openness, while  $J$  is the vector of lag variables. Equation 6, therefore, is used for the estimation of the impacts of health care expenditure and IDs on labour productivity in Africa. Accordingly, the parameters of LP, CP, POPG, HEXPC and OPN are expected to have a positive relationship with the labour productivity, while both IDs are expected to affect labour productivity negatively, unless otherwise.

To assess the role of institutions on health care expenditure and the spread of IDs, three institutional variables were considered. These variables were assumed to contribute immensely on the performance

of health care expenditure and control of IDs, equation 3 was used as the econometric model for the estimation of the impact of health care expenditure and IDs on labour productivity, as well as the assessment of the role of institutions on health care expenditure and spread of IDs in Africa. The models include all the relevant variables and they are specified as equation 5 and 6, where, other variables are as defined above, INS represent three institutional quality variables namely: GEFTVS, CCRP and PSAV. GNI is the gross national income (used as additional variable for the robustness re-estimation analysis), and  $J$  is the vector of lagged dependent variables. Accordingly, the parameters of the two INS variables (GEFTVS, CCRP) are expected to be positive, where quality institution will improve health care expenditure positively. The parameter of PSAV is also expected to be positive, where political instability and war increase the spread of IDs.

#### *Estimation Method*

The study used Generalised Method of Moment (GMM) as method of estimation. As pointed out by Baltagi (2005), in panel data estimation, both the Generalised

Least Square (GLS) estimators and the Fixed Effect estimators would produce constant estimates in the presence of dynamics and endogenous regressors. To curb this problem, Arellano and Bond (1991) proposed a dynamic panel GMM, which is an instrumental variable estimator that uses all past values of endogenous regressors, as well as the current values of strictly exogenous regressors as instruments. Arellano and Bond (1991) started by transforming all regressors by differencing all regressors and used generalised method of moments. This process is called Difference GMM (Hansen, 1998).

System GMM Estimator becomes more efficient due to some shortcomings of the Difference GMM, particularly near unit root problems and it is not efficient when the individual cross section ( $N$ ) is large. This study reports results of system GMM. According to Arellano and Bover (1995) and Blundell and Bond (2000), the different GMM estimator neglects vital information in the level relationship and in the relations between the level and the first difference. Indeed, the variables at level are weak instruments for their first difference and are potential source of persistency. To curb

$$\begin{aligned} \ln HEXP_{it} = & \beta_1 \ln HEXP_{it-j} + \beta_2 \ln GDPC_{it-j} + \beta_3 INS_{it-1} + \beta_4 \ln CP_{it-j} \\ & + \beta_5 POPG_{it-j} + \beta_6 \ln OPN_{it-j} + \beta_7 \ln GNI_{it-j} + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

$$\begin{aligned} HIVPR_{it} = & \beta_1 HIVPR_{it-j} + \beta_2 \ln GDPC_{it-j} + \beta_3 INS_{it-j} + \beta_4 \ln CP_{it-j} \\ & + \beta_5 \ln HCP_{it-j} + \beta_6 POPG_{it-j} + \beta_7 \ln OPN_{it-j} + \beta_8 \ln GNI_{it-j} + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

this problem, they advocated a different approach known as system GMM. The system GMM approach estimates both the level and first difference regression as a system by instrumenting the level regression with the lagged level variables. The system GMM has two estimators, “One step” and “Two step” estimators, where the two-step estimator is the optimal estimator that provides efficient estimates.

#### *Countries of the Study*

The study covers all African countries with the exclusion of Somalia, South Sudan, Zimbabwe and Seychelles due to a lack of data on essential variables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This subsection discusses the two-step system GMM results obtained in the estimation of the impacts of health care expenditure and IDs on labour productivity performance in Africa. The estimation used LP as the dependent variable against other explanatory variables, as specified in equation 4. On the role of institutions on health care expenditure and IDS in Africa, the estimation used both HEXPC and HIVPR as dependent variables against other explanatory variables, as specified in equations 5 and 6, respectively.

#### *Empirical Results*

#### **The Impact of Health-Care Expenditure and Labour Productivity**

The results of Difference GMM analysis presented in Table 1 exhibit some elements

of near unit root or persistency problem as the coefficients obtained from the lagged dependent variable in all the 3 models are closed to 1. This problem, according to Blundell and Bond (2000), is capable of resulting to inefficient estimates. Similarly, the Sargan test P-values obtained in all models shown in Table 1 failed to reject the null hypothesis of validity of over identifying restrictions and it indicates that the instrumental variables used are invalid.

At the same time, the P-values of serial correlations of AR (1) in models 2 and 3 from the table indicate the presence of first-order serial correlation. These conditions, therefore, justify the weaknesses of Difference GMM, and that the result using this estimation technique is in efficient for this analysis. However, the result of Difference GMM is presented in Appendix A for comparison with the System GMM, which was adopted for analysis in this study.

Table 1 also presents System GMM Estimators (two-step) which examines the impacts of health care expenditure on labour productivity performance. As highlighted earlier, the two-step system GMM is theoretically more efficient than the Difference GMM result. Estimates of two-step system GMM in model 1 in the table revealed that health care expenditure was positive, but statistically insignificant for explaining labour productivity performance.

The above result is quite contrary to the theory; our prior expectation was that improving health expenditure would lead to better and enhanced health care delivery through the better provision of health

infrastructure. It was expected to reduce the level of illness, absenteeism and improve worker ability and concentration, hence, leading to an overall improvement in their productivity performance. However, this relationship could be attributed to issues including inadequate resources for health, inefficient management of health resources, corrupt governments and other deficiencies that are evident in African health systems. The result is also in line with the reasons highlighted by Novignon *et al.* (2012) that in Africa, where health infrastructure is

mostly underdeveloped, increasing health expenditure is necessary, but not a sufficient condition for improving health status. They further argued that the efficiency and effectiveness of the allocation and utilisation of such resources should be given priority.

On the impact of IDs on labour productivity, for example, HIV appears negatively and statistically significant at reducing per worker productivity in Africa. The result of system GMM obtained from model 2 in Table 1 shows that a 10% increase in HIVPR among workers

TABLE 1  
Estimation of the Impacts of Health Expenditure and Infectious Diseases on Labour Productivity  
(Difference and System GMM)

VARIABLES	MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3			
	Diff.	GMM.	SYS.	GMM	Diff.	GMM.	SYS.	GMM
LnLP <sub>t-1</sub>	0.859*** (8.16)	1.034*** (59.00)	0.742** (3.17)	1.088*** (37.17)	0.834*** (3.90)	1.047*** (76.22)		
LnHEXP <sub>t-2</sub>	0.009 (0.41)	0.006 (0.51)	-0.001 (-0.03)	0.002 (0.12)	-	-		
LnCP <sub>t-2</sub>	0.017 (1.15)	0.007 (0.74)	0.011 (0.80)	0.002 (0.15)	0.002 (0.14)	0.002 (0.15)		
lnHCP <sub>t-2</sub>	0.006 (1.48)	0.007* (1.95)	0.005 (1.54)	0.009** (2.27)	0.006* (1.73)	0.006* (1.73)		
POPG <sub>t-1</sub>	0.023* (1.81)	0.022** (2.33)	0.001 (0.11)	0.021** (2.24)	0.009 (0.66)	0.026** (2.12)		
lnOPN <sub>t-2</sub>	-0.045 (-1.31)	0.015 (0.70)	0.011 (0.55)	0.006 (0.29)	0.006 (0.29)	0.010 (0.49)		
hivpr <sub>t-2</sub>	-	-	-0.013 (-1.63)	-0.013** (-2.55)	-	-		
lnTBDR <sub>t-2</sub>	-	-	-	-	-0.001*** (-4.97)	0.001*** (-5.09)		
SARGAN TEST	5.860 (0.4391)	15.797 (0.260)	5.517 (0.480)	18.539 (0.183)	5.287 (0.5076)	11.199 (0.594)		
AR (1)	0.0015	0.0006	0.0280	0.0008	0.0670	0.0061		
AR (2)	0.3866	0.5933	0.3433	0.6809	0.5503	0.7325		

\*\*\*, \*\* and \*: significant at 1%, 5% & 10% respectively, values in parenthesis are t-values. And lnLP=GDP per worker, lnHEXP=Health Care Expenditure per capita, HIVPR=prevalence of HIV, lnTBR=all forms of TB detection rate, lnCP= Capital, lnHCP= human capital, POPG= Labour, on and lnOPN=Trade Openness. Time dummy for 2003-2010 are statistically significant across the entire models.

aged between 14 and 49 reduces labour productivity by 0.13 units. The negative relationship obtained above could be due to a lack of concentration at work, frequent absenteeism through sick leave or the tendency to discriminate workers living with HIV. This result confirmed that HIV/AIDS remains one of the major public health problems in Africa, as shown by several reports (UNAIDS, 2012). The result is also consistent with empirical findings by Dixon *et al.* (2013).

On the other hand, the system GMM result in model 3 from the same table (1) relates that TB is negatively and statistically significant at diminishing labour productivity per worker in Africa, as the other IDs shown in model 2. The coefficient shows that a 10% increase in TBDR leads to a 0.001 % decline in per worker productivity. This finding, however, is not new in this area and is in line with the WHO World TB Report (2012), as well as the empirical findings of Asiedu *et al.* (2011) which indicate that IDs such as HIV/AIDS and TB negatively affect labour productivity and economic growth.

### **Post-Estimation/Diagnostic**

The Sargan test of identifying restrictions with the high P-value of test result of two-step system GMM estimates presented in Table 1 for models 1-3 are: 0.260, 0.183 and 0.594. This statistics, according to GMM rule, failed to reject the null hypothesis of no over-identifying restrictions. This, therefore, confirmed that all specifications are well specified and that the instrument vectors

used are appropriate with no endogeneity problem.

Additionally, the test result by Arellano and Bond (1991) is presented in Table 1, where the p-values from the two-step system GMM estimate in all the models with the values: 0.0006, 0.0008 and 0.0061. These values are statistically significant at the 1% level. This indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. This also means that there is no serial correlation of the first-order in the estimation. On the other hand, the test result for second-order autocorrelation AR (2) as presented in the same table, based on the high p-values obtained from the two-step system GMM in all the models, with the values of 0.5933, 0.6809 and 0.7325, failed to reject the null hypothesis of no autocorrelation in line with GMM rule. This, therefore, indicates the absence of second-order serial correlation among the estimates. Accordingly, the absence of serial correlation of both first-order and second-order in the result presented in the above table, confirms that the instruments used are independent of the error term (no autocorrelation) and hence appropriate for the estimation.

Finally, the test statistics of the countries time-specific effects, using time dummy, also rejects the null hypothesis of irrelevance of time-specific effects on the impacts of health care expenditure, IFDs on LP in Africa. It was found that the time dummies are jointly significant at the 1% level, implying the relevance of time-specific effect in the analysis.

## The Role the Institutions on Health Expenditure and Infectious Diseases

The second objective of this study is to examine the impact of institutions on health care expenditure and IDs with specific reference to HIV/AIDS. However, due to the factors discussed in Table 1 earlier as some of the weaknesses of Difference GMM result for the estimation of the role of institution on health care expenditure and IDs are presented in Appendix B for comparison.

The system GMM result (two-step) presented in Table 2 examines the role of control of corruption in improving the level of health care expenditure in Africa. The coefficient of COCRP as an institutional input presented showed a positive and statistically significant impact of institution on HEXPC in Africa. According to the result, a 10 unit increase in the (index) of control of corruption in Africa will lead to a \$0.12 increase in per capita health care expenditure. This result confirms the conclusion that corruption is one of the factors negatively affecting the performance of health care expenditure in Africa. This revelation is in line with those of Knack and Keefer (1995) and Fisman and Gatti (2002).

The system GMM result obtained in model 2 in the same table (2) shows that the institutional variable referred to as GEFTVS is positive and statistically significant at improving the quantity and quality of per person health care expenditure in Africa. However, looking at the current per capita health care expenditure, the positive nature of this relationship could be interpreted

as a backward trend where the low level of health care expenditure in Africa could be due to weak institutions. Also, from the system GMM result obtained, the quality of institutions would contribute meaningfully to improving health care expenditure (resulting in an upward trend relationship). According to this result, 10 units increase in (index) government effectiveness will lead to a \$0.14 increase in HEXPC in Africa after a minimum period of a year.

The above finding justifies our assertion that inefficient government and inefficiency in resource allocation and utilisation mitigates the performance of health care expenditure towards the provision of population health care infrastructure in Africa. Moreover, the poor contribution of health care expenditure contributes to poor labour productivity performance in the region. This finding confirms the earlier empirical findings of Acemoglu and Robinson (2010) and Siddiqui and Ahmed (2013). The result is also in line with Wu, Tang, and Lin (2010), who concluded that in low-income countries' government spending does not contribute meaningfully to productivity and economic growth due to inefficient government and inferior institutions,

Additionally, the study examined the role of institution not only on health care expenditure, but also on the spread of IDs such as the analysis of the impact of PSAV on the HIV/Aids prevalence rate in Africa. The system GMM result presented in model 3 in Table 2 showed that a 10 unit increase in the (index) of political instability and

war could lead to a 0.14 increase in HIV prevalence among the population aged from 14 to 49 years in Africa. The above result conformed to the finding by Cliff and Noor (1993), which revealed that the 1982 crises in Mozambique had caused a serious destabilisation in the economy of the country, which resulted in the deterioration of the children's health.

Political instability has long been a common phenomenon in Africa. This situation has led to a proliferation of military bases and refugee camps across the region. The coefficient obtained in this estimation confirms that institutions contribute positively to the control of IDs such as HIV, TB and malaria in Africa. According to the dynamic analysis, the

TABLE 2

Estimation of the Impact of Institution on Health Care Expenditure and Infectious Diseases (Difference and System GMM)

VARIABLES	MODEL 1			MODEL 2			MODEL 3		
	Diff. GMM. SYS. GMM			Diff. GMM. SYS. GMM			Diff. GMM. SYS. GMM		
InHEXP <sub>t-1</sub>	0.700*** (6.70)	0.785*** (18.86)		0.803*** (8.97)	0.810*** (19.24)		-	-	
HIVPR <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-		-	-		0.961*** (15.26)	0.942*** (183.59)	
InGDPC <sub>t-2</sub>	0.293 (1.26)	0.035 (1.04)		0.157 (0.79)	0.090** (2.49)		-	-	
InCP <sub>t-2</sub>	0.031 (1.02)	0.033 (1.61)		0.094*** (3.08)	0.030 (1.30)		-0.042 (-1.60)	-0.049** (-2.07)	
InHCP <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-		-	-		-0.005 (-1.30)	-0.010 (-0.47)	
POPG <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-		-	-		0.042 (1.59)	0.020 (0.91)	
InOPN <sub>t-1</sub>	0.061 (0.75)	0.145*** (4.29)		-0.244*** (-3.18)	0.042 (1.35)		0.027 (0.84)	0.018 (1.06)	
COCRP <sub>t-1</sub>	0.014*** (3.64)	0.012** (3.47)		-	-		-	-	
GEFTVS <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-		0.018* (2.74)	0.014*** (3.53)		-	-	
PSAV <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-		-	-		0.010 (1.52)	0.010* (2.49)	
SARGAN TEST	5.164 (0.522)	10.222 (0.746)		8.832 (0.183)	18.539 (0.183)		5.878 (0.437)	15.118 (0.370)	
AR (1)	0.0002	0.0002		0.0002	0.0001		0.7024	0.6881	
AR (2)	0.3306	0.5251		0.2839	0.5068		0.2110	0.2409	

\*\*\*, \*\* and \*: significant at 1 %, 5 % & 10 % respectively, values in parenthesis are t-Statistics. And InHEXP=Health Care Expenditure per capita, HIVPR=prevalence of HIVPR, InGDPC= per capita GDP, InCP= Capital, InHCP= Human Capital, POPG=Labour and InOPN= Trade Openness, GEFTVS= index of effectiveness of govt. COCRP= index of control of corruption and PSAV= index of political instability... Time dummy for 2006 - 2010 are statistically significant.

effect of political instability and war could start to manifest after a period of at least one year.

### **Post-Estimation/Diagnostic**

The Sargan test of identifying restrictions (Arellano & Bond, 1991) shows that the high P-value of the test result of two-step system GMM estimates (Table 2) for models 1-3, as 0.746, 0.183 and 0.370 respectively in all models also failed to reject the null hypothesis of no over-identifying restrictions. These, therefore, confirmed that all the specifications are well specified and that the instrument vectors used are appropriate with no endogeneity problem. Additionally, the Arellano and Bond test examined the statistics AR (1) and AR (2) for the presence of serial correlation in the first differenced residual of the first and second orders. The results of the first-order autocorrelation AR (1) in Table 4.4 show the p-values from 2-step system GMM estimates in all the models with the values of 0.0002, 0.0001 and 0.0003 are statistically significant at the 1% level. These indicate that the null hypothesis is rejected. This also means that there is no serial correlation of the first-order in the estimation.

On the other hand, the test result for second-order autocorrelation AR (2), as presented in the same table, based on the high p-values obtained from two-step system GMM in all the models, with the values of 0.5251, 0.5068 and 0.2409, failed to reject the null hypothesis of no autocorrelation in line with GMM rule. These, therefore, indicate the absence of

second-order serial correlation among the estimates. Accordingly, the absence of serial correlation of both first-order and second-order of the results presented in the above table confirms that the instruments used are independent of the error term (no autocorrelation), and hence appropriate for the estimation.

Finally, the test statistics of the countries' time-specific effects, using time dummy, also reject the null hypothesis of irrelevance of time-specific effects on the role of institutions on health care expenditure and IFDs in Africa. It was found that the time dummies were jointly significant at the 1% level, implying the relevance of time-specific effect in the analysis.

### *Robustness Checks*

To check the robustness of the above results, following Ibrahim and Hook (2014), another estimation was carried out where some variables were removed (lnHCP, lnOPN, POPG) from some models, and different variables (lnGNI) were added into the equation and estimated. The result of the new estimation confirmed the earlier results of both sign and significance. The result obtained shows that country income level is statistically significant at influencing the level of health care expenditure, whereas model 3 in Table 4.4 2 shows that a 10% increase in country GNI will lead to a \$0.18 % increase in health care expenditure per person in Africa. In the other models in the tables, however, the role of GNI is insignificant for both health expenditure and IDs. Similarly, the P-values of Sargan

and both serial correlation of AR 1 & AR 2, as well as time-dummy test of time-specific effects as Post-estimation tests, were all in line with GMM estimation method, as highlighted earlier. The results of the robustness checks for the re-estimation of the impact of health-care expenditure and IDs on LP and the role of institution on health-care expenditure and IDs are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### *Conclusion*

The present paper examined the impact of health care expenditure and IDs, with reference to HIV/AIDS and TB, on labour productivity performance in Africa from 2002- 2011 covering 50 panels of countries. The results obtained from this study used endogenous growth theory and the system

TABLE 3  
Robustness Check for Estimation of the Impact of Health Care Expenditure and Infectious Diseases on Labour Productivity (Difference and System GMM)

VARIABLES	MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3	
	Diff. GMM.	SYS. GMM	Diff. GMM.	SYS. GMM	Diff. GMM.	SYS. GMM
LnLP <sub>t-1</sub>	0.844*** (8.64)	0.784*** (13.62)	0.824*** (11.17)	1.047*** (73.93)	1.089*** (59.53)	1.033*** (65.57)
	0.010	-	-	-	-	0.009
LnHEXP <sub>t-2</sub>		(0.45)				(0.71)
LnCP <sub>t-2</sub>	0.018 (1.17)	0.023 (1.61)	0.018 (0.97)	0.004 (0.31)	0.003 (0.24)	0.013 (1.40)
lnHCP <sub>t-2</sub>	0.005 (1.42)	0.003 (1.02)	0.006 (1.53)	0.007* (1.87)	0.009** (2.35)	0.008** (2.12)
Popg <sub>t-1</sub>	0.016 (1.28)	0.016 (1.26)	0.022 (1.57)	0.026** (2.03)	0.021** (2.20)	0.021** (2.17)
lnGNI <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.001 (-0.01)	-0.001 (-0.37)	0.001 (0.06)	-0.002 (-0.52)	-0.002 (-0.14)	-0.002 (-0.60)
hivpr <sub>t-2</sub>	- (-1.20)	-0.011 (-1.20)	-	-	-.012** (-2.35)	-
lnTBR <sub>t-2</sub>	-	-	-0.001*** (-4.03)	-0.001*** (-4.94)	-	-
SARGAN TEST	5.557 (0.475)	10.389 (0.109)	6.107 (0.411)	11.401 (0.577)	13.664 (0.398)	16.376 (0.229)
AR (1)	0.0010	0.0007	0.0173	0.0052	0.0007	0.0005
AR (2)	0.3885	0.3309	0.5429	0.7614	0.6839	0.6345

\*\*\*, \*\* and \*: significant at 1 %, 5 % & 10 % respectively, values in parenthesis are t-Statistics. And lnHEXP=Health Care Expenditure per capita, HIVPR=prevalence of HIVPR, lnGDPC= per capita GDP, lnCP= Capital, lnHCP= Human Capital, POPG=Labour and lnOPN= Trade Openness, GEFTVS= index of effectiveness of govt. COCRP= index of control of corruption and PSAV= index of political instability... Time dummy for 2006 - 2010 are statistically significant.

GMM estimation method. More specifically, it examined empirically whether the level of HEXP in Africa contributed to labour productivity per worker. In other words,

it examined how the amount being spent on each person translated into his/her productivity through the provision of health infrastructure and services that improve

TABLE 4

Robustness Check for the Estimation of the Role of Institution on Health Care Expenditure and IDs (Both Difference and System GMM)

Variables	MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3	
	Diff. GMM.	SYS. GMM	Diff. GMM.	SYS. GMM	Diff. GMM.	SYS. GMM
LnHEXP <sub>t-1</sub>	0.708*** (6.71)	0.809*** (18.00)	0.790*** (8.28)	0.846*** (19.96)	-	-
HIVPR <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-	-	-	0.957*** (14.71)	0.945*** (172.98)
lnGDPC <sub>t-2</sub>	0.291 (1.26)	0.015 (0.42)	0.187 (0.91)	0.058 (1.63)	-	-
lnCP <sub>t-2</sub>	0.033 (1.15)	0.032 (1.48)	0.096** (3.26)	0.028 (1.20)	-0.037* (-1.67)	-0.039** (-2.18)
lnHCP <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-	-	-	-0.005 (-1.28)	0.012 (-0.30)
POPG <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-	-	-	0.041 (1.50)	0.019 (0.93)
lnGNI <sub>t-1</sub>	0.012 (0.80)	0.015 (1.43)	-0.002 (-0.09)	0.018* (1.78)	0.002 (0.29)	-0.001 (-0.36)
lnOPN <sub>t-1</sub>	0.054 (0.68)	0.136 (4.06)	-0.259** (-3.16)	0.039 (1.21)	-	-
COCRP <sub>t-1</sub>	0.013*** (3.55)	0.012** (3.26)	-	-	-	-
GEFTVS <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-	0.017* (2.64)	0.012* (2.58)	-	-
PSAV <sub>t-1</sub>	-	-	-	-	0.010** (1.5)	0.014** (2.99)
SARGAN TEST	5.088 (0.5326)	10.051 (0.7585)	9.145 (0.166)	19.100 (0.161)	6.314 (0.389)	16.117 (0.306)
AR (1)	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	0.6886	0.6803
AR (2)	0.3848	0.6376	0.2522	0.6625	0.2229	0.2183
Observation	345	396	345	396	346	397
No. of Group	50	50	50	50	50	50
No of Instruments	14	22	12	20	14	22

\*\*\*, \*\* and \*: significant at 1 %, 5 % & 10 % respectively, values in parenthesis are t-values. And lnLP=GDP per worker, lnHEXP=Health Care Expenditure per capita, HIVPR=prevalence of HIV, lnTBR=all forms of TB detection rate, lnGDPC= per capita GDP, lnCP= Capital, lnHCP= Human Capital, POPG=Labour and lnOPN= Trade Openness, GEFTVS= index of effectiveness of govt. COCRP= index of control of corruption and PSAV= index of political instability... Time dummy for 2006 - 2010 are statistically significant.

population health. The results showed evidence of a positive but statistically insignificant contribution of health care expenditure to labour productivity performance in the region. This finding justifies the assertion made by Novignon *et al.* (2012).

This study also shows that institutional quality or government effectiveness is positive and statistically significant at improving the quantity and quality of per person health care expenditure in Africa. At the same time, control of corruption, as another institutional input, has a positive and statistically significant impact on HEXPC in the region. However, the current situation in Africa showed a backward trend, where the low level of institutions results in a low level of impacts on health care expenditure and the spread of IDs. On the other hand, the result confirmed the impact of institutions on the spread of IDs. The coefficient obtained in this estimation confirms that institutions contribute positively to the control of IDs such as HIV, TB and malaria in Africa.

#### *Policy Implications*

In order to make health care expenditure plays a positive and significant role in improving labour productivity per worker, African governments and health-related development partners should increase the amount allocated to the health sector in accordance with the Abuja declaration. In addition, with the incoming Millennium Development Strategy (MDS) to be launched by the United Nations as a continuation of the MDGs, which are set to terminate by

2015, stakeholders of the proposed MDS should learn from the shortcomings of the MDGs and ensure the proper appropriation of funds to the health sector. To curb the effects of IDs (HIV & TB) on labour productivity as investigated in this study, despite several campaign programmes at the local, regional, state/province and national, as well as sub-regional levels, more efforts are needed to curb the spread of diseases. These diseases have been the major causes of deaths, reduced labour supply and productivity, and other negative effects that Africa is known for. Stakeholders (governments and NGOs) should increase funding to improve the awareness and prevention of these diseases, which will go a long way in saving lives and improving labour productivity and economic growth in the region. On the quality of institutions, government effectiveness, control of corruption and other institutional measures should be strengthened in Africa to improve health care resources management.

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## Dissecting Nature and Grotesque Elements in Tunku Halim's *Juriah's Song*

Nur Fatin, S. A. J.\*<sup>,</sup> Wan Roselezam, W. Y. and Hardev Kaur

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

Tunku Halim's novella *Juriah's Song* (2008) revolves around the protagonist, Akri, and his encounter with the ghost of his late girlfriend, Juriah. Categorised as a horror genre, the characters and settings of this novella serve as important ground where elements of nature and the grotesque interweave to enhance the plot. In this paper, we examine the roles and functions of nature and the grotesque through a textual analysis of the chosen text by utilising the notion of 'the relationship between humans and nature' and the concept of the grotesque as proposed by Wolfgang Kayser, Sherwood and Phillip Thomson. Nature is depicted as a mirror that reflects the relationship between humans and nature. The grotesque, on the other hand, refers to various kinds of exaggerated emotions and distorted forms. Our findings demonstrate that both nature and the grotesque take on significant roles and affect the characters' perceptions, judgements and emotions, either positively or negatively. The generic designation of the grotesque applies to both actions and characters in the novel. Apart from functioning independently from each other, nature and the grotesque are also significant when they intertwine. When the two concepts are used together, nature acts as a catalyst to develop grotesque actions.

*Keywords:* Ghost stories, gothic, the grotesque, horror novels, Malaysian Gothic, nature, Tunku Halim

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*E-mail addresses:*

fatinjafni@gmail.com (Nur Fatin, S. A. J.),  
roselezam@gmail.com (Wan Roselezam, W. Y.),  
jshardev@yahoo.com (Hardev Kaur)

\* Corresponding author

### INTRODUCTION

In the novel *Juriah's Song* (2008), the elements of nature and the grotesque serve each other in many ways. The two elements constitute and develop horror in either isolated or reciprocal manner. The first objective of this research is to look at the elements of grotesque in the novel.

The next one is to study the depiction of nature in the text to determine how nature alone can be seen as a conduit for the horror element. In what way can nature be seen as an element that helps to bring out horror in the story? To answer this, we examine the negative elements of nature that can be seen as ghastly and intimidating by people in general. Finally, the main objective of this research is to examine how the grotesque is utilised in the text in relation to nature.

Based on the textual analysis, we extract relevant textual evidence alongside appropriate concepts in order to achieve our aims. This analysis is divided into three sections. The first section is on the concept of the grotesque as it appears in the text. The next section will look at the depiction of nature alone in horror fiction, specifically the depiction of nature in *Juriah's Song*, while the last section will discuss how nature and the grotesque mutually develop horrific factors in the text.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The bank of Malaysian Literature in English includes material from Malaysia and Singapore. When it concerns ghost stories, both countries are heavily influenced by Malay, Chinese and Indian cultures. Similar to the beliefs of other Asian people, primitive Malays and Chinese worshipped everything close to them. They embraced an animistic belief, a faith in the spiritual force of the entire natural world and the cosmos (Lim, 2005, p. 9).

In Singapore, the belief in the supernatural is strongly inclined towards the Malay and Chinese traditions. Jonathan Lim illustrates this circumstance in Singapore, as shown below:

*Out of all this sharing also emerges a sense of the supernatural that blends the beliefs of several races. There are a few places in the world where you would find grandparents warning children to be equally wary of the Malay pontianak and of Chinese water-ghosts. Where else would banana trees be respectfully revered alongside shrines to half-Malay half-Chinese spirits? Or pilgrims worship both a Chinese temple and a Malay keramat on the same trip?* (p. 5)

On the other hand, Malay supernatural and superstitious practices are a blend of Malay/Indian or Muslim/Hindu. The witch doctor or shaman is the all-knowing figure whose main role is to provide talismans and charms to protect against bad spirits, ghosts and other unseen apparitions. Animistic beliefs contribute the most as the basis for shamanic and magic beliefs. The rituals and worshipping of primitive gods, spirits and ghosts and Hindu myths brought the essential elements together and created a special type of magician or *bomoh/dukun* (Winstedt, p. 32). Therefore, much Malay fiction displays the practice of black magic and appearances of the *bomoh*.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In an umbrella study, the study of nature is subject to ecocritical study; this research adjusts its reach exclusively to the relationship between humans and nature. Nature in this context includes the weather, forests, rivers, seas and certain animals. In order to understand how the relationship between humans and nature can exactly be established, consider the following excerpt:

*Ecocriticism observes in nature and culture the ubiquity of signs, indicators of value that shape form and meaning. Ecology leads us to recognize that life speaks, communing through encoded streams of information that have direction and purpose, if we learn to translate the messages with fidelity.*

(Howarth, 1996, p. 163)

The fact is that, in our daily lives, consciously or not, nature is ubiquitous. As its existence is omnipresent, humans seldom take the time to observe what nature really means to them. This scenario occurs in literature as much as in reality. Ecocritical lens serve as a platform to show the relationship between nature and human. In a research on Arabic poetry by Hamoud Yahya Ahmed and Ruzy Suliza Hashim, they utilise ecocritical interpretations because “the poets make vivid interconnections between the human and nonhuman world by utilising nature as a form of human resistance to the occupation of the land” (2015, p. 14).

On the other hand, as aforementioned, the concept of the grotesque is also the main concept underpinning this study. Put colloquially, the grotesque generally means a situation or an object that is extremely horrifying and explicitly gory. Literary glossaries classify the grotesque as an element characterised by bizarre distortions, especially in the exaggerated or abnormal depiction of human body parts and features (Baldick, 1990, p. 93). The literature of the grotesque involves freakish caricatures of people’s appearance and behaviour as seen in the examples in the novels by Charles Dickens, while disturbing, odd fictional characters are also referred to as the grotesque (Baldick, 1990, p. 93). It is within the range of normalcy to have an abundance of grotesque narration in horror novels. However, the selection of grotesque concepts in this research is made carefully in order to materialise the connection between the grotesque and nature. Although, basically, all sub-concepts of the grotesque share the same underlying essence and purpose, not all concepts can be linked and made relevant to one or more other elements outside grotesque studies.

Therefore, to fulfil the purpose of this study, two applicable sub-concepts of the grotesque are chosen. The sub-concepts are generic designations by various scholars and a concept proposed by Wolfgang Kayser. Generic designations will be applied while describing the elements of the grotesque in isolation, whereas Wolfgang Kayser’s concept is applied when describing the relationship between nature and the

grotesque. For a more specific and solid definition of the grotesque, I choose the concept of horrifying and comic forms of the grotesque. In the broadest sense, grotesque elements in a literary piece purport to invoke horror and laughter simultaneously on the reader's part. Whereas the comic is not restricted to being amusing and delightful, it tends to be inclusive of a certain glee in disbelief and the like. In his book, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, Wolfgang Kayser highlights the absurdity of grotesque objects.

To merge the two concepts, we propose that the elements of nature and the grotesque can function independently. Nevertheless, the elements of grotesque, comic and horrifying can be further refined and enriched with the help of nature as the agency eliciting the notion of the grotesque in the novel *Juriahan's Song*.

## TEXT OVERVIEW

*Juriahan's Song* (2008) (henceforth *JS*) is a novel written by a Malaysian author, Tunku Halim, which centres on the protagonist, Akri. Akri is the hottest rock star in town when a song he sang becomes a nationwide hit overnight. However, behind all the glamour and fame, Akri is haunted and cursed by memories of his late girlfriend, Juriah. As teenagers, Akri and Juriah, were a pair of lovebirds who kept seeing each other despite the strong opposition from Juriah's father. During their frequent meetings, Juriah habitually hums certain tunes and this inspired Akri to compose some songs. On one unfortunate night, Akri sneaked into

Juriahan's room and they consummated their love. However, they were caught by Juriah's parents when Akri accidentally knocked over a vase in the living room, while trying discreetly to leave the house. Knowing how fierce Juriah's father was, Akri hastened to leave the house with Juriah's father, wielding a sharp blade (*parang*), chasing after him. In the midst of this chaos, Juriah begged her father to stop chasing Akri, but to no avail. With the aim of pacifying the two men she loved the most, Juriah lost control of her car while driving. She hit a tree at speed and the crash killed her instantly.

Feeling guilty and miserable, Akri fled to another region and sought solace in a seaside village. While Akri was immersed in self-guilt over the incident, he tried to commit suicide, but he was saved by an old man in the village, Pak Mansor. Pak Mansor later took Akri to his house and they lived together. With Pak Mansor, Akri learned how to play the guitar, and that was how he learned composing and rearranging the humming of Juriah into proper songs. But fame comes at a price, and for Akri, it is a deadly price. Ever since Juriah's song became a massive hit, the spirit of Juriah comes to haunt him. In desperation, Akri ventures out and seeks help from a village shaman, the *bomoh*. With his help, the mystery of Juriah's haunting spirit unravels and Akri learns that Juriah's spirit is roaming with him, wanting to inform him about the existence of a tiny, pulsing life, the new life created by them on the night that Juriah died. Throughout the story, from Akri's reverie in the lonely village to in the bustle of the city,

Akri is always surrounded by the voice of nature and grotesque imagery.

## ANALYSIS

### *Extracting Grotesqueries from Juriah's Song*

The meanings and conventions of the grotesque are broad and intricate. Elaborative though it may seem, the grotesque in its simplest form can be defined as mutated versions of humans, animals and/or plants (Thompson, 1972, p.13). Hence, in this section, we will tease out the elements of the grotesque that are present in *JS* by utilising the meaning proposed by Thompson (1972) in *A Glossary of Literary Gothic Terms*. To expand that definition, the grotesque can relate to any form of mutation that is extravagant, exaggerated or abnormal. The purpose of examining rudimentary concepts of the grotesque is to offer an overview or a frame so that the meaning of the grotesque can be confined and serve a general purpose.

In the novel, employment of the grotesque concept is abundant, as it acts as a catalyst to construct an overall horrifying mood. Grotesqueness can be clearly seen in the character Juriah. Her grotesqueness is displayed in two ways: when she possesses a mundane human physique, and when she is in spirit form, which is clearly an atypical entity. Although the two portray different kinds of the grotesque, they still convey an adequate quality as agents of grotesquery in the text.

Now let us first probe the "human" character of Juriah. Although Juriah is a perfectly normal girl in human form, the

moment her car hit the tree on the night of her death, all her mundane beauty left her. When Akri realised that Juriah was trapped in the mangled jeep, he hastened to enter the vehicle in the hope of being together with whatever was left of Juriah. In this situation, Juriah's action could be considered grotesque. Consider the following excerpt:

*Through the shattered glass, Akri saw that the airbag hadn't worked. Juriah lay slumped on the steering wheel as though bent hideously in prayer. One hand lay twisted and limp on the dashboard. Her hair covered her face but through the gap in the black veil he could see that her lips were parted as though yearning for a kiss. A cold, cold kiss with a single icy drop of blood like a tear poised on her lower lip.* (*JS*, p. 41)

It is clear that the twisted body of Juriah is a strong agent conveying a grotesque element in the text. It would suffice simply to describe her as badly injured, but her condition – already grotesque enough – is emphasized further by the author to describe the horrifying scene more fully. With this emphasis and exaggeration, the grotesque effect is more powerful. As the description of her pose fits the aforementioned definition of the grotesque, the "essential paradox of grotesque as both liberating and tension-producing" is achieved (Thompson, 1972, p. 61). The above excerpt portrays the grotesque in maimed form. However, Juriah is not just grotesque from the maiming, but

also through her unearthly demeanour after she dies. The first event occurs immediately after her instant death in the car accident. As described in the excerpt above, Juriah is already a confirmed corpse as Akri enters the car. However, to Akri's great surprise, Juriah suddenly "pushed one arm against the steering wheel, slumped back in the car seat and turned to him" (JS, p. 43). The abnormality of the situation made Akri cry out. Silently and almost secretively, Akri found Juriah as scary as the moment, and the situation forced him to think that Juriah was "turning sanity into madness, turning love to fear" (JS, p. 44).

Instead of stopping there, Juriah's action is further described as being beyond normalcy, and her undistorted form clearly represents the grotesque in a definite sense.

*Like a corpse impatient with the confines of its coffin, she turned her bloodied head from side to side before stopping it just short of Akri's face ... A two-inch piece of glass poked from one of her eyes, the eye that was closed and puffy. With her other eye, she blinked and stared mournfully at him ... In that one look, with her whiteness of her eye, in the dark world of her eyeball, he saw her pain. (JS, p. 44)*

Through her painful eyes, Akri is able to grasp the gist of what Juriah desires from him. She wishes to be with Akri forever and accusingly asks Akri why he wants to run away. The latter question from Juriah causes

Akri to have enormous guilt towards her. Despite her strong desire to be with him, Juriah gradually retreats into a convulsion and speaks of nothing else.

Apart from this physical distortion and abnormal grotesquery, as mirrored by Juriah in her humanly being, Juriah also elicits the grotesque through her unearthly form. As is mentioned, in the moment after her death, she pronounces that she will never leave Akri alone. And she does not. In his seclusion in the seaside village, Akri sees Juriah in the form of nature – this topic will be the analysed in the next section – but once Akri becomes famous and moves back to the city, Akri is still visited by Juriah in her ghostly form, and this haunting affects Akri greatly. Judging by the frame, Juriah looks the same, but with the evident presence of Juriah around him, Akri realizes that Juriah is relentless in her anger, hatred and spite.

One night, as Akri is resting in his bedroom in his condominium, Akri is startled when he hears Juriah walks across the room towards him. "Her breath drew in as she saw him lying shirtless on the bed. She padded across the room to a hushed rip-rip sound" (JS, p. 83). The idea of Juriah becoming excited at seeing the half-naked Akri on his bed is grotesque by default. Grounding in the definition of the grotesque proposed by Sherwood, in addition to physical distortion, mental distortion and corruption can be seen as acts of grotesquery too, thus explaining why Juriah's actions can be seen as grotesque. Despite her heaving breaths on seeing Akri, she comes closer to him and presses her body against his.

*...hands – slippery and drenched in cold blood, moved up his bare shins and across his thighs ... before he could tell, a weight like a disused mattress fell on him ... Breasts squashed his chest. Smooth ankles against his shins. Cheek against his cheek. Dusty hair upon his mouth! Juriah slithered against him. Skin on skin.* (JS, p. 84)

In the above excerpt, Juriah's deliberate action can be seen as seductive and longing for physical contact with Akri. Perhaps she is trying to relive the moments when she made love with Akri on the night of her death. She draws her head closer to Akri as though "eager to kiss him with its slithering tongue" (JS, p. 85). The idea of a human having sexual intercourse with a non-human is unthinkable and can be considered gross and abnormal. This depicts what Sherwood proposes to be mentally and spiritually corrupted, and the event helps visualise what Kayser postulates as "exorcising the demonic" (1963, p. 59).

Going back to the physical abnormalities established by Juriah, Akri stiffens when he feels that "something cold and soft like blood-soaked meat held his ankle" (JS, p. 83) and he describes how Juriah's smell reminds him of "a puddle in a steaming alleyway where rotting rodents floated" (JS, p. 84). Although Akri stays firm, with his eyes tight shut, he can visualise Juriah's appearance. He fears that if he opens his eyes he will not see the lovely Juriah of yore but a figure with "a shard of glass poking

from one eye. A decomposed head filled with worms and maggots. A mouth filled with broken teeth and a blackened slug-like tongue" (JS, p. 85). The physical attributes of Juriah have evolved into a more distorted form, enhancing her grotesqueness. If we are to infer anything from thus, we can say that her grotesqueness has been augmented – the more distorted her physical appearance, the more daring and fearful she becomes. In parallel with her changes, Akri senses that Juriah has become more threatening too, so he no longer feels guilt and longing, rather, he recognises his fear of Juriah as he confesses that he can "get so scared" (JS, p. 90).

Although Akri is aware of his deep love for Juriah, and as he shoulders pressure of guilt for her untimely death, this slowly but surely changes into fear and anger towards Juriah's vengeful spirit. The grotesque, as portrayed by the character Juriah, includes physical distortion of her human form and spiritual corruption of her ghostly form.

#### *Locating Nature Elements in Juriah's Song*

The narration of nature permeates the text and the element of nature serves two purposes: 1) bringing forth the animalistic value in humans, and 2) a source to deliver oppressing energy against the protagonist.

Although Akri and Juriah acknowledged Juriah's father's objection to their relationship, the two youngsters could not break it off. One night, they met at Juriah's house, believing that her parents were asleep in the next room. As Akri was about to leave the house, he knocked over a vase causing

Juriah's parents to wake up. Furious at the situation, Juriah's father chased after Akri. Throughout this scenario, Juriah's father was described as a beast. Driven by his innermost anger and instinct, Juriah's father was seen as retreating from his human self and taking on a beastly demeanour. The moment he saw Akri standing in his house at the darkest time of night, his expression changed and he became "a man-eating beast in a human body" (*JS*, p. 36). His further actions and movements were also equated with those of an animal, "He thumped down the stairs, legs splayed wide, muscles taunt. Eyes burning" (*JS*, p. 36). In the next few pages, Juriah's father is called a "beast" countless times (pp. 36–40). The emphasis on the word "beast" intends to describe his abnormal human being attributes. As narrated earlier in the story, Juriah's father is a man of high position in society – a civilised human, with a calm wise conduct. However, enraged this domestic situation, his instinct forced him to display beastly traits, which shows that there is human-nature (in this case, human-animal) interconnectedness. Forced by circumstances, humans can act like animals – triggered by certain elements, the beast in a human can materialise.

In other research, a character is proved to be getting along well with nature. For example, in Atwood's *Surfacing*, it can be seen that the protagonist interacts with nature, and as it progresses, the more she comes to terms with her feelings and grief. (Sedehi & Yahya, 2015, p. 251). However in this research, nature can be seen as a cloud of negative force for humans in the

text. In his attempt to forget Juriah, Akri flees to a rural village. In a small fishing town, Akri often wandered by the sea's edge, in the hope of seeking solace and relief from nature. However, instead of placating his unresolved guilt over Juriah's death, Akri found that the forces of nature, too, opposed him. It started on the very night he left Juriah, when her father was in pursuit wanting to kill him. A banyan tree is described as an ally of Juriah's father (the beast), as the tree is deemed to fail him with "its tentacle-like roots to snare his feet" (*JS*, p. 38). When Akri reminisced about the days when he was happy with Juriah, he vented his loneliness and guilt by strumming his guitar and sharing it with nature, with the "running crabs and scattered shells", asking "How could he play it to anyone but sea and sky?" (*JS*, p. 4). As if loathing Akri's idea of feeling 'soft' and soppy about Juriah, the weather suddenly changed from clear to murky. The "black clouds swallowed the sunrise and now swelled over the coconut trees" (4), which can be seen as a protest from nature. The cloud that ingests the sunlight is a sign that what little comfort he has will be diminished effortlessly by his surroundings.

Also, the sea especially affected Akri in a negative way. The sea is seen as an agent to make Akri feel guilty and prompts him to try to commit suicide. On the first occasion, the sea is seen by Akri as ferocious, "the sea crashed like hideous mouth-foaming stallions" (*JS*, p. 3). The sea is especially terrifying when Akri believes that the reason why he is trying to drown himself in the sea

is because the spirit of Juriah merges with the sea, luring him into it. It is Juriah that “came leaping from the sea, fist clenched, screaming at him with fire in her eyes and the water boiled with her fury” (*JS*, p. 29). Similar to the previous paragraphs, the relationship between humans and nature is apparent. Where the previous example underlines the relationship between humans and animals, in this paragraph, we are sure of the relationship between humans and nature. As much as nature is natural and omnipresent, the effects that nature has and how it can be seen as omnipresent are there as well. This is why Akri can visualise certain elements (clouds, tree and sea) as animate and affecting him.

#### *Interweaving Nature and Grotesque in Juriah's Song*

So far, we have demonstrated the depiction of nature and grotesque characters in *JS*. The explications of the two topics are a precursor to lead in to the analysis in this section. The previous analyses serve as a general overview. Although the roles of nature and grotesque can stand in isolation and do not depend on each other to function, it is interesting to note that, in many parts of the text, the two support each other and impute the horror of the story.

Although in the previous section, we based our analysis on the definition of the grotesque based on a glossary meaning provided by Thompson (1972), and an American take on the grotesque by Sherwood, in order to illustrate the relationship between the grotesque and

nature, we now consider the definition of the grotesque proposed by Wolfgang Kayser. He defines it thus, “grotesqueness is constituted by a clashing contrast between form and content, the unstable mixture of heterogeneous elements, the explosive force of the paradoxical, which is both ridiculous and terrifying” (qtd. in Thompson, 1972, p.16).

The grotesque generally proposes two meanings. First is the notion of abnormality and the distortion of humans, animals and plants, and second is anything that invokes horror and comic simultaneously. We have, concurrently, highlighted that the grotesque boasts diverging definitions. Thus, to utilise only one definition or concept in one analysis would restrict elaborate exploration of the usage of the grotesque.

Looking at the definition proposed by Kayser, it is important to note that the grotesque should treat both horror and comic at the same time. In building a frame for a definition of the grotesque, Philip Thompson emphasises that the assortment of the two elements is not necessarily proportionate, as in some stories, a comic text with a touch of horror, or vice versa, can still be called grotesque (Thompson, 1972, p. 21). Putting this frame onto the text, we can state that the grotesque in *JS* is a type of horror text with a touch of comedy.

What does it mean to invoke both terror and the comic at the same time? Hopkins suggests that in a written discourse, some elements are written in a gruesome ghastly way, purportedly to bring out the “funny” side of the story (1969, p.163). To put it in

other words, the grotesque should deliver both horrifying and terrifying elements, but the readers should also detect the ridiculousness of the situation and find themselves laughing because they are flustered, scared or nervous. Thompson explains the purpose and impact of the grotesque as follows:

*...the possibility that our laughter at some kinds of the grotesque and the opposite response – disgust, horror, etc. – mixed with it, are both reactions to the physically cruel, abnormal or obscene: the possibility, in other words, that alongside our civilized response something deep within us, some area of our unconscious, some hidden but very much alive sadistic impulse makes us react to such things with unholy glee and barbaric delight [emphasis added]. Just how far one can legitimately pursue this aspect of the grotesque is doubtful, but we may note that, at the very least, the grotesque has a strong affinity with the physically abnormal [author's emphasis].(pp. 8-9)*

The excerpt above explains how the grotesque induces both horror and comedy at the same time. In *JS*, Halim applies this concept of the grotesque through the element of nature. Although the application is made metaphorically, it serves as a unique and interesting approach to analysing the text. Halim utilises the elements of nature in

order to convey the grotesque in his novel. In this sense, nature acts as a catalyst to transport the horrifying and comedy.

On the night of their secret rendezvous in Juriah's house, they stirred from their sleep when they heard noises coming from Juriah's parents' room. Shocked and terrified, the two jump straight out of bed. They stood opposite each other at the end of the room, with Juriah crouching on the floor near the bed while Akri froze behind the door. In the awkward tense stillness, Akri found the atmosphere "unnaturally hollow and loud, like chickens on a chopping board, being beheaded" (*JS*, p. 20). Although the idea of seeing Juriah's father roaring and snarling at them is horrifying to both Akri and the readers, the metaphor used by Halim to describe Akri's observation is both horrifying and comical at the same time, thus wonderfully befitting the notion of the grotesque. And note that, Halim uses an animal – a chicken – in his metaphor. Although the whole picture is nerve-wracking, whether by force or naturally, at least the crease of a smile – if not a chuckle or nervous laughter – will appear on their lips. In the midst of the chaos, equating the whole atmosphere to a beheaded chicken portrays goriness and elicits laughter at the same time.

To clarify further, we might say that the act of beheading a chicken does not stand as a funny thing. Rather it is ghastly, as blood will be spilt and the chicken will be limp and dead. Truly, there is nothing comical or funny about beheading a chicken, but to associate it with such an intense situation

is nonetheless ridiculous. It is mentioned in the text that it is “hollow and loud”. Imagine a chicken howling for survival on its deathbed in the absolute stillness of the night. It might arouse sympathy in some people but to most, an imaginary chicken struggling and bellicose is undoubtedly a funny image. Therefore, in this situation, we claim that should the readers be sensitive to the narration, they could not avoid at least drawing a nervous laugh on reading this particular section. From this perspective, the textual evidence befits the framework of the grotesque proposed by Kayser, who expounds that animals and plants are abundantly manipulated in enhancing the grotesque. Other than the symbolic appearance of an animal, real animals also appear recurrently in the grotesque:

*...points to unnatural fusion of organic realms concretized in this ghostly creature [Kayser exemplifies a bat]. And strange habits complement its strange appearance ... The plant would, too, furnish numerous motifs, and not only for the ornamental grotesque. The inextricable tangle of the jungle with its ominous vitality, in which nature itself seems to have erased the difference between plants and animals, is so grotesque that no explanation is needed. The enlarging microscope or a glance into otherwise hidden organic realms reveals grotesque sceneries as well (Kayser, 1963, p. 183).*

To give another example, consider this sentence: “He fell like a tree cut down” (*JS*, p. 55). During his sojourn in the seaside village, Akri lived in a humble house with Pak Mansor and Mak Lijah (the couple have lived in the village for many years). One afternoon, Akri followed Pak Mansur to prayer in the village mosque. It is one of their regular visits to the mosque, except that it was an unfortunate day. As the village men were preparing for the prayers, a crazy man barged into the mosque with a *parang* held firmly in his hand. As he was running amok, the man lashed out randomly with his weapon, and Pak Mansur tried his best to save his fellow villagers from being killed, unaware of the crazy man’s sudden attack that was directed at him. It was already too late when he realized that the *parang* was now implanted in his head. The slashing produced a loud dull cracking sound, and to Akri’s horror, he witnessed Pak Mansur’s death. He watched how Pak Mansur stopped breathing as he “fell down like a tree cut down” (*JS*, p. 55). In this context, the word “fell” indicates to fall down dead.

Although the event evokes horror, shock, sadness and sympathy in the reader, since Pak Mansur died unexpectedly and shockingly, the metaphor used once again induces both horror and comedy in its usage of nature. In this case, it is a tree. The scenario in which Pak Mansur was attacked with an axe should only be gruesome and fearful, but because it happened so suddenly and unexpectedly, it left the readers in a shocking aftermath. As the crazy man attacked Pak Mansur swiftly and casually,

he was equated with a tree being felled. Consider an inanimate tree, stiff and still and accepting its demise with little to do but fall down helplessly. This grotesque effect demonstrates what Thompson validates as the grotesque “shock-effect”, which is used to “bewilder and disorient”, jolt the reader out of his “accustomed ways of perceiving the world and confront him with a radically different, disturbing perspective” (1972, p.58).

## CONCLUSION

The elements of the grotesque and nature are abundant and evident in *JS*. For the grotesque concept, Thompson’s general definition is first applied to provide an overview of the topic of the grotesque. As we delved further into the notion of the grotesque, the definition proposed by Wolfgang Kayser is closely referred to. In general, the grotesque is an element that celebrates the bizarreness and abnormality of a thing, a strange situation and physical deformity, and Kayser’s notion of the grotesque is inclusive of the idea of grotesque as both comic and horrifying. The role, presence and effects of the grotesque are displayed through the character of Juriah in *JS* (2008).

As for nature, it is undoubtedly important in enhancing the horror elements and enlivening the mood of the story. On the one hand, the role and presence of nature are more apparent through the eyes of another character, the protagonist, Akri. Although Akri fled to a rural spot in the hope of finding tranquillity, he found that the elements of nature surround him as

mocking and despising him. Therefore, Akri’s perception was that he only received negative vibes from the nature. Hence, the elements of nature, such as trees, sea and waves, and other animals, are seen as oppressive to him.

Neither element is independent of the other, the two can be seen mutually helping each other to enrich the narration. The grotesque depicts “the unresolved clash of incompatibles in work and response” (Thompson, 1972, p. 27), and with nature as a working agent, we postulate that a grotesque effect is optimally achieved, “In spite of all the helplessness and horror inspired by the dark forces which lurk in and behind our world and have power to estrange it, the truly artistic portrayal effects a secret liberation” (Kayser, p. 188). In this context, the application of the grotesque and nature are almost equal; however, when the two elements are combined, the grotesque overrules nature. However, nature acts as a facilitator, delivering a more complicated definition of the grotesque as the element that evokes both the horrifying and the comic.

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## The Rise of Jewish Religious Nationalism and Israeli Approach to the Palestinian Conflict

Javadikouchaksaraei, M.\*<sup>,</sup>, Bustami, M. R. and Farouk, A. F. A.

*Center for Policy Research and International Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the relationship between Jewish religious nationalism and Israeli approach to the conflict with Palestinians. This paper explores the relationship between religious nationalism and Israeli approach to the long standing conflict in the occupied territories. It seeks to explain why religious nationalism has become closely associated with hawkishness since 1967. While the Jewish religion advocates no single approach to the conflict with the Palestinians, religious nationalism has been significantly more hawkish than the nonreligious approach in Israel.

*Keywords:* Religious nationalism, Israel-Palestine-conflict, hawkish

### INTRODUCTION

Many recent studies examining the impact of religious nationalism on conflicts between states and ethnic groups tend to be centred on the role of religious nationalism in the emergence and persistence of conflicts (Krishna, 1996; Calhoun, 2001; Secor, 2001; Woltering, 2002; Agnew, 2008; Mullin, 2010). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most protracted and serious conflicts of the century not only because it is difficult

to find a solution satisfactory to both parties, but also because it is an active conflict which threatens the Middle East and the world because of the involvement of super powers having vested interest in prolonging the conflict. Using the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a case study, this paper examines the crucial role of religious nationalism in sustaining the conflict. However, since the 1967 war, religious nationalism and hawkishness have become intertwined in perpetuating the conflict.

The Hebrew Bible attaches special significance to the relationship between national identity and religion (Kaplan, 1994) which underscores the “divinity” element in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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##### *E-mail addresses:*

mehrzedarian@yahoo.com (Javadikouchaksaraei, M.),  
reevany@usm.my (Bustami, M. R.),  
azeemf@usm.my (Farouk, A. F. A.)

\* Corresponding author

In some situations, even where the root cause of the conflict is religiously motivated, the inclusion of religion into most conflicts only makes matters worse. Thus, for a thorough comprehension of this phenomenon, the authors of this paper set out to underscore in the most general sense, the effect of religious nationalism on the emergence and sustenance of conflicts with special focus on religious nationalism among the Israelis in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Though the focus of this paper is on the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, its findings can be generalised to a large extent to many conflicts around the world, thus, providing further insights and reference materials for the study and debate on religious nationalism. Despite the apparent religious and political divide between the Israelis and the Palestinians, it must be noted that not all Jews support the Zionist agenda of the state of Israel and not all Palestinians are supportive of the aggression of the militant groups.

This paper explores the relationship between the approach adopted by Israel in dealing with the Palestinian issue and the religious nationalism aspect to the conflict. It also examines why religious nationalism has become more hawkishness especially since 1967. Thus, the main aim of this paper is to understand the concept of religious nationalism that is at the heart of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. As such, the paper contributes to the body of knowledge on this topic. Such a contribution will focus on identifying and examining different points of view regarding the conflict.

Studies conducted thus far have focused on identifying factors that might lead to future resolution of the conflict.

There are some limitations to the study. The first is theoretical and the second is historical. The theoretical one is related to of the kind of religious nationalism that is the focus since there are various religious nationalisms in literature. (Hayes, 1966, Smith, 1996).

The historical limitation refers to the time constraint of the study. This study focused on the development of Zionism in the late 19th century with a view to evaluating the historical, cultural and religious claims of the Jews in the late 20th century. This paper will exclude recent Arab-Israeli conflicts as understanding the recent political rapprochement from both sides is another topic altogether.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITIONS**

In an attempt to develop the theoretical framework for the current study on the relationship between religion and nationalism with special focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is vital to have a closer look at both sides of the political divide. Despite the religious and political differences between these two groups, both are faced with similar problems.

In the study on nationalism, Roger Friedland (2002) and Juergensmeyer (1993) describe the concept of distinctive religious form of nationalism. In his discourse, Friedland argued that nationalism is ‘a state-centred form of collective subject

formation...a program for the co-constitution of the state and the territorial bounded population in whose name it speaks... [and] a set of discursive practices by which the territorial identity of a state and the cultural identity of the people whose collective representation it claims are constituted as a singular fact' (Friedland, 2002).

Friedland defines religious nationalism as a special form of nationalism with variable content describing the 'joining of state, territory, and culture' (Friedland, 2002). The form, however, does not explicitly explain how these entities are to be joined together, what content it entails in the state-centred collective subject formation, or the constituents of the discursive practices necessary to amalgamate the geography of a people with their cultural identity. A possible mode of specifying the content of the form is provided in religion. In short, religion provides a means 'of joining state, territory, and culture'. This power of religion, according to Friedland, is due to its unique 'models of authority' feature on the one hand, and its 'imaginings of an ordering power' (2002) on the other. Religion, according to the author, can be regarded as the 'totalizing order capable of regulating every aspect of life' (2002). Friedland however, acknowledged the fact that this injunction is less applicable to Christianity – for Christianity originated as a stateless religion. In an attempt to amalgamate state, territory, and culture, religious nationalism places importance on the family, gender and sexuality. In this way, religion assists in safeguarding the

traditional role of the family as the primary source of continuing human existence through reproduction, and thus, protecting it against the undesirable economic and cultural forces which tend to weaken its prominence. From the point of view of gender, religion seeks to preserve traditional gender roles both within the family and in the wider society, and also to a great extent, restricts sexuality within the family. The relationship between nationalism and religion has also been acknowledged by sociologists, thanks to the increasing detachment of the latter from traditional religious institutions under whose purview they once flourished and 'may be invested with highly diverse meanings and used for a wide variety of purposes . . . both within and outside the framework of religious organizations, and where there exist state religions' (Beckford, 1989). While religion tends to take the back seat in most secular states of the world, religious practices deemed advantageous, especially in the areas of national security, are easily incorporated into the national development agenda (Martin, 1978; Bruce, 1996). As indicated by David Martin (1978), the relationship between religion and nationalism is of vital significance upon which religious values flourish among the countries of Europe. This phenomenon, the author argued, holds even for Christianity despite its apparent conflict with nationalism. The author says:

"Christianity may be a religion that rejects the worship of Caesar or the exaltation of the ethnic group, but in order to retain even the possibility of suggesting more worthy

objects of praise, it must be positively related to the national consciousness, particularly as this is highlighted in a myth of national origin" (Martin, 1978).

Most historical studies highlight the continuing and significant role played by religion and religious belief systems both in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, further indicating that despite the potential risk of decline in people's appeal for religious belief due to rising nationalism and racism, various philosophies of nationalism act as boosters for religious practices (Hugh McLeod, 2000). A similar argument is put forward by (Turner, 1988) who believes the emergence of the modern day nation states as strength rather than a weakness for Christianity in its drive towards Christianisation of the masses (Turner, 1988).

## NATIONALISM

The terms nation and nationalism have proved difficult for historians to define. Adam Smith defines nationalism "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential nation" (Smith, 2001). Benedict Anderson's view of the nation relates to the Smith's potential nation. Anderson views the nation as an imagined political community whose members dream of being free and the symbol of this is the sovereign state (Benedict, 1991). Ernest Gellner ties nations . Zionism created Isreal. Palestine is a potential nation. Palestinian nationalism is an instance of

national consciousness emerging in the absence of a nation state.

The most familiar typology of nationalism has two main categories. In the voluntarist conception, individuals must belong to a nation, but they can choose which nation they wish to belong to. Members are related by citizenship and the population within a certain territory belongs to the same nation regardless of cultural affiliation. In the organic conception, individuals are born into a nation and wherever they migrate, they remain an intrinsic part of birth. (Khalidi, 1997).

The basic tenets, fundamental ideals, and core concepts of nationalism have remained fairly constant through time and across cultures. The basic tenets or propositions to which most nationalists adhere to form the framework of the nationalist vision of the world . Nationalists envision a world divided into a nation. The nation is the sole source of political power and nations require full self-expression and autonomy. Loyalty to the nation overrides all other loyalties, and to be free, every individual must belong to a nation. This core doctrine provides the rationale and impetus for various kinds of nationalist activity. The fundamental ideals of nationalist ideologies are well-defined relating to collective self-rule, territorial unification, and cultural identity. The dream or plane future is as important in the foundation of the nationalist movements as the past (Smith, 2001). National destiny more than simply ideas of the future. Destinies are predetermined by histories and

chart a unique course and fate. Lastly, the homeland constitutes an historic territory or the ancestral land. All of these tenets, ideals and concepts are not involved in every nationalist' ideology or movement, but these overlapping concepts of nationalism can be used to better understand nationalist ideologies (Stendel, 1996).

Historians recognise that nationalism is not just an ideology of reaction. Nevertheless, particular nationalisms arise in opposition to some 'other', and nationalisms are defined by what they oppose. The development and maintenance of every culture requires the existence of a different and competing alter ego. The construction of identity involves the construction of opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation of their differences from us (Stendel, 1996). Nationalisms demand the rediscovery and restoration of the nation's unique cultural identity, and they are dependent on leadership that is capable of formulating an ideological content convincing enough for a large population. An important element of a nation's unique cultural identity is ethnic, usually associated with a particular territory and incorporates myths of ancestry and historical memories with elements of common culture (Smith, 2001).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM: THE HIGH STAKES INVOLVED**

Palestine-Israel dispute is still one of the major disputes persisting in the world at present symbolising the relationship

between the West and Islam. (Bonney, 2004: p.269).

It is not surprising that much has been written about it by historians and political scientists. The Palestinian-Israeli dispute has played a critical role in shaping the political landscape of the Middle East and has been the focus of considerable social science research.

There have been many theoretical perspectives which offer an understanding of popular attitudes toward issues related to war and peace.. The political cultural approach, for instance, is prevalent among scholars who argue that shared norms and values are the basis of political attitudes (Tessler & Nachtwey, 1998).

Literature contends that religion has played a major role in fuelling most ethnic conflicts in recent decades. (Rummel, 1997; Fox, 1997, 1999, 2000a, b, c, 2004); Laitin, 2000; Ellingsen, 2000; Reynal, 2002; Roeder, 2003; Sammy & Javadi, 2015).

When a state relies on religious doctrines to obtain political legitimacy, it leaves ample room for religious leaders and established religious institutions to bring an overtly theological interpretation to any political question. Religious nationalisms, even those that appear to be ethnic, have an ideological component. This is because religion, the repository of traditions of symbols and beliefs, always stands ready to be tapped by those who wish to develop a new framework of ideas about social order. In the case of Bosnia, for example, the anger of Bosnian Serbs is also fuelled by an imaginative religious myth. The Serb

leaders are Orthodox Christians who see themselves as surrogate Christ-figures in a contemporary political understanding of the “passion” narrative. Dramas and epic poems have been invented to retell the New Testament’s account of Christ’s death in a way that portrays historical Serbian leaders as Christ figures, and the Bosnian Muslims as Judas. This mythologised dehumanisation of the Muslims allows them to be regarded as a sub-human species, one that in the Serbian imagination deserves the genocidal “ethnic cleansing” that killed so many in the darkest hours of the Bosnian civil war (Sells, 1996). As the Bosnian case shows, there is a fine line between ethnic and ideological forms of religious nationalism. It may be just as violent as ideological nationalism. The London terrorist bombings by the Irish Republican Army when the ceasefire broke down in February 1996, and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) in Sri Lanka suicide attacks that demolished downtown Colombo in January 1996 are recent examples. Yet, to some extent, these acts of violence are understandable because they are aimed at a society that the terrorists regard as exerting direct military or political control over them (Juergensmeyer, 1996).

Some religious nationalists see their own secular leaders as part of a wider, virtual global conspiracy, one controlled by vast political and economic networks sponsored by European and American powers. For that reason they may hate not only their own politicians, but also these leaders’ political and economic allies in lands far beyond their own national boundaries. Islamic

militants associated with Egypt’s radical al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group), for example, have attacked not only Egyptian politicians - killing president Anwar Sadat and attempting to kill his successor, Hosni Mubarak - but also foreigners such as the Greek tourists killed near the pyramids on 17 April 1996 (the tourists who were on a bus were allegedly gunned down by Muslim terrorists). The movement literally moved its war abroad against secular powers when its leader, Sheikh Omar 'Abd ai-Rahman, moved to New Jersey and was involved in a bomb attack on the World Trade Center on 26 February 1993 that killed six and injured thousands. The trial that convicted him in January 1996 of masterminding the attack also implicated him in an elaborate plot to blow up many sites in the New York City area, including the United Nations buildings and the Lincoln Tunnel. Algerian Muslim activists have apparently brought their war against secular Algerian leaders to Paris, where they have been implicated in a series of subway bombings in 1995. Hassan Turabi in Sudan has been accused of orchestrating Islamic rebellions in a variety of countries, linking Islamic activists in common cause against what is seen as the great satanic power of the secular West. In some cases, this conspiratorial vision has taken bizarre twists, shared by both the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo and certain American Christian militia movements that Jews and Freemasons are collaborating to control the world (Safan, 2001).

Israel has a long history of including religious nationalism in its politics and

therefore, it has an effect on the conflict with Palestinians.

Reiter (2010) provides answers to what exactly the role of religion has been in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He puts forth five characteristics of a conflict fuelled by religion;

- i. The enlisting of religious ‘warriors’ unfurls beyond the region in conflict
- ii. Individuals/groups motivated by religious ideology carry out sensationalist terror acts and assassinations in a bid to frustrate political negotiations.
- iii. Religious formations that demonstrate adherence to the prepositions or fundamental truths of religion, and show commitment towards infusing the same among members of the public command massive/decisive political power
- iv. Religious symbols and values are part of asocial fabric that the general public is not predisposed to compromise or negotiate
- v. Religion values and controls holy places that can neither be compromised nor negotiated

Israel and Judaism have 3 parallel and central “elements of religious faith that represent conflicting values, and are therefore used in specific contexts to reinforce the religious aspect of the” Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Reiter, 2010). The first relates to the laws of peace and war and the question of whether or not a nation can settle a conflict by compromising with

people from a different religion. The Torah commands the nation of Israel to fight in the crudest way possible any nation from taking full control of the Promised Land (Reiter, 2010).

The second element of religious faith representing conflicting values relates to the status of the territory in question, and whether or not control should be exclusive. A theological outlook among Palestinian Muslims and Israeli Jews holds that Palestine is a ‘holy land’ – the Waqf (pious endowment) for the former, and the Promised Land for the latter (Khaid, 2011). Religious faith, therefore, “forbids conceding any control over the land” (Funk & Said, 2009). The Jews believe that it is their religious duty to occupy the entire land and not share it with members of any other religion (Reiter, 2010).

The third element relates to the status of Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount, and whether or not members of other religions have a right over it. The Temple Mount/Al-Haram site, the old City of Jerusalem and holy sites as Al-Masjid Al-Ibrahimi/the Cave of the Machpela, Joseph’s tomb in Nablem, and Rachel’s tomb “are anchors for the national-religious and historical identity of a vast population which includes people who are not necessarily religious” (Barsiman, 2010). The immensely charged nature of the said sites as religious and historic nationalism symbols is demonstrated perfectly by the decision of the Netanyahu Administration to include the Machpela Cave and Rachel’s tomb among heritage symbols intended for development (Reiter,

2010). The move did not, however, go down well with the Palestinian leaders, and a religious war erupted, with each side claiming ownership and “sovereignty that cannot be relinquished to the other side exclusively” (Barsiman, 2010).

This study contributes to the literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by bringing forward different points of view. All the studies on this conflict are based on the possibility of reaching a settlement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict one day. This thesis tries to focus on the conflict from another perspective and strives to reflect that both sides have an interest in the continuation of conflict as their national and religious aspirations over the same territory require.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Any research, regardless of the type is conducted with the overriding aim of gathering intelligence about the marketplace and illuminate trends and behaviours. Qualitative data, though not easily measurable, reveals valuable perspectives and attitudes that are almost undetectable using quantitative means. Its exploratory nature allows for the collection of data on specific areas of interest, often by means of expert reviews and dialogue between researcher and respondent (McLeod, 2008). Therefore, the paper uses the qualitative method because it focuses on a smaller number of cases to provide an in-depth evaluation of valuable perspectives and hidden attitudes.

Library and the internet have been extensively used for this research. Secondary sources such as books and articles dealing with Israel and religious nationalism idea are used to answer the research question.

To answer the research question and the claims of the paper, the study adopts a historical analysis. In order to draw an accurate profile of events, persons or objects (Adams, 1985).

Historical analysis involves investigation and analysis of controversial ideas and facts, and aims at assessing the meanings and reading the messages of the happenings while asking the questions of “what happened” and “why or how it happened” (Leedy, 2012). This study demonstrates how different sides of the conflict interpret the history of the conflict. In this regard, hypothesising the influence of the past is executed in this study to display deeply the effect of different evolvement of the positions of the Palestinian and the Jews in the conflict. Given the fact that modern historical analysis usually draws upon most of the other social sciences, in order to ensure these narratives are thorough, the study has availed of the use of international relations. It will also use the interpretation of the other’s working on the conflict. As a result of library investigation composed of scanning the secondary sources, this study also gets the opportunity of observing and comparing tendentious sources written about the Palestinian -Israeli conflict. Sanning the secondary sources is important in order to see the perspectives of the conflict.

## DISCUSSION

### *Israel and the Zionist Agenda*

In spite of the dispersion of most Jews after the Roman reconquest of the Land of Israel in 135 C.E., Jews continued to consider themselves a nation even though they had no country or state before 1948. They did not lose their religious, cultural and national connection to the Land of Israel and to Jerusalem, the central location of Judaism where their temple once stood. Communities of Jews lived continuously in their homeland and those living elsewhere expressed their hope to return through prayer, folklore, artwork, and song. Modern Zionism began in Europe in the late nineteenth century, when both nationalism and antisemitism were on the rise. The founder of political Zionism was Theodor Herzl, whose ideas were influenced by the anti-Semitic elements in the trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, who was falsely convicted of treason (he was exonerated in 1906). Herzl witnessed French mobs shouting “Death to the Jews” during the trial. The Dreyfus trial, compounded by ongoing anti-Jewish violence in Eastern Europe, led Herzl to conclude that the only solution to the persecution of Jews is to re-establish a Jewish state. He developed modern political Zionism, or Jewish nationalism, which is the belief in the right to self-determination for the Jewish people in their ancient homeland, the Land of Israel. In his renowned book entitled *Der Judenstaat*, which was published in 1896, Herzl highlighted the need for the prospective Jewish state to adopt a system

of state governance along the western liberal type which has a religious element; he dedicating a full section of the book to this theme. In a somewhat vivid rhetoric, Herzl asked “will we end by having a theocracy?” and he answered his own question by saying “No, indeed. Faith unites us, knowledge gives us freedom. We shall therefore prevent any theocratic tendencies from coming to the fore on the part of our priesthood. We shall keep our priests within the confines of their temples in the same way as we shall keep our professional army within the confines of their barracks” (Herzl, 1946).

Despite acknowledging the significant role played by religion in the mobilisation of masses in different parts of the Christian world, the Zionist movement was particularly cautious in preventing the different factions in their midst from dominating the entire movement or in becoming a rigid opposing faction; a mechanism that enabled the integration of the key religious players, and thus putting Zionism on a stronger footing in the international arena. In presenting its demands to the world, the leadership of the World Zionist Organization was never isolated in its ideology of avoiding theocracy. In fact, the religious components of the Zionists also agreed to follow the same line of action in pursuit of a common goal: establishing a Jewish state. If religion bestows on humankind the feeling their fates are interconnected, this primordial feeling is continually reshaped and energised by common experiences and interactions, then by extension, a common religious faith should foster the development of brotherhood (Gutmann, 1979).

The rationale for this compromise and acceptance by religious Zionism can be understood from the Zionist belief that the establishment of the Zionist movement and the eventual setting up of the state of Israel are pivotal components towards the realisation of redemption of their people. This ensured the plans for a theocratic dimension was deferred. The traditional Jewish Party, Agudat Israel, whose ideology includes rejection of the notion that secular Jews may attain redemption, and argued that such elements should be prevented from Yishuv's (Jewish Mandatory Palestine) national institutions, and eventually, the government. Being cognisant of the fact that no man but God predestined the theocratic vision, the Agudah in fact became even more politically dormant on foreign affairs than the National Religious Party (NRP).

David Ben-Gurion's political philosophy introduced the Mamlachiyut, the idea of statism, which argued that the state should be the focal point of Zionism (Liebman & Don-Yehiya, p. 983). Against the backdrop and believing his Jewish predecessors lacked political realism, Ben-Gurion developed statism in 1936. "We want to build a state, and we shall not build one without political thought, political talent and political prudence," he noted (Yanai, 1987). In two distinct instances, the Zionist movement, after very intensive debates, agreed to the demands by the international community to relinquish territories considered sacred. In both instances (the acceptance of the 1937 partition proposal of the Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel and the UN Partition

Plan of November 29, 1947), the movement was compelled to surrender segments of territories considered by Zionists as part of historic Jewish settlements.

#### *Religion and Hawkiness: Understanding the Fundamental Correlation*

#### **The impact of the Six Day War**

One of the most cited reasons for the relationship between religion and hawkishness is the influence of the Six Day War (Rosenak, 1988) which saw the capture of the holiest Jewish site (the Temple Mount) by the Israeli army. Furthermore, the swift nature of the conquest in that the Jews triumphed from the fear of the re-emergence of the Holocaust to a rapid military victory all within six days, in fact led many religious Jews to believe in the divine intervention. Similar beliefs are shared by ultra-Orthodox Jews as well. For the ultra-Orthodox Jews, the Six Day War made it easier for one to readily associate them with their political right agenda, Gush Emunim, in contrast to their predecessors prior to 1967. Thus, the religious Jews generally tend to support the idea of Israel's continuing control of the territories captured during the Six Day War (Rebinstein, 1981).

The most tormented by the success of the Israel military in the 1967 War was the ultra-orthodox Jews. Just before the war, Israel was somewhat intimidated by the strong rhetoric from Arab leaders claiming that Israel would be completely destroyed and the war will be another Holocaust. For this reason, Israel's unprecedented defeat of the Arabs, which led to their control of the

substantial portions of the ancient holy land and Jerusalem, led many Jews to believe the invisible hands of divine intervention. One movement with revivalist tendencies caught the attention of prominent figures among the Orthodox yeshivot (Yehiya, 1996). For the followers of this movement, the phenomenal victory of Israel signalled the imminent redemption of the whole world. To such advocates, victory is indicative of God's decision for the Jews to rescue their entire original homeland and that for the Messianic redemption to be accelerated, the promised land must be controlled and Jewish settlements erected. In short, the 1967 military action was necessary. Among the first flag bearers of the movement that advocated for the settlement of Israelis in the administered territories were the Modern Orthodox (Lustick, 1988; Sprinzak, 1991). Initially, the settlement spree was triggered by security concerns. The Labour Government's focus was on securing the strategic coastal line. However, majority of the settlers perceived this security concern only as secondary with the primary reason being the return to the promised land. For this reason, the religious Zionist movement continued in their drive for expanding settlements to the various holy sites, regardless of the government's approval or disapproval of such moves. With the coming into power in 1977 of the Likud Party, the government supported and further celebrated the settlement agenda, providing funding in order to intensify the process.

By 1967, Israel again imposed a military regime on the Arabs living in the territories

occupied after the war, including West Bank and the Gaza Strip. With this engulfment of portions of Palestine into Israel, the Arab population living in Israel surged and the population distribution of Israel between the Arabs and Jews became a hot political debate. The total population of Israel based on the latest census stands at 7,282,000, comprising 75.5% Jews, 4.4% non-Jews which are mainly immigrants from the former Soviet Union and the rest (20.1%) Arabs (ICBS 2008); it is a balance which is likely to change significantly when the Palestinians in the Territories are counted as a single geographic unit, in which case the two ethnic groups maybe similar in terms of number.

In 1977, the political hegemony enjoyed by the Labour regime was lost due to the disastrous Yom Kippur War in October 1973. Also, as a consequence of that war, the role of religion in Israeli politics changed drastically.

In addition to 1978 declassification of Israeli documents and archives, the backdrop for this shift in popular and academic commentary can be found in events such as the Yom Kippur War which altered the political landscape and created a more hawkish, ethnically diverse, political and religious right conservatives. The 1977 electoral triumph of the Likud coalition over the Ashkenazi-led labour group, the ongoing, high-profile clashes between the Israeli government and Fatah or the military wing of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the 1982 Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon and controversy over

Israel's indirect role in the massacre of Muslim Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps all helped in changing the attitude of the Jews regarding the Palestinian issue. In this chaotic political context, Israeli scholars began to question the status quo on the ground, drawing parallels to events and policies as early as the 1920s and 1930s, for example, David Ben-Gurion's policy of "transfer"—that is, the Zionist euphemism for what Palestinians call "dispossession" at best, "rape and pillage" at worst (Masalha, 1992). The illegal invasion and occupation of a land far away to create a Jewish homeland, the eviction of a majority rightful occupants and the suppression of the remaining few termed as a bunch of useless "minority" with no rights, made it justifiable for Jews in Israel to emphasise the Jewish race and use it as a rallying call (Kimmerling, 1999; Raz-Krakotzkin, 2005) to unite its people. The post-1967 war made this sense of "bondage" based on Jewishness stronger; with Jewishness not only being referred to as a distinct race but also a national religion.

There has been substantial debate among the commentators of the Israel-Palestinian crisis concerning whether the Six Day War constituted a breakdown or extension. For those in favour of a breakdown, the occupation of parts of the Palestinian territory after Israel's victory, by itself, constituted a new dimension of national religiosity which was never apparent prior to the war. On the other hand, the commentators of continuation are of the view that this new movement is more or less an extension of the old

Labour-masterminded settler scheme. What is evident though is the fact that since 1967, the national dynamism transcended from the Labour movement (characterised by their incipient secularism) to the national religious advocates including the Likud Party, the national religious party, and the Shas Party as well as other nationalistic parties.

In the 1970s, a robust change occurred in the relationship between religion and nationalism. This change is attributed mainly to the policy changes afforded by the religious-national party during this period. Until the 1970s, the central focus of the party was to protect the image of the Jews and safeguard their interests and this party was typically regarded as one of the most dovish players in the political arena at the time. However, the party changed face from being a religious-national party to national religious party, and has since shifted focus on the construction of Jewish settlements across the West Bank enlisting the Yeshiva (Jewish high school students) into the Israeli Army. This new national religious face was represented by the Gush Emunim movement (Block of Faithful) which was established in 1974 (Lustick, 1988) and adopted suitable ideologies from both the Jewish religionism and Zionist nationalism. From the former, the Gush Emunim movement adopted the idea of a community based on the traditional Jewish faith foreseeing a Messianic revival; from the latter, the Gush Emunim also adopted the idea of the territory being the central focus as well as upholding the concept of Messianic revival. Thus, a new

concept of Messianic Zionism was borne based on two strategic areas: community and the territory. Hence, while in the relationship between nationalism and religion in the post-1970 era was primarily implicit, if not completely negative, the relationship became positive thereafter. This positive relationship became even stronger in 1977 when Labour lost power to the Likud Party under the leadership of Menachem Begin. The key supporters of Likud-led government were middle-class Ashkenazi religious nationalists who were mainly represented by the National Religious Party and the low-class traditional and nationalist Mizrahi members. In the 1980s, a number of the low-class Mizrahi elements influenced the traditionalists and the ethnic Mizrahi members to shift their support to the Shas party (Peled, 1998). Another significant turning point in Israeli political history was the reconciliation between the state and the Orthodox Jews. When Likud came to power, the parties protecting the interests of the Orthodox found it suitable to be part of the Likud coalition, a thing they dodged throughout the Labour regime. In the 1990s, the Likud party came under a new leadership headed by Benjamin Netanyahu. During the election season, Netanyahu's campaign slogan was "Netanyahu is Good for Jews". The new Likud coalition represented almost all minority groups except the Arabs. These included the Mizrahi Jews, new Russian migrants, religious nationalists as well as the Orthodox (Haredi) Jews (Shafir & Peled, 2002). In this way, secularism became

synonymous to "Left" while Jewish religion became synonymous with the Right.

The integration of culture and religion had a significant impact on the Israeli political landscape; a view which is also confirmed by data from the current study. As can be shown, the current study indicates that the Mizrahim which are descendants of Arab or Muslim countries exhibit more religiousness compared with those of European descent (the Ashkenazi). Specifically, the result depicts that 50% of the Mizrahim are "traditionalists", compared with Ashkenazim whereby only 19% saw themselves "Traditionalist". Only 9% of Mizrahim are "non-religious", "non-observant", or "anti-religious", compared with the Ashkenazim which account for 34%. Yet, about 78%–86% of Mizrahim believe in God compared with only 49%–52% believers in God among the Ashkenazims.

About 62%–69% of the Mizrahim believe that the Jews are a "chosen people" compared with 35%–36% of the Ashkenazim. The one religious category where the Ashkenazi weight is significantly higher than the Mizrahi is the Orthodox (Levi & Katz, 2000).

While the secular governing parties of the different regimes may have been poised to believe that they have successfully used the settlers to their own political advantage, Labour's strategy in intimidating the Arab states to sign peace accords, and Likud's threats of further occupation of the territories without the possibility of

returning them even when there are peace agreements showed that both parties lost sight of the “religious” injunctions that gave birth to the settlement movement in the first place. Over time, these differences between the politicians and settlers became the source of significant divide between the two. For example, the Labour Party’s acknowledged readiness to surrender the occupied territories in exchange for peace rendered the party at loggerheads with the Religious Zionists. In fact, even the Likud Party, which also preaches and strongly believes in the settlement programme eventually clashed with the Religious Zionists over differences in approach and extent. Security being the primary concern of the Likud, the party identified that parts of the occupied West Bank (previously under the control of Jordan) and the Golan Heights (captured from Syria) are key territories for buffering national security, while the Gaza Strip and Egypt’s Sinai Desert (conquered during the 1967 war) were of secondary importance – for they provided limited or no strategic security benefits. Thus, when Egyptian president Anwar Sadat made pronouncements that he was ready for a peace deal with Israel in the 1970s under the David Agreement, the Likud party accepted the peace offer in a bid to free Israel from the potential danger of one of its key enemies. This however, requires Israel to withdraw from Sinai and evacuate all the Jewish settlements established during the occupation. When the Likud party agreed to this compromise with Egypt, the religious settlers felt utterly dismayed that

despite Likud’s philosophy of safeguarding territorial nationalism, they are succumbing to moves resulting in the expulsion of Jews from their historic homeland. To some of the religious settlers, the Likud Party’s behavior not only tantamounts to a betrayal of their religion but was also a violation of the divine order (Sprinzak, 1991).

Religious Zionism eventually led to much violence. For example, in the West Bank, a Jewish secret terrorist group was initiated, carrying out assassinations of Arab politicians and opinion leaders, and masterminding bombings in public places and transportation. Similarly, a celebrated Jewish physician in the occupied territories, Baruch Goldstein, in a revenge for the killing of his friend by a Palestinian, gunned down over 30 Muslims while observing their prayers. Similar violence was meted out by Religious Zionists on the Palestinians and moderate Jews who tended to advocate for Palestinian sovereignty. While such actions were usually condemned by the National Religious Party as well as the religious elites, the acts also were also justified on religious grounds. In some cases, support for such acts was implicitly indicated. This include, for example, the Chief Rabbi of Israel’s praise singing at Meir Kahane’s funeral, who was the mastermind of the Kach movement, and who repeatedly likened Palestinians to animals and advocated their complete eviction from the state of Israel. In some cases, the religious justification of the violent acts is explicit. For example, when the Israeli government planned to come into terms with the Palestinians concerning the

settlement issue, including Israeli readiness to relinquish parts of the Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestine, a number of rabbis publicly cautioned Jews in the military to desist from being a part of an action which is not in conformity with the will of God. For Israel, where the political neutrality of the military almost became a religious requirement, such a strong rhetoric is indicative of the huge destabilising potential of the land issue.

Moshe Dayan and other secular Zionists also expressed delight at the return of Jews to what they referred to as their historic homeland. In this way, public opinion was generally hawkish in the immediate period just after the Six Day War. However, with the emergence of major events such as the Lebanon War in 1982 and the Palestinian Intifada of 1987–92, Israeli public opinion gradually became more dovish. Nevertheless, the religious community remained consistent in being more hawkish than the non-religious one. The question now is: why has the trend persisted?. This question could be answered by considering the changes in both nonreligious, and the religious segment of the Israeli society (Yishai, 1987). Starting from the mid-1980s, the Israeli political spectrum has witnessed reformation towards greater secularism, liberalism and individualism especially among the younger generation. Before this period, however, the Jewish political spectrum was somewhat divided between republicanism and ethno-nationalism, both of which have experienced significant decline over the years, thanks to rising

liberalism, and the drive towards a more dovish stance. In fact, after the 1987–92 intifada, Israel experienced a drastic decline in ethno-nationalism, with more concerted efforts towards upholding the Israeli territorial integrity (Arian, 2002). Politicians such as the then Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak argued that given the declining fighting spirit among the populace, it was wise to resort to the dovish stance (Rynhold, 2003). The diminishing republican ideologies is also a directly related to increase in the number of ultra-Orthodox young men exempted from serving in the Israeli army due to religious reasons (Accordance with the Israeli Security Service Law). While this number was only a few hundred in the 1950s, it jumped to over 30,000 in the 1990s (Ilan, 2000).

For the ultra-Orthodox community, the emergency of hawkishness can be attributed to the increased participation in the politics of ultra-Orthodox ideologists (Sheleg, & HeChadashim, 2000). Even though this shift in focus cannot be regarded as explicit republicanism, it is symbolic of their rising self-consciousness. Since 1977 after the Israeli advocacy of the Right to power, ultra- Orthodox practitioners felt their closeness to power for their perception is the ethnocentricity of right and that right is more sympathetic to organized religion ; thus, their participation in national politics surged (Shragai, 2001, & A Dayan, 2002).

The “divinisation” of religiously motivated violence reached its apex on November 4, 1995; the day a siting

Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, was assassinated by an ultra-nationalist Yigal Amir. Unlike many other assassins who were often societal outcasts, Amir was a product of the Religious Zionist movement, a part timer at an ultra Orthodox yeshivah as well as a student of law at the Orthodox university in Israel (Bar-Ilan). Amir confessed to the killing of the prime minister and accused him of turning into a traitor and endangering the lives of the Jews by sacrificing the sacred territories for a peace deal; and as enshrined in the Jewish law, Amir argued, Rabin's tyranny legalised his assassination (Golinkin, 1996).

There is continuing debate among Israelis whether Amir was a misguided ultra-nationalist or a true product of ultra Orthodoxy. What is clear though is the fact that the pronouncements of Amir were not in any way uniquely associated with ultra-orthodoxy. In fact, they are commonplace among other non-religious Zionist movements as well. Thus, while the majority of the commentators tended to blame Amir for his action, they still found the Likud Party wanton for inciting violent reactions to the peace process initiated by the Labour Party. However, media reports have also pointed out the extreme entanglement of the land issue and religion in Orthodox discourses and argued that, to some extent, Amir being exposed to the extremist views of the Religious Zionists may have influenced in his judgement (Horvitz, 1995).

The emergency of hawkishness can be attributed to the increased participation

in politics by ultra-Orthodox ideologists (Sheleg, & HeChadashim, 2000). In the 1996 election, \ the ultra-Orthodox leadership decided to throw their weight behind Shimon Peres for prime minister candidature, due to his good funding of ultra-Orthodox affiliated institutions. However, pressure from the junior ultra-Orthodox members resulted in them doing the reverse (Shragai, 2001). In addition, during the reconstruction of the settlements, some ultra-Orthodox advocates bought houses in the territories and through which they have some interactions with the people.

In summary, the strong correlation between religion and hawkishness since 1967 can be explained in terms of the role of religious and nonreligious actors which helped in shaping the political culture of the Jewish state. While political liberalism increased, ethno-nationalism and republicanism diminished significantly in the secular community. In the religious community, however, the reverse is true.

## CONCLUSION

Religion always has an advantage over political ideology, because it need not offer a political strategy, and its legitimisation is not dependent on a clear-cut criterion of failure or success. Victory or defeat can quite easily be explained as the will of the Almighty. Religion appears as a universal vision that offers "salvation" to all mankind. It is utopian, undefined in time and unspecific about ends and political means. But Judaism contains some acutely ethnocentric ideas which separate the Jewish people from the

rest of the world.

After the creation of the state of Israel, there remained a profound split between those focused on the religious nature of the first Jewish state, and citizens who viewed the state primarily as a haven for Jews. But all citizens became more mobilised thanks to the continual threat posed by hostile Arab states, and protecting the new nation became infused with religious as well as practical zeal. Although some religious Jews living in Israel do not play an active role in the defence of Israel, for many religious Jews, playing an active role in supporting a militarised state is seen as essential.

It was not until after the 1967 War, however, that support for an expansionist vision of Israel and religious ideology became more galvanised. The unexpected nature of Israel's victory and its seemingly effortless acquisition of lands once part of the Biblical state of Israel fuelled religious nationalism among many religious groups. It created a strong association between hawkishness, support for a relatively hard-line attitude against the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and a belief that Israel is entitled to its original borders.

Although religion remains a constant in politics, its role will thus inevitably change with recent circumstances and will be affected by external pressures. The many changes witnessed by Israel over the course of its short history have changed notions not only of what it means to be Jewish in a political sense, but also in a religious sense: for some citizens, an ideology of nationalism, militarism, and

religious justification for specific actions have become fused. The volatility of the situation in the Middle East has often made it very difficult to find common ground.

Sadly, when the discourse shifts from arguable definitions of national security and state's rights to religious arguments, the potential for dialogue between secular and religious forces within Israel is thwarted, not just between Israelis of different political orientations but also between Israelis and the Palestinians with whom they must negotiate. History has made many dovish Israelis remain suspicious of Arab intentions despite their greater willingness to make concessions. Liberals and moderates often find themselves thwarted by a right-wing religious ideology that sees negotiation as a form of religious heresy as well as militarily dangerous.

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## Language Attitude and Motivation of the Islamic School Students: How *Madrasa* Students of the Academic Year 2013-2014 in Indonesia Perceive English, English Teaching and Learning and Native Speakers of English

Ag. Bambang Setiyadi\* and Muhammad Sukirlan

English Department, Faculty of Education, Lampung University,  
Sumantri Brojonegoro No.1 Bandarlampung, Lampung Province, Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

Many studies have been conducted to identify language attitude in language learning and different studies on language attitude are related to different aspects of a language. Islamic Schools in Indonesia, known as *madrasa*, were often assumed to perceive English and the native speakers of the foreign language negatively and also assumed to be an educational institution which emphasises anti-modern, anti-Western and anti-pluralistic communities. This study aimed to identify how *madrasa* students in Indonesia perceive English, English teaching and learning and native speakers of English. The data of this study were collected through a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert-type scale. ANOVA was conducted to identify how differently the *madrasa* students perceive English, English teaching and learning and native speakers of English from the students of other schools involved in this study. Correlation analyses were also undertaken to determine how the three categories of the language attitude were correlated with one another. The results of this study indicate that the *madrasa* students have positive perceptions towards the three categories of language attitude and these categories are significantly correlated with one another. The empirical data of this study imply that the *madrasa* students in Indonesia can develop sensitivity to the culture of the native speakers of English while learning the foreign language without losing their own cultural identities. The *madrasa* students are relatively open to globalisation and modernisation even though they are committed to their own culture and religious beliefs.

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*E-mail addresses:*

bambang\_setiyadi76@yahoo.co.id (Ag. Bambang Setiyadi)

muhammad\_sukirlan@yahoo.co.id (Muhammad Sukirlan)

\* Corresponding author

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## INTRODUCTION

Motivation in psychology has been well explored and different studies have introduced different theories of motivation in learning (see Noels *et al.*, 1999; Hedi, 2000; Noels *et al.*, 2000; Vallerand *et al.*, 2008; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). In general, education motivation in learning seems important to explore; Schiefele (1991) suggest that one of the most interesting and relevant educational research problems is to determine the relationship between motivation and learning (p. 305). In the context of foreign language learning, many studies have also provided evidence that motivation and learning a foreign language are related and the studies have enriched the perspectives of teaching and learning a foreign language (Wen & Johnson, 1997; MacIntyre & Noels, 1999; Khamkhien, 2010; Ziegler & Moeller, 2012; Chang & Liu, 2013; Martinsen *et al.*, 2014).

The term *motivation* is often interchanged with *attitude*. Baker (1992) uses the term *integrative* and *instrumental*, which is commonly used to classify motivation and attitude. Compared to Baker (1992), Spolsky (1988) suggests that attitude is not a component of motivation, but regards it as another factor which influences learning through motivation. Other studies exploring the role of motivation in foreign language learning were conducted by Bidin *et al.* (2009), Erdemir (2013), Oller and Vigil (1977) and Svanes (1988). Erdemir (2013) and Oller and Vigil (1977) conducted studies on the role of attitude in language learning; however, but they did not separate attitude

from motivation, while Bidin *et al.* (2009) and Svanes (1988) separated motivation from attitude. A study that separated attitude from motivation but the two variables were still developed in a single questionnaire was conducted by Henry and Apelgren (2008). One of the objectives of Henry and Apelgren's study was to compare attitudes to English as the first foreign language with other foreign languages in Sweden. The discussion on the relation between attitude and motivation in second language learning seems not to be final and needs further research to identify how the two variables are interconnected.

Kiesler *et al.* (1969) define attitude as the intensity of positive or negative affect for or against a psychological object and further explains that a psychological object is any symbol, person, phrase, slogan, or idea towards which people can differ in relation to positive or negative affect (p. 2). In line with this concept, Shaw and Wright (1967) define attitude as a relatively enduring system of evaluative, affective reactions based upon and reflecting the evaluative concepts or beliefs which have been learned about the characteristics of a social object or class of social objects. Since the reactions are learned, they may be changed by further learning (Lemon, 1973). The findings in Shaw and Wright's study (1967) suggest that attitudes are not innate and that they are learned. They are regarded as products of social structure. Since they are learned, they may be changed by further learning (Lemon, 1973). In education attitude of students can also be changed in order for them to

have better learning. Therefore, studies on students' attitude seem to be worthy exploring so that they can be provided with processes and facilities for their success in learning accordingly.

The concept of attitude and the findings of the studies, which were originally developed in the field of social psychology, have also been well explored in language teaching and learning. In the context of language teaching and learning, Baker (1992) discusses attitude more specifically in terms of language. He suggests that language attitude is considered very important to language teaching since policies on language can flourish or fail according to the language attitudes of the community. He also states that language attitude is an umbrella term, under which resides a variety of specific terms such as the attitude to language groups, language lesson and the uses of specific language. In the area of language teaching and learning, different studies have been done in relation to language attitude to different aspects of language teaching and learning.

A study by Bhaskar and Soundiraraj (2013) provides empirical data that the attitude to English learning that language learners had at school level changed when they entered college. A study by Ali *et al.* (2012) was conducted to investigate attitudes to teaching methods and found out that learning vocabulary through computers have changed the attitude of Malaysian students in learning vocabulary. With regard to proficiency, a study by Siew Ming *et al.* (2011) revealed that the attitudes

towards learning English were positively correlated with proficiency. As compared to the studies by Ali *et al.* (2012) and Siew Ming *et al.* (2011), the study conducted by Erdemir (2013) refers language attitude as the attitude to English language. Their study provided proof that positive attitudes to studying English language by Turkish students who were studying at a university in the US cohered with their success in learning the language.

Following the original concept introduced by Kiesler *et al.* (1969), attitude is the intensity of positive or negative effect while motivation (Woolfolk, 2004) refers to the students' reasons for acting, that is, whether the cause for the action is inside (*intrinsic*) or outside (*extrinsic*) the person. Attitude and motivation are separate aspects and should be investigated separately. They may be two individual variables that have a cause-and-effect relationship. Mantle-Bromley (1995) suggests that attitudes influence the effort that students make to learn another language since the effort expended to learn another language has to do with actions and intentions, which refer to the concept of motivation introduced by Woolfolk (2004).

Even though language attitudes in this study are investigated separately from motivation, motivation in learning a language is also discussed in order to have a better picture of the interaction between the two variables. As suggested by Mantle-Bromley (1995), attitudes influence the effort that students make to learn another language and the effort refers to motivation.

Motivation, in turn, will affect students' learning of a foreign language (Ziegler & Moeller, 2012; Ahat, 2013; Bernardo *et al.*, 2014). Since attitude and motivation are interconnected, the discussion on attitude can hardly be separated from motivation.

Motivation in the context of language teaching and learning has been mostly inspired by Gardner and Lambert (Dornyei, 1994). Gardner and Lambert (1972) introduced two types of motivational orientation in SLA; integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Language learners are believed to have either integrative or instrumental motivation before they decide to learn another language. Integrative motivation refers to learners' willingness and interest in interacting with members of the L2 group (Gardner *et al.*, 1997) while instrumental motivation refers to pragmatic reasons for language study (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Warden and Lin (2000), who involved language learners in Taiwan in their study, however, provided evidence that the integrative motivational group was notably absent among the learners in their study. They argued that the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation was relevant in the context of teaching and learning English as a second language (ESL), while in their study, the learners learned English as a foreign language (EFL). The distinction between two types of motivational orientation: integrative and instrumental motivation in language and teaching learning in Gardner's model is understandable since integrating with another community seems to be a big

issue in Quebec City in which Gardner's (1972) model has been developed. It may be argued that motivation in learning or teaching English relates to demographic and other characteristics of language learners as suggested by Ryu Yang (2003). Motivation also relates to the settings in which the learners learn English in the context of ESL or EFL as indicated by Li (2014).

Another dichotomy of motivation which is also known in language learning and teaching is the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Dornyei, 1994), which has been well developed in general education (Pintrich *et al.*, 1993; Lepper *et al.*, 1996; Hedi, 2000; Vallerand *et al.*, 2008). Dornyei (1994) makes a distinction between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated behaviours in language teaching and learning. Extrinsic motivated behaviours refer to the behaviours that language learners perform to receive some extrinsic reward such as better salary or grades while intrinsically motivated behaviours refer to behaviours whose rewards are internal like fun to do a particular activity in learning another language (Dornyei, 1994). Dornyei (2003) also claims that Gardner and Lambert's concept has no obvious parallels in any field of motivational psychology.

Language learners may perceive a target language in different ways depending on their beliefs and knowing the beliefs and attitudes students have in regard to learning a foreign language is important for teachers and curriculum policy makers alike (Stewart-Strobelt & Huabin, 2003). English and related aspects of the language may be

perceived in a positive or negative sense depending on beliefs of language learners. Language learners may also learn English in either ESL or EFL setting, depending on where the language is learned. In Indonesia, students learn English at school but outside of the school the students do not use the language since the people do not speak the language in the community. English is learned as EFL in all schools in Indonesia.

The schools in the country may be divided into two main groups; the schools under the Department of Education, known as public schools and the Islamic schools under the Department of Religious Affairs, known as *madrasa* or *madaris* (plural). The education of *madrasa* is parallel with the public schools of the Department of Education. *Madrasa Ibtidaiyah* is equal to elementary schools, *madrasa Tsanawiyah* to junior high schools, and *madrasa Aliyah* to senior high school. Some *madrasa* have boarding houses for their students and these types of *madrasa* are known as *pesantren*. There are also many Islamic schools that use the curriculum of the Department of Education in their learning and teaching processes. Most of such schools are organised under *Mohammadiyah* affiliation (often considered as more modern Islamic schools). Under the curriculum developed by the Department of Religious affairs, students of *madrasa Aliyah* have to learn two foreign languages at schools, namely, Arabic and English. It may be argued that *madrasa* is often perceived from the negative aspect of this educational institution, emphasising their anti-modern, anti-Western, and anti-

pluralistic communities (Park & Niyozov, 2008). This institution is often perceived to be very traditional in their learning and teaching process and to be away from newly developed approaches in teaching, which have been traditionally implemented in most Western countries.

Therefore, the students of *madrasa* are often assumed to perceive English as a language of the Western in a negative sense and the native speakers of the language as people from the other side of the globe. By portraying the language attitudes of *madrasa* students explored in this study, language teachers, curriculum designers, course book writers and government will have clearer ideas to provide the students with better strategies, facilities and policies to reach the objectives of teaching English as a compulsory subject at *madrasa* in Indonesia. The purpose of this article is to investigate how students of *madrasa Aliyah* in this study perceive English, English teaching and learning and the native speakers of English, as well as how the language attitudes of the *madrasa* students interact with their motivation in learning English. For this purpose, the research questions in this study are as follows:

1. How is the perception of *madrasa* students to English and English teaching and learning?
2. How is the interaction between the language attitudes of *madrasa* students with their motivation in learning English?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

To explore how the *madrasa* students perceive English, English teaching and learning and native speakers of the language, a total of 329 students of the *madrasa Aliyah* in the area were involved as participants for the study. At *madrasa Aliyah* in Indonesia, the students learn English and Arabic for 4 hours each a week.

To compare the language attitude of *madrasa* students with the students of other groups involved in this study, thirty students were randomly selected from each of the four schools, namely, a public Senior High school, *Mohammadiyah* vocational school, *Mohammadiyah* Senior High School and *madrasa Aliyah*. All of the 120 participants were Senior High School students of the academic year 2013–2014 in an urban area in Indonesia, and they were either the first, second, or third grade level students. The reason for selecting such a sample was that all the subjects had been learning English since Junior High School and they had not taken any English courses outside the schools. The age of the students ranged from 15 to 19 and the number of female students were relatively equal to the number of male students.

### *Instruments*

The attitude questionnaire, which is meant to measure language attitude, consisted of three subscales measuring the attitude to English, attitude to English teaching and learning, and the attitude toward native speakers

of English. Each of the latent variables in the questionnaire was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire on attitude was developed based on the approach introduced in Gardner's study (1974). This approach provides participants with statements and they have to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree. The responses of *strongly agree* was rated as the highest score 5, *agree* was rated 4, neutral 3, *disagree* 2, and those of *strongly disagree* was rated 1. The questionnaire items were written and answered in the Indonesian language, which all students use as a medium of instruction at schools. The attitude questionnaire consisted of 50 percent negatively worded items and 50 percent positively worded items. The negatively worded items were reversed before being scored. These were items numbered 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 30. The negatively worded items in the attitude questionnaire have alternative 1 as the highest score and 5 as the lowest score. In answering the attitude questionnaire, the students were asked to indicate their schools, their gender and their ages.

TABLE 1  
Questionnaire scales and number of items

Scale	No of items
Attitude to English	10 items
Attitude to English teaching and learning	10 items
Attitude toward native speakers of English	10 items
Total	30 items

Table 1 shows the scales of language attitude and the number of items for each scale. As mentioned earlier, the questionnaire consists of three categories. The category of attitude to English had 10 items, while the category of attitude to English teaching and learning had 10 items, and the category of attitude to native speakers of English had 10 items. In total, the questionnaire to measure the three categories of language attitude consists of 30 items.

#### *Data analysis*

The data obtained with the questionnaire were first computer-coded with the help of SPSS 16.0 for Windows. As shown in Table 3, to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, a reliability assessment of the instrument's ability to accurately and consistently measure the target areas was carried out using Chronbach's Alpha test. To compare the language attitude of *madrasa* students with that of the students of a public school and the students of two *Mohammadiyah* schools, the mean scores of the three categories of language attitude, ranging from 1 to 5, were computed. ANOVA was conducted to identify differences of language attitude between the four groups of students. To determine whether the three categories of language attitude of *madrasa* students had relationships with other variables, correlation analysis was undertaken.

TABLE 2  
Steps of data analysis

Steps	Purpose	Analysis
1	Reliability assessment	Chronbach's Alpha test
2	Comparison among the groups	ANOVA
3	Relationships among variables	Correlation analysis

## RESULTS

To increase the internal consistency of the hypothesised scale of the language attitude, Cronbach Alpha coefficient of internal consistency was computed for the scale. The internal consistency was also computed for the individual scales of the language attitude: attitude to English, attitude to English teaching and learning, as well as attitude towards the native speakers of English. This was continued until exclusion of an item failed to increase the magnitude of the respective alpha coefficient. As a result of omitting the least consistent items shown in Table 3, the scale was designed to assess the language attitude was left with 24 items with an alpha of .843. The scale designed to assess attitude to English had a total of 8 items with an alpha of .773, while the attitude to English teaching and learning had with 8 items with an alpha of .729, and the attitude towards native speakers of English had 8 items with an alpha of .643.

The items excluded from the scale of attitude to English include item number 2 (*English is a language with standard rules*) and item number 4 (*English is a popular language in Indonesia*), while those from the scale of English teaching are item

numbers 12 and 17 (*If I have children, I would like them also to learn English out of school hours* and *Learning English is dull*), and the items from the scale of attitude to native speakers of English are numbers 23 (*Native speakers of English feel too superior to other people*) and 28 (*Native speakers of English are hard working*) (see Appendix Language attitude to English, to English learning and teaching and toward native speakers of English). Generally, the results of the internal consistency cannot be regarded as high, but lower Cronbach alpha scores are often considered to be acceptable when scales for measuring attitude or motivation in language learning contain only a few items. Dornyei and Scizer (2002) considered their questionnaire acceptable for the analysis to explore the changes of attitudes and motivation in learning target languages, even though the mean reliability of their questionnaire was .67. Henry and Apelgren (2008) also regarded their questionnaire of the integrative orientation acceptable with the Cronbach alpha score .559 to analyse the change of attitudes before and after the introduction of the second foreign language to the curriculum. With the Cronbach alpha ranging from .643, .773 to .729 for the three categories of language attitude, the questionnaire used in this study was acceptable and the analyses were continued.

#### *The Differences of the language attitudes of the students from different schools*

Table 4 shows the differences of the language attitudes of the students from different

schools explored. In general, the students in this study had positive attitude and the mean of the language attitude of the students ( $m = 3.529$ ) is above the neutral level ( $m = 3.00$ ). In order to have a better picture of language attitude of *madrasa Aliyah* students, the mean scores of the language attitude of the four schools explored in this study were compared. The public high school students' positive attitude was the highest ( $m = 3.770$ ), followed by that of the *madrasa* students (3.604). The positive attitude of the students of the *Mohammadiyah* schools proved to be the lowest ( $m = 3.512$  and  $m = 3.583$ ).

#### *Means and standard deviation of language attitude*

For the purpose of comparison between the three categories (attitude to English, attitude to English teaching and learning, and attitude to native speakers), the mean scores of the three categories of the language attitude were compared. Table 5 shows the highest mean was the attitude to English (mean = 3.640), followed by the mean of attitude to English teaching and learning (mean = 3.626) and the mean of attitude to native speakers of English (mean = 3.309). Of the three categories, attitude to native speakers of English (mean = 3.309) was the lowest.

#### *Inter-correlations among categories of language attitude*

To determine how the three categories of language attitude were correlated, correlation analysis was undertaken. Table

6 shows how the language attitudes have inter-correlations among them. The results presented Table 6 show that the category of attitude to English (AE) is significantly correlated with the category of attitude to English teaching and learning (AETL) with  $r = .421$ , and  $p < .01$ , and also significantly correlated with the category of attitude to native speakers of English (ANS) with  $r = .252$ , and  $p < .01$ . The category of attitude to English teaching and learning is also

significantly correlated with the category of attitude to native speakers of English, with  $r = .127$ ,  $p < .05$ . The three categories of language attitude explored in this study are positively and significantly correlated. The correlation analysis between the three language attitudes uncovers a close relationship among them and the analysis may explain the correlation between language attitude and motivation in learning English as a foreign language.

TABLE 3  
Cronbach alpha values for each category of language attitude

Multi-item scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha (n = 120)
Attitude to English	8 items	.773
Attitude to English teaching and learning	8 items	.729
Attitude toward native speakers of English	8 items	.643
Total	24 items	.843

TABLE 4  
Language attitudes of different schools

Schools	Mean	SD
Public High school (n=30)	3.770	.368
<i>Mohammadiyah</i> Vocational school (n=30)	3.512	.480
<i>Mohammadiyah</i> High school (n=30)	3.583	.464
<i>Madrasa Aliyah</i> school (n=30)	3.604	.321
All schools (n= 120)	3.529	.275

TABLE 5  
Means and standard deviation of language attitude

Scales	Mean	SD
Attitude to English	3.640	.353
Attitude to English teaching and learning	3.626	.406
Attitude to native speakers	3.309	.359

TABLE 6  
Inter-correlations among language attitudes

n = 329	AE		AETL		ANS	
	R	sig	R	Sig	r	sig
Attitude to English (AE)			.421**	.000	.252**	.000
Attitude to English teaching and learning (AETL)	.421**	.000			.127*	.000
Attitude to native speakers (ANS)	.252**	.000	.127*	.000		

\*\* p< .01

\*p< .05

## DISCUSSION

### Research Question 1

*High positive attitude of madrasa students to English and English teaching and learning*

As shown in Table 4, the high school students in Indonesia in this study generally have positive perceptions towards the three categories of language attitude (above the neutral level,  $m = 3.00$ ). To specifically answer research question 1, Table 4 provides evidence that *madrasa Aliyah* students have relatively higher positive attitudes to English and English learning and teaching in Indonesia, compared with that of the average student ( $3.604 > 3.529$ ). The finding seems to be contradictory to common assumption. Common assumption about the perception of Islamic education is that students of the Islamic schools will perceive Western people, their culture and their language in a negative sense.

To interpret the findings that the students of the *madrasa Aliyah* show high positive attitude towards English, understanding the concepts of Islamic education introduced by Douglass and Shaikh (2004) may

be very helpful. They classified Islamic education at least under three typologies, namely, education of Muslims, education for Muslims and education about Islam (Douglass & Shaikh, 2004). *Madrasa* schools can be grouped more under education for Muslims in that the students for the schools study in formal setting and registered as full-time students where teachers deliver both “secular” and Islamic education. At school, students are taught all subjects from an Islamic perspective. This typology can be contrasted from education of Muslims where the process for learning takes place through formal and semi-formal settings such as mosque schools, study circles, and after-school programmes (Park & Niyozev, 2008).

As discovered in this study, the attitude of the *madrasa* students toward English is positive, which is in line with the finding in a study by Erdemir (2013). His study reported that the participants, who were born in Turkey and spoke Turkey as their native tongue, showed a positive attitude to learning and speaking English even though they perceived English as a threat to their cultural and linguistic identities

(Erdemir, 2013). He also claimed that their positive attitudes toward English might have provided them with the motivation and orientation to learn and master the language since they were studying for their degree in the USA. The positive attitude of the students in Erdemir's study (2013) cohered with the success in learning the language.

The positive attitude of the students of the Islamic school in this study also supports the findings of a study conducted by Owen (2011), which involved Southeast Asian students, including some participants from Indonesia. In the context of religious beliefs, Indonesia is similar to Turkey. The findings of his study provided empirical data that the students of *madrasa* need useful knowledge, marketable skills and combined Muslim learning with knowledge of the national language, Mathematics, Science, and even English, while being strongly committed to the Islamic values (Owen, 2011). It seems that the *madrasa* students, who are studying at the institution under education for Muslims as mentioned earlier, may consider being proficient in English language as a marketable skill. Therefore, they do not perceive English as a threat to their religious and cultural identities. It can be argued that the students of *madrasa* in Indonesia perceive English as an international language worthy to be learned and important for communication in the era of globalisation. Their perception towards English as an international language is in line with the findings in a study by Lai (2013). Lai (2013) claims that even though students used Chinese as the medium of

instruction they tend to perceive English as an indispensable symbol of Hong Kong as an international city, and associate English more closely with traits of the elite.

Since the attitude to English of the Islamic school students of *madrasa* is positive, they seem to perceive the teaching of the foreign language and the culture of the speakers of the language positively. This argument may support the finding in Park and Niyozov's study (2008), that the majority of *madaris* are essentially not anti-modern. They claim that *madaris* proactively apply appropriate modern concepts and pedagogies to suit their respective religio-political aspiration. However, the empirical data in this study that show the positive attitude of *madrasa* students to English as a target language are not in line with a study conducted by Aladdin (2013). Aladdin's study, which investigated the attitudes of the non-Muslim Malaysian learners of Arabic (NMMLA) toward learning of Arabic as a target language, evidenced that NMMLA did not show positively high attitude to Arabic as a target language and NMMLA just showed moderate attitude to Arabic and to native speakers of the language.

Even though the present study has similarity with Aladdin's study (2013), in which the participants were learning a target language that was culturally distant, it is interesting to note that the participants of the present study positively perceived English and its native speakers. Meshkat and Saeb (2014) explored Iranian high-school students' beliefs about learning English and Arabic and found that students

held significantly different beliefs about learning the two foreign languages. It may call for further research to investigate how language learners from different religious backgrounds perceive English and Arabic when they learn the two international languages, which are often perceived as languages that are culturally loaded with certain religious groups. For example, how Muslim and non-Muslim students perceive the Arabic language, which is often associated with *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* (Aladdin, 2013), and English, which is associated with the Western culture (Meshkat & Saeb, 2014), at the same time.

## Research Question 2

### *The interaction between language attitudes and motivation in learning English*

To understand how the attitude of the *madrasa* students towards English in this study could be positive, it seems that there is a need to refer to the concept of motivation in foreign language learning, which is often overlapped with attitude to learning foreign language. As discussed in the literature review, in a foreign language learning there are at least two ways of classifying motivation. The first classification that differentiates between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation has been explored in many studies (Bidin *et al.*, 2009; Dornyei, 1994; Siew Ming *et al.*, 2011). The second classification that contrasts integrative from instrumental motivation has also been identified in other studies (Domakani *et al.*, 2012; Kormos & Csizer, 2008), even though

combination of the first and the second classifications is also common (Chalak & Kassaian, 2010; Zhao, 2012).

Since in Indonesia integration to the speakers of English is not a serious issue as it is in Quebec, Canada where integration is a big issue as identified by Gardner *et al.* (1997), the dichotomy between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation seems to be relevant for this study. It might be explained by arguing that the students of the *madrasa*, who are strongly committed to Islamic values but need useful knowledge and marketable skills, have interests in learning English because English is a marketable skill as extrinsic motivation. Their interests in English will finally result in positive attitude to the language and other aspects of the language.

The different reasons for perceiving English in a positive sense between the *madrasa* students in Indonesia and Turkey students involved in Erdemir's study (2013) could probably be explained by referring to the different types of motivation. The positive attitude of the Turkey students studying in the USA might be argued that they were learning English and thus had a positive attitude to the language because they needed to integrate and communicate with the people in the USA, who apparently use English as the medium in their daily life (integrative motivation). The Indonesian students of *madrasa* in the present study learned English as a marketable skill which is useful in the era of globalisation (extrinsic motivation). Different reasons for having the positive attitude provided in the two

studies can be classified under different types of motivation in language learning, as discussed earlier, but the different reasons seem to result in the positive attitudes to the target language.

It is interesting to note that Siew Ming *et al.* (2011) suggested that intrinsic motivation is commonly associated with integrative orientation, while extrinsic motivation is usually associated with instrumental orientation. In their finding, intrinsically motivated students are likely to have more positive attitudes and less negative attitudes towards learning English compared to extrinsically motivated respondents. Siew Ming *et al.* (2011) also suggested that intrinsically motivated students might be more successful learners of English as their positive attitudes could drive them to success (Siew Ming *et al.*, 2011). It may not be the case in Indonesian context since integrative orientation is not an issue among school students. This assumption proposed in the present study is referred to the statistics presented in Table 4, which evidenced that the attitude to native speakers of English (mean = 3.309) is lower than the attitude to English (mean = 3.640) and that to English teaching and learning (mean = 3.626). It can be concluded that the *madrasa* students in this study are interested in English and English teaching and learning more than the native speakers of the language. It can be argued that the students are more interested in acquiring the language (intrinsic motivation) than integrating with the native speakers of the language (integrative motivation). The

empirical data in this study may imply that intrinsic motivation is not relevant to be associated with integrative motivation, as suggested by Siew Ming *et al.* (2011).

The findings of this study, to some extent, compliment the suggestion in Gonzales's (2010) study which was conducted in the Philippines. Instrumental motivation and extrinsic motivation may be more applicable and appropriate for FL learning, as it is in the Indonesian and the Philippines contexts. Gonzales's (2010) study also suggests that the Filipinos in his research showed a hybrid of both instrumental and integrative motivation and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation seems to be more relevant when students learn the target language in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), while the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is more relevant when students learn the target language in the context of EFL. Based on the empirical data presented in Table 5, it may be argued that their positive attitude to English is higher than that of native speakers of the language if students have intrinsic motivation. In contrast, it may be argued that students with integrative motivation will perceive native speakers more positively than the language they speak. The latter assumption may call for further research.

The empirical data presented in Table 6 show that the three categories of language attitude are inter-correlated. The data also show that the correlation between the attitude to English and the attitude to

English teaching and learning is higher than that between the attitude to English and the attitude to native speakers of English. In addition, the correlation between the attitude to English teaching and learning and the attitude to native speakers of English is the lowest among the three categories. The inter-correlation may imply that the *madrasa* students' attitude to English will firstly affect their attitude to English teaching and learning, and then, affect their attitude to the native speakers of English.

It may also imply that the students are interested in English first and their interest in English will make them interested in learning the language. Finally, they are interested in the native speakers of English. The positive attitude to native speakers of English seems to result from their positive attitude to English as a useful skill to communicate with people from other countries in the era of globalization. The *madrasa* students in this study perceive the native speakers of English in a positive sense and it may be interpreted that the students are also interested in the Western people and their culture. Their interest in the people from the other side of the globe and their culture is useful for classroom instruction to understand instructional materials, as suggested by Rafieyan *et al.* (2013).

The findings of this study support that of the study by Park and Niyozov (2008) that the majority of *madaris* and *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) have embraced, to some extent, more modern pedagogical strategies and enhanced their syllabi. Traits of the modern *madrasa* include

Western-style classrooms and blackboards that replace the traditional arrangement of students sitting on the floor in a circle around their teacher. Park and Niyozov (2008) identified that there might be a small number of *pesantrens* or *madaris* in Indonesia that are linked with religious extremism. The majority are seen as quite moderate and committed to the idea of a multi-religious and multiethnic Indonesia.

It seems that the students of the *madrasa* in this study are relatively open to globalisation and modernisation even though they are committed to their own culture and religious beliefs that they learn at schools. The open personality of the students to other cultures and people from the West is really important since the students should learn English as a foreign language as a compulsory subject, along with the Arabic language. In learning English as a foreign language, the students of the *madrasa* seem to develop sensitivity to the culture of the native speakers of English without losing their cultural identities, as identified in the study by Shemshadsara (2012). Shemshadsara (2012) also suggested that language teachers must choose culturally appropriate teaching styles and explore culturally based linguistic differences to promote understanding instead of misconceptions or prejudices about the culture of the native speakers of the target language.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is true that the concept of language attitude is not easy to define, and that there are many categories of language attitude in the area of language teaching and learning. In this study the language attitude refers to English as a foreign language to learn at school, the obligation for the students to learn the language as an obligatory subject and the native speakers of the language as the representative of the cultural aspects of the language. It is also true that the attitude in learning a foreign language is difficult to be separated from motivation. Therefore, there is a need to redesign and reformulate attitude and motivation as important variables in learning. There is also a need to develop in further research a more standardised questionnaire with high Cronbach's alpha in order to measure students' attitudes and motivation that will look into more comprehensible aspects in language teaching and learning.

The discussion of the role of attitude and motivation in second language learning seems not to be final. Language attitude is closely related to motivation in learning a foreign language and they may have a cause-effect relationship. Since the variables can be separately measured in language learning, they may be measured as independent scales. The cause-effect relationship of the two variables need further research to identify which variable is the cause and which one is the effect in the relationship. The empirical data did not uncover whether their language attitude change or not from

year to year and the study did not provide how the three categories of language attitude affect one another. The inter-correlations among the three categories of the language attitude explored in this study need to be identified in order to know how one category of the language attitude results in positive attitude of the other categories of the language attitude.

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## APPENDIX

### Language Attitude to English, English Learning and Teaching and Native Speakers of English.

Following are a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree. There are no right or wrong answers since many people have different opinions. We would like you to indicate your opinions about each statement by ticking the alternative below which best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	English is necessary in the era of globalization.					
2	English is a language with standard rules.					
3	In Indonesia the use of English should be restricted.					
4	English is a popular language in Indonesia.					
5	Television programmes shown in English in Indonesia must be translated into Indonesian.					
6	English is less important than other foreign languages for Indonesians.					
7	English is a very complicated language.					
8	English is a language of educated people.					
9	English songs have boring lyrics.					
10	English has interesting pronunciation.					
No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11	Learning English is a waste of time.					
12	If I have children, I would like them also to learn English out of school hours.					
13	I prefer to be taught in English at all school levels.					
14	Learning English is interesting.					
15	Learning English makes me happy.					
16	I would rather spend my time on another language (if any) than English.					
17	Learning English is dull.					
18	English class should be an optional subject.					
19	English is a language worth learning.					
20	Learning English can influence our way of life based on <i>Pancasila</i> (Five Pillars).					

No	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
21	Native speakers of English are friendly.					
22	Native speakers of English are generally well educated.					
23	Native speakers of English feel too superior to other people.					
24	Native speakers of English are money oriented.					
25	Native speakers of English are arrogant.					
26	Native speakers of English tend to intervene with another country's domestic affairs.					
27	Native speakers of English are trustworthy.					
28	Native speakers of English are hard working.					
29	Native speakers of English are considerate of the feeling of others.					
30	Native speakers of English are selfish.					

## Correlation between Social Capital and Entrepreneurship toward Posdaya Empowerment

**Saleh, A.\*, Metalisa, R. and Mukhlisah, N.**

*Department of Communication and Community Development, Faculty of Human Ecology,  
Bogor Agriculture University, Bogor, Indonesia*

### ABSTRACT

The objectives of the study were: (1) to analyse the empowerment level of Pos Pemberdayaan Keluarga (Posdaya) based on the four pillars, namely, Economy, Health, Education and Environment; and (2) to review the relationship between social capital and entrepreneurship toward Posdaya empowerment. The study was conducted in Bogor and Cianjur districts of 20 Posdayas by using a survey method. The total number of respondents was 199 consisting of members , management personnel of Posdaya and the society of the twenty Posdayas. The data were collected from May to September 2014 and processed using rank Spearman Correlation. The results indicated that Posdaya cadres empowerment, based on the four pillars, was not satisfactory yet as a result of high dependency of the cadres on university support as well as that of the government. Another reason was that there was less community initiative to realise self production resources and self capital support. Social capital and entrepreneurship are important factors in improving Posdaya empowerment. Therefore, supports from university, the local government, private sectors and society in improving Posdaya empowerment are generally and badly needed. Posdaya empowerment has developed the community's health, economic and education, but not the environment, which was categorised as less empowered. Social capital and entrepreneurship were variables to improve Posdaya empowerment through structure, relation, affective behaviour and entrepreneurship. This empowerment was supported by Posdaya's potentiality, community and economic infrastructures.

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*E-mail addresses:*

amiruddin\_ipb@yahoo.co.id (Saleh, A.),  
rindi.indo@yahoo.co.id (Metalisa, R.),  
nurulmukhlisah@rocketmail.com (Mukhlisah, N.)

\* Corresponding author

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## INTRODUCTION

Centre for family empowerment post (Posdaya) is a centre for empowering community activities conducted in, by, and for the community itself, which is generally known as *bottom up programme*. Mulyono (2014) stated that Posdaya is a model of family empowerment to revive the mutual cooperation culture in building human resources through active participation in the family. Autonomy, utilisation of resources and local potential become sources for every solution. Posdaya is a place for friendship forum, communication, advocacy, and also a place for functionally strengthening unified family activities based on the four pillars mentioned (economic, health, education and environment). Masduki (2009) mentioned that in a certain circumstance Posdaya can be a centre for continuous family services such as in education, health, economy and environment so that families in all villages can grow independently especially in activities related to the four pillars.

The four pillars of Posdaya were developed to grow independently in programmes based on local and potential conditions starting from the easiest programme to more difficult ones in order to revive the social capital, mutual aid and self help among the members of the community. Partnerships with other institutions in caring for the poor community were also established (Saleh *et al.*, 2014).

The main indicators of Posdaya developed by the Centre for Human Resources Development (P2SDM) of Bogor Agricultural University were independency

and empowerment. Aziz *et al.* (2011) indicated that self help is a means to be independent. Being independent is a condition in which a person does not need any support from other people or institutions. Bantilan and Padmaja (2008) stated that empowerment is a process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Furthermore, Aziz *et al.* (2011) mentioned that community empowerment is conducted using participatory approach through the following phases: field of inquiry, analysis for action, advocacy training, policy dialogue, and tracking action for change.

Recently, the development of Posdaya has improved. Some studies have mentioned the improvement based on several social measures . Therefore, it is important to develop a road map of Posdaya empowerment stages.

A togetherness circle could not be developed without binding values. Some literatures refer to these traditional values as social capital. Without any social capital, friendship, working together, and the attitude of caring for each other cannot be realised. The role of cadre also became very important in creating young entrepreneurs.

These cadres were known as social entrepreneurs, as cited in some literatures. Recently, Posdaya has expanded and become attractive among various government organisations and private sectors. Posdaya empowerment to improve the quality of life of its members is due to its social

capital and entrepreneurship. Bantilan and Padmaja (2008) stated that build-up social capital played an important role in influencing impacts from the technology because of the ways in which social network and social relationship facilitated the dissemination of technology. Moreover, entrepreneurship itself is a process which takes place in a network in the presence of social relations (Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2013). A big question has been about how social capital and entrepreneurship were able to empower the Posdaya cadres themselves. Hence, the objectives of the study were: (1) to analyse the Posdaya empowerment based on the four pillars: education, health, economy and environment, and (2) to analyse the correlation between social capital and entrepreneurship toward Posdaya empowerment.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on 20 Posdayas, which are located in the Districts of Bogor and Cianjur. The research employed a survey technique. Posdaya was chosen by observing its progress. The data were collected from May to September 2014. The study was designed as a descriptive explanatory correlation. The respondents amounted to 199 people consisting of Posdaya cadres and members , as well as influential leaders.

The data used include both primary and secondary data. The collected primary data consisted of information on social capital, entrepreneurship and Posdaya empowerment. The data were separated into

four pillars: education, health, economy and environment. The primary data collection techniques used questionnaire in-depth interviews (fully-structured interviews), observation and focus group discussions. The secondary data were documents obtained from the study reports, village offices, relevant government agencies, as well as other relevant documents from BPS , books, journals, or internet containing theories or research findings related to the study. The analysis used was descriptive statistical analysis such as frequency, percentage; and Spearman rank correlation analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Characteristics of the Respondents*

Most Posdaya activities were done by teenagers and adults. The ages of the respondents ranged from 15 to 75 years old. Eighteen percent of them were at productive ages (35 – 40 years old). Most of the male members are married (15 - 19 years old). There are more female members than their male counterpart. The Posdaya activities were done more by the females to support their family needs.

Posdaya was mostly conducted in remote and poor villages. Education is not as important as their livelihood work. There were many respondents who did not finish their primary education (27 percent). The rest of them were high school leavers (29 percent). Most of the respondents worked in the home industry, farming and fisheries by utilising available local resources and potentials in each area or community

(Saleh *et al.*, 2014). Female respondents were housewives and workers in the home industry. The family size ranged from three to five people. In a family of more than five people, the motivation to be an active member was very low.

The community has been contaminated with instant lifestyle and consumerism, causing difficulty for them to get involved in social programmes. There is a tendency for lessening social care as a result of being busy working in industrial world with longer working hours.

Lack of motivation in community development and the difficulty in making the respondents take part in community development collaboration among the locals have caused Posdaya activities to be stagnant whereby some of them stopped altogether in developing Posdaya activities. In addition, underdeveloped Posdaya was also due to lack of organizational skills and knowledge.

#### *Posdaya Empowerment in Community Development*

Community empowerment is a possible element for a community to survive and reach some progress (Hendratmoko & Marsudi, 2010). Situmeang *et al.* (2012) define empowerment as an effort to provide resources, opportunity, knowledge, and skills in improving the ability to make decisions, take actions and participate in group life.

Posdaya empowerment was expected to support a community in creating its own business activities. Empowering

Posdaya was supposed to be built in a surrounding society, indicated by a completely established Posdaya. This completely established Posdaya created a forum to empower the community. There were 20 Posdayas chosen in this particular study. Details on the condition of Posdaya empowerment are described in Table 1.

Table 1 indicates that Posdaya empowerment has not been fully achieved, where more than fifty percent of the members admitted this condition. There were seven basic aspects causing this situation including accessibility to productive assets, capital, cooperative, marketing, technology, needed inputs and human right.

Table 1 also shows that the level of empowerment is not satisfactory or it is categorised as less empowered. Problems appearing in a Posdaya mostly depend upon the role of universities, as well as government support. The community does not have complete understanding about the purpose of establishing a Posdaya, whereby in their opinion, Posdaya should provide them with a business capital. This particular attitude reflected the community's behaviours toward achieving a better life as being an inferior skill. More than sixty percent of the respondents expressed that the economic aspect was less empowered. This resulted from the difficulty of the members to obtain capital, although Cooperative and Micro financial centres had been established in several villages. The difficulty in accessing capital was caused by the difficulty in accessing information. Training and supervision gave them skills

in feed processing in implementing business activities. However, the marketing of food products was still an obstacle. This was due to the practice of doing their business individually, rather than in cooperative effort or mode.

Technology was highly needed to improve their business. Until recently, Posdaya has not been able to apply economic technology as they only recognised simple technology. In fact, Posdaya is even unable to access input of production from urban areas.

Health Pillar became a priority in Posdaya despite its very low empowerment level. This means that the respondents are conscious about how important health is in their life. However, that aspect/pillar is still less empowering. Empowerment can be improved by supporting some factors, such as participation, supervision, training, and partnership. Community participation had existed prior to the launching of Posdaya, however, the respondents need more training

and support by the government as well as the universities.

Education pillar is also indicated as being less empowered. The education programmes consisted of school for kids under five years old (PAUD), Quranic School (Religion), computers training and reading activities for illiterate people. All of these activities existed before the Posdaya programme was introduced. It was expected that Posdaya could continue and improve those activities. School infrastructure was incomplete. Posdaya is supposed to provide that infrastructure as well as volunteer teachers.

More than fifty percent of the respondents stated that the environment pillars failed to improve the environment of the community despite the programmes of animal fertilizer, family health, nutrition and medicinal plants, biophore programme, common seed plantation and tourism. The respondents thought that there was no need for implementing those particular

TABLE 1  
Posdaya empowerment based on the Four Pillars

Variables	Category	Total (person)	Percentage (%)
Economy Pillar	Less empowered	129	64.8
	Empowered	70	35.2
Health Pillar	Less empowered	104	52.3
	Empowered	95	46.7
Education Pillar	Less empowered	114	57.3
	Empowered	85	42.7
Environment Pillar	Less empowered	110	55.3
	Empowered	89	44.7
Posdaya empowerment	Less empowered	107	54.0
	Empowered	92	46.0

n=199

programmes for various reasons. Those programmes were less beneficial and unable to improve their empowerment. Moreover, the technology used was not suitable for the local condition. For example, biopori is not favourable because the soil in their area is unable to absorb water. Posdaya is not active in distributing the information needed. Therefore, their behaviour remains unchanged.

#### *Correlation between Social Capital and Entrepreneurship toward Posdaya Empowerment*

Social Capital and entrepreneurship are supposed to be the most important variables in order to increase community empowerment through Posdaya. The basic elements of social capital are trust, cohesiveness, altruism, cooperative, networking and social collaboration. These have great influence on economic development through various mechanisms such as increasing public responsibility, widening people participation in democracy, strengthening harmony among people, and decreasing conflict. According to Kyu Ha (2010), social capital consists of community cohesiveness, relationship, reciprocity, partnership and common rules. The scatter values of rank Spearman coefficient on social capital and entrepreneurship toward Posdaya empowerment are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that social capital has a positive relationship toward Posdaya empowerment. It means with social capital owned by Posdaya the community empowerment is better. Social capital of

Posdaya is reflected through three elements, namely structure, relation, and affective. All these can develop social empowering of Posdaya itself. Structural social capital is the ability of the members to collaboratively conduct activities such as in celebrating religious activities and Independence Day.

TABLE 2

Rank Spearman coefficient ( $r_s$ ) value of social capital and entrepreneurship toward Posdaya empowerment

Variables	Value of $r_s$ in Posdaya empowerment
Social Capital	0.142*
Entrepreneurship	0.294**

\* Correlated significantly at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

\*\*Correlated significantly at 0.01 level (2 tailed)

$r_s$  = rank Spearman coefficient

The quality of committee to manage program is part of the structural social capital. Coordination among committees created norm and rules which can tighten the committee's involvement with the community's aspiration. This study indicated that cooperation established among its members ultimately led to progress, such as the development of cultural infrastructure.

Social relation is reflected through participation among people in common activities. Posdaya is generally based in rural areas where cultural values are well-established. This was indicated by cooperative work with newcomers such as those from Sumatera and Java and business activities as well as organising jobs, especially in Posdaya programme. Larson *et al.* (2004) stated that social capital can create collective work, especially in poor society.

Generosity and tolerance indicate an affective behaviour. Such behaviour is continuously developed through Posdaya programme to avoid intolerance and jealousy orientation toward newcomers. They are happy if the newcomers conduct their business successfully. Zal *et Al.* (2013) stated that social capital will be able to support community empowerment in economy.

The result of the study showed that entrepreneurship has a highly positive significant correlation to Posdaya empowerment. It means the better the Posdaya entrepreneurship, the better will the Posdaya role be to empower the economy of the members and community. Posdaya entrepreneurship approach emphasises on empowering social problem solving. Posdaya entrepreneurship is determined by capital, labour, basic input, skills and technology.

Capital used will be gained from government support or micro finance loans. The community will gain a loan through proposals applied based on accepted rules. The other element is labour. Commonly Posdaya member business is individually done in the forum at home industry. Therefore, the labour used is home labour.

The home industry was in food production. The standard material was cassavas. Those materials were provided through purchases made in the market or from other farmers. Bogor is a famous place for cassava production. The abundance cassava production has motivated Posdaya

members to improve their skills through trainings conducted by Posdaya.

Successful entrepreneurship is supported by strength and potentiality of Posdaya. Self sufficient groups such as farmer group, women group, religious group will be the potentiality of Posdaya. Potentiality refers to both community and physical supports such as using their house for kindergarten and involving in seed planting for their front yard.

Government policy became very important to develop entrepreneurship. Human resource development was reflected from the readiness of the Posdaya member to be appointed as Posdaya manager. Posdaya needs some field assistants as consultants and agents to give its members a hand in opening the off Posdaya networks. Besides, Posdaya also needs field assistants as partners to get the society moved, and as friends to discuss, extract ideas and exchange opinions, information and innovation sources for Posdaya development. Due to limited funding sources, however, assistant facilitation is hampered and this causes Posdaya's movement to become very slow.

The results of the study indicated that the Posdaya entrepreneurship development is facing a problem in human resources. To unify a community to cooperatively work together became a prominent problem. It needs to socialise a related solidarity among people in the community. Consumptive life pattern was also a hindrance to persuade people for social programmes.

## CONCLUSION

Some conclusions of the research results are as follows: (1) Posdaya empowerment has developed the community in the aspects of health, economic, and education, while environment aspect had not been achieved yet, and it was categorized as less empowered; (2) social capital and entrepreneurship are the variables to improve Posdaya's empowerment through structure, relation and affective behaviour; and (3) entrepreneurship is supported by Posdaya potentiality, community and economic infrastructures.

Furthermore, advanced research should be done to improve the capacity of the local resources in order to strengthen the social capital and entrepreneurship of entrepreneurs in Posdaya.

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## Employability, Mobility and Work-Life Balance: How do they relate for MBA holders in Malaysia?

Samuel, R.<sup>1\*</sup> and Ramayah, T.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Business Management, Kampus Bandaraya Melaka, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 110 off Jalan Hang Tuah, 75350 Melaka, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Minden, 11800 Penang, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

Organisation-managed traditional career is paving the way for what is known as the new career which is self-managed. It is also known as boundaryless, protean or post-corporate career. For the former, the ultimate goal of employees was to climb the proverbial hierarchical ladder up to its highest rung. This then would spell success, which was measured by upward mobility and high income levels of the employees. For the latter, however, success encompassed being employed and remaining employable in the external and internal labour markets. Success in the new career is measured by employability, multi-directional mobility and work-life balance. The trend towards achieving success in career is summarised as gaining employability, making lateral transitions for enrichment and achieving a better and richer quality of life. This study examined the relationship between employability, mobility and work-life balance among 152 MBA graduates in Malaysia. A model that was developed was tested using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique using Partial Least Squares (PLS). A positive relationship was found between employability and mobility and this relationship was stronger when work-life balance was higher. Hence, organisations should realise the high importance placed by individuals on work-life balance and would need to draw up policies and procedures to enhance this balance among the employees, including changing their inflexible corporate policies to allow for more adaptability and flexibility. The changes could include flexible work schedules, compressed work-week, job-sharing and other workplace arrangements.

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*E-mail addresses:*

rachelsam@bdrmelaka.uitm.edu.my (Samuel, R.)

ramayah@gmail.com (Ramayah, T.)

\* Corresponding author

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## INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover rate in Malaysia increased from 12.3% in 2012 to 13.2% in 2013, and was seen mostly in the manufacturing (24%), conglomerates (14%) and financial services (13.3%) industries (Seah, 2013). A survey conducted between June 2010 and July 2011 on executive positions in 143 Malaysian companies across various sectors found an attrition rate between 9.6% and 75% (Goh, 2013). This trend of increasing turnover is in contrast with the traditional career which was organisation-managed and had job security as its hallmark. In the traditional career model, the ultimate goal of employees was to climb the proverbial hierarchical ladder up to its highest rung. This then would spell success which was measured by upward mobility and high income levels of the employees (London & Stumpf, 1982).

Judging on the changes that are currently seen in the world of work, the traditional career seems to be paving the way for what is known as the new career that is also known as boundaryless, protean or post-corporate career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Organisations worldwide are restructuring, de-layering and flattening their structures causing the focus of career to shift to self-managed career development (Hall, 2002; Sewell, 2005). Unlike traditional careers, for employees, success in the new career would encompass being employed and remaining employable in the external and internal labour markets (Bernston *et al.*, 2006). Career success

is equally pertinent for organisations as their accomplishment also depends on employees' success (Ng *et al.*, 2005).

Evidences of change are obvious in the financial and construction sectors in Malaysia (Arshad *et al.*, 2005; Juhary *et al.*, 2004). A study on Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in Malaysia showed that organisational changes like downsizing, globalisation and entry of China into the World Trade Organization (WTO) have put pressure on Malaysian industries. Inevitably, these changes in the organisations impact on employability, mobility and work-life balance of the employees.

Employability is increasingly used as an indicator of success as multiple-employer and multiple-profession careers become more common (Boudreau *et al.*, 2001). Employability is also closely linked with mobility as movements between employers are linked to being successful. In fact, employability facilitates mobility and contributes to an individual's "movement capital" (Trevor, 2001).

Mobility can occur in many forms. It can be in the form of renegotiation of contract by leveraging highly marketable skills (Yamashita & Uenoyama, 2006), an increase in responsibilities and opportunities for new learning (Weick, 1996), and intra-organisational, as well as inter-organisational mobility (Valcour & Tolbert, 2003). When individuals move from one employer to another, it does not necessarily mean an advance in position, as what individuals might experience could be an increase in responsibilities, affirmations from peers

and opportunities for new learning (Weick, 1996).

Since the late 1980s, high importance has been placed on autonomy, flexibility and balance between work and home. The protean career theory introduced by Hall (1996) highlights the shift away from organisation managed careers to self or individual career management. The protean career theory focuses on how employees are more inclined to set their own career agenda up and establish benchmarks in measuring career success (Wong & Roziah, 2014). This trend towards achieving success in career is summarised as:

*“....achieving a multi-level set of self-development targets; gaining employability; making lateral transitions for enrichment...; undertaking self-management and entrepreneurship...; and achieving a better and richer quality of life...”*  
(Baruch, 2004, p. 76)

Hence, in any discussion on career which includes employability and mobility, work-life balance cannot be left out as the division between work life and personal life is increasingly blurring (Eaton & Bailyn, 2000; Goffee & Jones, 2000). In fact, work-life balance has been highlighted as one of the most important measures of career success by both men and women in Malaysia (Adida & Zainal, 2007). However, despite its importance, the relationship between the three variables has not been empirically studied. In particular, the present study

seeks to determine the relationship between employability and mobility, and explore the impacts of work-life balance on such relationship. In filling the gap, the present study contributes to the existing literature on career development and change.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL

Employability began to be studied empirically in the 1990s (van der Heijden, 2002). Employability is defined as the ability to gain and maintain a job in a formal organisation (Fugate *et al.*, 2004). It is understood as the ability to keep the job one has and to get the job one deserves (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010). It is seen as an alternative to job security, not only useful for entry into the labour market but to ensure career possibilities within and beyond the borders of organisations. Employability is accepted as a construct with two related components. Its measure includes self-valuation and perceived value both in the current organisation and outside (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Employability concerns with how well the employees expect to be able to deal with a number of circumstances that may present themselves in the present or the future, whether positive (e.g., promotions, selection processes) or negative (e.g., redundancy, downsizing) (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Employability is contended to enhance an individual's likelihood of gaining employment as it is built upon a number of attributes which include knowledge and skills, capacity for

learning, mastery of career management and job search and professional knowledge (van der Heijde & van der Heijden, 2006; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

Employability has a person-centred emphasis which places the responsibility for career management and development on the employees themselves (Hall & Mirvis, 1995). The onus then is on the employees to take the initiative to update their current skills and learn new ones to remain employable (Lee *et al.*, 2003).

Increasing job insecurity and changes in employment contract and structure have also increased movement between jobs among employees. The traditional career trajectory of internal promotion based on seniority within a firm has been replaced by ‘a sequence of job opportunities that goes beyond the boundaries of any single employment setting’ (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996, p. 116). Boundaryless careers are characterised by mobility not only across organisations but also across occupations, industries, geographic locations and employment forms in a non-linear and unpredictable manner (Arthur *et al.*, 1999). The high turnover and attrition rates in Malaysia are proof of employees moving across industries in search for autonomy, challenges and balance. Careers are thus seen as evolving sequences of work experiences over time (Arthur *et al.*, 1989), which makes every move from one position to another considered as a career transition (Chudzikowski, 2012). As job security and promotional opportunities within larger organisations decline, individuals may

view multiple employer experiences in a positive light because they support skill development, increase marketability, shift career control to the employee, and perhaps result in better matching career and family life-cycle demands (Marler *et al.*, 2002).

A person with a boundaryless mindset is said to “enact a career characterized by physical and psychological movement” (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006, p. 9). Mobility will hence be measured based on the attitude employees hold towards initiating and pursuing work-related relationships across organisational boundaries (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006).

However, to move from one position to another or from one industry to another, an employee needs to be employable. Hence, there is a relationship between employability and mobility because the higher the employability is, the higher the chances for making intra or inter-organisational movements (Raemdonck *et al.*, 2012; Rosenberg *et al.*, 2012). Hence, it is hypothesised that:

#### *Hypothesis 1*

The higher the perceived employability of an employee, the higher the perceived mobility.

One of the main reasons given by employees who move from job to job is the need to look for balance in their lives, a balance between work, personal time and family time (Goh, 2013). An employee perceives he has a work-life balance when multiple domains of personal time, family care, and work are maintained and integrated

with a minimum of role conflict (Clark, 2001; Ungerson & Yeandle, 2005).

When an individual has a high level of employability, he/she is able to keep his/her job and/or get another one he/she desires (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). However, as work-life balance is an important concern for most employees, this could explain why some employees do not move to another job/organisation even if they are highly employable. In other words, if the current position and organisation offer the individual the flexibility and balance he/she desires, he/she will not move to another position or organisation although he/she is highly employable. Hence, it can be hypothesised that employees' disposition to move to another job or position is very much linked with work-life balance (Direnzo *et al.*, 2015; Hobson, 2011; Lambert & Kossek, 2005).

### Hypothesis 2

The positive relationship between employability and mobility will be stronger when work-life balance is higher.

The proposed framework is shown in Fig.1.

## METHOD

### Sample

One hundred and fifty two MBA graduates holders, with a minimum of three years working experience, were identified as the participants. By attaining the MBA degree, they were assumed to demonstrate some degree of career self management (King, 2003). The MBA graduates were currently employed in manufacturing or service companies across Malaysia.

The participants were drawn from companies/organisations that were randomly selected from the Malaysian Top 1000 Corporate Directory 2004/2005 and the FMM Directory 2007. The researcher wrote and made phone calls to the management of the selected companies to enquire about the availability of MBA holders there. After explaining the purpose of the study and gaining approval, questionnaires were sent to the HR department. Completed questionnaires were returned in an addressed envelope attached. The participants were given two weeks to respond. One hundred and eighty five organisations were selected but only 130 organisations participated (70.3%). Some organisations had more than one MBA holder; hence, the total number

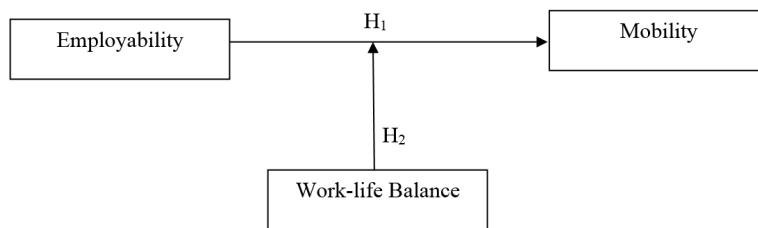


Fig.1: Proposed framework  
(Direnzo *et al.*, 2015; Hobson, 2011; Raemdonck *et al.*, 2012; Rosenberg *et al.*, 2012)

TABLE 1  
Demographic Profile of the Participants (N=152)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	77	50.7
	Female	75	49.3
Year obtained MBA	1990 and earlier	8	5.3
	1991-1995	7	4.6
	1996-2000	47	30.9
	2001-2005	90	59.2
MBA source	Local	94	61.8
	Overseas	35	23.0
	Twinning programme	19	12.5
	Others (e.g., Distance Learning)	4	2.6
Marital status	Married	108	71.1
	Single	42	27.6
	Widowed	2	1.3
Children	Yes	94	61.8
	No	16	10.5
	Not applicable	42	27.6
Sectors	Manufacturing	84	55.3
	Service	68	44.7
Description of Positions in Current Organisation	Strategic decision making	11	7.2
	Senior management responsibility	36	23.7
	Responsibility for work of others and organizational influence		
	First line management		
	Operational	40	26.3
	Others	33	21.7
		24	15.8
		8	5.3
<hr/>			
Employees' profile (N=152)	M	SD	Minimum
Age (in years)	38.5	6.3	29
Current job tenure (in years)	7.4	6.0	1
<hr/>			

of questionnaires received and analyzed was 152. Table 1 shows the profile of the participants.

### Measures

The measures used in the questionnaire were based on research in the area of employability, mobility and work-life balance (King, 2003; Briscoe & Hall, 2006;

Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). A seven-point Likert scale was used for all items ranging from '1' "strongly disagree" to '7' "strongly agree".

'Employability' was measured using Rothwell and Arnold (2007). Two dimensions were considered. They were personal attributes (self-valuation) (4 items with reliability of 0.72) and occupational attributes (perceived value of the occupation) (7 items with reliability of 0.79).

Meanwhile, mobility was measured using Briscoe and Hall's (2006) Boundaryless Mindset Scale (8 items with reliability of 0.87). Work-life balance was measured by 6 items adopted from King's (2003) instrument (6 items with reliability of 0.75). Table 2 shows an example of the items used and their sources.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The response bias analysis or the non-response bias check was carried out to ascertain the representativeness of the responses received from the participants. For this purpose, an independent t-test was conducted to determine if there was any significant difference between the means of the responses received within the time period, with the means of the late responses (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). Nonetheless, no response bias was noted in the analyses.

To test the model we developed for this research, we used the structural equation modelling (SEM) technique using partial least squares (PLS) with SmartPLS 2.0 (Ringle *et al.*, 2005) software. SmartPLS is a second-generation analysis software that can be used to test a complex model with latent variables. We followed the recommended two-stage analytical procedures by Anderson

TABLE 2  
Example of Measurement Items and Sources

Construct	Item	
Employability (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007)	EMP1	Even if there were downsizing in this organisation, I am confident that I would be retained.
	EMP2	My personal networks in this organisation help me in my career.
	EMP3	I am aware of the opportunities arising in this organisation even if they are different to what I do now.
Mobility (Briscoe & Hall, 2006)	MOB1	I like the predictability that comes with working continuously for the same organisation.
	MOB2	I would feel very lost if I could not work for my current organisation.
	MOB3	I prefer to stay in a company I am familiar with rather than look for employment elsewhere.
Work-Life Balance (King, 2003)	WLB1	I live where I want rather than where my career demands.
	WLB2	I save my energy and effort for things outside work.
	WLB3	My work does not have a negative impact on my quality of life.

and Gerbing (1988), where the measurement model was tested first to validate the instruments, followed by the structural model testing to test the relationships that were hypothesised.

Hair *et al.* (2014) suggested that in addition to evaluating the magnitude of the  $R^2$  values as a criterion of predictive accuracy, researchers should also examine Stone-Geisser's (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974)  $Q^2$  value. This measure is an indicator of the model's predictive relevance. According to Hair *et al.* (2014), "PLS-SEM exhibits predictive relevance, it can accurately predict the data points of indicators in reflective measurement models

of endogenous construct and endogenous single-item constructs" (p. 178). The  $Q^2$  or predictive relevance analysis was done by using the blindfolding procedure using a distance value of 6. Blindfolding is a measure which builds on a sample re-use technique, which omits a part of the data matrix, estimates the model parameters and predicts the omitted part using the estimates (Hair *et al.*, 2014). If the  $Q^2$  value is larger than 0, we can conclude that the model has sufficient predictive relevance (Fornell & Cha, 1994). The  $Q^2$  was 0.174, which was greater than 0, thus predictive relevance was confirmed.

TABLE 3  
Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR
Employability	EMP1	0.797	0.515	0.921
	EMP2	0.749		
	EMP3	0.600		
	EMP4	0.675		
	EMP5	0.744		
	EMP6	0.624		
	EMP7	0.772		
	EMP8	0.756		
	EMP9	0.727		
	EMP10	0.779		
	EMP11	0.640		
Mobility	MOB1	0.627	0.589	0.876
	MOB2	0.707		
	MOB3	0.837		
	MOB4	0.802		
	MOB5	0.841		
Work Life Balance	WLB3	0.897	0.758	0.904
	WLB4	0.837		
	WLB5	0.876		

Note: WLB1 and WLB2 were deleted due to low loading.

AVE = Average Variance Extracted, CR = Composite Reliability

TABLE 4  
Discriminant Validity

Construct	Employability	Mobility	Work Life Balance
Employability	0.718		
Mobility	0.220	0.767	
Work Life Balance	0.255	0.135	0.870

Note: The diagonals represent the square root of the AVE, while the off-diagonals represent the correlations

TABLE 5  
Loadings and Cross Loadings

Items	Employability	Mobility	Work Life Balance
EMP1	0.797	0.190	0.083
EMP2	0.749	0.243	0.159
EMP3	0.600	0.181	0.209
EMP4	<b>0.675</b>	0.105	0.211
EMP5	<b>0.744</b>	0.060	0.170
EMP6	<b>0.624</b>	0.044	0.218
EMP7	<b>0.772</b>	0.150	0.275
EMP8	<b>0.756</b>	0.066	0.254
EMP9	<b>0.727</b>	0.089	0.259
EMP10	<b>0.779</b>	0.196	0.175
EMP11	<b>0.640</b>	0.084	0.134
MOB1	0.147	<b>0.627</b>	0.152
MOB2	0.141	<b>0.707</b>	-0.015
MOB3	0.193	<b>0.837</b>	0.083
MOB4	0.144	<b>0.802</b>	0.087
MOB5	0.199	<b>0.841</b>	0.154
WLB3	0.198	0.148	<b>0.897</b>
WLB4	0.251	0.080	<b>0.837</b>
WLB5	0.239	0.103	0.876

TABLE 6  
Hypothesis Testing

	Dependent = Mobility	
	Main Effect	Interaction Effect
	Std Beta	Std. Beta
Employability	0.198***	0.212***
Work Life Balance	0.084	0.070
Work Life Balance*Employability		0.203*
R <sup>2</sup>	0.055	0.093
R <sup>2</sup> Change	0.055	0.038**

\*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

### Structural Model

Next, we proceeded with the path analysis to test the two hypotheses generated. The results are presented in Fig.2 and Fig.3 and Table 5. The  $R^2$  value was 0.055, suggesting that 5.5% of the variance in mobility could be explained by employability. There was a positive relationship ( $\beta = 0.212$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between employability and mobility. Thus, H1 was supported.

The second hypothesis (H2) was to test the moderating effect of work life balance. To test this hypothesis, we used the product-indicator approach as suggested by Henseler and Fassott (2010). We created the interaction term between the employability and work life balance and before doing this interaction, we mean centred the two variables to reduce multicollinearity. When the interaction effect was entered into the model, the  $R^2$  increased to 0.093, giving an  $R^2$  change of 3.8%. The interaction effect was significant ( $\beta = 0.203$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ).

Thus, H2 of this study was also supported. The effect size  $f^2$  as suggested by Cohen (1988) was 0.042, which is considered small. As suggested by Dawson (2014), we plotted the interaction effect to see how the moderator changes the relationship between employability and mobility. The result is shown in Fig.4. The relationship between employability and mobility was stronger when work life balance was higher, whereas low work-life balance had no impact on the employability-mobility relationship.

## DISCUSSION

Employability has emerged as a focus point for those seeking ongoing, worthwhile employment in the labour market (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Employability is given much attention due to organisational needs for flexibility in a changing labour market, by the present job mobility rates (involving change of employer, and/or occupation) and the

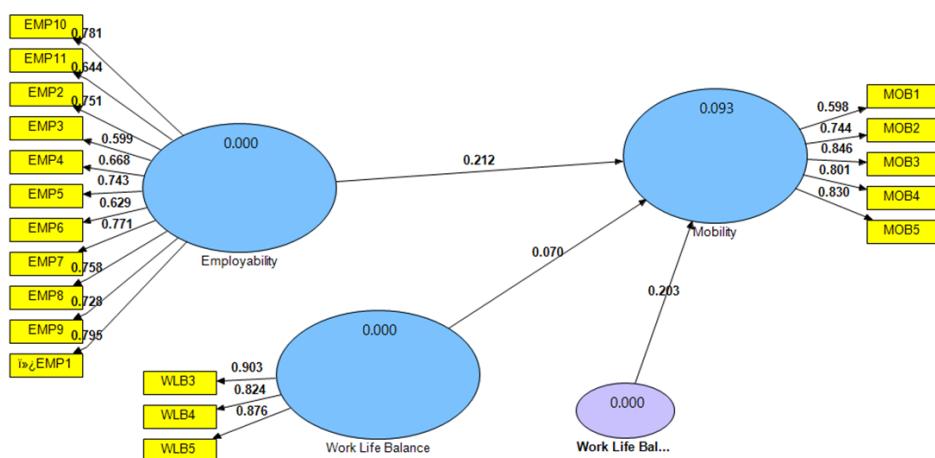


Fig.2: Path Coefficients of Employability, Mobility and Work Life Balance

growing pool of “free agents” or consultants (Bonfiglioli *et al.*, 2006). For an individual, employability is an indicator of his/her opportunity to acquire and keep an attractive job in the labour market (Thijssen *et al.*, 2008). Hence, employability can lead to the individual moving into other positions within the organisation or taking up new

positions in other firms or industries. Thus, there is a relationship between employability and inter or intra-organisational mobility.

It is highlighted in this study that the domestic sphere influences career choices as individuals give priority to their family life (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). Ibarra (2003) found that individuals declined promotions

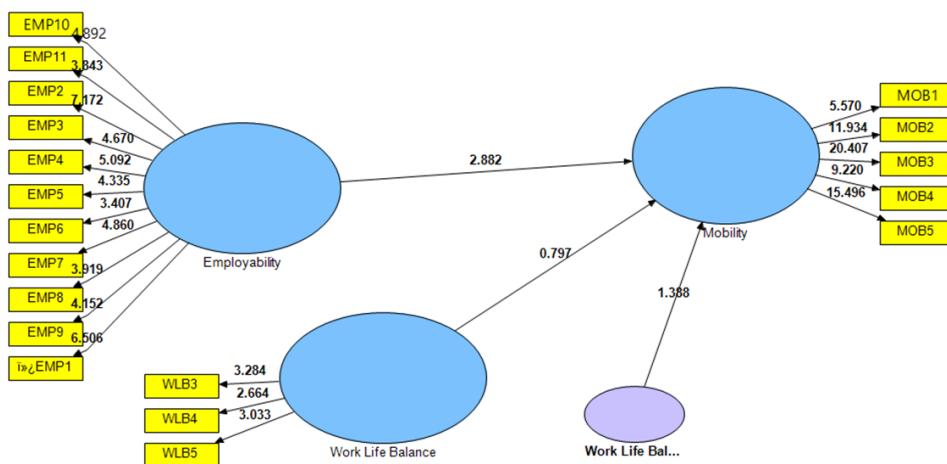


Fig.3: Bootstrapping of Path Coefficients of Employability, Mobility and Work-Life Balance

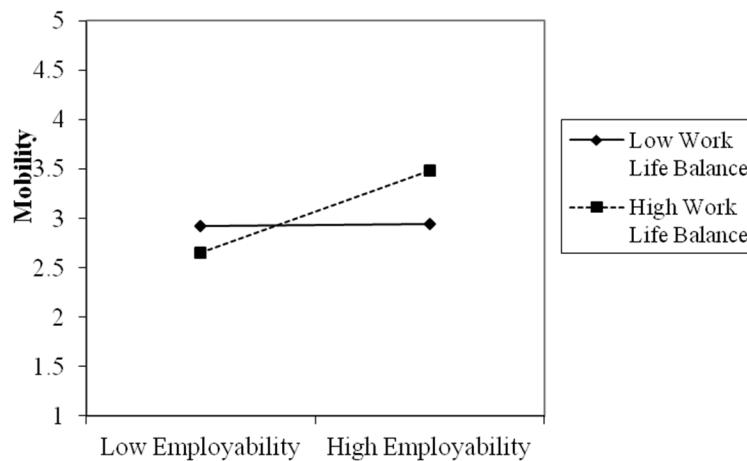


Fig.4: Interaction Plot

in order to spend more time with family and friends. Similarly, Moore (2002) found that employees, who were disappointed with the inflexibility of the corporations and the lack of concern for work-family balance, integrated their work and non-work lives by starting their own business. The strong influence of work-life balance on the employability-mobility relationship was clearly seen in this study.

As mentioned earlier, studies have looked at the relationships between employability and work-life balance (see Direnzo *et al.*, 2015; Hobson, 2011) and employability and mobility (Raendonck *et al.*, 2012; Rosenberg *et al.*, 2012). This study however has studied the relationship between all the three variables, thus enhancing the understanding of career and contributing to the body of knowledge in career development. The study also has highlighted the need for an organisation to realise the high importance placed by individuals on work-life balance. In fact, employees' disposition to move to another job or position is very much linked to work-life balance (Lambert & Kossek, 2005). Organisations can draw up policies and procedures to enhance this balance among the employees, including changing their inflexible corporate policies to allow for more adaptability and flexibility. The changes could include flexible work schedules, compressed work-week, job-sharing, telecommuting and other similar arrangements.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As employability will remain a phenomenon in the world of work and career, it will be useful to conduct more studies in this area. It is interesting to test the relationships between employability and other components such as personality traits, learning and career planning competencies, among others. Age could be used as a predictor variable in future studies. The younger, well-educated employees of Generation X and Y are claimed to desire employability rather than long-term employment (Bogdanowicz & Bailey, 2002). However, many mid-to-late career workers seem to struggle in developing strategies to manage their employability. Future studies could look at multi-source ratings (e.g., employees and their supervisor) as these could reflect more differentiated evaluation of employability, mobility and work-life balance.

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## Forensic Linguistics in the Light of Crime Investigation

**Farshad Ramezani\*, Arefeh Khosousi Sani and Kathayoun Moghadam**

*Department of Law, College of Humanities, Bandar-e-Anzali Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bandar-e-Anzali, Iran*

### ABSTRACT

Forensic linguistics is a branch of applied linguistics which deals with the analysis of linguistic evidence to clarify the ambiguities existing in any judicial process, especially in investigation crimes and legal issues. This field investigates legally valuable texts and linguistic evidence such as handwritten texts prior to a suicide, documents and evidence remained from a crime scene and notes of abductors. Discourse analysis is also widely carried out with the following aims to: understand the identity of the writer; identify the speaker with reference to the recording; and provide expert reports for legal authorities and police. The analysis of discourse greatly assists judicial system personnel to find truth. It is necessary for police officers, security experts and judges working in courts to become familiar with the potentials and application of forensics linguistics and its role in the success of legal investigations in order to attain truth in judicial processes.

**Keywords:** Forensic linguistics, linguistic evidence, law and linguistics, legal discourse analysis, linguistic finger prints

### INTRODUCTION

Forensic linguistics is a new approach in applied linguistics using scientific mechanisms which are also derived from other subfields of linguistics such

as phonetics, stylistics, pragmatics, dialectology and semantics used in courts during the process of police investigation with the goal of solving crimes and legal issues.

At present, the work of “International Society of Forensic Linguistics” is a typical example of this field. Considering the establishment and spread of international courts, it is extremely important for linguists to become familiar with the legal systems of different countries, especially in the new

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*E-mail addresses:*

farshadramezani.iau@gmail.com (Farshad Ramezani)

arefek\_sani@yahoo.com (Arefeh Khosousi Sani)

kathayounmoghadam@yahoo.com (Kathayoun Moghadam)

\* Corresponding author

century, when concepts such as ‘organised crimes’ and ‘international terrorism’ have gained a considerable significance.

This study is an attempt to study the different aspects of forensic linguistics and the application of this field in crime investigation. In the first section of this article, the theoretical concepts of forensic linguistics and its history are explained. The second section explains the role of forensic linguistics in a justice system. The third section deals with the practical description and analysis of forensic linguistics including description phonetics, stylistics and crime discourse analysis in judicial investigations to distinguish between successful investigations from unsuccessful ones. Finally, the article ends with a conclusion of the discussed issues in the field of forensic linguistics.

Forensic linguistics, as a term, could be equivalent to ‘court linguistics’, ‘judicial linguistics’ or ‘legal linguistics’. At least in the US, the term ‘forensic’ is mainly about people or methods that are used to perform judgment and mystery solving.

Therefore, in order to define forensic linguistics as new approach to linguistics and law, it can be formulated that this field is like forensic medicine which deals with the applications of medicine in legal issues or forensic psychology, which is about analysing mental disorders from the perspective of Law. As a comparison, forensic linguistics is a field which deals with the application of linguistics and its subfields including phonetics in identification, writing techniques, legal

texts, semantics, words or texts analysis with respect to legal and judicial goals. In other words, forensic linguistics is delimited by language science and legal preferences such as those formulated by courts and legal authorities (Groot, 2003).

As a matter of fact, approaches such as forensic linguistics, forensic medicine, forensic psychology and forensic pathology, all form a whole body of knowledge known as forensic sciences.

As previously mentioned, forensic linguistics is a new interdisciplinary approach to Linguistics and Law, whose necessity is on the rise day after day. The importance of this field is so much that one specialised organisation named as “International Society of Forensic Linguistics”, together with another international organ called “The International Association for Forensic Phonetics” is now active, whereas an international journal known as “The Journal of Speech, Language and Law” publishes relevant articles and books.

By considering the basic tenets of language theories and thousands of legal cases in American and European judicial system, many law experts and linguists believe that there is a close relationship between Linguistics and Law. They also state that a forensic linguist uses linguistic principles, different techniques such as discourse analysis or conversation analysis, general language theories and speech act theories in order to provide a court with their expert opinions. All the participation from forensic linguistics is to unravel legal mysteries and reach a fair judgment.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE HISTORY OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS FROM THE BEGINNING TO NOW

It can be doubtlessly stated that there is no definite starting point for forensic linguistics as a scientific discipline, which is also the case for other disciplines. Challenges of the identification of writers (writer of texts related to crime) play a fundamental role in the establishment of Forensic Linguistics (Olsson, 2008). From the ancient Greece, on certain occasions, Greek play writers accused each other of plagiarism. In 1800s AC, researchers were oriented toward the identification of genuine writers. This was mainly concerned with the most popular works such as those of religious texts and also Shakespeare's plays. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a number of methods were devised to identify writers and the possibility of ascribing a work to a writer, which were mainly concerned with mean word length and mean sentence length.

However, the first use of forensic linguistics in practice was in 1968 as the result of the work of a linguist named Svartvic. He used forensic linguistics in judicial process of a person who was convicted with the murder of his wife and child. Timothy John Evans was executed after his trial in 1953 based on a so-called confessions made by him. His confessions were troublesome, especially for a famous journalist named Ludwig Kennedy. Therefore, Svartic started to analyse the confessions and he quickly found that two different styles were used in the two confessions. Using linguistic evidence, he

showed that despite the court's decision, Evans did not make the confessions.

For a long period of time, there were a set of specific regulations in UK Law for confession hearing. Accordingly, convicts used to narrate their stories for police officers, and the officers were responsible to take down or type the hearings without interrupting the convicts; however, what happened in reality was quite diverse. Police officers asked a lot of questions, and then they started to write down the convicts' answers. The problem was that they wrote the answers not so much precisely, but instead they recorded their own perception of the convicts' sayings. Since people talk quickly and not much coherently, it could be possible for the hearers to leave out important details and in some cases, to record their own thoughts and guesses.

Therefore, police officers were indifferent about the rules governing the process of confession hearing, but they had their own way of recording the sayings. Unfortunately, on some occasions, the convicts record their own opinions together with the confession. Consequently, in the start of forensic linguistics, the validity of the confessions received by police was a significant issue, at least in UK. This was especially considered in a number of important legal cases such as "the appeal court of Derek Bentley", where the Birmingham University professor, Malcom Collard, who was also a famous British forensic linguist, played a fundamental role.

The establishment of forensic linguistics in the US was also in correspondence to

the rights of people and convicts during interrogation process. Magistrate court accused Ernesto Miranda of an armed robbery. However, the appeal court refuted the conviction. All police officers are obliged to tell the arrested of their rights; the officers have to tell them that it is not mandatory to answer the questions during interrogations, and all of them are eligible to have a lawyer. However, some doubts remain unsolved, which are mentioned by Roger Shuy. Shuy believes that the nature of interrogation process forces convicts to answer questions.

Therefore, it is hard to accept convicts' confessions as valid and voluntary (Shuy, 1997). In addition, he referred to a special case "the case of a 15-year old boy from Huston, Texas, who accepted the murder charge and signed his confession although the regulation relating to the accused person's rights was read to him" and concluded that the accused person accepted some forensic terminology in the murder charge regulation due to the lack of understanding and signed his confession. In fact, it can be said that no balanced and symmetrical relationship found in the relationship between "the judicial officers and police officers" on the one hand, and "the accused" on the other hand due to various reasons such as illiteracy or low literacy or for example, he speaks in a language, dialect or accent other than the language used in interrogations. Thus, any text, whether written or oral, which results from such an unbalanced relationship will have a significant difference with the accused' intention and what he meant. The

level of language comprehension could play a key role in interrogation process and confession hearing. On some occasions, the convict might get confused over the professional terms that exist in interrogation declaration letter. Helpless in understanding the content of interrogation, he might confess against himself (Olsson, 2008).

The scope of forensic linguistics has expanded since its establishment as a scientific approach. Nowadays, forensic linguists are asked to cooperate with legal authorities in variety of occasions such as the identification of the writer of threatening letters, letters containing explosives and deadly materials, writings related the time of death and suicide telephone messages. Forensic linguists provide legal authorities with their expert opinions (Tiersma & Solan, 2002).

Forensic linguists believe that there is a close relationship between forensic linguistics and law. In fact, the linguists use their theoretical knowledge and professional experiences to help the actors in criminal investigations in reviewing the criminal assumptions and removing ambiguities and doubts arisen in the context of linguistic evidence. Achieving a better understanding of the forensic linguistics in criminal investigations requires having a basic knowledge in the field of language functions in the cultural and social contexts. With the development of forensic linguistics, the study of the impact of variables such as gender, age, ethnicity, geographical region and social class on written and audio findings with judicial and police value

becomes possible. Today, the developed judicial systems are widely using the professional opinions of forensic linguists to analyse linguistic evidence in cases and make judicial decisions.

### **THE FORENSIC ANALYSIS OF HANDWRITING**

A manuscript that is analysed in legal context is referred to as legal document which is deeply probed by forgery document examiners. This practice is known as Forensic Handwriting Analysis.

All human beings have their own specific handwritings, just like their fingerprints. Therefore, the identity of a writer could be revealed by analysing his/her handwriting. For example, handwritings left by those committing suicide with an emotionally depressed state are completely different from handwritings written by scared victims.

With respect to handwriting forgery (i.e., to fake someone else's handwriting), it can be formulated that the forger can never wipe out the interference of his/her own handwritings, and he/she can never duplicate the handwriting of another person. Therefore, forensic linguists can compare the genuine writings with the fake ones to determine whether the handwriting is real or not. This can be also done by using computer software and model recognition tools.

Forensic linguistics was introduced for the first time by a linguist called Svartvik (1968) about 40 years ago in a book entitled "Ivan's remarks: an example for forensic

linguistics". In this book, he compared that part of the accused person's statements that had not been referred to at the court and had caused his conviction to the other part of his statements that had not been used and showed that these two parts have many structural differences in terms of linguistic. Subsequent investigations proved the innocence of Ivan and his homeowner was brought to trial as the main accused in the murder of his wife and child. The publication of this book is to be considered as a turning point in the debate on forensic linguistics in criminal matters.

Nowadays, many judges use expert opinions of forensic linguists who have been trained under certain programmes for handwriting analysis. Forensic linguists are at the service of courts and legal societies in order to analyse contracts, exchanged written documents, anonymous letters, threatening letters and wills.

### **THE POSITION OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS IN JUDICIAL SYSTEMS**

Describing the relationship between two abstract concepts of language and law can help us in reaching a better understanding of the role and position of linguists in legal and judicial systems. Undoubtedly, we need language in order to make and understand the law. In other words, these two abstract notions are inseparable. The increasing attention given by linguists to the relationship between these two concepts, especially in the twentieth century, is the result of this inseparability. From the very beginning,

linguists have opposed the existence of ambiguity and archaic terminology in legal texts, regulations and court decisions. On the other hand, judges have been doubtful about the presence of linguists in courts and legal organisations; they perceived the presence of them as a threat to themselves. This a statement made by a judge about a linguist (a phonetician), "We all know that a linguist is a person who can speak in several languages (Storey-White, 1998, p. 281). These misunderstandings and misconceptions about the role and nature of linguistics caused tensions in the beginning, but soon judges and juries especially in US found that the skills of linguists in discourse analysis and pragmatics are key to a better understanding of the intention of speakers. They also found that linguists can assist them with the goal of the better comprehension of laws, regulations, contracts and evidence given by both parties. Linguists are also useful in dealing with oral documents and hand writings.

## FORENSIC PHONETICS

In forensic phonetics, linguists attempt to compare the recorded voice of a convict while doing a crime and the voice of the suspects, and finally to find a relationship between them. They also determine how much similar are the two voices, which may play a pivotal role in courts and among jury members in conviction or acquittal of an individual.

This method was first used in the 1960s. It was as valid as using finger prints in judicial processes. Today, phonetic analysis

(physical and audio) is a method used for the identification of convicts in judicial and legal processes. In this process, the linguist first uses auditory phonetics to transcript one's sayings. This stage is very important for any legal investigation. Missing one letter of a word might change the meaning of that word or even a whole phrase. After carrying out the transcription and analysis of the final transcribed text, the phonetician can determine to what social class and geographical area the speakers belong. Sometimes, besides their pronunciation and dialect, the pronunciation manner of one specific letter in a word can provide officers with valuable information about the identity of the convict.

Carrying out physical phonetics makes the observation of the speaker's voice spectrogram possible. Studying the spectrogram, one becomes able to attain information such as frequency, height, intensity and pitch. By combining and analysing the data derived from physical and auditory phonetics, linguists can understand whether the speaker speaks with his own voice or he imitates another person. For example, in April 2000, one German encoder and decoder, which was made during World War II, was stolen from a museum in UK. Following the robbery, a few request notes for money and a tape were found. The tape included a message with the South African pronunciation of English. After the phonetic analysis of the tape, it was found that the speaker belonged to northern England, but he tried to imitate English-African Dialect. After the investigations were done, a British

antique dealer was arrested. He confessed that all notes and messages belonged to him (Coulthard & Johnson, 2007, p. 148).

However, it should be noted that the information derived from phonetic analysis is not definite and final. This method suffers from a range of limitations. First, people on different social, temporal, and geographical occasions speak with different pronunciations, intensities and pitches. On such occasion, the comparison of spectrograms derived from two voices cannot produce final results.

The use of spectrogram to identify the speaker needs at least two separate spectrograms from the person in question. In both samples, there should be at least one common word so that we can compare the two spectrograms to attain information needed for understanding the speaker's identity.

However, despite the limitations of physical phonetic analysis and its error rate (Hollien, 1990), FBI and other advanced police forces use phonetic analysis to complete their investigations. As had previously been mentioned, however, phonetic analysis by itself could not be accepted in a court of law (Nakasone & Beck, 2001).

## PHONETIC STYLISTICS

The use of language, either in oral form or in written form, is one method for the identification of people. Vocabulary and diction of each person grows gradually with him/her and is exclusive to himself/herself. Diction, syntax and the use of grammatical

structures are used as linguistic fingerprints, and there is a close relationship between the personality and social identity of individuals. The analysis of linguistic fingerprints is one method for the identification of genuine writers and also for understanding the number of writers of a note. Stylistic techniques could be helpful in revealing the liberty and intention of the writer in writing a specific note or manuscript. It also shows that the present note is or is not affected by people other than the writer.

Researchers have proposed a number of methods for the analysis of linguistic finger prints. For the first time, De Morgan (1882) suggested the average length of words hypothesis. From his point of view, the average number of letters in each word in sentences of a text can work as a criterion for the identification of the genuine writers. The examples of other criteria include mean sentence length (Yule, 2009), lexical variety (Winter & Woolls, 1996), and diction and syntactic structure (Honore, 1979).

The truth is that in practice, many words, phrases and expressions may be similar in the writings of different people. Therefore, the identification of genuine writer by using this method is only possible when the number of suspects is less than five. On the other hand, notes left in a crime scene (e.g., those left by abductors, threatening letters, suicide notes, etc.) are usually short and most often less than 100 words. Therefore, the application of forensic stylistic methods and finding the mentioned features in such short notes are practically impossible.

In addition, the analysis of the writer's notes includes valuable information about the identity of the writer of a note. There is usually a close relationship between one's handwriting and his/her education and social class (Davis, 1986). The analysis of spelling errors and the type of diction in a note or a manuscript determines the level of education. However, it should be noted that on certain occasions, the writer might change his/her handwriting to mislead the investigators.

### **FORENSIC DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Forensic discourse analysis is a branch of critical discourse analysis. The important thing about this approach to linguistics is the identification of social context in which the discourse (oral or written) is produced. In text analysis, we should be always cautious about the situation and social context of the production of the discourse. We need to address the socio-cultural backdrop against which a text is born.

Forensic discourse analysis is rarely about the previously existing texts (e.g., threatening letters and suicide notes). On many occasions, the analysis is performed on the transcribed sayings of convicts and suspects. That is why discourse analysis should take into account the features of both written texts and oral productions including conversation cooperative principles, turn taking, the design and distribution of speaking chance between interlocutors, and the length of conversation for each participant. However, there are limitations to discourse analysis. While transcribing oral

discourse, intentionally or unintentionally, some verbal features disappear. Slembrouk (1992) believes that even if the transcribed speech is very precise and word by word, certain features such as the tone of message, emphasis on certain letters or words, pauses, unfinished sentences or words, grammatical errors, gambit words and sounds (Aha, hum, let's say), rare expressions and non-standard structures are left out in transcribed texts. However, from the perspective of a discourse analyst, these features may include invaluable information. For example, when a police interrogation is transcribed, it may be possible that a lot of the mentioned features are left out under the influence of organisational language or executive process. In written texts, features such as the complexity and difficulty of sentences syntactic structures, the use of passive structure instead of active voice, using long sentences and the use of many subordinate clauses, conjunctions such as and, or, if and unless, all of which create a logical relationship between sentences. One may also add nominalisation as a method for hiding the subject to this list; the mentioned feature can all cause ambiguities in the precise comprehension of a text.

The existence of coherence and cohesion among sentences could be examined by analysing the criteria such as pronouns and what they refer to, verb tense consistency, ellipsis, omitted or hidden structures (Hunyadi, 2003). Situational context in which a text come into being is of great importance because the socio-cultural context may directly affect the meaning

of words and sometimes even change the meaning all together (Eades, 1996). Hence, while analysing a discourse, one should not only limit himself/herself to the literal meaning of a word, but they must care about the practical meaning of the word according its context of use (Prince, 1981).

## CONCLUSION

Forensic linguistics is an interdisciplinary branch of Linguistics and Law, which has become the centre of attention among US scholars of Linguistics and Law in the recent decade especially after 1997. As a matter of fact, forensic linguistics is a new scientific approach to applied linguistics using scientific mechanisms, which are also derived from other subfields of linguistics such as phonetics, stylistics, pragmatics, dialectology and semantics used in courts during police investigations with the goal of solving complex legal cases. The linguistic analysis of correspondence, evidence and documents, recorded sounds, notes left in a crime scene by suspects and convicts, plays a vital role in legal investigations and unveiling the truth. Judges and juries, especially in the US, were first uncomfortable about the presence of linguists in courts and legal organisations, and perceived linguists as a threat to themselves. Soon, however, they found that the skills of linguists in forensic discourse analysis, pragmatics, forensic phonetics, dialectology and semantics are keys to a better understanding of the intention of speakers. Today, considering the establishment of international courts, it is

extremely important for linguists to become familiar with the legal systems in different countries and the judicial mechanism of international courts.

In the new millennium, notions such as organised crime, international terrorism and violation of human rights are of great significance. In our present age, the scope of forensic linguistics has been widened in many countries, especially in the US and Europe; thus, it is necessary that scholars of Law and Linguistics attempt to attain a better understanding of this scientific approach. There should be a proper context in which the skills of forensic linguists assist judges and legal authorities.

It is recommended to approve some laws by the countries in order to not only allow but also consider it necessary to use the views of linguists in relation to the case subject in general. These establishing laboratories and departments of forensic linguistics in judicial and police structures of countries, organising specialised meetings and committee of forensic linguistics for police officers and court judges, as well as developing the studies of forensic linguistics as an independent academic discipline.

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## Genre-Based and Process-Based Approaches to Teaching News Articles

Jeneifer C. Nueva

*Department of Languages and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences, Central Mindanao University, University Town, 8710 Musuan, Bukidnon, Philippines*

### ABSTRACT

Genre-based and process-based are approaches which claim to improve students' writing proficiency. This study determined the effect of these approaches on news articles written by 80 students in five aspects: content, accuracy, fluency, appropriateness and intelligibility; it evaluated the significant difference between the pretest and post-test of the process-based (control) and the genre-based (experimental) groups; and examined the significant difference in the writing performance of two groups. The study used *t*-test for independent samples and *t*-test for paired samples to analyse the data. Students' output had showed better improvement in five aspects when exposed to genre-based intervention than those exposed to the process-based approach; there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests of the control and experimental groups; and there is a significant difference in the writing performance of the students. Both approaches improved students' news articles but those exposed to genre approach performed better than those exposed to process-based approach. Adoption of the genre-based approach in the writing course would help improve students' writing proficiency.

*Keywords:* Genre-based, process-based, news article, teaching, writing

### INTRODUCTION

Writing, according to Hung, is one of the important skills that learners learning English as a second or foreign language

must develop (Nueva, 2011). Out of the four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), writing is regarded as the most difficult skill to acquire because it calls for a higher level of productive control and considered by many students as a tedious activity.

In the Philippines, English proficiency in the four language domains is declining.

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##### *E-mail addresses:*

jeneifer.nueva@gmail.com; jeneifer.nueva@cmu.edu.ph  
(Jeneifer C. Nueva)

Students obtained a mean score of 6.69 in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the proficiency test conducted by the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and this mean is far lower compared with international standards (Geronimo, 2015).

In Central Mindanao University (CMU), many students have difficulty writing effective composition. In order to help the learners develop their writing skills, teachers use different approaches such as product, process, and genre-based.

Product approach focuses on the linguistic features and gives emphasis on evaluating the written output based on the learners' knowledge of language form. Contrary to the product approach, process approach (as its name suggests) emphasises the processes of producing a text such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing (Nordin & Mohammad, 2006).

Product and process approaches have been useful in the teaching of academic writing. However, there are limitations as approaches pave the way to the development of another approach – the genre-based, also known as genre-based instruction, which combines the product and process.

Genre-based instruction (GBI) promotes the teaching of specific genres generally encountered by students in the different disciplines and the overt teaching of the language patterns and social conventions of these genres (which are not addressed by the process approach). Awareness of the conventions inherent to these genres, like genres of academic English, is a key

factor in improving learners' writing skills (Osman, 2004).

Product, process, and genre-based approaches have contributed a lot to language pedagogy, in general, and to the development and enhancement of the learners' writing skills in particular. Product approach plays an essential role in enhancing learners' writing skills (Nordin & Mohammad, 2006). Similarly, process approach has a significant influence in the teaching of writing as it values the learners and the stages of text production (Rahman, 2011). Furthermore, genre-based approach substantially improves students' writing because it does not only include the teaching of the content, language and organisation but also social conventions laid for particular genres and the use of language for specific contexts. In this way, the learners are exposed to a real world writing (Chaisiri, 2010).

Findings of various studies, conducted in the different ESL and EFL contexts, reveal the efficacy of the process and genre-based approaches in addressing writing problems of students. However, the researcher has found only a few of such studies in the Philippines (in general) and in Mindanao island (in particular).

Students' writing problems prompted the researcher to evaluate the effect of the approaches on students' writing proficiency in order to find an empirical basis as to which approach works well with CMU students. Thus, this paper explored the performance in the writing of news article of 80 students exposed to genre-based and

process-based approaches in five aspects: content, accuracy, fluency, appropriateness, and intelligibility. It also evaluated the significant difference between the pre- and post-tests of the process-based (control) and the genre-based (experimental) groups and examined the significant difference in the writing performance of the two groups.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Three popular approaches to teaching writing are the product, process, and genre-based. Product-based approach includes the following characteristics: learners imitating a specific model text, emphasising on organisation of thoughts rather than on the generation of ideas and giving more importance to the written output of an individual learner after a single draft. Process-based approach, as the name suggests, involves processes such as brainstorming or generating ideas, class or group activity, organising thoughts, peer-editing, and rewriting or writing the final draft, incorporating some comments and suggestions from the teacher and other learners (Badger & White, 2000).

Of these aforesaid approaches, genre-based is known to be the most improved one (Osman, 2004). Genre-oriented approach was born in the late 1980s to supplement what the process-oriented approach failed to address. The word “genre” is used in various educational contexts to refer to the recognised convention of particular texts in certain cultures (Hammond & Derewianka, 2001).

The product, process and genre-based approaches have contributed a lot to language pedagogy in general, and to the development and enhancement of the learners’ writing skill in particular. For example, Nordin and Mohammad (2006) noted that advocates of product approach like Badger and White (2000) contend that it plays an essential role in enhancing learners’ writing skill. Similarly, proponents of the process approach claim that it has a significant influence in the teaching of writing as it values the learners and the stages of the text production (Rahman, 2011).

Furthermore, supporters of genre-based approach assert that it substantially improves students’ writing because it does not only include the teaching of the content, language, and organisation but also the social conventions laid for particular genres and the use of language for specific contexts. In this way, learners are exposed to a real world writing (Osman, 2014; Paltridge, 2000). Chaisiri (2010) also revealed the result of his research stating that genre-based approach improves the writing ability of students.

Findings of the different scholars on the efficiency of the process and genre-based approaches to teaching writing may be enriched through more studies in various learning contexts involving research participants across age groups.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the principles promoted by Genre Theory and Noticing

Hypothesis. Genre theory is based on the notion that a certain convention characterises a discourse agreed upon by a particular community. It is anchored on the concept of scaffolding championed by the Russian psychologist Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky and American educational psychologist Jerome Seymour Bruner. In this study, Genre theory is used as the basis in teaching students the conventions of news article such as using present tense in the headline and past tense in the body, following appropriate lead, citing quoted lines and others (Elashri, 2013).

Noticing Hypothesis, Richard Schmidt's SLA perspective, is based on the notion that the explicit teaching of the linguistic features heightens learners' awareness on the aspects taught which will be processed in order to facilitate learning (Schmidt, 2010). Ellis (1997) noted that noticing is a prerequisite to learning.

Noticing Hypothesis provides a basis for lexical awareness-raising exercises at a discourse level and justifies the claim that teaching conventional patterns of the news report such as the content, text structure/organisation, verb tense, voice, and lexical items will improve learners' ability to produce the same genre. Exposure to the move structure of the news articles, would help students in their written output in terms of content, accuracy, fluency, appropriateness and intelligibility.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study, which used the quasi-experimental design, was participated

by 80 first-year Bachelor of Science in Education students who majored in English with age range of 16-19. Both genders were represented in the study. They were enrolled in English 12 (Writing in the Discipline) class run by a researcher at Central Mindanao University, Musuan, Maramag, Bukidnon, Philippines. These students were grouped into two according to their original block section: 36 for the control and 44 for the experimental. In addition, the study utilised Levene's test to check the homogeneity of variances. It also used t-test for independent samples and t-test for paired samples for data analysis.

The study used two materials. The teacher made checklist and a rubric that were pilot-tested with a group of students who had similar characteristics with the respondents. The content of these materials was later revised based on student feedback.

Teacher-made matrix (Appendix 1) was used to evaluate news articles focusing on the title, verb tense, voice, information provided in the lead/introductory and succeeding paragraphs, intended audience, purpose, context/situation, language used (informal/formal), and tone. The content of the matrix was based on the linguistic features inherent to news articles as outlined by Itule and Anderson (2006). Writing rubric (Appendix 2) which the researcher adapted from Paltridge (1992 as cited in Brown, 2001) was originally developed by the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). It was used to evaluate the students' news articles based on the linguistic features such as

content (ideas and arguments); accuracy in terms of use of cohesive devices and lexical, grammatical, and relational patterns; fluency; appropriateness; and intelligibility. Scoring ranged from 0 to 5 for each aspect (0 for lowest and 5 for highest point).

Furthermore, this study involved activities for the control group (process-based): pretest, text analysis, presentation of result of text analysis, comparison and contrast of three news articles (local, national, and international) but no awareness raising exercises on the text structure, and post-test. In the pretest, students were asked to write a news article. Then, they were grouped and instructed to analyse local, national, and international news articles using teacher made checklist. They then presented their group outputs and feedback was given. After that, students (as a group) were required to write collaboratively a news article. During the writing process, the students did the prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. They also received feedback from their teacher and from their fellow students. As soon as students were ready for an individual writing task, a post test was conducted where they improved their pretest outputs which were rated using the writing rubric modified by the researcher.

For the experimental group (genre-based), the learners did the same activities/processes. The only distinct aspect of the genre-oriented instruction was the consciousness-raising exercises. For example, in the text analysis the content (lead: 5Ws and 1H), verb tense (title/

headline and body), voice, verbal deadwood, and other linguistic aspects inherent to news articles were taught explicitly (through lecture-discussion, genre analysis, and workshop with explicit feedback/error correction from teacher and peers). The students were given the teacher-made checklist (Appendix 2) to guide them in the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Research Question 1*

What is the performance of the students exposed to Genre-based and Process-based approaches in five aspects: content, accuracy, fluency, appropriateness, and intelligibility?

Table 1 shows content of the news articles of 27 (75%) students exposed to the process-based approach (control group) showed little apparent coherence and 9 (25%) demonstrated a limited range of ideas in the pre-test. This means that readers would have difficulty following students' work because only a few ideas were expressed with no apparent development in content. In the post-test, the works of 32 (89%) students revealed inadequate ideas while only 4 (11%) illustrated a moderate development although supporting details were still limited. This suggests that there is a little development in the content but details remained incoherent.

In addition, the content of the news articles of 16 (36%) students exposed to genre-based approach lacked unity; the work of 28 (64%) students revealed limited

ideas in the pre-test. In the post-test, works of 36 (82%) students contained limited information while 8 (18%) of them showed a coherent arrangement of details but they still lacked supporting ideas.

Result of this study is similar to the findings of Wu, Lee, Jih, and Chuo (2006) indicating that feedback and revisions significantly improved the content of students' written output. It is also consistent with the result of Pan's study (2000, as cited in Lin, 2010) showing the efficacy of GBI

and process-based approaches to teaching writing because they have helped heighten learners' familiarity with the structure and conventions of the particular genre and improved their writing in terms content and organisation.

Both approaches, to a little extent, helped improve the content of students' news articles in terms of purpose and relevance of ideas expressed. However, there was not much difference in the performance of the control and experimental

TABLE 1  
Students' Performance in the Pre-test and Post-test for Content (N=80)

Qualitative Description	Processed-based (N=36)		Genre-based (N=44)	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Cannot write in English at all				
Evidence of few ideas with no apparent development. Little apparent coherence to the text.	27		16	
Limited range of ideas expressed.  Development may be restricted and often incomplete or unclear. Information is not arranged coherently	9	32	28	36
Moderate range of ideas expressed.  Topic development is present, but may still lack some detail and supporting statements. Information is generally arranged coherently.		4		8
Good range and progression of ideas expressed and coherently arranged, although there may still be isolated problems. Ideas and evidence are relevant, but more detail may still be desirable.				
Good range and progression of ideas expressed and coherently arranged, although there may still be isolated problems. Ideas and evidence are relevant, but more detail may still be desirable.				

groups pertaining to content. This could be attributed to the number of revision attempts. After all, writing is developed through time with sufficient writing exercises. The process of prewriting, writing, and rewriting consequently leads to the improvement of the content (Nordin & Mohammad, 2006).

Table 2 shows the pretest of the 32 (89%) students who were exposed to the process-based approach; the results

display students' inadequate knowledge of linguistic, discourse convention, style, use of punctuation, spelling, verb tense, voice, and use of cohesive devices. Similarly, 42 (95%) of the students who were exposed to genre-based approach showed the same inadequate knowledge for accuracy in the pre-test. However, in the post-test, 36 (82%) students had improved their performance in terms of accuracy. They were already

TABLE 2  
Student Performance in the Pre-test and Post-test for Accuracy (N=80)

Qualitative Description	Processed-based (N=36)		Genre-based (N=44)	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Cannot write in English at all				
Very limited grasp of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, and style. Little grasp of the use of punctuation, spelling, verb tense, voice, and use of cohesive devices.	32	22	42	
Limited grasp of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, style, use of punctuation, spelling, verb tenses, voice, cohesive devices	4	14	2	36
Moderate grasp of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, style, use of punctuation, spelling, verb tenses, voice, cohesive devices enabling the expression of broader range of meanings and relationships between those meanings. Occasional faults in punctuation, spelling, verb tense, and use of cohesive devices				8
Competent grasp of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, style, although problems may still occur with the use of punctuation, spelling, verb tenses, voice, cohesive devices. Relationship within and between propositions is generally well-managed.				

conscious about the writing conventions for news articles.

In the post-test, there were improvements in the spelling, use of punctuation marks and grammar. However, accuracy in terms of use of the simple past form of the verb, avoidance of the use of verbal deadwoods, use of active voice, adherence to the principle of conciseness, observance of inverted pyramid structure (writing the most important details first like what, who, where, when, and why) and others remained a problem.

This result is in agreement with the findings of Djiwandono (2011) who discovered consciousness-raising technique with emphasis on the linguistic/grammatical aspects of the text significantly improved students' skill in writing their ideas following the accurate rhetorical moves or text conventions. Similarly, Nueva (2013) found that genre-based intervention programme had improved students' use of verb tense, voice, and rhetorical moves set for news articles.

The result implies that students who were exposed to genre-based approach performed better than those exposed to process-based approach.

Table 3 reveals that in the pre-test, majority or 31 (86%) of the students exposed to process-based approach and 34 (77%) of those exposed to genre-based approach wrote very short texts which were composed of incoherent ideas and some of them were difficult to follow because the words, phrases, and sentences were not strung together neatly.

In the post-test, only 19 (53%) in the control group while 40 (87%) in the experimental group showed improvement in terms of fluency. There were four (9%) respondents who wrote with moderate level of subtlety and flexibility. The findings show positive development in terms of vocabulary and flexibility.

The results show that although both approaches helped improve students' fluency, the experimental group performed better. Findings are consistent with the study conducted by Nueva (2013) who noted that consciousness-raising activities and scaffolding helped enhance students' confidence in writing news articles which, in turn, also improved their writing fluency.

The results further implied that students showed improvement in writing but they had not reached the desired competence for writing news articles.

Table 4 shows that in the pre-test, majority or 32 (89%) of the students in the control group and 40 (91%) of those in the experimental group utilised language that is not appropriate for news article such as the use of verbal deadwood, contraction, very long sentences, passive voice instead of active, non-observance of inverted pyramid.

In the post-test, only 3 (8%) in the control group while 39 (87%) in the experimental group showed significant improvement in their writing in terms of appropriateness. The results implied that the experimental group performed better as a consequence of the consciousness-raising activities conducted in the classroom.

The findings or results of this study is

consistent with Lin (2010)'s who showed the performance of respondents exposed to genre-based instruction had significantly improved in the post-test in terms of text organisation, use of discourse relational signals, and correct and appropriate use of linguistic aspects.

Three students (8%) in the control group used language that was appropriate to news report in the post-test. In an interview, it was found that these students had some experience in journalism when they were in high school. This suggests that awareness of how a text is formed leads to a well-structured text.

Table 5 reveals that in the pre-test, majority or 20 (56%) of the students in the control group and 40 (91%) of those in the experimental group could express only very simple meanings and the readers would spend some time to digest the intended message.

In the post-test, 32 (89%) in the control group while 44 (100%) in the experimental group showed significant improvement in writing in terms of intelligibility. Result of this study is consistent with the findings of Nueva (20013) who revealed that explicit feedback and revision consequently improved students' written outputs.

TABLE 3  
Students' Performance in the Pre-test and Post-test for Fluency (N=80)

Qualitative Description	Processed-based (N=36)		Genre-based (N=44)	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Cannot write in English at all				
Isolated words or short stock phrases only. Very short text.	31	17	34	
Texts maybe simple, showing little development. Limited structures and vocabulary. Little subtlety and flexibility	5	19	10	40
Texts show increased development.				4
Writes with a fair range and variety of language. Moderate level of subtlety and flexibility.				
Can generally write spontaneously the required genre. Competent use of a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Competent level of subtlety and flexibility.				
Writes well the required genre and on matters relevant to specific genres. Good range of grammatical structures and vocabulary, subtlety, and flexibility.				

TABLE 4  
Student Performance in the Pre-test and Post-test for Appropriateness

Qualitative Description	Processed-based (N=36)		Genre-based (N=44)	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Cannot write in English at all				
Use of language (including lay-out) is minimally appropriate to text type, function, and communicative goal.	32	25	40	
Use of language is generally appropriate to function, text type, and communicative goal within a limited range of text types.	4	3	4	39
Lay-out is generally appropriate to text type.				
Use of language is generally appropriate to function, text type, and communicative goal within a moderate range of text types.		8		5
Lay-out is generally appropriate to text type				

TABLE 5  
Students' Performance in the Pre-test and Post-test for Intelligibility

Qualitative Description	Processed-based (N=36)		Genre-based (N=44)	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Cannot write in English at all				
Can convey only very simple meanings. Concentration and constant verification necessary on the part of the reader	20		40	
Can convey basic meanings, although with some difficulty	16	32	4	
Broadly able to convey meanings, although errors can interfere with communication		4		44
Communicates meanings effectively. Only occasional interference due to errors.				
Communicates meanings comprehensively and effectively; qualified intelligibility in specific genres. Can generally be understood without any difficulty.				

The results indicate that both approaches improved students' writing in terms of intelligibility as a consequence of the scaffolding, peer editing, and revising activities in the class. Sufficient input such as feedback from the teacher and other students would likely result in an improved written output (Wei, 2013).

#### *Research Question 2*

Is there a significant difference between the pre- and post- tests of the process-based and the genre-based groups in the five aspects?

Table 6 shows the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students exposed to the process-based and genre-based approaches in five aspects: content, accuracy, fluency, appropriateness, and intelligibility which had significant difference with each p-value that is equal or less than 5%.

Students who were exposed to both process-based and genre-based approaches performed better in the post-test. This result is consistent with the findings of Foo (2007) who found that learners who were exposed to process and genre-based approaches

had expressed their ideas in writing more efficiently than those exposed to product approach.

In addition, learners who received genre-based approach had higher mean difference in the pre- and post-tests particularly in accuracy and appropriateness. This result concurs with the previous study of Nueva (2013) where student awareness about the inherent linguistic convention of news report was heightened (manifested in their written output) after the genre-based intervention programme.

#### *Research Question 3*

Is there a significant difference between the writing performance of the control and experimental groups?

Table 7 shows the writing performance of students with a group mean of 13.28 for those exposed to process-based approach and 15.22 for genre-based approach. This figure implies that students in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group.

TABLE 6  
Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Respondents Exposed to Two Approaches

	Process-based (Control)				Genre-based (Experimental)			
	Pre	Post	t-value	p-value	Pre	Post	t-value	p-value
Content	2.25	3.11	14.28	.00**	2.63	3.18	7.18	.00**
Accuracy	2.05	2.17	2.09	.04*	2.00	2.81	13.91	.00**
Fluency	2.14	2.71	6.73	.00**	2.22	3.02	8.88	.00**
Appropriateness	2.05	2.25	2.91	.01**	2.02	2.88	16.50	.00**
Intelligibility	2.45	3.11	8.07	.00**	2.63	3.20	6.42	.00**
Total	10.97	13.28	13.78	.00**	11.54	15.22	25.46	.00**

\* significant at 5% ( $p \leq .05$ )

\*\* significant at 1% ( $p \leq .01$ )

**TABLE 7**  
Writing Performance of Students Exposed to Process-based and Genre- based Approaches

Approaches		Mean	Standard Deviation
Process-based	(control)	13.28	2.02
Genre-based	(experimental)	15.22	1.05

The results are similar to the findings of Chaisiri (2010) who found that genre-based approach improved the writing ability of the students. However, it is contrary to the findings of Hashemnezhad and Hashemnezhad (2012) who discovered that students who were exposed to post-process approach (genre-oriented) did not demonstrate a significant advantage over those who received process-oriented approach. Their study, however, was focused on the EFL context while the present study is within the ESL setting which could be a reason for such discrepancy.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data of the study, three conclusions were drawn. First, both process-based (control) and genre-based (experimental) approaches help improve students' writing of news articles in five aspects: content, accuracy, fluency, appropriateness and intelligibility. However, students in the experimental group obtained higher group means which imply better performance than those in the control group especially in terms of accuracy and appropriateness. Second, there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests of the control and experimental groups. Third, there is a significant

difference in the writing performance of the two groups specifically in terms of accuracy and appropriateness. This implies that in the context of learner-participants, genre-based approach to teaching writing helps enhance the writing skills of students more effectively than the process-based approach. This is a consequence of explicit teaching of the linguistic features inherent to news articles.

This study focused on the teaching of news articles in an ESL context. To validate further its findings, more studies on evaluating the effectiveness of genre-based approach may be conducted in another ESL or EFL setting focusing on other genres and allotting longer period for intervention (activities). The results could be used to justify the adoption of the approach in the teaching of writing.

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## APPENDIX 1

### TEACHER-MADE MATRIX

	Local	National	Foreign
Title			
Verb tense			
Title			
Body			
Voice (active/passive)			
Information provided in the lead/introductory paragraph	Who: What: When: Where: Why: How:		
Details provided	2 <sup>nd</sup> Paragraph:  3 <sup>rd</sup> :  4 <sup>th</sup> :  5 <sup>th</sup> :		
Intended audience			
Purpose			
Context/Situation			
Language (formal/informal)			
Tone			
Other observations			

## APPENDIX 2

	Overall Description	Content (Ideas and argument)	Accuracy (Lexical, grammatical, text structure/pattern, style)	Fluency (Ability to use language/words/sentences to express ideas spontaneously)	Appropriateness (Use of language specific to genre/text type)	Intelligibility (Ability to convey ideas in a more understandable way)
0	Cannot Write in English at all					
1	Intermittent writer. Very difficult to follow.	Evidence of few ideas with no apparent development. Little apparent coherence to the text.	Very limited grasp of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, and style. Little grasp of the use of punctuation, spelling, verb tense, voice, and use of cohesive devices.	Isolated words or short stock phrases only. Very short text.	Use of language (including lay-out) minimally appropriate to text type, function, and communicative goal.	Can convey only very simple meanings. Concentration and constant verification necessary on the part of the reader.
2	Limited writer. Rather difficult to follow.		Limited grasp of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, style, use of punctuation, spelling, verb tense, voice, and use of cohesive devices.	Texts maybe simple, showing little development. Limited structures and vocabulary. Little subtlety and flexibility.	Use of language generally appropriate to function, text type, and communicative goal within a limited range of text types. Lay-out generally appropriate to text type.	Can convey basic meanings, although with some difficulty.
3	Moderate writer. Fairly easy to read and understand	Moderate range of ideas expressed. Topic development is present, but may still lack some detail and supporting statements. Information is generally arranged coherently	Moderate grasp of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, style, use of punctuation, spelling, verb tense, voice, and use of cohesive devices enabling the expression of broader range of meanings and relationships between those meanings. Occasional faults in punctuation, spelling, verb tense, voice, and use of cohesive devices.	Texts show increased development. Writes with a fair range and variety of language. Moderate level of subtlety and flexibility.	Use of language generally appropriate to function, text type, and communicative goal within a moderate range of text types. Lay-out appropriate to text type. Textual organization and lay-out generally appropriate to text type.	Broadly able to convey meanings, although errors can interfere with communication.

## APPENDIX 2 (*continue*)

4	Competent writer. Easy to read from start to finish. Text-generally well-organized.	Good range and progression of ideas expressed and coherently arranged, although there may still be isolated problems. Ideas and evidence are relevant, but more detail may still be desirable.	Competent grasp of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, and style, although problems may still occur with the use of punctuation, spelling, verb tense, voice, and use of cohesive devices. Relationship within and between propositions generally well-managed.	Can generally write spontaneously on general topics. Competent use of a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Competent level of subtlety and flexibility.
5	Good writer. Can write well within general and own purpose areas. Able to produce organized, coherent, and cohesive discourse.	Good writer. Can write well within general and specific genres. Able to write organized, coherent, and cohesive discourse.	Confident and generally accurate use of lexical, grammatical, textual/relational patterns, and style, punctuation, spelling, verb tense, voice, and use of cohesive devices. Relationship within and between propositions generally well-managed.	Writes well on general topics and on matters relevant to specific genres. Good range of grammatical structures and vocabulary, subtlety, and flexibility.

Adapted from Paltridge (1992)

## Taken for a Ride: Students' Coping Strategies for Free-Riding in Group Work

Priscilla Shak

*Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Jalan UMS, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

Group work, when effectively implemented, fosters a close bond and camaraderie among group members. It makes group tasks less overwhelming and even promotes greater work quality. However, if it is badly implemented, it may lead to discord and arguments among students within a group. Group work encompasses various areas of English language teaching and learning, hence, free-riding is expected. While language instructors equip themselves with multiple strategies to prevent free-riding, the results of this study indicate that students too have taken this in stride and come to accept and even expect free-riding in group work. Through interviews, this study gleans student perception on free-riding and reveals that despite their awareness of the manifestation and pitfalls of free-riding, students appreciate the group work's aptitude towards producing a better quality work. Students also revealed various coping strategies for tackling and prevent free-riding in group work.

*Keywords:* Free-riding, coping strategies, group work

### INTRODUCTION

Hailed as one of the most effective classroom strategies in promoting interaction and collaboration, group work has long been recognised in the teaching and learning of English. When implemented diligently, the benefits of group work are manifold

and extend way beyond the classroom and into future workplaces. As Sheppard and Taylor (1999) eloquently put it "Many human endeavours cannot be accomplished individually, requiring instead that people combine their efforts towards a common goal" (p. 1147).

Nevertheless, despite meticulous planning and preparation on the part of language instructors, they are often plagued by problems of free-riding in group work. According to Börjesson *et al.* (2013), free-

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*E-mail addresses:*

pshak@ums.edu.my, priscillashak@gmail.com (Priscilla Shak)

riding “occurs when one or several members of a group contribute so little to a group project that if the same grade is given to all members, the grade would be misleading and unfair” (p. 1). This highlights the inequality and misappropriation of marks should free-riding occur in group work.

Previous studies have documented incidences of free-riding and highlighted instructors’ and students’ complaints (Burdett, 2003; Li & Campbell, 2008; Davies, 2009; Börjesson *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, what is most bothersome about free-riding is that student grades may not be reflective of, or equal to, the effort and time they have put into a group task. Good students may have to shoulder more responsibilities of group tasks as they are seen as more capable and thus relied upon by other group members. Weaker students, on the other hand, resort to their survival instinct and free-ride in order to pass a course or in the hope of scoring better.

Unfortunately until today, there is no fail-safe way to prevent free-riding and this has been a major concern among language practitioners as they strive to be as fair and as objective as possible in their assessment of students’ group work. Realistically, it is quite impossible to eradicate free-riding as there are many variables that affect the outcome of any group work. For this reason, some students are wary of group work as they are sometimes required to participate in group work against their wishes or despite their preferences.

In view of the various considerations and intricacies in employing group work in

the language classroom, the current study is significant in that it explores strategies that students employ when faced with free-riding so that similar techniques could be conveyed to future students and implemented in future group work. The term ‘coping strategies’ as used in this paper refer to the methods or steps that students take to deal with free-riding problems in their group work.

This paper reveals student views regarding the probability of the occurrence of free-riding in group work and also strategies students employ when free-riding occurs. Hence, this paper raises the following research questions:

1. What are student perceptions regarding the probability of free-riding occurring in group work?
2. What are the strategies employed by students to cope with the occurrences of free-riding in group work?

In Universiti Malaysia Sabah, the UB00702 English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) course offered by the Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning requires students to participate in a group work throughout the 14 week duration of the course. The main objective for the inclusion of the group work in the course is to simulate workplace settings which often require team effort and encourage camaraderie among group members. Additionally, it aims to promote active interaction among team members in order to help improve language and communication of learners.

In this study, each student was assigned to work in a group of four to five at the beginning of the semester to undertake a group project throughout the semester. No specific group formation procedure was enforced and students were allowed to choose their own group members. This was in order to allow them to work with like-minded members, those who shared same or similar class schedules, and members whom they were most comfortable with, to promote a more conducive group-work environment for all students. The only exception to this was students who registered late and thus, assigned randomly to particular groups consisting of fewer members by the class instructor. Each group was allowed to determine its project title and related content.

It should be noted that most of the EOP students had registered for the course later than anticipated (normally semester 4 of their study in the university) due to various reasons including: repeating lower levels of pre-requisite English courses due to failures or obtaining low CGPA in the previous semesters. Consequently, most of these students are considered to have lower proficiency in English or are academically weak although this may not necessarily be the case. Nevertheless, after taking the EOP course for the semester, these students would use this group work experience to respond to the interview questions for this research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies have supported the use of group work in the English language teaching and learning classrooms and researchers have documented the successful use of group work (Sheppard & Stoller, 1995; Thomas, 2000; Holst, 2003; Beckett & Slater, 2005; Shaaban, 2005). Proponents of group work maintain that collaborative team work as present in group work leads to heightened communication skills that lead to greater group performance and ultimately better end products (Burdett, 2003; Oakley *et al.* 2004).

Advocates of student-centred collaborative learning counsel that meticulous planning is vital for classroom instructors before assigning any group work. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, none has been able to give a fool-proof method of completely eliminating free-riding. Free-riding usually occurs when students attempt to evade work or their duties, and instead, depend on other members of the group to complete a group task. To complicate matters, it is usually difficult for instructors to identify free-riders. As a consequence, marks awarded for group work and to the students may not be fair (Gajendran *et al.* 2004; Davies, 2009).

Documented widely in social, economic and educational research literature, the problem of free riding occurs when a member of the group benefits from the collective group's effort by contributing minimally. It is also identified as a form of 'social loafing' (Sheppard, 1993; Morris & Hayes, 1997; De Vita, 2001; Watkins,

2005). In cases where free-riding takes place, “students face conflicting demands between altruism and self-interest” (Davies, 2009, p. 563). Torn between their desire to help and unwillingness to become scapegoats due to their teammates’ lack of performance, some students inadvertently take up the responsibilities of the group tasks voluntarily, either out of genuine desire to help or impress others (Watkins, 2005), or reluctantly.

Whether due to different learning experiences or other reasons, group work has generally received mixed reaction from students. In a study conducted by Maiden and Perry (2001), some students view group work as an unnecessary source of stress. In a research conducted by Burdett (2003), it was found that not all good students are particularly fond of group assessments as they feel they can do the work faster and achieve more by working alone. Asian students seem to be “disheartened and helpless at having to complete mandatory group assignment” (Li & Campbell, 2008). In a study, Burdett (2003) obtained university students’ perceptions of group work and reported that quantitative data revealed that 57% of the students had agreed that their group work experiences were positive 26% viewed their group work experiences as negative while the rest were impartial. In addition, previous study has also shown that group work may not necessarily be beneficial to all members of the group. Börjesson *et al.* (2013) identified the role of “the victim” within the group, who is usually the weaker student who feels

that other group members are more capable of doing a better job, and who lets the others do the work in order to get a better grade for the group. These ‘victims’ rarely learn much from the group work experience.

Nevertheless, EOP practitioners often feel that they need to include group work in the EOP course as in essence it is believed to serve the purpose of getting learners to learn to communicate, collaborate and work with groups of people to attain a mutual gain. Similarly, studies have shown that most students view group work as a good way to improve work quality, to learn how to work in a group and to reduce workload as the task can be done with the help of others (Ford & Morice, 2003; Gajendran *et al.*, 2004; Davies, 2009; Shak, 2010).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data for this study was gathered qualitatively from individual interviews with respondents based on convenience sampling where respondents were made up of students who had agreed to be interviewed and to participate in the research. A total of 16 second year students, aged between 21 to 22 years old, were the respondents in this research. Out of the 16 respondents, 14 were Malaysian students while two (2) were international students from China. The respondents included nine (9) Malays, four (4) Kadazandusun, one (1) Iban, and two (2) Chinese nationals from China.

Each interview session was guided by a set of semi-structured interview questions and was conducted at the end of the EOP course. Each respondent was required to

answer seven (7) interview questions on the common problems in group work, the frequency of free-riding in group work, student perception towards group work and strategies that they employed to overcome free-riding problems in their group work. The interview sessions lasted between 5 and 14 minutes. In total, the interviews yielded 140 minutes 32 seconds of recorded data.

Prior to the interview, each respondent was given approximately 15 minutes to have a preview of the interview questions. The questions were written in English and had a Bahasa Malaysia translation. The respondents were allowed to answer the interview questions in either English, Bahasa Malaysia or bilingually. Out of 16 respondents, four (4) respondents chose to answer the interview questions in English, six (6) chose to answer in Bahasa Malaysia, while the remaining six (6) answered in both languages, alternating between English and Bahasa Malaysia.

The interview sessions were transcribed in both English and Bahasa Malaysia. The responses were then coded based on emerging themes and later categorised and grouped accordingly. Where relevant and significant, the number of total comments is provided in the results and discussion section. All the translation in this study was undertaken by the author and verified by an English language lecturer whose native language is Bahasa Malaysia. A listing of all original quotes in Bahasa Malaysia is attached in the appendix.

Respondents were encouraged to provide their responses based on the

group work they had participated in while completing the UB00702 EOP course. The sharing, recommendations and suggestions given in the interviews were based on, and included the respondents' overall experiences in participating in group work and the free-riding issues they had faced.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Student perceptions regarding the probability of free-riding occurring in group work*

Data collected from the respondents' feedback in this study indicated that 11 out of 16 respondents perceived free-riding as a very common phenomenon in group work. One respondent expressed that

*there are definitely nine or eight out of ten cases of free-riding in group work.<sup>1</sup> (Respondent 6)*

While another respondent said that

*each one [sic] (group work) must have problem.... Err...this thing about attitude I think... responsibility about work about group not have [sic]... one member [sic] the best and one will definitely free-ride.<sup>2</sup> (Respondent 13)*

Most of the respondents were of the opinion that group work was very susceptible to incidences of free-riding.

Nevertheless, one respondent who commented that free-riding seldom occurred reasoned that free-riding may take place because;

*sometimes... maybe they listen to our opinion, but they don't have own opinion.* (Respondent 16)

it justifies that some students may have appeared to free-ride simply because they did not have any opinions, or did not share opinions regarding the subject. It is possible that free-riding students may be weak and therefore could not contribute to the discussion significantly.

As highlighted in previous studies by Börjesson *et al.* (2013) and Davies (2009), the occurrence of free-riding in group work is quite rampant. In the classroom, the prevalence of group work has brought about the increasing instances of free-riding. In turn, students begin to view free-riding as a normal occurrence rather than something unexpected. Most students it seems take it for granted that group work entails having to deal with free-riders among them. This is supported by data collected from this study which indicated that most respondents agreed that free-riding is a common phenomenon in group work.

Due to the reason that most students perceive free-riding to be a common occurrence, it is therefore quite important that instructors utilising group work brief their students on how to deal with free-riding issues. By doing this, students will be able to prepare themselves better to handle potential group problems. Early warning will also help to discourage free-riding behaviour among students as they are aware that their actions will be monitored, and that

there will be repercussions. The next part of this paper will explore strategies employed by students to deal with free-riders in their group work.

*Strategies employed by students to cope with the occurrences of free-riding in group work*

### i. Meting out punishment

Data showed that a majority of the respondents agreed that some form of punishment or penalty should be imposed on free-riders.

*In order to make she [sic] realise... there should be a penalise [sic].*  
(Respondent 7)

This view as expressed by a respondent is supported by another who said that

*if we don't punish this person, he might continue with his habit and not cooperate. So, (we) need to teach (him) a lesson so that he is aware of his mistakes.<sup>3</sup>* (Respondent 5)

The responses indicate that respondents are in favour of meting out punishment, for instance imposing penalty on the free-rider as a deterrent. As a respondent pointed out, the free-rider

*must be punished even if the punishment is light.<sup>4</sup>* (Respondent 10)

## ii. Discuss the problem with the free-rider

Many respondents are of the opinion that meeting and discussing the issue with the free-rider is the first step to be taken when it first occurs. A respondent explained that by discussing with the free-rider, the specific problems the group faces as a result of the lack of input from him or her will enable the free-rider to reflect on his or her lack of contribution. This will hopefully prompt immediate changes and encourage the member who is lackadaisical to contribute to the team. Table 1 below shows the respondents' suggestions to discuss the problems with the free-rider:

The respondents' recommendation to discuss the problem with the free-riding member of the group is consistent with the findings of another study where Li and Campbell (2008) recommended that students should be encouraged to manage conflict between group members and clarify the responsibilities and duties of group members to tackle free-riding issues.

## iii. Inform the lecturer

Respondents when faced with free-riders in their group can also inform the lecturer of their problem. Some respondents suggested reporting free-riders to their course lecturers while one stated that he would ask the free-rider to do his or her share of work first and if ignored, will highlight the matter to the lecturer concerned. Interestingly, one respondent reported that his lecturer's reaction when informed of free-riding problem in group work is to leave it to the respondent's group members to decide on the fate of their free-riding mate. Unfortunately in this case, such a response did not help in solving the matter. These respondents' views are presented in Table 2.

A study by Ford and Morice (2003) revealed that some students kept group conflicts to themselves as they felt that the outcome would not be any better even if they informed their lecturers of the free-riding problem. Nevertheless, from the respondents' responses, highlighting free-riding issues to the lecturers had its own merit. A better way perhaps to overcome

TABLE 1  
Discuss Problems with Free-rider

Interview Extract	Respondent
<i>first, we meet and discuss... at least we work together as long as she... uh willing to... not blaming, not push [sic] them to do the work but we group work [sic] in a group again.</i>	Respondent 2
<i>we will meet and discuss as a group and inform each member of the problem... tell the person (free-rider) that he did not do his work and suggest to him how we can cooperate.<sup>5</sup></i>	Respondent 5
<i>The student who free-ride, he/she needs to be chastised... Discuss with him/her appropriately.<sup>6</sup></i>	Respondent 8

this is for the course lecturer to instruct the groups to report occurrences of free-riding earlier to avoid any further discord that may affect group performance later. In addition, students should be warned beforehand that they may need to resolve free-riding issues on their own and therefore should plan for equal work distribution.

#### **iv. Warn or threaten the free-rider**

Some respondents' coping strategies included warning and threatening the free-riders in hope of getting the latter to comply and contribute to the group's effort. It was found in this study that some respondents believed that by warning or threatening the free-riding group member, they could get that member to comply and shoulder tasks assigned to him or her. Table 3 below quotes the respondents' warnings and threats to free-riders:

Maiden and Perry (2011) documented a Viva warning approach to caution students of their shortcomings in the group work which is consistent with the findings of the present study whereby the respondents felt that there was a need to warn the perpetrator in free-riding incidences. Their study indicated that 45% of their respondents felt the need "to challenge an underperforming group member" (p. 457). This supports the findings of the present study that group members who free-ride should be warned so that they are aware that their actions will not be condoned and there will be consequences should they choose to ignore the warning.

#### **v. Monitor group work progress**

Data also revealed that one of the methods students used to cope with free-riding in group work was to ensure that they monitor their work progress. In addition

TABLE 2  
Inform the lecturer

Interview Extract	Respondent
<i>When the problem going to be [sic] serious... we should tell the lecturer with what [sic] the problem, so maybe [sic] lecturer can help.</i>	Respondent 2
<i>If he or she continue [sic] to not do the work, I will inform the lecturer.<sup>7</sup></i>	Respondent 6
<i>it is up to you whether you want to include his/her name in the group.<sup>8</sup></i>	Respondent 4
<i>so, we will have to think twice, whether or not to include his name in the group.<sup>9</sup></i>	Respondent 4

TABLE 3  
Warn or threaten the free-rider

Interview Extract	Respondent
<i>if you don't do any work, I will not put your name in this assignment. From there on, he/she will fear that if he/she relaxes, he/she will get a zero.<sup>10</sup></i>	Respondent 4
<i>If they don't come to our group discussion, scold them to warn them to solve this problem.<sup>11</sup></i>	Respondent 1
<i>I will say to him/her; if you do it, okay there'll be marks. We will all get equal marks if that's the case.<sup>12</sup></i>	Respondent 14

to that, as part of the group monitoring progress, a respondent also suggested setting specific deadlines for members to adhere to. There seems to be merit in these coping strategies because if the group work progress was closely monitored and kept on track, members of the group would most likely be on their toes during subsequent meetings. Table 4 below shows respondents' support for monitoring group work progress:

A study by Poon (2011) indicated that some students may not like the idea of having their peers assess their contributions to the group work as it may affect their friendship. Nevertheless, the suggestion or agreement to have some form of work progress monitoring may deter free-riding occurrences.

#### **vi. Ignore the problem or evade potential conflict**

Ironically, although a majority of the respondents support punishing the free-riders, for reasons of their own, some respondents choose to ignore the free-rider's lack of contribution and continue on with the group work tasks without the free-rider's cooperation or input. Data revealed some respondents were left with no choice but to complete the group task without the contribution of the free-rider for the overall benefit of the group. The data also indicated that despite the fact that respondents support penalising free-riders, they are at the same time sympathetic towards the free-riders. Table 5 below presents the extracts of some of the responses given.

TABLE 4  
Monitor group work progress

Interview Extract	Respondent
<i>we'll ask for his/her work report. Present in front of the class what he/she has done so far... see if he/she understands.<sup>13</sup></i>	Respondent 9
<i>if (we) need to submit (the assignment) this week, they must give it two days ahead.<sup>14</sup></i>	Respondent 3

TABLE 5  
Ignore the problem

Interview Extract	Respondent
<i>Let it be... this has happened before<sup>15</sup></i>	Respondent 1
<i>I just finish the work</i>	Respondent 7
<i>the solution is I'll help him to do the task for the sake of the group.<sup>16</sup></i>	Respondent 14
<i>everyone has feelings of sympathy, right? We cannot bear to see our friend not getting any marks.<sup>17</sup></i>	Respondent 4
<i>maybe we don't know his/her problem... we still have to complete it anyway. I will include his name... because I understand that he may have his own problems.<sup>18</sup></i>	Respondent 11

It can be surmised from data that some respondents ignore free-riding problems in order to avoid conflict with their group mates. It is also documented that some respondents are willing to take up additional work load as they view it as doing a favour for the group mates.

## CONCLUSION

Students were clearly aware of the perks and drawbacks of group work. They have realised that although group work may not have been ideal in many instances, the benefits of group work could not be disputed. As they juggled between social and academic commitments, they needed to draw a line between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of group members. The results of this study are significant in that these coping strategies could be disseminated to students so that they are aware of options and steps that they could take when attempting to resolve conflicts involving free-riding problems in group work. Data analysis revealed that while students saw the need for meting out punishment to their free-riding group mates, they also felt that it was necessary to weigh and consider consequences of their actions before doing so.

University students should be aware that as they step into adulthood and the working world, society would expect them to have the necessary social competence and communication skills to prepare for the workplace. Karau and Williams (1993) attested that “many of life’s most important tasks can only be accomplished in groups,

and many group tasks are collective tasks that require the pooling of individual members’ inputs” (p. 681). As expressed by one respondent,

*I prefer working in groups as it saves time and increases creativity. If every member focuses on the task assigned or given, we will have a very good outcome.<sup>19</sup>* (Respondent 12)

Therefore, participating in group work in the classroom should be viewed positively and regarded as a practice and challenge in manoeuvring future workplace situations.

White *et al.* (2007) expressed that “a continuing challenge for educators using group work is to ensure that it remains a positive learning experience for student” (p. 78). In view of the fact free-riding is bound to happen in group tasks, it is important course instructors are certain that group work is necessary, and will help students to attain course objectives. Apart from that, course instructors employing group work in the classroom should impose specific measures to ensure that all members participate equally. A clear guideline should also be in place and this information must be disseminated succinctly to avoid the issue of free-riding (Ford & Morice, 2003; Shak, 2014). Additionally, instructors can specify the necessary steps to be taken should free-riding issue rear its ugly head so that prompt actions can be taken to correct the problem before it is too late. Further recommendations on instructors’ strategies

to prevent free-riding can be found in Shak (2014).

It is recommended that in-depth studies are undertaken on the effects of the implementation of group work in the language classroom. One way to do this is through comparison and analysis of student performances between group and non-group tasks. In addition, further exploration in task distribution, peer support and motivation are also recommended for future studies.

In conclusion, the abundant benefits of group work can only be truly enjoyed when members of the team co-operate and contribute equally in the task. As a respondent aptly said, *must believe... all believe [sic]. Trust, confidence and believe is [sic] very important in group work.* (Respondent 15)

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## APPENDIX I

### LIST OF ORIGINAL INTERVIEW QUOTES

- <sup>1</sup> “Dalam sepuluh kerja berkumpulan, mesti ada sembilan atau lapan yang menumpang.”
- <sup>2</sup> “...mesti ada menumpang.”
- <sup>3</sup> “Kalau kita tidak bagi hukuman sama orang ini, mungkin dia tetap akan meneruskan sikapnya tidak berkerjasama. So kena bagi pengajaran supaya dia sedar dia punya kesilapan.”
- <sup>4</sup> “Mesti menerima hukuman biarpun hukuman tidak berat.”
- <sup>5</sup> “secara group kami akan berjumpa dan bagitau masalah setiap group ini bahawa... terus-teranglah orang ni dia tidak buat kerja dan bagi pendapat dia macam mana kita berkerjasama.”
- <sup>6</sup> “Student yang menumpang ni, dia perlu macam dibagi teguranlah... Bawa berbincang bagus-bagus.”
- <sup>7</sup> “Kalau dia masih tidak buat, saya bagitau lecturerlah.”
- <sup>8</sup> “Itu terpulang dengan awak samada kamu mahu nama dia ada dalam group ataupun tidak.”
- <sup>9</sup> “Jadi kita pun macam thinking twice, berfikir dua kali, samada kita letakkan dia dalam group atau tidak.
- <sup>10</sup> “kalau kamu tidak buat kerja, saya akan tidak letak nama kamu dalam assignment ini. Jadi dari situ dia akan rasa macam takutlah sebab mungkin jika dia rilek dia ada dapat zero.”

- <sup>11</sup> “...marah diorang bagi warning untuk selesaikan ni masalah lah.”
- <sup>12</sup> “Sia akan cakap dia, kalau kamu buat, ok ada markahlah macam tu. Kita dapat semua ratalah macam itu.”
- <sup>13</sup> “kita minta laporan kerja dia. Present depan kelas apa kerja dia setakat ini... tengok dia faham ke tidak.”
- <sup>14</sup> “Kalau minggu ni hantar, dua hari sebelum tu mesti bagilah.”
- <sup>15</sup> “biarkan sajalah... pernahlah hadapi masalah begini”
- <sup>16</sup> “Penyelesaian dia, saya bantu dia untuk membuat tugas untuk membantu kumpulan.”
- <sup>17</sup> “memang semua manusia ada rasa belas kasihan kan? Kita tidak sanggup tengok kawan kita tu dia macam tidak dapat markahlah.”
- <sup>18</sup> “Mungkin kita tidak tahu masalah dia... apa-apa pun kita kena siapkan. I will include his name... sebab saya faham mungkin ada masalahnya.”
- <sup>19</sup> “Saya lebih suka bekerja secara berkumpulan kerana itu lebih menjimatkan masa dan kreativiti kerja tu lebih banyak. Kalau setiap ahli menumpukan kerja yang disuruh atau yang dibagi oleh seseorang, kita akan dapat hasil yang memuaskanlah.”



## The Impact of English Language Proficiency on Interpersonal Interactions among Students from Different Nationalities in a Malaysian Public University

**Sarwari, A. Q.\*, Ibrahim, A. H. and Nor Ashikin, A. A.**

*Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences (CMLHS), University Malaysia Pahang,  
Lebuhraya Tun Razak, 26300 Gambang, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

English language is the main communicative means among local and international students of Malaysian universities. Thus, this study was carried out to evaluate the impact of English language proficiency (ELP) on interpersonal and intergroup interactions among students from different nationalities in a Malaysian public university. An embedded design of mixed methods with the predominant role of the quantitative method was applied to conduct this study. The quantitative method, with 220 participants from both local and international students, was used as the main method and interviews were carried out to enrich the data. The results of this study confirmed that ELP is among the main factors that affect the process of interactions among local and foreign students of Malaysian public universities. Based on the findings of this study, lack of ELP among both local and international students and their different accents and linguistic assumptions have negative impacts on the process of interactions among them.

**Keywords:** English language proficiency, interpersonal interactions, different nationalities, Malaysian universities

### INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal communication among students from different cultural backgrounds at modern higher education institutions, especially in Malaysian universities, is an important issue to be evaluated. Gathering of students from different nationalities at university campuses helps them to gain some essential skills and improve their personal

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*E-mail addresses:*

qaharesarwari@gmail.com (Sarwari, A. Q.)  
ainol@ump.edu.my (Ibrahim, A. H.)

ashikin@ump.edu.my (Nor Ashikin, A. A.)

\* Corresponding author

abilities. University time must be considered as an important period for all students to achieve their goals and to experience new contacts with people from different social backgrounds (Wade, 2008). Both local and foreign students of Malaysian universities can improve their personal competences and academic abilities through their contacts with different people. According to Lin (2011), interactions have important impacts on enabling people to learn, to recognise and to meet the requirements of the new societies. Enrolment of students from different social and cultural backgrounds with their different communicative norms and different language proficiencies at the same campus, besides its beneficial aspects, may challenge their interpersonal competence as well.

According to Reed (2008), the collegiate environments are productive and important for students to increase their skills. Yoshida *et al.* (2013) points out language skills are among the important preconditions for successful interactions among people from different cultural backgrounds. Interactions among students from different nationalities may ease the ways for them to evaluate their language proficiency and personal skills so as to shape their communicative norms based on their perceptions from their daily contacts. As asserted by Martin-Beltrán (2010), through their direct contacts, the communicators can assess the perceptions of competence and proficiency of their counterparts and interlocutors. Language proficiency is important for both the social and academic lives of students, and a good

level of ELP may help them to be happier in the workplace after their university time. Because of the essential role of English language in the labour market, many language departments established their policies which require language teachers to use the English language as their communication means when talking and interacting with students and colleagues (Froese *et al.*, 2012).

English language is the main means of communication among local and international students of Malaysian universities. Therefore, the level of ELP among students from different cultural backgrounds in Malaysian universities may affect their contacts and collaborations. At the same time, good skills in English language help students to be more successful in their daily interactions. Huang (2010) argues that students with good level of language proficiency do better when interacting with the host people for their social and academic needs. However, there are insufficient studies on the effects of ELP on the process of interactions among local and international students of Malaysian universities in the literature. Thus, this study was designed to assess the impacts of ELP on the process of interactions among local and international students of a Malaysian public university, namely, Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP).

## THEORETICAL SUPPORT

The theory which directs this study is the Contact Theory of Allport (1954). The Contact Theory is one of the leading theories

on intergroup interactions and has led many studies and research, and recognised as an important framework for strategies on contacts among different groups for more than 50 years (Aidoo, 2012). The Contact Theory grabbed the attention of many researchers, scholars and policymakers when the Supreme Court of the United States designed the innovative act of Brown V. Board of Education for integration under its guidance. The Contact Theory was introduced by Allport in his famous book, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Dovidio *et al.* 2003).

Allport (1954) stated his apprehensions and views about the successful and beneficial interactions and contacts among people from different backgrounds who are facing conflicts and prejudice in the societies. Based on his statements, interaction among different groups begins with the *sheer contact* stage, which leads into the *competition* stage as a third step continues into the *accommodation* stage, and finally the process reaches the *assimilation* stage. For a successful intergroup interaction to happen, Allport (1954) proposed four preconditions: the existence of equal ranks, common goals among communicators, intergroup collaborations, and the existence of formal supports (law, customs, environment and authorities).

Besides Allport's proposed conditions for the intergroup contacts, some other scholars worked on the Contact Theory and introduced some steps and preconditions for successful contacts among the different people. Pettigrew (1998) introduced three

new preconditions for the Contact Theory to ease the ways for fruitful intergroup contacts among people from the different groups and social backgrounds. His first proposed condition is the existence of the individualised and de-categorised situation, where threats and anxiety may differentiate acts and interactions of the individual communicators. The second proposed condition is the impacts of primary interactions among people on a remarkable categorisation which probably raise the positive attitudes of the people. The third precondition which was proposed by Pettigrew (1998) is the continuation of interpersonal and intergroup contacts among the people based on their positive attitudes which pave the ways for the awareness of re-categorisation among the people.

The steps and preconditions, which were introduced through the above mentioned scholars, are all supportive of the process of interactions among students from different social and cultural backgrounds in a collegiate environment. As students enter universities as individuals and through their contacts with their peers from different races and nationalities, they establish their networks and assimilate and re-categorise in a new environment. Of course, as English language is the main communicative means among local and international students of Malaysian universities, the level of their ELP will affect and be affected through their daily contacts and interactions. The main goal of this study was to evaluate interpersonal interactions among local and international students of a Malaysian

public university, who belong to different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. Thus, Contact Theory which is a famous theory in intergroup interactions was used as the theoretical framework for this study. At the same time, English language is the main communicative means among students from different nationalities in Malaysian universities. The level of ELP must be considered as an important factor that affects all the four steps of the Contact Theory for the process of interactions among people from different backgrounds. The step, which is *sheer contact*, leads into *competition*, *accommodation* and finally *assimilation*. Therefore, the steps proposed by Alport (1954) through his Contact Theory are suitable to guide this study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Language proficiency is an important influencing factor on the process of interactions among students from the different nationalities. According to Tavakoli and Rakhshandehroo (2014), language proficiency refers to the level of skills that an individual can speak, write and read a language or understand the language. The direct and spoken contacts among students may help them to gain some new communicative skills and improve their language proficiency. As pointed out by Martin-Beltrán (2010), practice of language accommodation in the interpersonal setting is an implicit way of involving students in group discussions. It is also essential to evaluate the ways that help students to construct their language proficiency

in the collegiate environment. Through better understanding of the procedures and development of proficiency among people, educators will be able to focus on the ways that improve the context of language learning (Martin-Beltrán, 2010).

Based on the arguments of previous researchers, the level of ELP has direct and important impacts on the process of interactions among people from different nationalities. Huang (2010) conducted a study on the role of media use and interpersonal communication among international students at the University of Buffalo, State University of New York. Based on his findings, he argued that foreign students with self-reliance of their language proficiency during their interactions with host people assume that they do better in the academic and social affairs (Huang, 2010). In a qualitative study of cultural experiences of Arab and American students of American colleges, Abdulla (2008) also pointed out that language is believed to be an obstacle for people, including the ones who are able to speak the different languages. Different implications and cultural usage of language exist among speakers and that might cause misinterpretations. Different cultural backgrounds are also known as restrictive of deepness of friendships among different cultures. Because feelings of how to spend free times, life priorities or even general themes of interests were different from Americans to Arabs (Abdulla, 2008).

Some personal characteristics like shyness may also affect the process of improvement of ELP among students.

As argued by Fallah (2014), shyness can affect the process of English language learning and also the self-confidence and motivations of the learners significantly. However, continuation of involvements in interactions may help students to improve the level of their ELP. At the same time, the direct communication and language proficiency have mutual effects on each other and involvements in interactions may improve both the language proficiency and communication skills of the communicators. Fallah (2014) stated that, from the beginning of focusing on the conversational and communicative contexts to the learning process of the second language, communication has been considered as an essential procedure and an important aim for learning the second language.

At the same time, some previous researchers found close relationships between ELP and communication among people from different cultures who use English language as the means of their interactions. From a study on the relationships between academic language and academic communication, Haneda (2014) found that academic language (English) is an essential requirement among students for their academic interactions that enable them to achieve their personal, social and intellectual goals. Uzun (2014), based on the findings of a study on the role of English language in the technology mediated intercultural interactions in the practical environments, argued that besides the internet, communicative technology and

cultural information, English language is among the important elements that enable people to have successful intercultural communication. Moreover, Jamshidnejad (2011), based on the results of a study on practical approach of interaction strategies, pointed out that individuals would will have numerous achievements in communication and language information through the use of interaction strategies and teamwork. Based on the assertions and arguments of previous researchers, ELP is among the main factors influencing interactions among communicators from the different nationalities who use English language as the means of their contacts. Their interactions also help them to improve the level of their ELP.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

An embedded design of mixed methods was conducted to carry out this study. The predominant method for this study was the quantitative survey with the participation of 220 from both local and international students of UMP. The embedded design is one of the main classifications of the mixed methods in which a secondary data set plays the supportive role for the main or primary data in a study (Creswell & Palo Clark, 2007). Qualitative interviews were also conducted to further validate the information. The quantitative data collection procedure was applied through the direct survey by distribution of the questionnaires. All participants of the quantitative survey were chosen based on the convenience

sampling procedure. The quantitative data were mostly collected from the places like hostel, library, cafeteria and classrooms, where both local and international students of UMP gather and interact. An interview invitation note was added in the introduction section of the quantitative questionnaire. Through that invitation note, the participants of the quantitative survey were asked to leave contact details in case of their agreements to be participated in the qualitative section as well. All interviewees of this study were chosen based on their own agreements through the quantitative questionnaire. The qualitative data were collected through interviews with 12 participants from Malaysian and foreign students of UMP (6 local and 6 international students). All interviews were done directly and audiotaped.

The main instrument for the quantitative method of this study was the questionnaire. The quantitative instrument was prepared based on Likert's scale and 12 open-ended interview questions were designed for the qualitative section of this study. The instruments were prepared by the researchers of this study with reference to the questionnaires and instruments of some previous works (e.g., Izumi, 2010; Gao, 2011; Aidoo, 2012). Prior to the final data collection procedure, the questionnaire was checked and revised through conducting of a pilot study. Slavin (2007) states that pilot tests play the role of experimental runs of the research project which is carried out to test and fix the instruments. The reliability of instruments was checked through SPSS

and the Cronbach's alpha score for all items (questions) of the questionnaire was .705. The questionnaire for this section included 14 options based on the Likert's scale.

### *Participants*

A total of 220 UMP students who are Malaysian and international students participated in this study. The numbers of participants from both local and international students were chosen equally as follows: local students,  $N = 110$  ( $M = 45.63$ ,  $SD = 6.61$ ) and foreign students,  $N = 110$  ( $M = 41.75$ ,  $SD = 6.60$ ). From 220 students, the number of male participants was 147 ( $M = 42.91$ ,  $SD = 60.60$ ), while the number of female participants was 73 ( $M = 45.27$ ,  $SD = 6.63$ ). At the time of this study, all the participants were degree and postgraduate students of UMP and the vast majority of them were in the age categories of 18-22 and 23-29 as from the category of 18-22  $N = 95$  ( $M = 43.93$ ,  $SD = 5.91$ ) and the category of 23-29  $N = 87$  ( $M = 42.98$ ,  $SD = 5.96$ ). Based on the results, only 17.3% of the participants were in the age categories of 30-36 and 37+. The Malaysian participants of this study belonged to different parts and all major ethnicities in the country. The foreign participants came from 16 different countries and are from different parts of the globe, with the majority of them from Asian countries. Table 1 demonstrates the frequencies of the foreign participants of this study according to their home countries.

The quantitative and qualitative data of this study were analysed separately. The quantitative data were examined through

the essential options of SPSS, and findings of the qualitative interviews were analysed under the themes and categories based on the research-, and interview-questions.

## FINDINGS

### *Quantitative Findings*

The quantitative data were analysed through the descriptive test of SPSS. The quantitative data of this manuscript focused on the ELP level among all 220 participants of the study and its effects on their daily interpersonal interactions. Based on the descriptive results, from all 220 participants, 67.8% of them reported that they already had some direct and spoken interactions with their peers from the different nationalities and social backgrounds. Moreover, based on their responses, 32.2% of them did not experience any direct interaction with students of other nationalities and cultural backgrounds. The majority of the participants (78.2%) reported that they use English language as the means of their contacts with students from other countries. Furthermore, from all the participants, 60.1% stated that that they were able to understand almost all

parts of the conversations and messages during their interactions and talks with the students from different countries and social backgrounds. Majority of the participants (75.9%) illustrated that their social and academic needs encouraged them to focus on their English skills and interact with different people. However, from all of the participants, the self-reported ELP level of 4.5% of them was 6.0 or above, 22% of them had the ELP level of 5.0-5.5, and the ELP scores of the majority of participants, 60.5% of them were between 4.0 up to 5.0. The scores were considered based on the IELTS and UMP English Proficiency Test (EPT). The EPT test also follows the IELTS testing and scoring system. Based on the quantitative findings, students with the ELP level of 5.0 or above (either IELTS or EPT) were good in their interactions with peers of different nationalities at the UMP campus. However, students who had low levels of ELP (less than the IELTS/EPT score of 5.0) were not satisfied with their communications and interactions with peers from other nationalities.

TABLE 1  
Frequencies of international participants based on their countries

Country	Frequency	Country	Frequency
China	18	Libya	6
Indonesia	13	Nigeria	5
Iraq	13	Sudan	4
Yemen	13	Algeria	1
Afghanistan	10	Canada	1
Pakistan	9	Egypt	1
India	8	Iran	1
Bangladesh	6	Somalia	1

### *Qualitative Findings*

The qualitative findings from the interviews were analysed separately based on the research questions and answers of the participants and under the emerging themes and sub-themes. The qualitative data, as a secondary data, play a supportive role for the main data which are quantitative.

To report the results of the qualitative interviews, both the local and foreign groups of interviewees are coded as LPX and FPX as LPX (X instead of the number for the participant) for the local participants and FPX for the international participants. For example, participant LP1 means local participant number 1, and both groups are coded as: (1) LP1, a Master Malay-Malaysian student, (2) LP2, a degree Malay-Malaysian student, (3) LP3, a degree Indian-Malaysian student, (4) LP4, a degree Indian-Malaysian student, (5) LP5, a degree Malay-Malaysian student, and (6) LP6, a senior degree Chinese-Malaysian student. International interviewees are coded as: (1) FP1, a master student from Afghanistan, (2) FP2, a PhD student from India, (3) FP3, a PhD student from Algeria, (4) FP4, a senior degree student from China, (5) FP5, a degree student from Yemen, and (6) FP6, a master student from Nigeria.

Almost all of the interviewees of the qualitative section of this study pointed out the lack of ELP among both local and international students of UMP as one of the main factors which resulted in the negative effects on the process of interactions among them. For example, participant LP1 stated that “English language is the main

factor that affects our communication with international students, and both local and international students of UMP have some problems with language proficiency.” His views are supported by participant FP4, who asserted that “lack of skills in English language is major problem and prevents us to communicate successfully.” Participant FP2 pointed that “Both local and international students of UMP must develop their language proficiency, especially in English language.” They also pointed out that they should try to gain the essential skills of communication to be more successful in their interactions since the lack of language skills and speaking abilities are the main problems for the students who interact with different people. Based on the statements of the interviewees, a good level of English language proficiency helps students to have more successful interactions with students from different nationalities at the university campus.

Participant FP3 asserted that “The main factor that affect interactions among students and prevents some students to be involved in the daily contacts with the different people is lack of English language skills.” His statement is supported by the view of participants LP2 who said “My problems in English language and lack of experience on interactions with foreigners undermine my daily contacts with other international students in UMP.” Participant LP6 pointed out the use of slangs and different accents by different people as one of the main problems, “the use of different slangs by foreign students from different countries and

their different accents are among the main challenges." Finally, participant FP4 stated his personal experience, "My involvements in interactions with local students and foreign students from other countries were very helpful for me and both of my language proficiency social skills improved through this process." He also stated that "As new student when I joined the UMP, I faced different problems and I was not able to talk with other people and go to other places like Kuantan city. I was also not able to ask questions from the lecturers or discuss with my classmates, but with time and through my daily interactions with my local classmates and other students in the campus, I have managed to solve these problems." According to the views of all the participants of this section, ELP is among the main factors affecting the process of interactions among local and international students of Malaysian universities, especially UMP. The findings of the qualitative data are supportive of the quantitative results of this study.

## DISCUSSION

This study was carried out to evaluate the efficacy of English language proficiency (ELP) on the process of interpersonal and intergroup interactions among local and international students of a Malaysian public university. As argued by Martin-Beltrán (2010), understanding the way proficiency among people is developed will help the educators to advance the language learning context. English language is the main means of communication among local

and international students of Malaysian universities and also the main academic language for the higher education in the country. Besides other factors that affect interactions among students from different countries and cultural backgrounds in the Malaysian collegiate environments, the level of ELP among students was also assessed. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative data confirmed that the level of ELP among the students had direct impacts on their daily interactions and communication with students who speak different languages. The findings of this study are also supported by the results of some previous studies on related issues. English language and communications among people from different backgrounds have direct relations. People with good levels of ELP have more successful interactions, and daily interactions among them improve the level of their ELP as well (Haneda, 2014; Uzun, 2014; Jamshidinejad, 2011).

According to both the quantitative and the qualitative results, the level of their ELP influences the quality and frequency of interpersonal communication among students from the different nationalities on the university campus. Based on the quantitative results, students who achieved a good level of ELP reported that they were satisfied and able to understand most of the messages and conversations during their interactions with other students using English language as the means of their communication. At the same time, the level of ELP among university students must be counted as an essential part of their

professional life as well. This argument is supported by Froese *et al.* (2012), who pointed out that because of the important role of English language in the market, the different language institutions under the particular regulations require instructors to use English language when interacting with their students and co-workers.

The results of this study confirmed that a good level of ELP among students from different nationalities helps them to have more successful contacts. Huang (2010) pointed out that international students with better language abilities might be more successful in their social and academic affairs. One of the main social issues for the foreign students in the host country is to have a good level of interactions with the local people and their language proficiency will enable them to do so. The modern multicultural university environment asks the students who stay and study in these locations to be involved in interactions with their peers from various social backgrounds. University time is also an important opportunity for students to improve their skills through their daily contacts and talks with different people, including the level of their ELP. Wade (2008) also focuses on the positive effects of the university environment on the personal life and social skills of the students.

Furthermore, according to the results of this study, the lack of ELP among both local and international students is the main factor that has negative effects on the process of their interpersonal and intergroup interactions. However, daily interactions

among students from the different nationalities and social backgrounds have positive effects on their level of ELP. Based on the qualitative results, through their interpersonal interactions with different people, students improved their language skills and also become familiar with the different slangs and accents which are used by the people of different countries. In the qualitative data, some local participants pointed out the use of slangs and different accents by foreign students as challenging factors for successful communications with them. These findings are supportive of the assertion of Abdulla (2008) who states that language is assumed as one of the main hurdles for the communicators who interact with different people, even for the people who can speak different languages. The use of different accents, synonyms and slangs by people of different countries undermines the language proficiency of non-native speakers. Almost all of the qualitative interviewees suggested that improved ELP among students as an essential requirement for conducting more successful interactions among them. They also pointed out that the lack of ELP among some of their peers as a discouraging point for their daily contacts. This issue is supportive of the assertion of Martin-Beltrán (2010) who argued that the communicators could evaluate the level of competence and proficiency of the people who are in contact with them and they could establish some new ways of communication through their awareness.

However, the main findings of this study are the positive effects of similar level of

ELP of the communicators on their contacts and also the helpful impacts of daily interactions among them on improving the level of their ELP. The argument of mutual positive effects of language proficiency and interpersonal communication between/among the different people also is supported by the findings of this study. In addition, the main findings of this study include the negative effects of the lack of ELP and the use of different accents and unfamiliar slangs in a setting where people from different countries use English language as the means of their interactions rather than their own language or the language of the host people. These findings are quite new and probably different from findings of studies in the countries where foreign students use English language as the means of their communication with the host people who are native speakers of this language. These findings may answer some questions in relation to issues and highlight the importance of ELP in the process of interactions among students of different nationalities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Students from the different countries and cultural backgrounds at modern universities of the emerging hubs of higher education, including Malaysia, use English language as the means for their daily communications. Thus, the issue of ELP and its effects on contacts and collaborations among students remain important and interesting. Future researchers should evaluate the role of ELP on both the social and academic lives

of students from different nationalities in the modern collegiate environment. They can also conduct experimental studies to evaluate the effects of ELP on the interactions among young and newly graduated employees from the different social backgrounds in a multicultural workplace. The current study was conducted in a young Malaysian public university located in a suburb area with limited number of international students. Therefore, studies conducted on the same issues at well-established universities located in urban areas with more international students and located in the cosmopolitan locations may bring different results.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study assessed the influence of English language proficiency (ELP) on the process of interpersonal interactions among local and international students of a Malaysian public university. The participation of 220 students from the different countries and cultural backgrounds enabled this study to include the views of different people in a manuscript. Based on the findings of this study, ELP was among the main factors that influenced interactions among students from the different countries. Both the quantitative and qualitative results illustrated that students with good level of ELP had more interactions with their peers and were satisfied during their interactions. The results of this study also showed that the lack of ELP had negative effects on interpersonal and intergroup interactions among the participants of this study. Based on the

participants' responses, their involvement in interpersonal communication with their peers helped them to improve their ELP level. At the same time, they mentioned the use of different accents and slangs among students from the different countries as an obstacle towards their understanding and their satisfactions when interacting with other students. However, more studies in the related issues may answer more questions and further information on the impacts of Malaysian students' language proficiency on their interpersonal and intergroup interactions with those from different cultures and countries.

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## Preference of Conventional Degrees by Educational Institutions: Two Cases from Pakistan and India

Hussain, N.<sup>1\*</sup> and Mirza, A.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Institute of Business Management, Department of Education, Korangi Creek, Karachi, Pakistan*  
<sup>2</sup>*Tolworth Girls' School, Fullers Way North, Surbiton, Greater London KT6 7LQ, United Kingdom*

### ABSTRACT

Although the number of programmes offered by distance education has increased significantly and gained global importance, research shows that there is a resistance towards distance degree holders and many employers are sceptical at the time of appointing such employees as the quality of outcome is questioned. This cold war has gone to the extent that especially the teachers earning degrees through distance are sometimes considered as second class in merit at the time of their appointment in public and private educational institutions. This paper reports on the findings of a qualitative case study research that investigated and explored the support given by employers to teachers during their study period through distance education and the perceptions of the employers towards the worth of distance education degrees. Two universities offering distance education in Pakistan and India were taken as units for investigation. Two semi-structured interview protocols were developed to collect data through three focus group interviews and five individual interviews of teachers and employers, respectively. Stufflebeam's (1983) CIPP evaluation model was adapted to analyse the data and important findings showed that the perceptions of the participants from both countries regarding the support and worth of distance degrees varied from employer to employer tilting more towards conventional degrees.

**Keywords:** Conventional degrees, distance degrees, employer perceptions, teacher perceptions, value of distance degrees

### INTRODUCTION

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*E-mail addresses:*

nasreen.hussain@iobm.edu.pk (Hussain, N.)

amirza4@tgs.rbsch.org (Mirza, A.)

\* Corresponding author

For years, distance education has had a bad reputation in terms of educational quality and research suggests that literature review spanning over many years indicates that a resistance is sensed for distance

degrees during the hiring process. It is believed that such mode of education is bureaucratic and hierarchical in nature and has a weaker academic culture than conventional universities. Todd and Wong (2000) stated that early 70s and 80s marked distance degrees with a stigma, as few dubious higher education institutions were involved in offering shortcut degrees to the students. A careful reading of institutional history suggests the existence of such institutes at the margins of many poorly conceived and poorly resourced schemes of correspondence education, which justify the label poor substitute (Evans & Nations, 1993). Since conventional instruction is still perceived by many to be better organised than distance education, this system has been subjected to criticism in the field of education, which at times gives a timely opportunity to the employers to consider employees with distance education degrees as second class citizens.

With the passage of time, it seems that distance education trend is rising within a highly competitive educational market (Seibold, 2007; Thirunarayaan, 2010) and the enrolments have increased significantly. Shortage of funds has forced many countries to consider distance education as one of the best alternatives to control the predicament as it requires less space and resources and is more modern. Distance education is at a turning point and more teachers and students are being attracted towards the new dimension of teaching (Daniel, 2001), especially those who want to retain their jobs and family obligations (Thompson,

2009), considering the limited flexible time they have at their disposal (Johnson, 2003) while studying for additional degrees. Bernado *et al.* (2004), Campbell and Swift (2006), and Chaney (2002) propound that advancement in technology has opened vistas for educational institutions to offer online courses and advertisements for such programmes are on the rise. Wright (2014) terms this as a pop-culture phenomenon. Keeping the high demand in mind, such institutions have an opportunity to revisit their distance programmes and develop them into a world class form of educational delivery; therefore, it is imperative for the institutions to be aware of the perceptions and needs of the market at the time of developing and offering programmes, as the graduated students will have to eventually offer their services at their institutions (Chaney, 2002; Russell, 2004; Adams & DeFleur, 2006). For quite many people, distance may not be ideal, but it may be all that is available. Rao (2002) believes that immediate social problems would be created if people see that advantaged groups are given access to conventional and relatively expensive education, whereas the disadvantaged get a second rate distance education.

The scenario in quite many developing countries is different as the society judges the importance of vocational work negatively for ideological reasons. Government support is doubtful and research shows that employers are biased at the time of appointing candidates with distance degrees (Adams *et al.*, 2007; Carnevale,

2007; Flowers, 2007; Linardopoulos, 2012) and the support given by the recruiters is minimal. Hence, to overcome the perception that distance education programmes are inferior than more traditional face-to-face courses, the programmes need to be credible and respected, while appropriate support, incentives and rewards should be introduced by the governments and employers for the enrolled and prospective students. On the other hand, in developed countries, many students from distance institutions are more likely to be respected than scorned as it is generally believed that distance education is much more difficult and compels the students to the subject matter longer and more intensely (Singh & Sudarshan, 1996). Moreover, the students have an obligation towards the society and are expected to live up to it by their government. At the same time, they enjoy moderate financial support from their government and employers, and therefore, enjoy a much more positive image in the society. In spite of this optimistic picture, Bates (1990) and Keegan (1996) opine that although the outlook of employers towards distance degrees has improved, many are still sceptical of its usefulness in the workplace.

This study supports the research within higher education and aims to explore and investigate the backing given by the employers to their teachers during their study period through distance education and their perceptions towards the integrity of such degrees. To seek answers to this problem, a qualitative case study was conducted at two well-known distance institutions in

Pakistan and India that offer post-graduate and research degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language (TEFL/TESL) through correspondence and online. The study raises the following questions:

1. How do educational institution employers perceive the worth of distance education degrees in comparison to conventional degrees?
2. What support is provided to the teachers by such employers when studying through a distance mode?

## STUDY CONTEXT

This study was carried out in two countries of Asia, which is home to the world's largest number of learners studying at a distance (Jung, 2012). The research participants were English language teachers who were in the process of upgrading their professional degree through distance education. Two English departments at distance universities in Pakistan and India offering postgraduate and research degrees were selected for this study. The participants in Pakistan were in their dissertation writing stage and the Indian students had completed their correspondence course work and were attending a 15-day workshop/contact programme at the campus. The teachers in Pakistan were enrolled in a master's in TEFL programme, whereas the teachers in India were enrolled in MPhil in TESL programme. The entry requirement for the master's degree is BA or master's in English Literature and for MPhil degree is a master's in English Literature. Both

are one year programmes offering eight and 11 courses, respectively, followed by research dissertation. All courses are offered through correspondence including study guides and specially prepared readers containing updated and relevant theoretical and research articles. In addition, assignments for each course offered, visits to study centres for tutor support, a 15-day workshop/contact programme and final examination are essential. It should be noted that the distance university in India does not offer a master's programme. Neither of the universities is accredited with any national or international accreditation agency and the courses, systems, and processes are developed, whetted out and implemented by departmental committees. In spite of minor structural differences in the programme, the objective of the study was to find out the worth of distance education by employers and the support extended to the teachers enrolled in such programmes during the study period.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Distance education or distance learning is a process where the students' learning takes place in which they are separated by time and space from their teachers. It is an excellent mode of learning for those who cannot attend face-to-face classes and at the same time would like to earn an additional degree regardless of class, creed, gender or distance (Kanwar & Taplin, 2001). This mode of study has the requirements and ability to reach anyone anywhere and has been acknowledged as a form of delivery

system for improving the current status of teacher education and training globally (Vaskovics, 2015). If the degree plays a pivotal role to ascertain the financial standing and status in the employment market (Lenski, 1966), both employers and employees should accept the fact that some degrees have a better stand in today's work market simply because of the way in which they are presented and taught. Many gatekeepers who review resumes for various kinds of openings are doubtful at the time of short listing and appointing those who have qualified through distance (Mustafa, 2013) as the mode of training, examination and quality of outcome are questioned. This cold war has gone to the extent that the learners qualified through distance are sometimes considered as second class in merit at the time of appointment (Iqbal, 2002).

### *Value of Degrees*

There is a body of research conducted in various types of industries including educational institutions to find out how distance degrees are viewed at the time of employment. A study carried out by Open University of Hong Kong in 1999 on 488 employers and 2558 students investigated the value they gave to open degrees. A majority of employers agreed that distance learning degrees were credible, while 90% of them said that such degrees enabled students to work as well as grow professionally, and that they could see a vast improvement in their problem solving skills. Findings also indicated that if given an opportunity, they would

recommend their employees to upgrade their educational qualifications through distance programmes.

Moore and Kearsley (1996) reported a research conducted by the Distance Education and Training Council in 1994 in ten member institutions to determine how 674 graduates felt about their distance learning experience. A follow-up survey was also sent to the employers of these participants. The majority of employers (94%) responded that they thought the graduates compared favourably in knowledge, skills and attitude, and 81% said that the graduates performed better on the job.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, Government University Quality Assurance Council, UK measured academic excellence in more than a hundred universities in the UK including Open University, UK and to everyone's surprise, the Open University was positioned in the first ten British Universities in terms of academic excellence (Keegan, 2002). This brought about a visible change in the attitude of the learners, academicians, as well as the employers. *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation* and Commonwealth of Learning has formulated policy statements in favour of distance education and the World Bank has provided monetary support for such programmes. Abundant budget is allocated for distance learning, support given by the government, volume of research done on this mode of learning, even the fact that distance education students today read their Open University books openly as they commute,

which they used to hide in brown paper wrappers in the past are marks of a new legitimacy (Perraton, 1999).

Research study findings of Adams and DeFleur (2006), Zain-ul-Abadin and Adam (2010) and Adams, Lee, and Cortese (2012) coincide with each other. The first study found that only 7% of higher academic management of public sector universities was keen to give admission to graduates with online degrees, and only 11% management of private sector universities were prepared to admit students with online degrees. The second study results were based on a countywide survey to assess job qualifications of applicants who had degrees from conservative and distance education universities. The result yielded that those with a degree from traditional universities were preferred. The third study included 713 high school principals in the US to find out the degree preference that they give when hiring teachers. Two hiring situations were created: the first was prospective employees with traditional versus partial distance education and the second those with traditional versus wholly distance. In both scenarios, applicants with conventional degrees were found to be a favourable choice.

A study conducted by Columbaro and Monaghan (2009) based on literature spanning over seven years was studied within four databases: Academic Source Complete, Education Source Complete, Business Source Complete, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Abstracts. The result culled from this study specified that

employers or gatekeepers may still have a soft corner for those with traditional degrees at the time of hiring process. However, further research was required.

Puffer (2005) investigated the available online dissertation abstracts and articles published in professional journals from 1979 to 2003 on distance education. 312 studies and articles were reviewed to find out the worth of distance degrees by employers and graduates. The results from various online publications indicated that the perceptions of employers and graduates regarding the value of such degrees have hardly changed over the past 25 years. In spite of this, graduates still continue to enrol in distance courses and employers continue to give more preference to those who apply for jobs with conventional degrees.

Research studies by Adams and DeFleur (2006), Chaney (2002), and Russel (2004) indicated a mixed perception pertaining to the worth of distance degrees. The study also indicated that distance learning provided a convenient option for multi-tasking adults to enhance their education and the opportunity for universities to admit a large number of students without expanding the campus vertically or horizontally.

**Employer support.** Supporting employees who are enrolled in distance programmes is beneficial to the organisations as the skills learnt would be directly applied in the workplace; therefore, employer support during the study period is highly recommended. On the other hand, it is entirely at the discretion of the employers to define the degree of support extended

to its workers, which may include a full or partial fee, financial loan, time release, offering flexible working hours, support to look for donors, offering a repayment guarantee to the educational institutions and many more depending on the availability of funding. Many employers would like to send their teachers for further education through distance mode, but doubt the quality of course information and the assessment guidelines and periodic student evaluation for positive learning outcomes (Parscal & Riemer, 2010). On the practical side and based on the researcher's experience, many teachers refuse to grow professionally as they have to tend to multiple responsibilities at home with no support. Meanwhile, employers in educational institutions are sceptical regarding the worth of distance degrees when short listing the candidates for appointment or considering financial support or time release for additional education (Eaton, 2001). Literature review findings give an indication of mixed perceptions of the importance and value of distance learning globally, more tilted towards the traditional face-to-face option, though distance learning preference will gain a firm ground in years to come. Employer support may vary from institute to institute, but on the face of it, this support will take time to establish itself.

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative case study research was preferred for the project to study contemporary phenomena by exploring individuals and organisations within a given context.

Creswell (2013) explains that a case study approach explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time “through detailed and in-depth data collection” (p. 97). The objective was to explore and compare the units based on the research questions. Two distance universities in Pakistan and India served as units for the study, where female and male students were studying for their master’s and MPhil degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language (TEFL/TESL). The researchers aimed to explore the perceptions of the teachers and administrators who were working in different educational institutions through interviews that are particularly useful for exploratory research, where the goal is to generate ideas and to validate them against everyday experiences of the participants. The master’s programme is not offered by the distance university in India; however, the course structure as explained earlier is almost the same in which the students have to study through correspondence materials. In order to enable the researchers to achieve the objectives of the study, one researcher visited the distance institutions in both countries at a preset time keeping in mind the availability of maximum students. The participants in Pakistan were in their dissertation writing stage and were invited to gather at a common meeting point for interviews, whereas the Indian students had completed their correspondence course work and were attending a 15-day workshop / contact programme at the campus.

### *Tools and Data collection*

The researchers used individual and focus group interviews for the study and prepared two semi-structured interview protocols for teachers and employers based on an adapted version of Stufflebeam’s (1983) evaluation model. The four categories (Context, Input, Process and Product) were reduced to three by eliminating Context as the researchers knew where the interviewees were working and had retrieved their workplace details through the internet. The interview protocol for the teachers had three questions under Input; two under Process, and four under Product. Individual interview guide prepared for the employers had two questions under each category and a couple of general questions to find out the qualifications of their teachers and the upgraded degrees they were interested in. The focus group interviews took about 60 to 75 minutes each, whereas the individual interviews took about 30 minutes each. The interviews were conducted by only one researcher due to distance and paucity of funds. All the steps recommended by the researchers to interview the participants were considered and it was made sure to establish an appropriate atmosphere by addressing the cognitive, interpersonal, interactional, communicative, emotional and dynamic aspects of the interviews so that the participants would feel secure and talk freely. At the same time, ethical dimensions were also taken into consideration. All the participants were asked to fill in the informed consent form that included among other details confidentiality, choice to drop

out at any point of the study, human safety and permission to record the interviews. The aim of the interviews was to yield in depth data and provide a true picture of opinions, experiences, expectations, attitudes and feelings of the interviewees. The researchers were thus able to analyse the data individually and then as a team to validate the findings by extracting perception patterns, themes and categories to give a holistic picture.

#### *Study Participants*

The study participants were selected by convenience from both countries who were either in their dissertation writing stage or were attending workshop/contact programme to finish their master's or MPhil programmes. The researchers through personal contacts were able to get appointments with the employers for individual interviews. For the purpose of this research, employers included the head, principal, dean, and two HR administrators who were directly or indirectly involved in developing recruitment policies, job descriptions, and were also part of the hiring team.

The researcher conducted eight interviews in all: two group interviews (8 participants each) comprising three female and five male teachers in Pakistan studying for master's degree and one in India (12 participants) comprising eight female and four male teachers, who were studying for MPhil degree; three individual interviews with principals of a school and college, and the dean of a university in

Pakistan and two individual interviews with college administrators from HR departments in India. Evaluation framework based on an adapted version of Stufflebeam's CIPP (1983) model, with three categories including Input, Process and Product, was used to synthesise and analyse the interview data. The themes that emerged from the detailed interviews were categorised for analysis.

## **RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

Three categories that emerged very strongly from the interviews were: (a) institutional support during the study period-student point of view (Input); (b) institutional support during the study period-employer point of view (Process); and (c) value of distance degree in the market (Product).

#### *Institutional support during study period-student point of view (Input)*

Most participants from Pakistan and India stated that they did not receive enough support from their workplace in terms of time release or sponsorship to earn their degrees through distance programmes. This is understandable as teachers in public and private educational institutions are sparse and long period of study leave usually creates teaching problems. Moreover, funding allocation is limited and support from the government is hardly visible. The participants from both countries were quite disappointed and had various stories to tell; most of them related to support in release time to attend workshop/contact programmes that were part of the study. Of

all the group interviews conducted, only two participants who worked for a private school in Pakistan said that they were supported by the employers in terms of time release for the study.

One reported:

*"Since the principal of this school had done his masters from the same Open University, he realizes the problems of distance learners and he spent hours sitting with me and my colleague explaining the concepts. If it had not been for his support, my colleague and I would have had to spend double the time understanding the concepts. We were allowed leave to attend the workshop and visit the library housed at the main campus. Of course we've signed a bond." He added, "I would consider the master's programme that I am doing currently far superior than I did through f2f mode. I am more aware of the latest research in teaching English language, have developed confidence, and my colleagues were real professionals."*

Another teacher said:

*"We have been given 15 days off to attend the workshop with the understanding that we will offer training programmes once both of us qualify. This would be a great experience for both of us and I*

*am looking forward to be called a 'trainer'. This is my first master's and I have no words to express how elevated I am in terms of my professional development."*

This indicates that probably those employers who go through the process of distance education perceive the degree positively and realise the worth of such programmes. This particular principal encouraged and supported his teachers as he wanted to develop them professionally to bring about a change in the school system as he found programme superior and robust.

A disappointed teacher from a public college explained:

*"The bottom line is that nobody cares about our professional growth. My principal said second master's wasn't required, so I didn't get leave during my study period. It's good that the workshop session was in summer...Once we join the institution, we stay where we are till we retire. I have learnt a lot from this course and will recommend it to my friends."*

A student in India had to make excuses to attend the 15-day workshop at the distance university and shared:

*"I knew from the experiences of my colleagues that my principal would never release me to attend the workshop, so I had to make an excuse to take two weeks off."*

Another teacher complained:

*"My pay will be deducted, but I don't mind. The workshop is very important for me. University Grants Commission (UGC) should intervene to make the leave process manageable because the benefits of the postgraduate programme would naturally go to the students. We have to earn professional development points for promotion, so having an additional degree is very important for us."*

Three participants from the same college stated that the employers were quite supportive and they had benefitted from whatever the distance course had to offer them. It was quite evident from the data that the participants from both countries were not encouraged, especially by public sector institutions to join the distance programmes; therefore, they were not obliged to support the teachers. All the participants were of the consensus that leave should be given to attend the contact programme.

#### *Institutional support during study period- employer point of view (Process)*

One school in Pakistan offered in-house teacher training workshops and ongoing participation in such events was encouraged. The principal stated that the school supported teachers who went on short courses offered by different organisations in terms of time release and explained:

*"PD is essential to cater to the needs of the masses, and to provide service to the community. We encourage teachers to implement new methodologies and if the training courses are relevant to the needs of our institution, we definitely support our staff. Young female teachers are more motivated, but not male teachers... they have evening jobs. We also prefer to support female teachers as the retention rate is high, but distance degrees do not enjoy a good reputation in the market. I have heard about fake degrees, non-recognized institutions, and other such things."*

The principal of a public sector college presumably did not believe in the professional growth of teachers and stated:

*"Developing teachers is not required as almost all have done master's or MEd and know to teach .... They don't have time to implement modern methodologies as they have to finish the courses. Moreover, it is not good for female teachers to stay after school to attend programmes. Government pay is not competitive, so why would my teachers put in extra effort."*

The dean of a department at a university said that the faculty was encouraged to grow professionally, but they had to carve out time from other commitments as public institutions usually have limited staff and releasing them was not convenient.

*"The government recommends that every teacher should be released once every five years to upgrade their professional degree, but this is only on paper. It's sad, but that's the way it is! The distance programmes are relevant at times and it would be possible to give them a few days off, but we don't force our teachers."*

Two HR administrators from colleges in India explained that in this increasingly complex global world, the professionals needed to have an edge over the others and the only way to update themselves was to enrol in courses offered by distance institutions. This way the teachers could work as well as study. One administrator responded as follows:

*"My institution is committed to provide equal opportunities in higher education to the teachers and in preparing them to make a meaningful contribution to the society. All teachers have master's or PhD degrees in their specialized field and if they want to update themselves, it's their individual responsibility. Mark my words, very soon almost all teachers would have*

*done at least one course through distance."*

The second HR administrator shared:

*"My institution does not offer scholarships to the teachers as we already have a cohort of well qualified and trained teachers; however, specialization is preferred and we support short time release. An additional degree paves way for promotion, which is important in this competitive world."*

#### *Distance degree value in the market (Product)*

A principal of a school in Pakistan was quite supportive of the distance degrees, but preferred such degrees from abroad and stated:

*"Many employers have little information about distance education and they view face-to-face teaching more valuable yielding positive outcomes. They think distance learning takes away the charm of interactive discussion, cooperative learning, immediate feedback, public speaking, and the ability to learn from each other. This is because distance education degrees have been declared fake at times and such institutions don't even have a proper office, thus the credibility of distance programmes is at stake. For a few more years, I would opt for teachers with a*

*traditional degree and would request the government to recognize distance degrees in TEFL.”*

A principal of a public sector college in Pakistan stated that he had heard a lot about the distance programmes, but it was not required by his teachers. As far as hiring teachers for his institution was concerned, conventional degrees were acceptable. He further added:

*“The distance university in Pakistan is no doubt one of the oldest universities in Asia, but I would doubt the quality of courses. The graduated students from such universities who are well established in the field of education and have made a name for themselves are exceptional cases. I’d rather go for teachers with conventional degrees.”*

The dean of a university in Pakistan was more concerned about the accreditation of the degree awarding institution rather than the type of degree. He was of the opinion that accredited institutions ensure quality control of their programmes to meet the required standards to earn a good reputation in the market. He opined:

*“Very soon distance qualifications will become an increasing option for the teachers and educational institution employers won’t be left with much choice. To gain credibility, the open university in*

*our country should consider market needs at the time of developing courses and get international accreditation for quality control.”*

The HR administrator in India commented:

*“My college has a Faculty Appointment Committee and the members consider the suitability of the candidates based on their qualifications, experience, and the skills they have, not where the degree is from.”*

Another administrator shared his viewpoint:

*“Distance mode is expanding in India because regular universities have been unsuccessful to cater to the demands of the masses, and a time would come when most students would have gone through the distance mode at least once in their life time.”*

The two principals and dean interviewed in Pakistan had wavered opinion about distance programmes. The dean considered distance degree as a rear door entry to get a degree. This coincides with the opinion of Yick, Patrick and Costin (2005), who believe that distance degrees are one step down. The dean was concerned that the distance programme should be accredited with a national or international body to

verify and ensure the quality of programmes being offered. Wellman (2000) explains that an accredited institution has to go through the process of on-going inspection, and evaluation to verify that it meets the standards set by the accrediting body for curriculum, faculty, finances, governance and student facilities. Employers in Pakistan voiced that distance degrees would be recognised only with the government's blessing. The view point of senior HR administrators in India was different as they preferred the skills of the teachers rather than the mode through which degrees were acquired.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Although distance education degrees are in demand as they allow individuals with a first or second job as well as those with family commitments to complete the degree at its own pace in their own working environment yet, such degrees are viewed with a doubt due to lack of "interaction among students, between students and instructors, in addition to non-accessible resources" (Raj & Al-Alawneh, 2010, p.1). The findings of this paper support Johnson (2003) that such degrees also serve the needs of the adult population, who would like to have an additional qualification for promotion. Since the role of higher degrees is growing in the workplace, especially in the teaching profession, it is important that space should be created for the interested ones to expand their education (Thompson, 2009). It is confirmed through literature review that the employers to a large extent have failed

to put an unbiased and honest value on degrees earned through distance education as also documented in this research study. As evident from the literature, the 'gatekeepers' have an overall negative perception of distance degrees and this will continue until the scenario reverses, that is, the employers themselves attain distance degrees to understand and realise its value. Meanwhile, this attitude will increase the frustration level of those who are motivated to grow professionally, yet are given a cold shoulder by their employers.

Distance degrees in many South Asian countries are mostly perceived inferior because the 'guru' (teacher) is not in sight to guide the students with her or his knowledge. Secondly, many feel that students' learning is better in a conventional face-to-face environment, forgetting that distance students take double the time to cover the subject matter. However, the employers should not forget that distance courses are more open to public scrutiny than traditional classroom instruction because many distance courses are delivered through mediated programmes that can be accessed easily.

Similarly, a drawback of distance mode as emerged from this study was the credibility of degrees by the employers due to the churning out of fake degrees that are worthless (Ezell & Bear, 2005) in the market. Few employers in the study doubted the value of such degrees as the institution in Pakistan and India were not accredited with any agency to validate the courses that were being offered and questioned the quality of

learning achieved by prospective employees through distance mode.

The study results from Pakistan indicated that many teachers who enrol in distance programmes have teaching responsibilities not only in one school or college, but two or even three jobs to make their ends meet. This raises some issues concerning the interrelationship between their work and study (Evans & Nation, 1993). It nurtures the question of how working teachers find a substantial amount of time to complete their modules and assignments. Evans and Nation (1993) also doubt the extent to which the courses which the teachers follow draw upon and contribute to their professional practice as teachers. We should not forget that a teacher's work is not only demanding in terms of hours of work, but also in terms of emotional demands of working with children and their parents. It is difficult to put a value on all this work in an economic sense, not only because the benefits are difficult to demarcate, but also because these benefits do not need to be set against the costs involved, both individually and socially. To compensate for this loss, employers should support motivated teachers who are interested in professional growth. Though indifferent attitude and lack of support is not common only for distance learners, administrators of almost all public and private sector institutions are quite reluctant to release their teachers for a long term as this creates a teaching void in the already teacher shortage scenario.

It has also been realised that such degrees are appropriate for highly motivated learners who want to progress professionally, but not so for struggling students. This research confirms the quality and value of learning experiences gained from the teachers' point of view as they saw themselves grow professionally in theory and practice, increased self motivation and improvement in skills and knowledge. Enrolling in distance programme allows them flexibility and convenience to fit in their personal commitments. Due to the large class size in developing countries, lecture method is the most acceptable way of teaching and this suits the untrained teachers as well, which in turn, hampers the learning process of the students and nearly all memorise the content to pass the examination. On the other hand, the learners through distance have to read the study guides and readers in order to do their assignments and the end of the programme workshops prove to be most beneficial where practical work dominates. The teachers gave positive rating to the overall process, ignoring accreditation and market value of distance education degrees.

## CONCLUSION

Although this study in a way could add to the growing body of research on distance education and harmonises with many research findings that distance education can be equivalent to traditional face-to-face education, the results of this study cannot be generalised to all population. Moreover, the evidence is not sufficient to

conclude that distance education is superior or inferior to traditional education, yet the insights provided in this article may help inform employers of the value of distance education. In spite of them not supporting the teachers while studying, it was quite apparent in this study that the teachers who graduated through the distance programme had developed practical skills, were good in higher engagement skills and had developed positive attitude. Although long established perceptions may take time to change, there has been a steady improvement in the public's perception of distance education. On a positive note, Fogle and Elliott (n.d.) reiterate that as more people attend distance institutions over time and the number of employers coming from such education setting on the hiring side of the desk increases, a rather favourable treatment of distance degrees can be anticipated.

To confirm the validity and acceptability of distance degrees, the distance education institutions have to get accreditation nationally or internationally and it is the responsibility of the government to gauge the reputation of such institutions for rigour and mentored learning experiences, as they contribute in supporting the distance programmes financially. There are high hopes that this issue would be amicably resolved with the timely intervention of the government and mutual dialogue between competent authorities, resulting in a changed attitude of the employers, as well as employees in the education sector. A composite understanding that emerges from the research is that a comprehensive research

needs to be undertaken to study employers' views on distance and conventional education (Adams & DeFleur, 2006; Astani & Ready, 2010; Linardopoulos, 2012). Meanwhile, one can conclude to a certain extent that while distance education may not be superior to or better than traditional face-to-face education, it is not inferior to traditional education.

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## Human Rights Lesson from Selected Malay Proverbs

Mohd Faizal Musa

*Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

Human rights culture is relatively new in Malaysia. Thus, locating and unearthing the values of human dignity from traditional heritage would help to enhance understanding on modern human rights. An attempt to connect traditional values buried under Malay proverbs with contemporary sociological findings should be made. In order to make this attempt successful, George F. Mclean's formulated framework 'human rights and the dialogue of civilizations', together with the categorisation of Malay proverbs by Syed Hussein Alatas, was chosen. Mclean's formulation looks into the needs of civilisations in dialogue, values and virtues, cultures and traditions and the ontological foundation of the many faces of humanity. Syed Hussein Alatas's categorisation of Malay proverbs helps to select suggestive and 'reprimandative proverbs' that contain human rights values. This essay intends to identify features of human rights in traditional society, and by doing so, challenges the notion that human rights are a Western product and incompatible with the culture and religion of Islam.

*Keywords:* Human rights, cultural relativism, Malay proverbs, universal declaration of human rights

### INTRODUCTION

In 1997, Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysian premier at the time, advised other Asian countries not to blindly obey the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

due to their lack of Asian values and their use as a medium of super powers to discriminate against poor nations. Suffice to say, Mahathir's call did not gain as much support as he had hoped for. A fact that has always been ignored is that there were also Muslim and Asian voices present during the drafting of the UDHR. Among others, Zafrullah Khan, a Muslim and Wellington Khoo, a Chinese, both participated in the discussions. Even though Malaysia, as

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*E-mail addresses:*

kajianakademikfl@gmail.com, mfaizalmusa@ukm.edu.my  
(Mohd Faizal Musa)

an independent state, had not yet come into existence in 1948 at the time the UDHR was drafted and was not properly represented in the drafting process, the fact that Malaysia has since been involved in drafting huge amounts of ‘covenants which were based on and an elaboration of the UDHR’ is enough to prove that the country generally agrees with the UDHR (Zan, 1997). In the same year, Mahathir was lambasting the UDHR, his administration established the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM). Later in 2013, still under Barisan Nasional, the coalition that has ruled Malaysia for 56 years since its independence, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department, Jamil Khir Baharom reminded Malaysians not to be “blindly engrossed with human rights as espoused by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [as this] may cause discordance in the society” (Baharom, 2013). Not long before that in pre-response to the Malaysian Universal Periodic Review session<sup>1</sup> dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013, an official Friday sermon from the Prime Minister’s Department called ‘human rights a facade to destroy Islam’. The Friday sermon was prepared by JAKIM (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, the Malaysian Islamic Development Department) for mosques all over Malaysia (Zahid, 2013). The Malaysian government has been insisting that “Malaysia could not accept principles that go against the order of human nature” and this was the reason why Malaysian Prime Minister, Najib Razak, “objected to the inclusion of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)

rights when signing ASEAN’s first human rights charter” in 2012 (Chooi, 2012). This act of compunction, or merely the excuse to not adhere to standard international human rights principles, is well known among human rights academics and activists. In fact, in the Malaysian context, using religion as an excuse for non-adherence to human rights is gaining momentum. Back in the 90’s, as mentioned earlier, the Malaysian establishment under Mahathir Mohamad’s administration demonised human rights as un-Asian and an imposed Western moral code, or to put it simply, cultural colonisation (Mohd Sani, 2008).

Culture is an integral part of human rights. UNESCO, for example, has recognized culture as an important tool to promote human rights:

*“Culture is a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group. It encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Respecting and safeguarding culture is a matter of Human Rights. Cultural diversity presupposes respect of fundamental freedoms, namely freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom to participate in the cultural life of one’s choice” (UNESCO, 2001).*

These two ‘rationalizations’ – human rights are unAsian and unIslamic – have been played up by governments, especially in Malaysia. Alfred Fernandez (2006) clearly noted how Islamic countries and Eastern states regularly viewed the UDHR as too Westernised and Euro-centric and thus repudiate it when it is convenient for them. The countries of the South, in particular Africa and Asia, claimed that they were not present in 1948 as they did not exist as such at the time. A number of countries of Islamic faith regard human rights as a kind of civil religion at odds with their beliefs, which they are not ready to accept (Fernandez, p. 18).

Alfred Fernandez’s statement above is a reflection of what happened in Vienna in 1993 during a UN Conference on Human Rights. During that year, Asian states and numerous countries under the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) joined together to criticise Western human rights codes that they claimed had been imposed on them through the United Nations. In Vienna, Islamic countries submitted the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, which had been proposed much earlier at the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of Islamic Foreign Ministers in 1990. According to the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, rights are given from the divine and no interpretation of rights should contradict the *Sharia* law. This is an example of abusing cultural relativism as an excuse not to conform to the UDHR (Halliday, 1999, p. 153). To be more specific, Malaysia is also a member of the Organisation of

Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and an Asian country. In 2012, Malaysia, as a member of ASEAN, adopted and signed ASEAN’s 2012 Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, while maintaining the core concepts of the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, is also an attempt to shape its own human rights charter with an emphasis on cultural relativism:

*All human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. All human rights and fundamental freedoms in this Declaration must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis. At the same time, the realization of human rights must be considered in the regional and national context bearing in mind different political, economic, legal, social, cultural, historical and religious backgrounds (ASEAN, 2012).*

How valid is it to give religious and cultural excuses in order not to conform to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights? Diana Ayton-Shelker has proven that there is no clash between religions, cultures and human rights; in fact, dialogues between cultures, religions and human rights can begin from traditional cultures that provide and defend human dignity: “... greater understanding of the ways in which traditional cultures protect the well being of their people would illuminate the common

foundation of human dignity on which human rights promotion and protection stand" (Ayton-Shenker, 1995).

A simple answer to the question stated previously, as has been clarified by Diana Ayton-Shelker, is that it is correct to say that in every religion and culture, human values and protection for people's well-being is an essential pillar. It is possible that the hesitation among governments to accept the Universal Declaration on Human Rights could actually be political and be 'motivated' by an interest to protect the power within their own circle. Myint Zan concluded, referring to a call by the then Malaysian Premier to review the declaration, by stressing that, "it would not be second guessing when one says that the civil and political rights embodied in the UDHR would appear to be the main irritants for Mahathir, and the Asian countries" (Zan, 1997).

#### *Are human rights really alien to the Malays?*

In addition to being a Muslim-majority and Asian country, Malaysia has another important factor to consider when it comes to human rights. The cultural aspects of Malay Muslims are also shaping many views in life. In Malaysia, 'Malayness' and Islam are conflated together due to definition of the Malays in the Malaysian Constitution as "people who speak the Malay language as their mother tongue, lead the Malay way of life and profess the Islamic faith" (Omar, 1983, p.79). Malaysia's founding father, Tunku Abdul Rahman, once stressed that

the Malay custom is essential to the Malays and could not be neglected in any aspect of their life: "to a Malay, the religion is his second nature, the other is *adat* or custom and these two mean everything to him. The saying goes – *Biar mati anak jangan mati adat*" (Abdul Rahman, 2007, p. 125).

Shamsul Amri Baharuddin (2005), a noted sociologist in Malaysia, stresses that *adat* or Malay traditional custom also plays a significant role in determining views on human rights. In fact, since the colonial era, three systems of laws have been implemented in Malaysia or Malaya as it was previously known. First, the English common law style; second, the Malaysian version of Islamic law, and third; the *adat* law:

*In practice, however, the legal system during the British rule was divided into three. Firstly, there was the 'English common law' system which was accepted as the general legal system and was responsible to deal with all matters in the sphere of criminal justice affecting all citizens. In the sphere of personal laws it is only applied to immigrant non-Muslims (for instance, European, Chinese, Indian, etc). The Muslims, largely Malays, were subjected to the Islamic laws, or Syariah, particularly, in matters relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance. Therefore, the Syariah laws formed the second legal system in British Malaya. The third legal system operating then was the Adat*

*system, or the Customary or Native legal system, applied mainly in the areas of personal laws and, in a very limited context, in the sphere of criminal justice, too, of some groups of native peoples in the Peninsula Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. The Adat legal system was a heterogenous one because there were many distinct and large ‘native’ or ‘tribal’ groups, mostly non-Muslims, especially, in Sabah and Sarawak, each having their own tribal-specific adat codes, mostly in the form of oral traditions, applied in a localised context* (Baharuddin, 2005, p. 5).

However, the position of adat is not properly observed. Individual rights are heavily dependable on adat. In fact, the Malay adat has very a significant influence on Malay-Muslim personal law. For instance in the state of Negeri Sembilan, “adat (custom) displaces agama (religion) in some areas of family law” (Faruqi, 2011, p. 16). Where are the *adat* codes derived from? One particular source of *adat* is *peribahasa* or proverbs. Rich in style and content, Malay proverbs are daily codes of life for the Malays and are regarded as unofficial ‘laws’ or moral guidelines to adhere to.

This paper is a preliminary attempt to locate human rights hidden in the Malay proverbs. This is important at this juncture as currently upholding human rights is seen as accepting foreign values. I believe, to be fair, it is critical to inspect how human rights

are reflected in Malay custom especially in the context of current attacks on ‘human rights-ism’ (Ong, 2014). After all, as will be discussed further, the spirit of human rights is not absent from the Malays and excuses propagated by the establishment to debunk human rights such as that ‘human rights-ism’ reject the values of religion and etiquette; or that human rights are a ‘Western product to undermine Islam’ can be glaringly perfidious.

## INTRODUCING MALAY PROVERBS

The complexity and beauty of Malay proverbs have enchanted many. Among them were high ranking British officials, Hugh Clifford and Frank Swettenham, who both resided in Malaya for many years during the colonial era. C.C Brown (1969), a former lecturer in Malay Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, acknowledges how both of the officials were captured and amazed by the uniqueness of the Malay proverbs. He even cited their admirations in his own collections of the Malay proverbs; ‘In the introduction to their Dictionary of Malay Language, Clifford and Swettenham wrote, “like French, it is essentially a diplomatic language and one admirably adapted for concealing the feelings and cloaking the real thoughts. Not even in French is it possible to be so polite, or so rude, or to say such rude things with every appearance of exaggerated courtesy, as is the case in Malay,” and although this dictum does not specifically mention the proverbial sayings (‘*ibarat, pepatah, bidalan, perumpamaan*,

*telabai* as they are variously styled), the illusion to them is obvious' (Brown, 1969, pp. x-xi). Other famous references on the Malay proverbs are mentioned in collections by orientalists such as W.E Maxwell (1878), Hugh Clifford's (1891) and J.L Humphreys (1914).

Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany from Deakin University, Australia, in their research on the Malay proverbs, explained that proverbs are widely used among the Malays. They observed that proverbs remain an authentic medium to preserve the informative part of Malay language especially in maintaining old and rare vocabularies. According to them, proverbs are also considered very useful tools to understand the world view of the Malays and how they respond to their environment:

*Proverbs then represent a treasure trove of information about the language in which they occur, the views of the people who use them, and the ways in which those users conceive the world in which they live* (Fanany & Fanany, 2008, p. 1).

Other than extending knowledge of the language and the speaker, proverbs also functioned in the society to explain, deal, perceive or resolve a conflict or situational problem. Peter Seitel, in his 1969 paper entitled "Proverbs: A Social Use of Metaphor" for instance, emphasises that a proverb "is a plan for dealing with the situation" or to answer a question like "what to do" in order to give quick advice (Seitel,

1981, p. 130). Proverbs educate people with 'simple truth' that can be applied and often used 'to make a decision' (Tischler, 2007, p. 321). A well-known Malay anthropologist, A. Samad Idris referred to proverbs as '*ketinggian falsafah sesuatu bangsa itu*' which as far as I understand means, "the peak of wisdom for a civilization" (Idris, 1989, p. ix).

In general, proverbs are very common, widely used and very much "understood by all members of [a] language group" (Fanany & Fanany, 2008, p. 3). In this context, it is important to acknowledge that proverbs are well accepted by members of society since the Malay proverbs in particular have their own weight in daily affairs to the extent that they have already become a personal law as Shamsul Amri Baharuddin already asserted (p. 5). Regarding this point, Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany stressed that proverbs have their own respective authority and are applied in the society in many situations; "perhaps the most important social feature characteristic of proverbs is their authority. Proverbs carry the approval of the society in which they exist and reflect its values, ways of thinking and strategies for dealing with certain common occurrences or situations. This is the unique feature of proverbs, as opposed to other genres of folklore..." (2003, p. 3).

The beauty of the Malay proverbs lies in their set of forms and set of meanings. In this case, the relationships between the surface structure or the words that make up the expression and deep meaning, or the message of the proverb, are interconnected.

In addition, Fanany and Fanany termed this network as the cognitive framework, “which simply means the interconnected pathways of meaning that relate words and expressions beyond their literal uses” (2008, p. 3). A notable Malay linguist, Za’ba, in his famous work ‘Ilmu Mengarang Melayu’ also explains the same. According to him, the duality of layers as presented in the Malay proverbs can only be understood when compared with or applied to a certain situation, the proverbs then explain or simply educate how an individual should react or respond in the middle of a crisis (2002, pp. 170-192).

Another important feature of the Malay proverbs is that although they are fixed in form, they may differ in meaning and emerge in many versions depending on the geographic regions and the age of the speakers. One thing that is obvious is that the Malay proverbs are usually very homely and draw heavily from images or characteristics of Malay life (Brown, p. ix).

Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany (2008, p. 4) drew up at least five specifications of the Malay proverbs, as follows: i) a proverb must be an unbound and fully independent utterance; ii) it must contain one or more metaphors; iii) a proverb must have one or more specific social applications that are generally known to native speakers; iv) a proverb must have some sort of traditionality within the society, and v) it must contain some piece of advice or observation on the way the world works that represent a generalisation that is always in force. By adapting metaphor in the

proverbs, the language becomes different from the ordinary discourse and contains parallelism and semantic features such as paradox and irony, as tools of conveying the message. It is by analysing the meanings of the proverbs that one will understand the wisdom or code of ethics that the proverbs suggest.

The Malays are a metaphoric race and by the term ‘metaphoric race’, it is meant that the Malay people often ‘use a gestalt from one domain of experience to structure experience in another domain’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 130). Malay metaphoric expressions appear in the literary and cultural products which inform cultural literacy among the Malays particularly in proverbs (Ahmad, 2003, p. 40).

Bridging these metaphoric old wisdoms in the Malay culture and contemporary phenomena, I hope to interpret human rights using local norms and in doing so reconcile the perceived conflicts between human rights and Asian or Islamic values. In order to do that, I have chosen George F. McLean’s formulated framework ‘human rights and the dialogue of civilizations’. A professor of philosophy at the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in Washington, Mclean presented his idea in Qom, Iran in 2001 and was well accepted by the audience during the international conference on ‘Human Rights and Dialogue of Civilizations’ organised in the Islamic Republic of Iran by Mufid University, together with the United Nations. In order to make this work, I have chosen the categorisation of proverbs proposed by the

late Syed Hussein Alatas. Syed Hussein Alatas's categorisation of the Malay proverbs helped me to select 'suggestive' and 'reprimandative proverbs' that contain human rights values. Clive S. Kessler (2008), an emeritus professor of sociology at the University of New South Wales, pointed out how Alatas influenced a wide range of academic discourses in the 'third world countries', especially in the field of postcolonial studies (pp. 128-129). Alatas is also chosen here for his inalienable status. In the human rights domain, status relations are important to emphasise in order to make it easier for the people to relate themselves with human rights struggles. For the issue of status here, I will refer to Murray Milner Jr's (2014) approach on understanding that human rights is 'located primarily in other people's mind' (p. 169). Alatas' well-established status is important to consider, as human rights expansion in Malaysia needs an 'insulating type of status' (p. 169).

### **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to George F. Mclean (2001), there is urgent need to cultivate traditions in order to adjust culture to "new circumstances and promoting creative human freedom" (p. 182). Mclean suggests cherishing values and virtues of a people particularly the part that respects "human dignity and rights, life commitments, personal relations and interaction between peoples" (p. 182). Mclean also proposes to uncover and study literary canons, ancient philosophy and

religious doctrines or simply referred to by him as 'primary structuring ideas' to bridge human rights with civilizations:

*The content of a tradition, expressed in the great works of literature, sacred and profane, and all the many facets of a culture, emerges progressively as the cumulative freedom of a people upon which personal character and civil society can be built. It constitutes a rich source from which human rights as multiple themes can be drawn, provided it be accepted and embraced, affirmed and cultivated. It is just here that lies the hope that human rights set in the context of cultures and civilizations can possess the vigor to protect and promote the life and interrelation of peoples. Where positive legislation is able to make some specifications for particular dimensions of concrete life, cultures contain the values to which the people are committed. In this way they judge the laws, evaluate their adequacy and direct their change and adjustment so that they can serve toward their realization. In this way rights fall within the culture (p. 180)*

Mclean argues that the survival of civilisations depends on how these 'primary structuring ideas' continue to play a role within the society. One way of having

dialogue of civilisations would be to relate human rights and traditions. While relating human rights and traditions, the dialogue of civilisations operates.

Another strategic step is to engage ‘charismatic personalities, paradigmatic individuals or characters who meld role and personality in providing a cultural or moral ideal’ such as Mother Theresa, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Lincoln or even great prophets like Abraham, Jesus and Muhammad, who according to him, “are concrete universals, link man [sic] and God and express that harmony and fullness of perfection which is at once classical and historical, ideal and personal, uplifting and dynamizing; in a word, liberating” (p. 188).

Applying what Mclean suggested, I chose the late Syed Hussein Alatas as a towering personality who provides a ‘cultural or moral ideal’<sup>22</sup>. However, before moving in that direction, let me stress the fact that Alatas has already advocated efforts to look at the Malay proverbs. In one of his important works written in Malay, Alatas suggests the urgency to restore and understand the Malay proverbs in order to unlock hidden concepts or unfamiliar ideas involving the Malays (Alatas, 1972). He stressed that proverbs and sayings are a good indicator to understand any ethnic group.

Alatas further explains that there are aspects of the Malay consciousness that have not been expressed in words yet, which can however be found in proverbs. In the paragraph below, Alatas states that,

the Malays surely have already set up many words, terminologies or vocabularies for things, ideas or concepts that exist in their civilisation. For instance, the thoughts and feelings such as ‘anger’ can be found. However, there are also words for explaining concepts such as ‘self-reliance’ and ‘initiative’ that differ from the words being used today. In the context of this paper, I believe the concept of human rights has existed in the minds of the Malays:

*Kesedaran yang belum disalurkan pada kata-kata, biasanya dinyatakan oleh pepatah-pepatah. Kesedaran tentang berdikari dan inisiatif ada dalam masyarakat Melayu lama. Perkataan kesanggupan mengandung arti berdikari. Demikian juga perkataan handal mengandung arti inisiatif. Ada juga pepatah-pepatah yang mengandung arti inisiatif, sebagai demikian: Belakang parang pun, kalau diasah nescaya tajam. Ini menunjukkan inisiatif untuk memperbaiki sesuatu keadaan, sesuatu taraf pelajaran. Sifat inisiatif dan sifat berdikari mustahil tidak terdapat dalam kesedaran masyarakat Melayu. Masyarakat Melayu dahulu telah membentuk kerajaan-kerajaan penting, telah berperang, telah menyusun negeri, telah juga menyamun di laut, telah berdagang, telah bercocok tanam. Ini semua memerlukan sifat-sifat inisiatif dan berdikari di kalangan*

*beberapa orang. Mustahil hal ini lenyap dari kesedaran masyarakat* (Alatas, p. 43).

*(My translation: Any consciousness that has not yet been channelled into words, is usually expressed in proverbs. Consciousness of self-reliance and initiative in the Malay has existed since long ago. The word 'handal' in Malay implies a willingness to be independent. There are also proverbs which imply initiative, such as: A back of a jungle-knife can also be sharp if you keep on sharpening it. This indicates a strong initiative to improve a situation and the standard of education. It is impossible that initiative and self-reliance were not there in the mind or consciousness of the Malays. The Malay people founded many kingdoms, fought against enemies, administered the state, in fact they robbed foreign sea traders, they had business and managed agriculture. All these need initiative and self-reliance among some people. It does not make sense that this can have disappeared from public consciousness'.*

Alatas suggests that the thoughts and feelings of the Malays, as mentioned above, can be reviewed, analysed and found in ‘suggestive’ and ‘reprimandative proverbs’. Alatas classifies three types of sayings or proverbs as ‘suggestive proverbs’,

‘reprimandative proverbs’ and ‘descriptive proverbs’. ‘Suggestive proverbs’ contain beliefs and demands, while ‘reprimandative proverbs’ often strike out to advise or prevent, which indicate that there are certain values being held. ‘Descriptive proverbs’ do not have a high degree of significance compared to the two previous categories as they merely observe or depict an issue or circumstance. In order to help understand this point, the view of Syed Hussein Alatas is cited here:

*Pada umumnya pepatah-pepatah Melayu kita dapat digolongkan pada tiga bahagian. Yang pertama apa yang kita namakan pepatah anjuran, yang kedua pepatah teguran, dan yang ketiga pepatah gambaran. Ada kalanya garis perbedaan antara satu sama lain agak samar. Peribadi suatu bangsa itu dapat dilihat dari pepatah anjuran dan teguran. Yang dimaksudkan anjuran ialah sesuatu pepatah yang menganjurkan nilai, keadaan, atau kepercayaan. Pepatah teguran semangatnya menegur, melarang sesuatu keadaan, nilai atau kepercayaan. Pepatah gambaran hanya melukiskan keadaan dengan tiada menegur atau menganjur. Sebagai contoh Kais pagi makan pagi, kais petang makan petang, dan Beras secupuk tidak akan jadi segantang. Dari pepatah teguran dan anjuran kita dapat melihat nilai masarakat Melayu dan pandangan hidupnya, tetapi kita tidak dapat*

*menentukan peribadi sesuatu bangsa atas dasar pepatah-pepatah itu senata-mata kerana pepatah-pepatah itu sifatnya memperhatikan persoalan bukan menunjukkan sifat peribadi bangsa. Ambil contoh pepatah Anjing menyalak pantat gajah. Ini menunjukkan kemarahan yang luar biasa tetapi sia-sia sahaja. Apakah sikap ini menunjukkan peribadi masyarakat Melayu? Tidak. Pepatah ini hanya menunjukkan orang-orang Melayu memperhatikan soal-soal marah semacam ini. Demikian juga pepatah Antan patah lesung hilang yang bermakna kalau suami hilang kuasa jantannya, isterinya akan mencari orang lain. Pepatah-pepatah yang demikian ini bukanlah pepatah anjuran (pp. 45-46).*

*(My translation: In general, our Malay proverbs can be classified in three parts. The first is what we call ‘suggestive proverbs’, second, ‘reprimandative proverbs’ and third, ‘descriptive proverbs’. Sometimes the differences between one another are rather vague. The character of Malay people can be observed from the ‘suggestive’ and ‘reprimandative proverbs’. What is meant by ‘suggestive’ is that the proverbs made suggestions, stressing values or beliefs. The ‘reprimandative proverbs’ carry spirit to prohibit a situation, values*

*or beliefs that are considered unsuitable. The ‘descriptive proverbs’ merely depict a state or condition without giving any suggestion or criticism. For example ‘Kais pagi makan pagi Kais petang makan petang’ (whatever you find when you) scratch in morning, (is just enough for you to) eat in the morning; (whatever you find when you) scratch in evening, (is just enough for you to) eat in the evening) and ‘Beras secupuk tidak akan jadi segantang’ (the rice contents of a bowl cannot fill a crock). From ‘suggestive’ and ‘reprimandative proverbs’ we can see the Malay values held by the community and their way of life, but we cannot determine the character of the people base on the ‘descriptive proverbs’, since the proverbs depict a situation to give attention to but do not characterize an ethnic group. Take the example of this proverb ‘Anjing menyalak pantat gajah’ (the dog barks to the elephant’s ass). It shows an incredible anger, but in vain. Does this attitude characterize the Malay community? No. This just goes to show how the Malays pay attention to matters of this degree of anger. Likewise, the proverb ‘Antan patah lesung hilang’ means the impotent husband will soon lose his wife. These kinds of proverbs are not suggestive for sure).*

In other words, I argued that the concept of human rights adopted by the modern society have already existed in the Malay culture and diaspora, although the concept was known by other terms not yet as ‘human rights’.

According to Lim Kim Hui (2003), proverbs are undoubtedly a brand of Malay rhetoric that serves both aesthetic purposes and ethical functions: ‘It should be understood that besides serving its aesthetic purposes and ethical functions, proverbs also serve their argumentative role as part of traditional communication, often serving to persuade, exhort or criticise. These roles (aesthetic, ethical and argumentative) are always intertwined and act as a whole in presenting a general idea of Malay rhetoric’ (Lim, p. 32). Lim Kim Hui later cited a statement from Abdullah Hussain’s preface for the Malay Proverbs Dictionary or ‘Kamus Istimewa Peribahasa Melayu’ (1991) that *peribahasa* or Malay proverbs come from three sources: the people, the sages and the holy texts. ‘The first source was the rakyat jelata (folk), who created *peribahasa* through their living experience. The second source was from those who were *arif bijaksana* (people who are knowledgeable and learned), who uttered the phrases as a result of their *renungan* (contemplation). The third source was derived from the *kitab suci* (sacred books) (Lim, p. 49)’. Using Alatas’s classification of sayings or proverbs, which are ‘reprimandative’ and ‘descriptive’ proverbs, I chose a few ‘suggestive proverbs’ that contain human rights demands. Further,

other ‘reprimandative proverbs’ are selected here as they are to advise or to prevent, which indicate that there are certain values being held.’

By going deep into one’s own heritage as Mclean’s suggested, human rights are strengthened and weaknesses perceived in the UDHR 1948 can be recognised and reformed in a way that ‘the Eastern cultures’ that are rooted to an Absolute Self as existence’ can be functioning.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS LESSONS FROM MALAY PROVERBS: FEW EXAMPLES**

It is important to note here that this is not the first time proverbs or orature heritage find their way into the human rights domain. For example, Kenyan poet and human rights activist, Micere Githae Mugo, has explored the possibilities of engagement between African orature and human rights. In her paper, ‘African Orature and Human Rights’, Mugo clearly presents how rights of the people have been passed through oral literature and tradition. In fact, according to her, it is proven that old wisdom has secured human dignity and played a big role in understanding and restoring human rights.

*Proverbial wisdom was the other valve to freedom of speech and expression in Orature. Proverbs were seen as the accumulated wisdom, formulated out of years of experience and practice. They were supposed to graphically recapture, through light compressed poetic language, expansive areas of*

*recapitulated experience. A proverb could open up a whole sphere of understanding between one generation and another. Normally, the elders were best suited to use them, given their long years of experience, but people of all ages used them – the artist in particular. Proverbs philosophized on life and made commentaries on the world around human life. They provided counsel, contained historical information, rationalized the puzzling and mystifying, questioned the hidden, and alluded to possible alternatives during critical moments* (Mugo, 1991, p. 25).

The Malay proverbs made their inaugural appearance at the United Nation in 1957. During the general debate of the United Nations at the 12<sup>th</sup> Session in that particular year, Ismail Abdul Rahman, Malaya's first Permanent Head of Federation to the United Nations in New York, proclaimed a simple Malay proverb in order to explain the struggles of a new-born state like Malaya to deal with the domination of colonial powers. Ismail quoted a Malay proverb, '*gajah berjuang rumput juga yang berasa*' or according to his translation, 'when elephants clash, it is the grass that is destroyed' (Ismail & Ooi, 2009, p. 110). Malaysia, then known as Malaya, had just obtained its independence on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1957. On 25<sup>th</sup> September 1957, Malaya was newly born and Ismail actively joined the debate at the UN using a traditional cultural product (a

proverb) to make his point.

As stated previously, Mclean suggested that human rights should be located in the cultural arena of one civilisation in order to reconcile the 'clash of civilisations' because human rights are considered as imported Western products. By looking into the Malay proverbs, it will be more accepted that human rights are not a hindrance to religious roots and that there are common grounds for definitive truth, justice and love (Mclean, p. 189).

The Malay traditions prescribed the most basic regulations for human rights many centuries ago. In the following part, I will compare universal human rights understandings with selected Malay proverbs.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights covers 30 articles including civil, political, economic and cultural rights. Articles 1 and 2 generally proclaim that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights' and are "entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam also states almost the same aims. Articles 1 and 2 of the declaration assert the universal values of human beings stating 'all men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other

considerations' as all human beings are "from one family whose members are united by their subordination to Allah and descent from Adam" (Conference, 1993).

It is from these common points, freedom, liberty, equality and dignity, stated in both declarations that comparisons between meanings or objective of the Malay proverbs and general human rights demand are drawn.

*a. The Right to Basic Necessities of Life:*

One of the common understandings within the Malay proverbs is that 'individual' rights in the society are secured. This is important since human rights are deemed 'individualistic' by former Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad (Flynn, 2014, p. 25). His logic is based on traditional cultures, both Western and non-Western, that view individuals as parts of a family or a community at large; thus, individual rights are believed to be against the state and society, and perceived as something foreign or a threat. The above confusion that human rights only secured and emphasised individual rights derived from truncated reading of the UDHR. Individual rights are scattered between Articles 3 to 19 of the UDHR; involving civil liberties, and liberal rights fought for during the Enlightenment in Europe and considered as the first generation of human rights. Another pillar of human rights is clustered under Articles 20 to 26, which address political, social, and economic equity, which were championed during the Industrial Revolution. It is also known as the second generation of human

rights. Group rights can be observed within the last pillar of human rights and arise in Articles 27 and 28 of the UDHR. They are better known as the third generation of human rights (Ishay, 2004, p. 359). It is easy to locate individual rights in the Malay proverbs and other traditional cultures. This point is made by Jack Donnelly in his highly cited essay "Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights" that in fact 'in traditional cultures, communal customs and practices usually provide each person with a place in society and a certain amount of dignity and protection' (Donnelly, 1984, p. 413).

For instance, one of the famous 'suggestive proverbs' among the Malay is '*harta pulang keempunya*' or the 'property is back in the hands of its owner'. According to C.C Brown (1969, p.172) the proverb emphasized the idea of 'a thing or person is at last in its (or his [sic]) proper place. Another popular proverb among the Malays living in coast is '*kuat ikan kerana radai*' or 'the fish is strong because of its fins' which means every person has his or her place in the society and their own necessities. Similar to the previous proverb is '*lain lubuk lain ikannya*' or 'a different fishing hole, different fish' which means each person has his or her own character and needs to fulfil (p. 151).

*b. Individual's Right to Freedom:*

Another common right upheld in Malay proverbs is the individual's right to freedom. An example for this point is '*kita semua mati, tapi kubur masing-masing*' which is

translated by C. C. Brown as “all of us die but each has his own grave” (Brown, p. 117). This ‘suggestive proverb’ explains that each individual will be responsible for their own actions; thus, freedom is secured for them to do anything they wish for, but they also have to bear the consequences.

### c. The Right to Justice

The most dominant rights preserved in Malay proverbs are the right to justice or equality before law. This shows how Malay traditions pay careful attention to justice. There are many different proverbs carrying the same messages that we are equal and that violating others’ rights will give bad repercussions.

For example, a very widely used proverb even among the young generation is ‘*ada ubi ada batas, ada hari boleh balas*’ or translated by Mubin Sheppard as “where yams are browns, banks will be made; a day will come when you can pay him out” (Sheppard & Hose, 1992, p. 4). Another example that is popular among Naning residents, a small territory in the southern part of Malaysia, is ‘*hukum berdiri dengan saksi, adat berdiri dengan tanda*’ or “religious law is established by witnesses, custom is established by signs” (p. 81). Here, *adat* law or traditional law is mentioned as one of the methods to settle disputes. It also indicates that the evidence presented in *adat* law must be clear or else no judgement can be made. Thus, strict rules of evidence are employed. This method of getting the evidence is stated in the Malay proverb, ‘*mati rusa kerana jijak, mati kuang*

*kerana bunyi*’, which is translated as ‘the deer’s death is brought about by its track, the argus pheasant’s by its note’. According to Mubin Sheppard, the proverbs give a clear ruling that a guilty man should be discovered and punished only by means of clear evidence (p. 139). Thus, it is better to acquit him or her if there is no immediate evidence. A similar proverb against deciding without having all the facts and evidences is “*rebut merampus bertanda beti*” or ‘robbery leaves visible evidence’ (Fanany & Fanany, 2008, p. 166).

Another ruling on how to settle disputes is the concept of fairness. Hence, it is common to encounter proverbs that impart legal advice to the judge. There is a Malay proverb that says ‘*bak tembilang bak penggali, bagai yang hilang begitulah pengganti*’ or ‘like the spade like the hoe, the replacement must be like what is lost’. The proverb explains that “if you lose or break something that belongs to someone else, you have to replace with something that is the same as the original” (p. 110). Another proverb making this point is ‘*salah bunuh memberi balas, salah cencang memberi pampas*’ or ‘if you kill by mistake you make restitution, if you chop by mistake you make amendment’. Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany explained that this proverb suggests “misdeeds have to be punished in accordance with the law” (p. 167).

Proverbs are also delivered the other way around, that is, by illustrating the negative results or consequences of a situation. For instance, ‘*bertelau-telau seperti panas di belukar*’ which means “striking unequally,

like sunshine in a thicket” or simply said equal justice cannot be obtained from the jungle (Sheppard & Hose, 1992, p. 214). Another example of a negative reminder in Malay proverb is ‘*dituba sahajakah ikan, dijala jaring bukankah ikan?*’ which means “are those alone fish which are poisoned with the tuba root, not also fish which are caught in the nets?” (p. 226). This difficult proverb is actually asking a question, “are accomplishments confined to those who are well favoured?” (p. 226).

A judge who decides on certain cases is advised to be non-discriminatory and carefully examines all facts to establish equality before the law. There is a ‘reprimandative proverb’ ‘*tali jangan putus, kaitan jangan sekah*’ or in English: ‘the rope shouldn’t break, the hook shouldn’t snap’ meaning “if you have to settle a quarrel or decide a case, make sure it is fair to both sides” (p. 181). Malay wisdom, as transmitted in the proverbs, also proposes that ‘good aspects of the law and so forth should be maintained while bad ones should be gotten rid of’ as presented in this proverb ‘*yang teguh disokong, yang rebah ditindih*’ or “the strong should be supported, the leaning should be pushed down” (pp. 188-189). It is important that healthy and non-biased norms, regulations, customs and laws be put in place within the society as the Malays have been cautioned in their proverbs, ‘*biar mati anak jangan mati adat*’ or ‘it is better for your child to die than for proper custom to die’. This proverb may seem negative on the surface for agreeing one’s own child to die rather than for custom

to die, but it is a reminder of the existence of certain people who aim to step on others and abandon *adat* law. This notion is supported in another proverb, ‘*pulai berpangkat naik, manusia berpangkat turun*’ or “the pulai tree grows upward in segments, man descends in generations” (p. 92). However, even if the Malays may be quite obsessed with their *adat* law, any reform or change should be subject to majority approval as clearly noted in this proverb ‘*hilang adat tegal dek muafakat*’ or “custom vanishes through consensus” (p. 132).

Regarding respecting laws in other places, travelling Malays are also advised to remember that ‘*hujan menimpa bumi*’ or ‘rain falls on the earth’, meaning to respect and “obey the law or custom of the place you are” (p. 133). The same goes in this famous proverb, ‘*masuk kandang kambing mengembek, masuk kandang kerbau menguak*’ or ‘when you enter the goat’s pen, bleat; when you enter the water buffalo’s pen, low’ or simply to say ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do’.

#### *d. Freedom of Expression*

The most famous proverb on freedom of expression among the Malays is ‘*orang berdendang di pentasnya, orang beraja di hatinya*’ translated by Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany as “people dance on a stage, people rule in their heart” or according to them, it means “you cannot control what people think and feel” (2008, p. 159). Another widely accepted proverb regarding freedom of expression is ‘*patah sayap bertongkat paruh*’ or ‘if your wing

is broken, support yourself with your beak' which sends the message as "if you are going to oppose someone, do it with all your might" (p. 162). One proverb that is not very much heard among the younger generations for its archaic vocabulary is '*ramai beragam, rimbun menyelara*' or 'crowded is varied, leafy becomes dry' which is interpreted by Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany as "to each his or her own" (p. 165). They further describe it as, "the image of the first phrase is of a crowd of people, where each person has different opinions and views. The image of the second phrase is of a leafy tree suffering, perhaps from a drought". As proverb also serves as an advice to the people, older generations have reminded that '*enggang apa kepada enggang, orang kepada orang*' or "what is hornbills to other hornbills, what is a person to other people". Basically, the proverb suggests "to rely on your own opinions and views since everyone has to bear their own" (p. 127).

#### e. Rights of the People

Malaya was a feudalistic society where the king or ruler was at the central position to decree yes or no. In fact, the king is an integral part of being a Malay. Diane K. Mauzy (2006), for example, defines Malays after her careful research that being Malay is a combination of race, religion and language. Thus, a Malay who does not speak Malay and is a non-Muslim will not be considered Malay:

*A Malay was a Muslim who habitually followed Malay customs and habits and spoke the Malay language. Additionally, to be a Malay, one needed to be the subject of a state ruler; since the state monarchical system was an integral part of Malay culture and helped make Malays distinctive from some of the groups in Sumatra that share certain racial, religious, and language similarities* (Mauzy, p. 45).

Because of this, it is difficult to imagine for the Malays to oppose the rulers. However, it is quite surprising that there are also many proverbs motivating people to challenge, criticise and evaluate their leaders, and thus not to follow them blindly if they, the rulers, violate the rights of the people.

Nonetheless, these political and provocative proverbs are not widely shared and observed by many. Codes and ethics to govern and administer the people or country are not well learned and must be enlightened.

For example, take this suggestive proverb, '*raja adil raja disembah raja zalim raja disanggah*' or 'a just king is a respected king, a cruel king is a hated king'. Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany (2008) give two meanings for this particular proverb (p. 92). First, one needs to obey the law but fight against injustice. Second, leaders are judged by the public based on how they treat their people. I have to state it here that I do

not agree with the translation of the word '*disanggah*' as hated. The proper word for hate in Malay is '*benci*' and carries a mild, non-active action, whereas '*disanggah*' should be translated as 'to topple'. Thus, the exact translation for this proverb is 'a just king will be respected and supported, a cruel and despotic king will be toppled'. This perhaps can be linked to the 1699 failed revolution, one hundred years before the French Revolution where historical documents stated that Malays toppled Sultan Mahmud of Johore Lama kingdom and killed him for his despotic, brutal ways and massive corruption<sup>3</sup>.

The Malay proverbs also warn the people regarding the greedy elites, read here as '*anak ikan kecil menjadi makanan ikan besar*' or 'the fry of the little fish become the food of the big fish'. Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany give the indirect meaning of this proverb as "the majority are always subject to the few in power" (p. 105). Almost similar to this proverb is '*harimau ditakuti sebab giginya*' or 'tigers are feared because of their teeth'. This proverb simply means that people in authority are not respected because of themselves but because of their power (p. 130). Thus, the authorities are reminded by the wisdoms that they should use and access their power in a good and non-abusive manner. Once they become despotic and soon a toothless tiger, the Malays have their right to bring up and bring down those in power because '*raja adil raja disembah raja zalim raja disanggah*' or 'a just king will be respected and supported, a cruel and despotic king will be toppled'.

The people are still the base of their power as presented in this proverb, '*kuat ketam kerana sepit, kuat sepit kerana ketam, kuat ketam dan sepit kerana wujud*' or in English 'a crab is strong because of its claws, the claws are strong because of the crab, and the crab and claws are strong because of their form'. This political proverb shows how the people or the public are those who put leaders in power on their throne or chair. Hence, I agree with Ismet Fanany and Rebecca Fanany's meaning for this proverb, "the power of the leader is from others in power, the power of those supporters comes from the leader, but the power of all of them is from the army made up of the public" (p. 150).

An unjust leader should be replaced since '*sekali air dalam sekali pasir berubah*' or 'each time the water deepen, that's when the sand changes'; by this proverb it means that 'when the governance changes, the ways of place change' or correctly said 'a new broom sweeps clean'. Thus, unjust leaders can always be toppled down subjected to how they served the people.

#### *f. Child Rights to Education*

Finally, I will bring another right secured among Malay society which touches the rights of the child to education. In one of the famous proverbs, the Malays are told that '*melentur buluh biarlah dari rebungnya*' or "bend the bamboo when it is a shoot" (pp. 156-157) suggesting that an early education is needed to teach children to behave, or getting proper skills, etc. However, parents need to be cautious with

the aspects of education that they are feeding their children since wrong teachings will not return right outcomes. The Malay proverbs wisely preach that '*guru kencing berdiri anak murid kencing berlari*' or "the teacher urinates standing up, his students urinate while running" which means children can be better or worse if right education fails to take place (p. 130). The right education will put children and later adults into good behaviour; thus, good and healthy environment as highlighted in this proverb, '*majlis di tepi air; merdesa di perut kenyang*' or "courteous at the water's edge, polite on a full stomach" (p. 154).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the discussion above, we can conclude that the spirit of human rights is not absent from the Malays, and in accordance with their values of religion and universal etiquette. Therefore, it is not right to say that human rights values are unAsian or unIslamic as raised earlier in this paper. Human rights are indeed part of traditional cultures that protect the well being of the people. This paper is a preliminary effort, a novel attempt, to recast contemporary human rights dogma as derived from Malay wisdoms contained in proverbs. Selected Malay proverbs show human rights have been appreciated in traditional society and that the concepts are not very different from modern human rights discourses. Novel approaches in contemporary human rights research that focus on the universality of the idea of human rights are highly needed

lately. Although relating novel approaches to particular cultural settings or traditions are quite fashionable as done by Micera Mugo, too often, only the great religions and major traditions are paid attention to.

There are two recommendations to be pondered in order to get this idea into our human rights policy. First, there are lessons to be learnt from other civilisations or approaches. Jack Donnelly praises Rhoda Howard who combines 'practical and moral grounds' to reconcile conflicting practices when dealing with human rights. He noted that Rhoda Howard managed to apply 'opt out' strategy for women who choose not to participate in traditional cultures such as female circumcision if she thinks the tradition violates her rights. That time has come for the Malaysian national legislation to consider 'opt in opt out' or compromising strategy when it comes to greater human rights subjects. It has been quietly recognised that the 'opt in opt out' strategy has been applicable without any conflicts among the Malays. People who opt in to traditional practices or customs in favour of the Islamic law have never been questioned by the authorities or society since the custom is so strong, well preserved and widely accepted. For example, it is known and accepted among the Minang Malays in the Naning territory and Negeri Sembilan in the southern part of Malaysia to observe and practice their *adat perpatih* custom especially when it comes to the rights of women, daughters and widows to inherit materials after the passing of husband or father even though the custom or *adat* law is

actually contradicting the teachings of Islam that place the greater portions of belongings or materials of the dead husband or father should be given to the males or sons. In the Minang matrilineal system, women have their own special positions where they are the sole manager, the administrator and the decision maker, whereas the males including husbands in the house are food or material provider<sup>4</sup>. Only if they ‘opt out’ their rights, the husband or patriarch in the family system can be functional. Complex issues regarding human rights can also be approached with this ‘opt in opt out strategy’ where rights of religious/sexual minorities or women that are not properly observed in the English common law or Islamic law can be settled with the *adat* law. For example, women can be given their own rights to wear or not to wear hijab. The Islamic traditions made it compulsory for Muslim women to wear hijab; however, the Malay proverb, or traditional customs clearly says that ‘*kita semua mati, tapi kubur masing-masing*’ which means ‘all of us die but each has his or her own grave’. This can also be the solution to controversial decisions to leave Islam, apostasy or members of LGTBIQ who choose to live out of the closet. As explained before, this suggestive proverb explains that each individual will be responsible for their own actions and willing; thus, freedom is secured for them to do anything they wish.

Second, in order for the first recommendation to be realised, a lot of work needs to be done first to codify the huge amounts of Malay proverbs into a practical and applicable law. I hope this

paper can serve as base for future research. I also recommend the National Human Rights Policy not to ignore the Malay customs and to start sorting out the many interpretations and meanings of the Malay proverbs. Policy makers should not merely adhere to a cultural relativist discourse and this paper helps to correct the false notion that nurturing modern human rights leads to discordance. There are a plethora of human rights values covered as hidden pearls in the Malay traditions and this fact cannot be denied. Objectively, lessons from our own customs and traditions can be cultivated. If this daring attempt succeeds, human rights interests can be well served.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> This research was funded by a grant from Ministry of Education of Malaysia, Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS/2/2013/SS03/UKM/03/2).

<sup>ii</sup> The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a process adopted by United Nations to evaluate human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. Other than giving opportunity for

all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries, this unique periodic review also includes a sharing of best human rights practices around the globe. See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (Without date). Basic facts about the UPR. Geneva. United Nations Human Rights. <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/BasicFacts.aspx>

<sup>iii</sup> The magnitude of Alatas's scholarship was summarized by Chandra Muzaffar, former student of Syed Hussein Alatas in a simple fashion; 'there are five areas of scholarship that Dr Syed Hussein should be recognised in: the study of corruption as a political phenomenon; contribution in developing progressive ideas and approaches towards Islam; contribution in the study of ethnic relations and integration in the country; studies on the phenomenon of psychological feudalism in Malaysia; and the study on independent, autonomous thinking.' See Azizan, Hariati. (2007). Alatas the towering thinker. Retrieved 13th January, 2013, from <http://www.thestar.com.my/story/?file=%2F2007%2F1%2F28%2Ffocus%2F16707414&sec=focus>.

<sup>iv</sup> Sultan Mahmud Syah or known as Sultan Mahmud Mangkat Dijulang was killed and humiliated by his own people. It is widely recorded that the Sultan had homosexual tendencies; however, it is not because of his sexual orientation that he was brought down tragically but because his despotic rules and attitudes were harming the people. This is a landmark episode in Malay classical history but was carefully written and deliberately ignored by many scholars since Malays are feudalistic society. However, few historical documents did mention this important incident. See Boxer, C.R. (1964). The Achines Attack on Malacca in 1629, as Described in Contemporary Portuguese Sources. In. Basti, J. & Roolvink, R. (Eds.), Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays Presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his Eighty-Fifth Birthday. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 109-121. And see Harris, J. (1956). The History of the Danish Commerce to the East Indies. In Collections of Voyages and Travels. Vol. I. London: N.P. [https://ia700503.us.archive.org/6/items/cihm\\_35412/cihm\\_35412.pdf](https://ia700503.us.archive.org/6/items/cihm_35412/cihm_35412.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> I have written a paper on this subject. Musa, M.F. (2015). Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Pepatah Minang Yang Terpilih. Jurnal Melayu, 14 (1), 48-63.



## Self Help Groups an Empowerment and Financial Model for Women in Nadia District, West Bengal

Sharmistha Bhattacharjee

*Jaypee Institute of Information Technology Noida, A-10, Sector 62, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201307, India*

### ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is a widely discussed idea all over the world. Scholars have defined the concept by explaining its dimensions including economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, and political aspects, as well as psychological well being of individuals, groups and communities. The literature points out that empowerment of women is possible by providing them with economic independence, increased well being and social and political development. This is possible by giving them access to saving and credit which promotes greater economic role in decision-making, optimising household's welfare, improving women's skills, mobility, knowledge, and support networks (Basu, 2006). To tackle the problem of poverty and enable the community to improve its quality of life, "Self Help Groups" came into picture as an empowerment and financial model which particularly aimed to mobilise women in rural areas. The main objective of the paper is to throw light on self help groups operating in the rural set up of Village Balindi Baishpukur, Haringhata block, Nadia District, West Bengal. It aims to overview whether these groups act as an empowerment or financial model for the women in this particular District.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, micro finance, self help groups, marginalisation of poor, entrepreneur, microcredit, cooperative banks, comprehensive projects

### INTRODUCTION

"Empowerment is an active, multidimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and

power in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to be transacted; nor can it be given away as alms. Power has to be acquired and once acquired it needs to be exercised sustained and preserved" (Pillai, 1995). Realisation of such a power by the rural women folk gave birth to self help groups in rural areas as a collective process to make women to become self-reliant,

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*E-mail address:*

sharmistha121@gmail.com (Sharmistha Bhattacharjee)

self-awareness and encourage collective mobilisation, capacity building and external exposure and interaction.

Self help groups act as mediators to empower women in rural areas. It is an informal voluntary association of people formed to attain collective goals, people who are homogenous, with respect to social background, heritage, caste or traditional occupations come together for common cause to rise and manage resources for the benefits of group members (Suguna, 2011). This paper provides a description of whether the existing self help groups in the Village Balindi Baishpukur Haringhata Block in Nadia District, West Bengal, act as an empowerment or financial model for women. This village is selected to be studied after an investigation of six villages and understanding the notion of self help group of the women. The study concentrates on self help groups as a financial model or an empowerment model in the rural areas concentrating on self confidence of women, family support, access to means, control of resources and assets, mobility, role in decision making and changes in women's role.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have defined of self help groups in various ways to quote a few are as follows. Facilitators for Change Ethiopia (2003) defined SHG as a group of likeminded poor women in a community with common objectives of working together for their economic, social and community development. In India, SHGs constitute a

widely accepted development strategy for poverty reduction as they are perceived as powerful vehicle for the promotion of micro-credit and micro-finance especially for women (Chen *et al.*, 2007).

The SHG model was introduced as a core strategy for empowerment of women in the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) in India. This strategy was continued in the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) with the government commitment to encourage SHGs to act as agents of social change, development and empowerment of women (Planning Commission, 2002). It is the largest and fastest growing micro-finance programme in the developing world (Seibel & Khadka, 2002; Swain & Floro, 2008). SHGs can be viewed as 'Empowerment Model' of development which encompasses all. In the recent year, SHGs are emerging as alternative credit source to the poor (e.g., Kumar, 2004; Bharathi, 2005; Singh, 2009; Nabavi, 2009). NABARD views the SHG as an essentially financial model facilitating a supplementary credit delivery mechanism for poor families that have not been reached by the banking system (Tankha, 2002; Sinha & Patole, 2002).

SHGs have been instrumental in empowerment by enabling women to work together in collective agency. A good number of researchers including Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) claimed that this movement helped in empowering women. Further, SHGs are effective in reducing poverty, creating awareness and ensuring sustainability of environment, which finally results in sustainable development of the

nation. It is reported that SHGs are now emerging as the predominant model for poverty eradication, women empowerment (Chidambaram, 2004) and development agencies (Panda, 2005).

SHG – Bank linkage programme helps to promote financial transactions between formal and informal banking system (SHGs). This programme helps bank in reducing their transactions, as well as risk costs in delivering small loans. SHG – bank linkage is a new rural banking concept (Sharma & Deogharia, 2009).

Self-help group (SHG) is a village-based financial intermediary usually composed of between 10-15 local women. Members make small regular savings contributions over a few months until there is enough capital in the group to begin lending. Funds may then be lent back to the members or to others in the village for any purpose (Sreeramulu, 2006).

A Self-Help Group (SHG) may be a registered or unregistered group of micro entrepreneurs having homogenous social and economic backgrounds; voluntarily coming together to save regular small sums of money and mutually agreeing to contribute to a common fund and meet their emergency needs on the basis of mutual help. The group members use collective wisdom and peer pressure to ensure proper end-use of credit and timely repayment. This system eliminates the need for collateral and is closely related to that of solidarity lending, widely used by microfinance institutions.

To make the book-keeping simple enough to be handled by the members, flat interest rates are used for most loan calculations. Self-help groups are generally started by non-profit organisations (NGOs) that generally have broad anti-poverty agendas. These groups are seen as instruments for a variety of goals including empowering women, developing leadership abilities among poor people, increasing school enrolments and improving nutrition and the use of birth control. Financial intermediation is generally seen more as an entry point to these other goals, rather than as a primary objective.

The existing literature suggests that the concept of forming SHGs and linking to banks would raise income and broaden financial markets by principally providing credit, among other services, to small scale entrepreneurs and thereby reducing poverty (Aghion & Morduch, 2000). This would also lead to women's empowerment, since microfinance programmes have mostly targeted women as clients (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002; Littlefield, Morduch, & Hashemi, 2003). India, which has about 70 percent of the total population living in rural areas, most of who are poor, the programme of microfinance in terms of linking SHGs with banks holds a critical role in targeting poverty reduction and empowering women socially, politically and economically. Since the concept of SHGs is more than 25 years old, a number of studies have already examined the impacts of microfinance.

SHGs have been instrumental in empowering grass root women in several

areas. Evidences from different regions revealed that there are positive improvements realised in terms of all the group members becoming literate, mitigating village disputes, improving health and education of children and keeping the village roads clean, as well as giving exposure to all members of the group to carry on the bank's transactions, etc. It has helped in many other ways; in replacing money lenders, changing cropping pattern, increasing use of organic pesticides and fertilisers, creating seed banks and creating a better awareness on nutrition, health and hygiene. It has also prompted the involvement of people in regular saving and internal lending, helped them initiate micro enterprises and manage lending schemes, avail government credit, operate savings accounts and communal funds, and maintain financial records. Besides, SHGs have been instrumental in people becoming environmentally conscious, using eco-friendly toilets, constructing, using and repairing rainwater harvesting structures, and participating in politics. Women have gained technical skills, as well as basic principles of management and group building. These groups are also creating networks to help women of different regions to unite collectively for a common cause. The effectiveness of the programme is dependent on the social awareness and acceptance of such efforts (Dheepa & Barani, 2010).

Rural credits serve as a tool for providing a sustainable livelihood for millions of rural Indians who do not have a means of livelihood. Several organisations like RRBs,

Microfinance Institutions, NABARD, etc. are playing a major role in providing rural credit facilities to rural India. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is formulating and regulating the policies and procedures to make the rural credit facilities available to most of the needy. In spite of several efforts put up by various organisations to increase the rural credit facilities, several challenges will prevail in the years to come (Akoijam, 2013).

There was also a remarkable improvement in the social empowerment of SHG members in terms of self-confidence, as reflected in their decision-making abilities and communication skills. Sustainability of SHGs was well established in terms of increased value of assets and savings rate, better access to institutional loans, higher rate of repayment of loans, elimination of informal sources and impressive social empowerment. The studies have found that the most common service is savings and loan facilities. Savings include general savings and particular savings for education, housing, marriages and festivals. Loans include both small and large loans at costs lower than those available in the market. Scholars are of the opinion that empowerment can be judged by three parameters such as economic, social and political, and increased well being. They also pointed out that micro finance programme does not explain the strong form of women empowerment rather it is weak form of women empowerment (Basu, 2002). Scholars report that economic empowerment resulted by SHGs is far

different from financial intermediation of SHGs. In fact, SHGs are incepted as financial intermediaries facilitating a supplementary credit delivery mechanism for poor families that have not been reached by the banking sector. Therefore, economic empowerment model is quite different from financial model aspect of SHGs (Das & Bhowal, 2013).

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development views the SHG as essentially a financial model facilitating a supplementary credit delivery mechanism for poor families that have not been reached by the banking system (NABARD, 2000). The study self help groups have two sides. On the one hand, they feel economically and politically liberated because there is a continuous saving being done by them and in the time of disputes, the members stand with the victim. On the other hand, women feel that their money is being stuck in a particular account and there is no immediate benefits drawn (Bhattacharjee, 2010).

## METHODOLOGY AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The location of the study is Village Balindi Baishpukur in Nadia district in West Bengal, India. It falls under Haringhata Block. Haringhata (community development block) is an administrative division in the Kalyani subdivision of Nadia district in the Indian state of West Bengal.

Haringhata is a Town in Haringhata Tehsil in Nadia District in West Bengal State in India. Haringhata is Main Town for the Haringhata Tehsil. Haringhata is 72.3 km

from its District Main City Krishnanagar and 48 km from its State Main City, Kolkata.

The self-help groups in this village came in congruence with Muhammad Yunus's concept of microcredit and microfinance. Muhammad Yunus was of the opinion that "People are not poor because they are stupid or lazy. People are poor because they have no financial structures to help them! Poverty is a structural problem, not a personal problem" (Muhammad Yunus, n.d.) There are two types of self-help groups in the village one made by the cooperative banks and the other by the Panchayat programme Comprehensive Area Development Corporation.

The first self-help group in this village was formed in 1998. It was started and regulated by the cooperative banks but failed to exist for a long period of time. In 2001, a fresh group was found by non-government organisations in the village taking assistance from the cooperative bank.

In 2002, the comprehensive area development corporation initiated a self-help group in the same village. Both the programmes, the cooperative banks and the West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation, have helped in emergence of a number of self-help groups. Sixteen self help groups in total were selected purposely, keeping in mind the regular functioning of the group, transaction with banks in continuous process and availability of the entire members. The constraints faced by the researcher were unavailability of members, hostile nature of women towards providing information

and transactions not well recorded by the bank. Eleven of them were funded by the cooperative bank and five by the panchayat programme (CADC). This paper presents a case history of women who are part of these groups.

The main reason of selecting this district was on the basis of coming up with new self help groups, with four members of each group was selected. As a methodology, the researcher was a participant observer and did all the investigations by interacting and participating in the activities with the women. During the primary stage, a preliminary survey was done about their family members, income and livelihood procedures. Later, case studies were taken through one-to-one interaction.

The study adopted a descriptive study design. This design was crucial in capturing the socio-economic characteristic of the study groups such as demographics data, economic status, social benefits and entrepreneurial activities. The study used both primary and secondary data. The information about the number of Self Help Groups in respective development blocks was provided by the Block office

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

### *Background of the Village*

Balindi Baishpukur, Haringhata had a population of 689 (2010-2011). The women under study come from both Hindus and Muslim background. They all are married. They are either a part of a joint family, where the male members earn for the living or a

part of a nuclear family where they work with their counter parts. Type of work performed ranges from being contractual or seasonal workers to assisting the banks with e-banking facilities. The male members of the family are primary earners engaged as labourers or having their own shops. The education level varies, with most of them are educated till the primary grade but some have qualified their graduation degrees. The self-help groups have facilitated some of the poor women to learn to sign and encourage education at the family level. In case of some Muslim women, they have taught the Arabic language for religious and spiritual purposes. The Muslim women effectively inculcate the same to their children. One can find all types facilities in the village; there is a mixture of Pakka (brick) and Kacca (mud) houses in the village.

### *Formation of Groups*

The two major sources to help in the emergence and formation of the Self Help groups are the commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks cooperative banks, through NGO's and the West Bengal CADC (Comprehensive Area Development Corporation) through Panchayat which acts a multi-agency rural credit delivery structure comprising of a huge network in the village.

NGOs link SHGs to banks for opening savings account and credit requirements. Banks lend to these groups after assessing the credit worthiness of an SHG on various parameters like group discipline on regularity of meetings, savings, rotation of

funds, maintenance of books of accounts, group record keeping, repayment of loans, etc.

The bank facilitates the group members who are engaged in livelihood creation activities like running a retail shop, cattle rearing, zari work, tailoring job, making candles, artificial jewellery, etc. The West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation, popularly known as CADC, is a statutory autonomous body formed in 1974, with a view to bring about all round development of rural economy through an integrated approach towards diverse activities viz., irrigation, agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery, literary, preventive health, women and children development, rural industries, farmers cooperatives, etc. Being a unique concept that had not been tried earlier, many practical difficulties surfaced during the initial stages of its implementation. Accordingly original model had to be revised and modified from time to time (Nand *et al.*, 2012). The formation of the self help groups in this village was primarily to empower the women financially.

#### *Functions of the Group*

Self-help groups work in a democratic manner. The upper limit of members in a group is restricted to 20. Among them, a member is selected as an ‘animator’ and two members are selected as the representatives. The animator is selected for the period of two years. The group members meet every month. They discuss about the group savings, rotation of group funds, bank loan, repayment of loan, social and community

action programmes. All the self-help groups under study have a meeting on the seventh month and pay the required amount. The bank transaction is done by the leader of the group or the secretary. In such a group, the poorest women would come together for emergency, disaster, social reasons, economic support and social interaction. It is a registered or an unregistered group.

#### *Self Help Groups Regulated by Cooperative Banks*

There are 11 self-help groups made by cooperative banks. Women point out that the groups comprise of a mixture of APL (Above Poverty Level) and BPL (Below Poverty Level) groups. Women of APL (Above Poverty Level) groups wish to be a part of BPL (Below Poverty Level) groups since the facilities are more. It is heard from the women folk that there were many groups in the village but due to lack of interest of the members of the group, all of them came to an end. One of the self-help groups being studied has existed for more than ten years. These women started this group by paying rupees twenty five every month and later on taking a loan from the bank worth two lakhs. There are thirteen members in the group at present turning women withdraw and deposit money in the bank. This group meets once a month mostly on the seventh. The money is mostly withdrawn for farming, animal husbandry and colour fishing. The block development office also facilitates the groups by paying loan to them with a marginal interest. It has also received subsidiary from the bank. New

accounts are created from time to time. If one of the women folk wishes to leave the group, the money invested by her will be returned. Below are the names of the self-help groups, year of starting, members, monthly fee, loan amount and usage of loan of the groups after 2001.

One can find that right after 2001 and once again in 2006, the formation of groups started in the village since women felt the need for such groups. Women believe that these groups not only give them a sense of cohesiveness but also inculcate a sense of self-confidence that changes their role from being a housewife who is not aware of the outside world to an empowered woman. It also encourages literacy since most of the women who could not sign can do the same after the formation of such groups. The formation of SHG encourages capacity building, skill development effect, management of resources and assets. It allows the women to work and learn the

skills provided by the institutions for their social and economic growth. It is worth mentioning here that one of the women folk looks after the e-banking system imitated by the bank and effectively manages the same. Women have a great decision making abilities as compared to those who have not joined the groups.

#### *Self Help Groups Regulated by West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation*

The women are found to be a part of self-help groups which have existed since 2002. There are five groups in this category. Eight to thirteen members are part of these groups. They have deposited thirty to fifty rupees per month. Over the years, the account stands to have around two lakhs. They have taken loan twice from the bank of varied amounts. Two percent of interest is also earned by the group in such an investment. By turn, the president and the secretary go

TABLE 1  
Self Help Groups regulated by Cooperative Banks

Name of self-help group	Starting Year	Members	Monthly fee	Loan	Usage of loan
Preetilota	2001	13	25	2 lakhs	Farming, Animal husbandry Colour fish rearing
Mukti	2006	15	50	1.6 lakhs	Animal husbandry
Moton giri	2006	13	25	1.75 lakhs	Animal husbandry
Saboj Shakti	2006	14	50	1 lakh	Animal husbandry
Anupama BPL	2006	11	25	2 laks	Animal husbandry
Shabnab	2008	5	50	35000	Animal husbandry
Shakti	2007	14	25	11lakh	Animal husbandry
Arpita	2009	10	50	50000	Farming, Animal husbandry
Anamika	2009	10	50	20000	Farming, Animal husbandry
Ananya	2009	10	50	1 lakh	Farming, Animal husbandry
Jiniya	2010	5	50	70000	Agriculture, Cattle rearing

to the bank to withdraw or deposit money. The group members meet every month. By turn, women go to the bank and submit the amount. Below are the five groups under the West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation (WBCADC). All the groups are well coordinated and managed. The present groups are highly cohesive and cooperative. Many women have learnt to sign their names as a result of depositing and withdrawing money from the bank. Money is taken in the form of loan from the bank for business purposes, animal husbandry and poultry framing, vermin-compost and sewing.

There is also a presence of a male driven self-help group named *Sobuj Shakhi* which comprises of ten members. These men are perusing their graduate or post-graduate degrees, while providing tuitions to the students of the nearby villages. They pay Rs fifty every month to the group leader and have got a loan of 30,000 from the bank which is used for petty business.

Training is received by these groups from time to time. These include wool sewing, beautician courses, vermi-compost

fabrics and embroidery. They also help the village *Aganwari* by cooking mid-day meals for the children. Some women under study are a part of NREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) project. One group is of the idea that they get the benefits from the block office and training was provided for cattle rearing. By the time they were given sheep to rear, they were unable to manage it. They informed the office but no care was taken.

Most of the women in the groups are uneducated so transaction of monetary matters becomes very difficult for them. There is a concept of APL (Above Poverty level) and BPL (Below Poverty Level) groups in the village where the sanction of being a BPL group is easier than the former. The family members, particularly the males, guide these women to get such benefits. They also get loan from the block office for various purposes such as farming, animal husbandry and buying of machines. They have registered their group under block office. This is possible since more than half of the members are working. They complement the income of the male

TABLE 2  
Self-help groups regulated by West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation

Name of Self Help group	Starting year	Members	Monthly fee	Loan	Usage of loan
Shakti	2002	10	50	2 lakhs	Petty Business, Vermi-compost and Animal Husbandry
Neel Kamal	2005	10	50	1.9 lakhs	Vermi-compost and sewing
Chaitali	2005	8	30	42000	Petty Business and Animal Husbandry
Rajni	2010	10	50	45000	Petty Business and Animal Husbandry
Dalia	2010	10	50	22000	Machine

members of the family. It is a cohesive group. The main problem behind all the groups is that women do not understand the need of these groups and the facility they have in getting two percent interest from the bank. Women demand that the money should be immediately returned. The making of self-help groups also calls for conflicts between households. The women are of the opinion that the bank personnel's treat them badly due to their illiteracy. If there is minute mistake in the form, it is rejected. No woman is allowed to maintain two accounts. The women of this group conceptualise the existence of such groups as catalyst for empowerment. This enables them to interact with the outside world which was earlier not possible. The formation of self-help groups acts as empowerment and financial model in the rural set up. Although there are numerous difficulties, women are of the opinion that the self-help groups do not only allow economic advancement of women but also social growth per se.

Investigating the scenario as a whole, women are of an idea that there are numerous problems in the village, particularly the roads. The basic problem of the village is to commute to the block office located 15 kilometres away and the bank is around 5 to 6 km away from the village. Generally, women of the self-help groups participate in training programmes arranged by the *Bidhan Chandra Krishi Visvavidyalaya* (*Local Agriculture University*) and non-governmental organisations in making mats and edible products. These programmes are hardly effective. The women are of

the view that the self-help groups should be associated with the panchayat so that they can get more benefits. One of the non-governmental organisations in the locality also helps these women with paper work and bank formalities.

Viewing the group as an empowerment model, it was found that women are self confident and capable of making monetary decisions. Some male members help these women. Family support is generally present but sometimes the formation of such groups and being particularly a leader of the group carries stress that can result in household conflicts. The formation of SHG has given access and means to women since it has increased mobility among them. With regards to the financial model, it gives them control over resources and assets and ultimately, the decision making pattern has changed the role of women the rural set up as a whole. It was found that despite the conflicting views women have towards self-help groups in the rural set up, the existence and formation of such groups is a boon to the village as whole. This creates a close sense of solidarity and cohesiveness among the villagers.

In terms of training and experience, it was found that the existence of such groups facilitates women and inculcates the power of capacity building, skill development, and marketing linkage. Literacy makes them aware of their family planning measures. Women of this group are of the opinion that self-help groups are mediator for empowerment which also provide financial strength to women.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is worth mentioning here that SHGs emerge as an important strategy for empowering women, alleviating poverty and serve as an alternative credit source to the poor. They are an effective strategy for poverty alleviation, women development and social empowerment. A number of literatures are available on the role of SHGs in empowering women and there are also cross world evidences that SHGs are helpful in reducing poverty. Further, a few studies also support the SHG as a financial model that ensures low cost means of rural lending in the absence of formal financial institutions.

Coming together and forming of groups to empower themselves enable an overall development of the village. In the villages under study, the self-help groups act as mediators to empower women. It allows women to become literate and interact with the outside world, particularly in financial matter, which is a male domain in a patriarchal society. It also allows them to peep into the lives of many women living around them who are sometimes victims of diseases or domestic violence. These groups also help these women to overcome various issues and improve their quality of life. There is a deep sense of cohesiveness and bonds between the group members. At times, it also calls for conflicts but with repeated interaction and clarity, matters are solved. Many women under the APL group also try to form BPL groups or want be part of these groups to get quick benefits from the bank.

Sometimes, group politics also enter the household domain but it is easily managed. Meeting at homes are not generally liked by family members. It was found that a number of groups have been dissolved due to petty issues and not getting immediate results but still women are still interested to continue with these groups so that they can contribute to the family's income in the time of need. Some women are still not aware of the concept which results in not making the payments in time. Women are of the view that saving money will allow their children to attain higher education and a good standard of living.

The overall findings of the study suggest that the SHG-bank linkage programmes have made a significant contribution to social and economic improvements of SHG members. It acts as a catalyst which empowers women. SHGs are both an empowering and financial model for the village as a whole.

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## OMG (*Oh My Grade*)! Social Networking Sites Ruin My Academic Grades?

Shakiratul Hanany Abd Rahman<sup>1\*</sup> and Stephen, J.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language, Universiti Malaysia Sabah Sandakan Campus, Locked Bag No. 3, 90509 Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

The future generation's competency in the English language is highly dependent on the performance of our very own TESL students as they are the future English language teachers who can make all the differences. Hence, any issues that might jeopardise their performance can never be taken lightly. This research was carried out to investigate whether TESL students' addiction to social networking sites (SNSs) influences their academic performance. A survey questionnaire method was used to gather data from 93 Semester 8 TESL students from the Faculty of Education, UiTM Shah Alam. The SPSS version 16.0 was used to analyse data. Despite initial prediction that student addiction towards SNSs is related to their academic performance, this study found no significant relationship between the two aforementioned variables. The finding contradicts several other studies on the relationship between SNSs addiction and academic achievement.

*Keywords:* Social networking sites (SNSs), internet addiction, academic performance

### INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites (SNSs), as defined by Boyd & Ellison (2008) are “web-based services that allow individuals to (1)

construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. In particular, SNSs are websites or applications (app) that can be accessed on various devices that allow users to get instant updates from anyone in their contact list, be it in the form of newsfeed, tweets, status updates, picture uploads,

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*E-mail addresses:*

hanany@ums.edu.my (Shakiratul Hanany Abd Rahman)

jeannets@gmail.com (Stephen, J.)

\* Corresponding author

comments on the ‘Wall’ and the list goes on.

It has been observed that students tend to be logged on to SNSs while doing any tasks or assignments through the multiple devices they possess. Despite the common scenario where students would browse through their smartphones to check for the latest updates on their SNSs accounts while listening to lectures, we do not know whether academic grades are affected, particularly that of TESL students. The SNSs could serve as a tool to enable instructors and students to communicate virtually regarding academic matters. The website edudemic.com provides useful information on the positive use of social media in education. Any academic-related announcements and information could be made available on the SNSs, especially Facebook.

However, heavy usage of SNSs could have an adverse effect on students’ academic performance. This claim is supported by several studies that have been conducted previously (Karpinski & Duberstein, 2009; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Ahsan ul Haq & Sohail Chand, 2012; Junco, 2012; Glass *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, there are always two sides of a coin; there are studies that show use of SNSs does not have negative effects on academic performance (Kolek & Saunders, 2008; Martin, 2009; Syarif Husin *et al.*, 2011; and Moon, 2011) which means addiction to SNSs is not related to Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

In any case, when it concerns TESL students and their academic grades, the stake is higher. TESL students are future English teachers who *must* perform well and

to become effective English teachers. They are responsible for imparting good English language skills to our young generation. In 2013, it was reported in the news that two-thirds of the English language teachers in the country are not competent to teach English (*The Star*, 11 Sept 2013). This was not a finding from armchair research but information gleaned from the Education Ministry. Of the 60,000 English language teachers who took the Cambridge Placement Test in 2012, only 20,000 passed the test. Passing the test in this context means that the teachers possess the accepted standards to teach English. The findings of this study are for relevant parties such as the scholarship providers and the Ministry of Education.

This study aims to examine the relationship between students’ addiction to SNSs and their academic performance. In particular, the study is conducted to fulfil the following objectives:

1. To investigate the frequency of SNSs usage among TESL students
2. To investigate the level of SNSs addiction among TESL students
3. To investigate the influence of SNSs addiction on TESL students’ academic achievement or performance

The hypothesis of the present study is, students who spend too much time on SNSs tend to possess lower Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) compared with those who do not spend as much time on SNSs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a likelihood students who are obsessed and addicted to SNSs tend to their neglect studies although they do not intend to do so in the first place. That is due to the fact that sometimes, students tend to get carried away with everything that SNSs have in store for them leading to the negligence of everything else that is outside of their online world. Being overly obsessed with SNSs has somehow made people to become out of touch with reality to such an extent that everything around them is affected, including job as well as school performance (Brick, 2008). In addition, students also tend to avoid academic affairs when they are connected to SNSs. According to CBS News (2008), University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) reported students busily typing on their laptops and logging onto Facebook are a very common scenario. By getting connected to the site, students are more likely to avoid or neglect their academic matters. According to Dr. Jerald Brock, a psychiatrist who treats patients who use the Internet excessively, this is because people are trying to extend their sense of identity and their sense of self by being connected to Facebook.

In an exploratory study conducted by Karpinski & Duberstein (2009), it was found that Facebook use negatively affects students' academic performance in that higher usage leads to lower academic performance as measured by grades and hours spent studying per week. Using the same data set, Kirschner & Karpinski (2010) noted a similar finding in which Facebook

use affect students' academic achievement and this is measured using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the study, the examination results of Facebook users are significantly lower than nonusers and this is evident through their CGPA. In this study, the users' GPA average is 3.06 while the nonusers' average is 3.82. It is clear the GPA gap is significant (0.76) which could determine whether a particular student will be graduating with First Class honours or Second Class honours. Researchers have also found that Facebook users spend fewer hours per week studying on average than non-Facebook users. Interestingly, according to qualitative data, a majority of students reported that Facebook use does not have a negative impact on their academic performance. Others on the other hand reported its use impacts on their academic performance which include procrastination, poor time management skills and the tendency to put off studying.

A study supports the claim that the use of social networking sites has an adverse effect on students' academic performance (Glass *et al.*, 2013). In the study, students self-report the number of hours they spend on Facebook a day. The study involved 255 freshmen and junior college students at a private university in the northeast United States. It yielded a similar finding as the preceding studies (Karpinski & Duberstein, 2009; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010) in which the amount of time students spent on Facebook was found to negatively affect their self-reported academic performance. It was consistent with the findings by

Ahsan ul Haq & Sohail Chand (2012) who found an adverse effect of Facebook use on students' academic achievement and it appear to have a more negative effect on male students. Congruent with findings by the studies above, the research conducted by Junco (2012) also found that the time spent on Facebook is strongly and significantly negatively related to overall GPA.

Conversely, Kolek & Saunders (2008) reported contradictory findings . In this particular study, they found that correlation does not exist between Facebook use and students' GPA. Martin (2009) has conducted similar research and found no significant relationship between the amount of time spent by students on social media and their grades. In the study, the grades of heavy Facebook users as well as light Facebook users were measured. It is found that among the heavy Facebook users, 62% received high grades and 38% received low grades, and the grade percentage among light users showed an exact similar pattern. A similar finding was reported by Syarif Husin *et al.* (2011) among 78 third-year Biomedical Science students in Faculty of Health Sciences, University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in which they conclude that the students' CGPA is not significantly associated with the time spent on Facebook. Likewise, Moon (2011) who studied 400 undergraduate students using a Web-based survey reported that there is no strong relationship or correlation between Facebook use and students' academic performance. In Moon's study, Facebook use is measured by hours spent on the site and

academic performance is measured using students' GPA. Given the two contradictory findings, this paper is keen to investigate how the TESL students' academic grades are influenced by the use of SNSs.

## METHODOLOGY

The target population of this study is TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) students at the Faculty of Education, UiTM Section 17, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. The sample was chosen using purposive sampling. In a purposive sample, researchers knowingly select individuals based on their knowledge of the population and in order to elicit data in which they are interested in (Mackey and Gass, 2005: 122). For this study, the participants selected were Semester 8 TESL students of the Faculty of Education, UiTM. The researcher's insider knowledge of the population was that they were computer literate and have at least one SNS account.

This research is quantitative in nature and data was obtained through survey questionnaire method. The purpose of the questionnaire is to elicit information regarding the samples' demographic data, their level of addiction towards SNSs as well as their current academic performance. The questionnaire is divided into three sections or parts. Section 1 was related to Demography consisting of three questions on gender, CGPA range and specific CGPA results. Section 2 consisted of four questions aimed at eliciting the respondents' frequency of SNSs usage. The respondents were required to tick the appropriate boxes provided.

Section 3 consisted of 20 questions meant to elicit student information pertaining to their levels of addiction towards SNSs. Questions from this section were adapted from The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) (1998), the first validated measures for Internet addiction developed by Dr. Kimberly Young.

The information on total number of students in the population was obtained from the main office of the Faculty of Education, UiTM Section 17, Shah Alam and 120 questionnaires were distributed; only 93 were returned. The respondents took three weeks to complete and return the questionnaires.

Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0 was used to analyse the quantitative data obtained in this study. The demographic details and the SNSs usage frequency were analysed using descriptive statistics in order to obtain both the frequency and percentage for data. Data pertaining to the influence of SNSs addiction on students' academic achievement was analysed using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Pearson correlation coefficient functions as a tool that is used to analyse the relationship between variables in a research. Using Pearson correlation coefficient, both the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables were determined. The variables' relationship strength was determined by the Pearson correlation value. Values ranging between .10 to .29 indicate the relationship as "Small". Values ranging between .30 to .49 indicate the relationship as "Medium", and for values ranging

between .50 to 1.0 indicate the relationship as "Large". Regardless of the sign in front of the value, whether it is a negative or a positive, the strength for both  $r = .5$  and  $r = -.5$ , for example, is the same. The positive and negative signs in front of the value will determine its direction (Cohen, 1988).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses salient findings from data presented in table forms.

TABLE 1  
CGPA

	Frequency	Percent
3.50-4.00	27	29.0
3.00-3.49	60	64.5
2.50-2.99	4	4.3
2.00-2.49	2	2.2
Total	93	100.0

From the table above, it can be seen that 27 students (29%) have CGPA ranging from 3.50-4.00. It is also very apparent that the CGPA range of 3.00-3.49 is the one with the most number of students, which are 60 (64.5%). There are four students (4.3%) who possess CGPA ranging from 2.50-2.49. The least number of students, which is only 2 (2.2%), possesses CGPA ranging from 2.00-2.49.

Based on Table 2, the mean of Semester 8 TESL students' CGPA is 3.38, which falls under the second CGPA range, 3.00-3.49. Nevertheless, the mean is based on only 74 out of 93 participants as the remaining students did not indicate their specific CGPA.

TABLE 2  
Mean of CGPA

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CGPA2	74	2.47	3.78	3.3836	.27558
Valid N (listwise)	74				

TABLE 3  
SNSs Ownership

	Frequency	Percent
Valid yes	93	100.0

It is found that 93 students (100%) own at least one SNS account. This shows that SNSs are widely used among Semester 8 TESL students. Facebook seems to be the most popular SNS as all the respondents have a Facebook account.

TABLE 4  
Weekly Usage

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Everyday	78	83.9
2-3 times per week	13	14.0
once a week	2	2.2
Total	93	100.0

From the above table, it is shown that 78 students (83.9%) log in to any of their accounts every day. It can also be seen that 13 students (14%) log in to any of their accounts 2-3 times per week. Only two students (2.2%) responded that they only log in to any of their accounts once a week.

TABLE 5  
Usage Duration Per Session

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 21-24 hours	5	5.4
17-20 hours	3	3.2
13-16 hours	7	7.5
9-12 hours	5	5.4
5-8 hours	22	23.7
1-4 hours	38	40.9
<1 hour	13	14.0
Total	93	100.0

As for the usage duration per session, it was found that it ranges ranging between 1-4 hours, with a total of 38 students (40.9%). The number of students whose usage duration ranged between 5-8 hours was 22 (23.7%). There were 13 students (14%) whose usage duration was less than one hour per session. There were seven students (7.5%) whose usage duration per session ranged between 13-16 hours, five students (5.4%) for both durations ranging between 9-12 hours and 21-24 hours, and finally, there were three students (3.2%) whose usage duration ranging between 17-20 hours per session.

TABLE 6  
Level of Addiction

	Frequency	Percent
Valid low	51	54.8
average	37	39.8
high	5	5.4
Total	93	100.0

Twenty items were outlined in the questionnaire in order to determine the respondents' level of addiction towards SNSs. There were three scales for the 20 in which the first scale was labelled 'Rarely/ Does not apply', the second was labelled 'Frequently' and the third was labelled

'Always'. The maximum score a respondent could get was 60 while the minimum was 20. Thus, in order to determine the level of addiction, the difference between the maximum and minimum score was calculated, which was 40, and it was further divided into three categories representing three different levels of addiction. As for those who scored between 20 and 33, they fell under 'Low addiction' group. For those who scored between 34 and 46, they fell under 'Average addiction' group, and for those who scored between 47 and 60, they fell under 'High addiction' group.

In the table above, it is apparent that a majority of Semester 8 TESL students were not severely addicted to SNSs because more than half, 51 out of 93 students (54.8%), possessed low addiction to SNSs. Thirty seven (37) students (39.8%) possessed average level of addiction. Remarkably, only five students had high addiction level towards SNSs.

TABLE 7  
Correlation between Addiction and CGPA

	addict
CGPA2	Pearson Correlation
	-.167
	Sig. (2-tailed)
	.154
	N
	74

The correlations between students' CGPA and their addiction towards SNSs were calculated using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Addiction in this case was treated as ratio variable using students' total mean score summed from the 20 items in the questionnaire. From the above table, it is shown that the correlation

coefficient between CGPA and addiction is .167, indicating that there is no relationship between students' CGPA and their addiction level to SNSs. The strength is obviously insignificant with the total score of 0.154. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between SNSs addiction and students' academic achievement, and the level was also insignificant.

This study has succeeded in achieving all the research objectives. As for the first research objective which was to investigate the frequency of SNSs usage among TESL students, it was found the student usage is moderately frequent based on the moderate duration per session of a majority of the students despite the fact that they log in to their accounts on a daily basis. In particular, a majority of students connect only between one and 4 hours per session and a minority connect for long hours (17-20 hours) per session. Other than that, the number of students who log on to their accounts once a week is very small. This finding showed that the TESL students' usage of SNSs is moderately frequent as a majority of them get connected to SNSs for short hours only. This could imply that a majority of the students do have their limitations when it comes to getting connected on the SNSs.

As for the second objective which was to investigate the level of SNSs addiction among TESL students, it was found a majority of the TESL students are not severely addicted to SNSs, indicating that only a minority is highly addicted. It can be concluded the majority of the TESL students in this study are not addicted to the SNSs.

despite the fact that more than 80% of them use it daily. This usage may be to fin family members' status in the Facebook. Although a majority of these students do use SNSs on a daily basis, they are not addicted to them implying these students could still manage their time pretty well.

Finally, the third research objective, which was to investigate the influence of SNSs addiction on TESL students' academic achievement, has also been achieved. It was found SNSs addiction has no influence on student achievement. This was proven through the calculation using the Pearson correlation coefficient in which it could be clearly seen that there was relationship between student addiction and their academic achievement. Additionally, the strength was also insignificant which demonstrates that the two variables are not related in any way. A finding which can further support and solidify this are the students' mean of CGPA, which is 3.38, and the CGPA range possessed by a majority of the students is between 3.00-3.49, and only a minority possesses CGPA ranging from 2.00-2.49. Semester 8 students are already students in their final semester and, in this context, over 90% of the students managed to retain CGPAs over 3.00. This suggests the students are academically successful as well as connected on their SNSs of choice. Their academic grades are not negatively affected by the amount of time they spend on the SNS.

Based on the discussion above, the findings of this are not parallel to the researcher's initial hypothesis. In fact, the

findings contradict other research which show SNSs use has an adverse effect on the student academic achievement (Karpinski & Duberstein, 2009; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Ahsan ul Haq & Sohail Chand, 2012; Junco, 2012; Glass *et al.*, 2013). The finding of this study that indicates an insignificant relationship between SNSs use and academic achievement is instead parallel with previous researches such as Kolek & Saunders (2008), Martin (2009), Syarif Husin *et al.* (2011), and Moon (2011). In these studies, the researchers found that SNSs use has no significant relationship with student academic achievement. This study clearly shows a similar finding and contributes to the literature, particularly in the context of TESL students, which, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, is not yet available. Based on these findings, this study posits that the TESL students' use of SNSs, either as addicted user or non-addicted user, does not influence their academic achievement. In short, the students' Internet addiction per se, is not a factor in their academic achievement. Interestingly, there are several implications that could arise out of the findings of this study.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

First, instead of putting blame on Internet usage per se, we can look at the student's health as the main cause for his/her poor academic results. Spending hours on the Internet either updating status, checking other peoples' status, chatting with friends or even finding new friends has an effect on a person's stress levels. In their study

of 300 21-year-olds, researchers at the University of Edinburgh Business School found that “the more social circles a person is linked to online the more likely social media will be a source of stress” (Ngak, 2012, CBSNews). In addition, Rosen (2012), author of *iDisorder*, found that teens and young adults become anxious if they cannot check their text messages. It is therefore possible to argue that, compared with Internet addiction, the student’s health status may be a more accurate prediction of achieving academic success (Ickovics *et al.*, 2014)

Secondly, academics can take the opportunity to fully integrate their teaching and learning using SNSs as it is made evident through this study that TESL students do log in to their account on a daily basis. The instructors might specifically set a “Page” or a “Group” in Facebook, for example, which could enable the students to communicate with them virtually in a more fun and less stressful manner. Since a majority of the students do log on to their SNS account every day anyway, the tendency that the students might miss any important academic-related announcements, information or instructions is very small. This will encourage the students to not only keep track with any latest information from their instructors, but it will also provide the opportunity for them to either synchronously or asynchronously discuss their academic matters through the “Chat” feature in Facebook, for instance. In short, university academics can make maximum use of everything that the SNSs have to

offer in order to bring their teaching and learning beyond the formal lectures so that both instructors and students can benefit from them. In addition, students could also make full use of their time while being connected to SNSs to do something much more beneficial rather than just “play” with the SNSs.

Thirdly, more SNS-like Learning Management System (LMS) such as Schoology should be developed in order to encourage online learning. Schoology is a type of LMS that resembles Facebook; however, its use is purely for the purpose of academic work. What we can start to think about now is the appropriateness of the development of SNS-like LMS that enables some non-academic social features. This is because it is proven through this research that the correlation between SNSs use and students’ academic achievement does not exist, so, perhaps students should be allowed to multitask and enjoy the social, non-academic features offered in SNS-like LMS. So far, Schoology is widely known as one of the most popular LMS platforms out there with Facebook-like interface; however, its straightforward academic purpose interface might throw students off the application. Other LMS platforms mostly function purely as academic tools without any resemblance of SNS. Perhaps, other LMS platforms that look like Twitter, or even Instagram could be developed in order to enhance students\ learning.

Since TESL students are studying language, mobile SNSs such as Viber, LINE, and WhatsApp could also be beneficial

for them. This is due to the fact that these applications allow voice recording, and the voice recording might be used to record the students' voice for speaking exercises, pronunciation of phonetic symbols and many others. Mobile SNSs are also downloadable on multiple devices especially smartphones, so TESL students and their instructors might utilise the function so that learning can happen in a more casual and fun manner.

In conclusion, this study found no significant relationship between the levels of SNSs addiction with the TESL students' academic achievement. Thus, TESL students, their instructors and even LMS developers can use this finding to enhance the learning of TESL students. Learning can indeed take place outside of classroom and if SNSs use does not affect student academic achievement, why hesitate to make use of all that it has to offer to create a more fun and creative learning experience?

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## An Exploration of ‘Unhomely Moments’ in Sadegh Hedayat’s *Stray Dog*

Oroskhan, M. H.\* and Zohdi, E.

Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Vali-e-Asr University, Rafsanjan, Kerman, Iran

### ABSTRACT

By the 20th century, transnational immigration escalated sharply. This has caused a feeling of displacement among immigrants due to the oscillation between two geographical places, the native or ancestral land and the foreign land. Consequently, the concept of “home” has taken on an added importance at a time of multiple journeys for immigrants across the world. Interestingly, in some cases, the person is not dispossessed of a place to live; however, he/she does not feel at home in the “new home”. This feeling of not belonging to a particular place is described by Homi K. Bhabha as “unhomeliness”. An “estranged” sense of “unhomeliness” emerges when one lives in a place which is not his/her real home. Accordingly, Iranian Intellectuals like Sadegh Hedayat who went abroad to gain the latest knowledge, mentally absorbed Western knowledge and they could never feel at home again. Of our subject, Hedayat could never feel at home because he never succeeded in leading to a consensus between his traditional Iranian culture and the modern Westernised culture. In this respect, Hedayat’s *Stray Dog*, a short story written in 1943, clearly portrays this feeling of never-belonging to any home. The story narrates the life of a dog (Pat) who is caught between two worlds, his motherland and the foreign land. Finally, it is suggested that the life of this dog, an unclean animal for some Muslims, exemplifies that of Hedayat himself whereby both experienced a sense of ‘unhomeliness’.

*Keywords:* Diaspora, unhomely moment, Homi Bhabha, Hedayat’s *Stray Dog*

### INTRODUCTION

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*E-mail addresses:*

h.araskhan@yahoo.com (Oroskhan, M. H.)

esmaeil\_zohdi@yahoo.com (Zohdi, E.)

\* Corresponding author

The connotation of home and ‘unhomed’ in postcolonial studies is centred around the diasporic subject. Indeed, the home turns into a significant nucleus in the schema of social networks established among the diasporic subject. Therefore, the concept

of home and ‘unhomed’ is contingent upon acquiring a good sense of the notion of diaspora. Considering its origin, diaspora means “scattering of seeds” (Anthias, 1998, p.560). However, as a concept, diaspora has a long history, initially used to illustrate the dispersal of the Jewish people from their homeland. Thus, the concept “underwent an amazing inflation that peaked in the 1990’s, by which time it was being applied to most of the world’s people” (Dufoix, 2008, p.1). Nowadays, diaspora is an all-embracing term that signifies people who have been uprooted from their native place through migration, immigration or exile. Therefore, it can be said that diaspora implies a “dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or countries” (Briziel & Mannur, 2003, p.1). When the diasporic subject crosses the geopolitical border, he or she encounters wide-ranging new experience and reality. Therefore, it is clear that the diaspora should have various interests and interaction with the homeland. For some in the diaspora, the homeland is described “as a sacred place filled with memories of past glory and bathed in visions of nobility and renaissance” (Levy & Weingrod, 2005, p.5). One of the central aspects of diasporic experience is “a strong attachment to and desire for literal return to a well - preserved homeland” (Clifford, 1994, p.305). This shows that diasporic subject never forgets his/her attachment to the homeland. When the diasporic subject is torn between his homeland and the

foreign land, defining the concept of home within the domain of diaspora becomes an intricate, and multifaceted task because it ends in the plurality of ‘homes’ and ‘belongings’. In this case, we are faced with a multilayered notion which is not based on a fixed concept. As Walters explains “The notion of diaspora can represent multiple, pluri-local, constructed location of home, thus avoiding ideas of fixity, boundedness, and nostalgic exclusivity traditionally implied by the word home” (1994, p.16). The relation between diaspora and the native place of origin is represented by equivocation and psychological uneasiness because the diasporic subject is situated between two different homes. Moreover this ambivalence toward the concept of home is continued until “a fundamental ambivalence is embedded in the term diaspora: a dual ontology in which the diasporic subject is seen to look in two directions—towards a historical cultural identity on one hand, and the society of relocation on the other” (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1994, p.425).

When the diasporic subject is relocated from his homeland, he should deal with a new place with all the different characteristics. The most basic feature ahead of the diasporic subject is the difference between the physicality of the new place and the old one which persistently reminds him of his homeland. Surely, home is unavoidably associated with the physicality of the homeland. And it becomes “a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination” (Brah, 1996, p.192). In this case, home also suggests the delighted experience of a

locality. One will be grasped by “its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, somber grey skies in the middle of the day...all this, as mediated by the historically specific every day of social relations” (Brah, 1996, p. 192). In this respect, one does not need to explain it to a native so long as it is the place of the most intimate relationship which also contributes to our personal memories. In this sense, those groups displaced from their native lands yearn to return to their homeland. However, as soon as the expansion of the home is exposed to outside influences or the outside world and the privacy of the home is invaded, a strange feeling of uneasiness is evoked. Homi K. Bhabha described this state of one’s feeling as the “unhomely” moment.

Homi Bhabha is one of the prominent figures of postcolonial studies. He has contributed to this field by introducing and developing challenging ideas such as hybridity, ambivalence, uncanny, time-lag and the unhomely. In his view, a moment of ambivalence is created when two cultures are mingled together and the colonised and the coloniser interact with each other. Therefore, a new culture with distinguished features is created and this dynamic, interactive, and tension-packed process is what Bhabha names as hybridity. This is a social process which ends in developing unhomeliness in the colonised. (Bressler, 2011, p.205).

In his book, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha provides a definition of

‘unhomeliness’. He believes the colonised subject long for his or her background and in this process, he cannot fully fit in. Bhabha refers to the intervention of the subject’s memory as a “negating activity” which forces the subject to experience an estranged sense in his/her present time. Later, he calls this feeling of “estrangement” the “unhomely” or being “unhomed”:

The negating activity is, indeed, the intervention of the ‘beyond’ that establishes a boundary, a bridge, where the ‘presencing’ begins because it captures something of an estranged sense of the relocation of the home and the world-the unhomeliness - that is, the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations. (Bhabha, 1994, p.9)

Bhabha borrows the term “unhomely” from Sigmund Freud. Freud’s term, *Das Unheimlich*, is most often translated into English as “the uncanny,” meaning that which is strange or unsettling though Freud meant more than this in his use of the term. However, *Das Unheimlich* is something that is both strange and familiar at the same time. According to him, “heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich” (Freud, 1995, p.220). Thus, Bhabha develops Freud’s notion of *Das Unheimlich* or the uncanny into an unhomely context whose familiarity and unfamiliarity are disturbed. “The unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence”. (Bhabha, p.11). On

this condition, “unhomed” does not denote being homeless. The ‘un’ in unhomely works as an antonymic prefix that deems contrary to the root word ‘home’. Therefore, to experience the moment of ‘unhomely’, as Lois Tyson mentions in *Critical Theory Today*, “is to feel not at home even in one’s own home because you are not at home in yourself; that is, your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee” (2006, p.421). Bhabha has extensively pondered on this notion and explicated the terror affiliated with the loss of the one’s recognisable self. He believes that “The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow and suddenly you find yourself taking the measure of your dwelling in a state of ‘incredulous terror’”. In another word, “unhomeliness” is a sense which makes you feel lonely at your home because you are not at home with yourself; you persistently oscillate between different cultures resulting in you becoming a psychological refugee with no place to take refuge in and feel peacefully and therefore, you fail to produce a new subjectivity. Similarly, the central theme of the Hedayat’s *Stray Dog* is based on the problem of displacement of the protagonist who is suffering from a split personality.

### *Sadegh Hedayat*

Sadegh Hedayat was an exceptional talent in modern Persian literature as a result of modernism in Persian fiction (Katouzian, 2008, p.1). He was born on 17 February 1903 in Tehran and committed suicide in a small rented apartment in Paris on 9 April

1951. The author of *Majm ‘al-Fosaha, Riyaz al-’Arefin* and *Rawza al-Safa-e Naseri* is mostly noted for his symbolic innovative technique of writing which distinguishes him from the authors of classical Persian literature. In his writing, he tried to show the “metaphorical classification of Iran in the two forms glorious past and impure and rotten present” (Mahmoodi, 2012, pp. 44-45). His writing is culture-specific and describes different facets of Iranian life. He is mostly known for his masterpiece, *The Blind Owl*, which explores many facets of Western literary tradition like its genre and is “the most famous Persian novel both in Iran and in Europe and America” (Katouzian, 2008, p.1). Persian literature owes its gratitude to him because of “his use of modernist, more often surrealist, techniques in Persian fiction” (Katouzian, 2008, p.1).

Hedayat lived during an important historical period of time in Iran and his writings appeared during the reign of Reza Shah which lasted for 20 years from 1925 to 1941. Although the country was never fully and officially colonised during this period, two imperial powers, the British and the Russians, had much economic influence over it. The French were at the peak of their intellectual reign during this period and many Iranians were tended toward them. As a result, many Iranian intellectuals had become doubtful about their past or the foundation upon which their identity is built. Homa Katouzian in his book *Sadegh Hedayat: His Works and His Wondrous World* describes this generation of Iranian

Intellectuals having a critical outlook on their culture and history: “Hedayat’s generation of intellectuals developed a critical approach toward history and culture into which they were born, forcing upon themselves the task of reinvestigating the very foundations upon which their identity and self-conception traditionally rested” (2008, p.44). Accordingly, it is justifiable to assert that Iranian intellectuals were ‘intellectually colonised’. It seems plausible that Hedayat was at the top of his career during a period in which European imperialism had a great influence on Iranian Intellectuals. At the “turn of century Iranian thinkers internalized the incongruity between their inherited local realities and the appropriated Western models as a structural deficiency” (2008, p.44).

Hedayat’s tendency and exposure in both Western and Eastern cultures situated him between two worlds. Taghi Modaresi, one of the celebrated authors of the generation after Hedayat, expresses his view about “Hedayat’s life is a continuous oscillation between secure and safe atmosphere which is bounded to keep the honor of father’s home and the foreign world” (Mahmoodi *et al.*, 2010, p.2). This oscillation between home and foreign world imposed some difficulties on the inner life of Hedayat and shows itself in the narratives of Hedayat and narratives of this period, “Past and present, culture and history, inherited ideals and adopted values merged in the narratives of this period” (Katouzian, 2008, p.44).

Hedayat’s life is a perpetual vacillation between the secure and safe atmosphere of the homeland for which he felt honoured and the foreign world for which he was deeply absorbed in as the fountain of his inspiration that contributed to his innovation of story writing. Hedayat’s tendency toward the West left him in a terrible situation in which he could not feel peace. He was always in search of a home in which he could feel relaxed and as a result, his suicide has been deemed as “a symptom of his inability to cope with the differences between his own culture and that of Europe” (Rahimieh, 1989, p. 16).

Hedayat has written many short stories tackling many issues. Katouzian has categorised his writings into: “romantic nationalist fiction, critical realist stories, satire and psycho-fiction” (Katouzian, 2008, p.7). Thus, *Stray Dog* can be considered as “one of Hedayat’s best psycho-fictions” (Katouzian, 2008, p.178). It should be noted that the term “psycho-fictional” was coined by Katouzian in 1970s to specifically describe Hedayat’s works; it differs from the category of ‘psychological novel’. In her view, psycho-fictional stories reflect “subjective nature of the stories, which brings together the psychological, the ontological and the metaphysical in an indivisible whole” (Katouzian, 2008, p.10).

In *Stray Dog*, Hedayat portrays the life of a desperate modern man in the form of an allegorical story. This message is carried over by a stray dog named ‘Pat’ which gets lost in Varamin, a city near Tehran, and

rambles around while being kicked and cursed by almost everyone it comes across.

Hedayat beautifully expresses the internal sense of self-alienation and self-separation from one's homeland by delving into the dog's psyche and provide a perfect example for understanding the tragic existence of a human being torn between two worlds,

*Stray Dog* describes a dog's psyche while going through the trauma of alienation, helplessness and physical torture, and his feelings, desires, hopes and sense of nostalgia ... make it accessible to human understanding as an instance of the tragedy of existence (Katouzian, 2008, p.178).

Wandering and straying is a familiar theme among Hedayat's psycho-fictions, except this is played by an animal not a human being. The aim of this study is to explore the diasporic subject's ongoing vacillation between the secure homeland and the strange atmosphere of a foreign world.

#### *The concept of home in Hedayat's Stray Dog*

Hedayat writes prose in both Persian and French focusing on exiled people and the incessant dialogue that occurs between being in exile and home that seems to shape the subject's identity. Therefore, home and the loss of home has become a central motif in colonial and postcolonial literatures.. In this regard, Hedayat's impulse to search for 'home' has lured him into a complex web of metaphors of home in *Stray Dog* because it surrounds the psychic and

physical experience of the colonised (Pat) and coloniser (his owner).

*Stray dog* opens with a description of a place which barely has the necessary requisite of a prosperous life. At this place, only the essence of life is provided for the people. There were "several small shops designed to satisfy hunger and other primitive needs of life" (Hedayat, 1995, p.1). This viewpoint is expressed by someone who has been abroad and astonished by the advanced Western civilisation. This astonishment shattered the confidence of the Iranian intellectuals and they felt compelled to question the uniqueness of Iranian civilization. This perspective led them to a:

*Rejection of the traditional world views that postulate God at the center of things and human souls as having the prospect of unending spiritual salvation encouraged them to find themselves as figures who are separated and unappreciated by society* (Mahmoodi et al., 2011, p.1)

At this juncture, we encounter a person who feels alienated and rejected in a deformed society. From now on, the 'unhomely moment' initiates and relates the traumatic ambivalences of the "hero". This ambivalence and psychological apprehension is the result of the connection between diasporic subject and his native place of origin which shows the former being torn- between two different homes. The Iranian diaspora can make a connection with his/her homeland as a result of being

exposed to Western civilization but the Iranian society is reluctant to welcome such people especially by the traditional and religious segments who view the former as irreligious, “In their eyes, the torture of an unclean dog, cursed by religion and possessed of seven lives, was quite natural and worthy of eternal reward. To please Allah, they beat him” (Hedayat, 1995, p.1).

It is probable that a dog is chosen as the protagonist of this short story, is to show the dishonourable situation the Iranian intellectuals . In many Islamic countries a , dog’ is regarded as an ‘unclean animal’. In the story, this dog whose name is Pat invokes some pleasant moments from his memory. “Whenever he looked at the field, the animal instinct in him revived and with it came pleasant memories of the past (Hedayat, 1995, p.2)”. It is the unhomely memory of home, or the remembrance of loss that is further disrupted by strange narrations of recent events. These memory flashes produce idyllic images of his family in a totally different world, as if from another planet. “This was his hereditary instinct; all his ancestors were bred to be free in the lush meadows of Scotland (Hedayat, 1995, p.2)”. For him, home has become a “place of origin, or the place of settlement, or a local, national or transnational place, or an imagined virtual community, or a matrix or known experiences and intimate relations (Cohen, 1997, p.3)”.

To illustrate this complex web of unknown experiences, Bhabha suggests the concept of ”unhomely”.and introduces a whole new perspective of homelessness. He

believes that homelessness is not confined to a stable category, since for the unhomely there is no spatial or conceptual reference of home. As Bhabha puts it, “Home may not be where the heart is, nor even the hearth. … Home may be a mode of living made into a metaphor of survival” (Bhabha, 1997). Hence, the “home” or dwelling is persistently decorated with shadows of different individual and collective agony placed on the Ego. Numerous incidents of the past from layers of individual and collective memory intrude into the Ego’s sense of the historical present and the world.

Pat searches his memory through the labyrinths of the past, citing the events which will help him preserve a collective memory romanticising his homeland and tries to connect it with the host homeland. And when he loses his homeland “suddenly, he had lost his mother and his brother; he had remained alone with his master” (Hedayat, 1995, p.3). At this moment, his master’s place becomes his new place to live. Therefore, he feels responsible toward his new home in which he is living:

He felt bound to respond to his master’s call, to scare strangers and stray dogs off his master’s property, to play with his master’s child, to treat those he knew differently from strangers, to eat on time and to expect to be petted at a proper time (Hedayat, 1995, p. 3).

Though this new place is not endowed with the features of his lovely homeland, he is still enjoying his time there because he feels a sense of belonging there. Although the time he used to spend with his brother was unforgettable, now he is happy that

he has a new friend “his master’s son. He would run after his new friend at the end of the garden, barking and biting his clothes” (Hedayat, 1995, p.3). Pat was really happy with his new friend and could still go on with his life easily. As time goes, an apprehension grows between where he is from and where he is at which causes the diasporic subjects (Pat) to form his own space. Therefore, he straddles between the two cultures. Yet, the painful memories of previous ‘home’ and the attempt to adapt to his new home foreground his feeling of alienation. He is like a pendulum vacillating between nostalgia for the homeland and the struggle to shape his present out of his new home. He cannot bear staying in this situation for a long time because this cannot be permanent. This situation, as Bhabha discusses it, is not a “transcendental passage (1997, p.447) but a “moment of transit” (Bhabha, 1997) in which the collusion of the different homes produces a sense of struggle which would compel the subject to “frame and name... social reality” (Bhabha, 1997).

In the story, Pat is also willing to frame his own social reality and thus, abandons his responsibility and tries to find his own way by joining a bitch:

*His master’s voice, cumbering him as it did with every duty and responsibility, had a special effect on Pat, but a force above and beyond the forces of that alien world pressed him to stay with the bitch. This obligation dulled and deafened his ears to the sounds of that world (Hedayat, 1995, p.3).*

However, Pat is not lucky enough and is unable to find a mate to form a union out of all this ambivalence and psychological apprehension; his attempt to create a new subjectivity fails. Thus, he enters a state where he has almost completely lost any physical existence; his symbolic appearance as a dog is the mask of an un-presentable identity or as Bhabha says, an identity of “no presence” (1994, p.294). The fragmented narrative, which is in the form of repeated patterns of restrained sorrow and pain, stain the neat usual order of his present. The timeless pain is thus portrayed as an unhomely moment. And as time goes on, his desolation escalates and while he is emotionally emptied, he yearns for love and kindness:

He needed to be fondled. His eyes begged for love and he was ready to give his life for anyone who would be kind to him and pet him on the head. He needed to convey his love to someone, to sacrifice himself and to show his devotion and loyalty, but it seemed that no one needed such an outpouring of affection; nobody took his side, and in every eye he saw nothing but enmity and malice (Hedayat, 1995, p. 4).

Home is endowed with relationships, bonding and a pool of collective memories that presume identity and nativity and it shapes a longing when it is dissipated. Thus, it is common sense to assert that the concept of homeland is recognised with a significantly interactive, romantically involving, and gracious aspect. Clearly, when you experience a loss of home, it

compels you to search for a location where the self could belong, a secure socio-political, cultural and intellectual space one could describe as home. For Pat, it became impossible to find a place so as to feel at home and live peacefully. Each and every land indicated a strange dwelling for him because every element and event of this land appears strange due to its uniqueness and absence from the homeland’s scenario: “He did not recognize this world he was entering. In it no one shared his sentiments and ways (Hedayat, 1995, p.4).

As the story ends, Pat eventually finds out the truth that he belongs to neither of two places namely his master’s home or his homeland and he is not able to form a private sphere. Therefore, he comes to this point that “All this effort had been useless. He knew neither why he was running, nor where he was running. He was spent and there was no way out” (Hedayat, 1995, p. 5). He finally realised he had no prospect for the future. And at last, while he was trying to run after car with the hope of finding a reliable home so as to be rid of the city in which he has been trapped, he loses his sensation and lies down on the ground with two vultures waiting to take his eyes out.

## CONCLUSION

During the reign of Reza Shah, Iranian intellectuals were caught between the world of modernity and tradition. One of these Iranian intellectuals is Sadegh Hedayat who was faced with contradictory social and cultural situations. He spent most of his

life trying to figure out a stable connection between his tradition and the modernity. However, he never succeeded and this is appropriately portrayed in his short story *Stray Dog* with the dog committing suicide. Hedayat never felt at home and saw himself without any sense of belonging to any place.

He had tried to describe the desperate status of Iranian intellectuals like himself in his writing. This expression which is an appropriate expression of an ‘unhomely’ moment is well described in *Stray Dog*. This concept of ‘unhomely moment’ was well developed by Homi Bhabha. He borrowed this term from Freud but changed its context to express a situation in which the subject’s past memory is merged with the present time and a strange feeling is created in the present time due to this intervention. Bhabha has researched on this topic extensively. He recognised the terror affiliated with this sense of doubleness between the past and the present time. He believes that the oscillation between these two worlds, created in the subject’s mind, results in the diasporic subject to feel lonely. Pat is persistently trying to find his collective sense of safety and stability in the home to avoid this sense of loneliness; nevertheless, he is rejected every time. Therefore, the concept of home, with its associations and affinities are defined within and sometimes flourished, never became attainable for Pat due to the intervention of the past memories into the present time.

At the end of the story, this nostalgia for the homeland is unattainable for him. And it takes the shape of avoid which is never

fulfilled in his mind finally causing him to commit suicide. Hence, in the present study, our focus was to discover the meaning of the concept of home in Hedayat's *Stray dog*. Hedayat successfully depicted the desperate unhomed situation of Iranian individuals through his protagonist, Pat, a dog, an 'unclean animal' in much of the Muslim world. As a result, the external and internal psychological trauma leads the diasporic subject into final destruction and death.

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## A Conceptual Model of Tourist Satisfaction

**Kwok See Ying<sup>#,\*</sup>, Ahmad Jusoh and Zainab Khalifah**

*Business Administration Department, Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia,  
81310 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

Tourism is a rapidly growing business that receives global attention. Successful tourism business will offer many benefits to the host countries. Although Malaysia's tourism industry is fast expanding, studies on satisfaction in the tourism context are still limited. Hence, conducting more satisfaction research in the Malaysian tourism context is vital. In this paper, three factors related to satisfaction namely service quality, value and experience are discussed. Previous studies only show direct relationship between these three constructs on satisfaction creation. However, based on comprehensive literature review, it is believed interactions of these constructs can be more complex and not limited to a one-to-one direct relationship. This paper puts forward a conceptual framework which describes how satisfaction can be influenced directly and indirectly by the three above-mentioned variables.

*Keywords:* Satisfaction, value, service quality, experience and tourism

### INTRODUCTION

Studies on satisfaction have received much attention and focus in order to understand the concept (satisfaction) better. Even though studies on satisfaction have been

conducted across industries, very few studies have focused on Malaysian tourism. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Malaysia's travel and tourism industry have been increasing continuously (WTTC, n.d.), hence illustrating the potential of expansion, which will be of significance for the country's economic development. Successful tourism business will provide greater revenue and profits to the host countries especially those with abundant resources. Therefore, understanding the factors that affect tourist satisfaction is

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*E-mail addresses:*

s.ying0525@yahoo.com (Kwok See Ying)  
ahmadj@utm.my, ahmadj@management.utm.my (Ahmad Jusoh)  
m-zainab@utm.my (Zainab Khalifah)

\* Corresponding author

<sup>#</sup> Author's current affiliation

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business and Finance,  
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, 31900 Kampar, Perak, Malaysia

important, especially in countries where tourism contributes substantially to the economy. Thus, more studies need to be carried out to achieve higher tourist satisfaction level; the latter is key to higher revisit rate and revenue to the country.

Studies have indicated good service quality, value and experience enhance tourist satisfaction. For instance, Zakaria, Hamid, Karim and Daud (2009) discovered service quality impacts on tourist satisfaction which was consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Žabkar, Brenčič Dmitrović (2009) at four tourist destinations in Slovenia while Ali (2015) looked at a case study of Malaysian Resort Hotels. A study conducted by Lai and Chen (2010) has discovered the direct and positive association between value and satisfaction. Similar findings were reported in Gallarza, Saura and Moreno's (2013) study on student leisure trips and Song, Lee, Park, Hwang and Reisinger (2014), who studied Korean tourist satisfaction in the context of temple stays have provided empirical evidence that value has an impact on tourist satisfaction. Chen and Chen's (2010) were successful in identifying a positive relationship between experience and tourist satisfaction in the heritage setting. The link between experience and satisfaction has been reported by Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2013) and Song, Ahn and Lee (2014) in their study on wine tourism and mega events respectively.

Nevertheless, those studies examined these three factors separately. Indeed, the relationship between experience, value and

service quality and satisfaction can be as simple as one-to-one direct relationship or more complex. This is because in the real world, the factors generally do not stand alone but function cooperatively in explaining the formation of satisfaction. For instance, according to the perspective of Stimulus-Organism-Responses (SOR), the above-mentioned constructs are connected. For that reason, a study that adopted SOR concept as the foundation of model construction was conducted in order to understand tourist satisfaction in a holistic manner.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the fundamental model of the suggested framework. Next, the following subsection explains concepts and definitions of the study's variables. Furthermore, the theoretical background of the study and a review of earlier studies will be discussed.

The Stimulus-Organism-Responses (SOR) model was developed to explain the effects of the service environment on consumer behaviour. The SOR model suggested the environment stimuli affect the emotional states of consumers, and thus, lead to the display of approach-avoidance behaviour. The concept introduced in SOR model is applicable to link the four variables discussed in this paper.

A series of consumptions, engagements and socialisations process at the destination during the trip have exposed tourists to different environment stimuli such as sight, scenery, crowdedness, servicescape. These

stimuli subsequently form the tourist's experience and influence the level of perceived service quality. Meanwhile, the experience and service quality derived from the destination's environment clues are deemed appropriate to substitute the stimulus factors as suggested in the SOR model.

After receiving environment clues that form experience and influence the level of perceived service quality, the organism (tourist in this study) will evaluate whether they are pleased with that experience and services received. The tourist's perceived value evaluation, which is partly derived from the emotion or the mood (Song, Lee *et al.*, 2014), denote the organism stage this circumstance. Finally, the approach behaviour expected in the SOR model can be represented by the concept of satisfaction. This means that if tourists have a good experience and perceives the service quality as positive, they are pleased and satisfied. Consequently, four major concepts discussed in this paper could be connected to the adoption of the concepts introduced in the SOR model.

#### *Definition of Concepts*

The definition of the term 'tourist' could be seen from different perspectives. Based on the analysis from various viewpoints on the definition of "tourist", some characteristics were found to be similar. These characteristics included movement, overnight stay for a short period not more than one year, not their usual environment, the purpose and activities of travelling

(McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1995; UNWTO, 1995; Horner & Swarbrooke, 1996).

Satisfaction refers to how much a person likes or dislikes a product or service after consumption (Woodside, Frey, & Daly, 1989) or a response to the perceived inconsistency between expectations and perceived performance (Oliver, 1980, 1981; Tze & Wilton, 1988; Hoffman & Bateson, 2006, 2011). In short, in this paper, satisfaction refers to the tourist's feeling of like or dislike pertaining to their visit.

Service quality relates to meeting customer requirements via service delivered (Chakrabarty *et al.*, 2007). Generally, it is widely accepted that service quality depends on the degree of the actual service performance to meet customer needs and expectation (Grönroos, 1990; Asher, 1996; Presbury *et al.*, 2005). In this paper, service quality refers to tourist evaluation of the services rendered during the trip.

The second variable is value which refers to the consumer's overall assessment of perceptions of what is received and what is given (Zeithaml, 1988; Zeithaml *et al.*, 2013). McDougall and Levesque defined value as "benefits received relative to costs" (2000, p.393). In short, value can be viewed as the overall sacrifices incurred in relation to benefits received (Buzzell & Gale, 1987; Monroe, 1991) by the tourists during the trip.

Apart from service quality and value, the third variable that may explain satisfaction is experience which is the collection point where the parties exchange

sensory stimuli, information, and emotion (Robinnette *et al.*, 2001). There are two common threads that describe experience - the first is where experience requires the engagement by a person and the second is where experience is internal in nature, and hence, unique (Knutson & Beck, 2003). Quality of experience could be used in describing the emotional outcome from consumer involvement in the activities (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). In this paper, experience is related to the tourist internal outcome of the trip.

#### *The Service Quality, Value and Satisfaction Relationship*

Service quality is a major factor related to satisfaction creation which can be seen in earlier studies (e.g. Spreng & Mackoy, 1996; Murray & Howat, 2002; González *et al.*, 2007; Lai & Chen, 2010; Lee, 2013). According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), satisfaction level is influenced by the gap between service perception and expectation. For instance, a better fit between service perceptions and service performance will reduce the gap, leading to higher quality of service and consequently higher satisfaction (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Parasuraman, *et al.*, 1994; Asher, 1996; Ekinci, 2004). Disconfirmation theory supports the gap's view, meaning that when perceptions meet or exceed quality expectation, positive disconfirmation is formed and the customer is satisfied. Otherwise, the customer is dissatisfied, suggesting a negative disconfirmation when perceived quality is lower than expected.

Value is also seen as a factor influencing satisfaction (Patterson & Spreng, 1997; Woodruff, 1997; Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998; Lai & Chen, 2010; Clemes *et al.*, 2011). Satisfaction is an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive regarding the fulfilment of some needs, goals or desire (Hansemark & Albinson, 2004; Namukasa, 2013). Therefore, it is reasonable to think that when the benefits a person receives are equal to or exceed what he/she sacrifices, the person will feel satisfied. On the other hand, if a sacrifice is higher than the benefit gained, the person will feel dissatisfied.

In addition, research findings also indicate that value is highly affected by perceived quality (Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Razavi *et al.*, 2012; Gera, 2013). The relationship between service quality and value can best be explained by adapting the utility perspective, in which the value is related to what a person gives up (cost) and what they receive (benefit) (McDougall & Levesque, 2000; Peter & James, 2013a, 2013b). Price and service quality are two main antecedents of perceived value (Duman & Mattila, 2005; Peter & James, 2013a, 2013b). It is important to note that superior quality is always priced higher (Zeitheml *et al.*, 2013) and therefore, perceived quality positively influences value, while price affects value negatively (Duman & Mattila, 2005; Lai *et al.*, 2009; Alireza *et al.*, 2011).

Some researchers (e.g. Bolton & Drew, 1991; Woodruff, 1997) have suggested that service quality is one of the factors that

affect value level, which in turn affects satisfaction level (Kandampully, 2006). Hence, service quality seems to influence the value creation first before it impacts on satisfaction level (Oliver, 1997; Woodruff, 1997; McDougall & Levesque, 2000). In addition, Sheth *et al.* (1991) suggested that value mediates the relationship between service quality and satisfaction and this view is supported in subsequent studies (e.g. Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Murray & Howat, 2002; Malik, 2012). When service quality influences satisfaction indirectly through value, it is reasonable to assume that value plays a mediator role in the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. Based on the above discussion, the first proposition is shown in Fig.1.

#### *The Relationship between Experience, Value and Satisfaction*

Studies have indicated relationships between experience and satisfaction (e.g. Hoffman & Bateson, 2006; Chen & Chen, 2010; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013). Today's customers do not merely purchase or consume services to satisfy their physical or intellectual needs. They are, instead, seeking something new or more to fulfil their different and ever increasing needs (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Hence, customer evaluation and satisfaction relate to their sense and response while consuming a service (Otto & Ritchie, 1996); that is, the “experience” that meets today’s consumer needs (Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Pine & Gilmore, 1999, Chang & Horng, 2010). Also, consumers demonstrate a sense of satisfaction when they encounter good service experience, which is a particular type of approach suggested in the approach and the avoidance theory (Donavan & Rossiter, 1982; Hoffman & Bateson, 2006). Thus, experience and satisfaction are correlated.

It was also found that experience and value are correlated (Bitner, 1992; Orsingher & Marzocchi, 2003; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The experience encountered will influence the evaluation on benefits (Prentice *et al.*, 1998), which is the major element that positively improves the value perceived, subsequently, experience's quality could be said to have an influence over perceived value. Moreover, the study of value chain management suggested that every point in the experience may potentially create value for the customer (Ron, 1992). Values created from each experience together sum up perceived value and thus, support the statement that value is affected by the experiences.

Proposition 1: Service quality has an impact on tourist satisfaction creation through value.

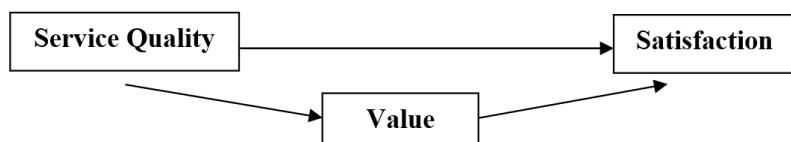


Fig.1: Value as mediator between Service Quality and Satisfaction

Carpenter (2008) suggested that satisfaction is the outcome of consumer judgment on value perceived derived from experience. Thus, rather than direct influence, experience seems to manipulate satisfaction indirectly through value. According to the findings by Chen and Chen (2010) who studied heritage tourists, the direct effect of the experience quality towards value is reported to be greater than the effect of experience quality on satisfaction. Their study also indicated quality of experience influenced satisfaction level more than value does. When experience appears as the major contributor to satisfaction level and value as the alternative factor, this establishes the mediator effect of value in the experience-satisfaction relationship. Chen and Chen (2010) further indicated the mediator effect of value although this particular aspect was not emphasised in their study. A recent research conducted by Song *et al.*, (2014) however, has empirically demonstrated that value mediates experience-satisfaction relationship in the context of temple stays.

After considering the direct and indirect relationships between experience, value and satisfaction, it is clear there is a mediator role of value in the relationship between

experience and satisfaction. Hence, the second proposition is as shown in Fig.2.

## THE SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK

Based on the discussion in previous section, taking into account the service quality and experience together and the role of value as a mediator, a model has been developed and illustrated in Figure 3. When integrated, experience and service quality are two important factors that contribute to satisfaction directly and indirectly through value. Thus, improvement in service quality and/or experience influences perceived value which has an impact on tourist satisfaction. The interaction of these factors can be seen in the SOR concept discussed earlier. However, the relationships shown in Figure 3 are not sufficient to explain the clear link between these variables when the interaction between service quality and experience is neglected. Hence, further study that attempts to bridge the gap between these variables is required.

Literature review suggested the need to explore the relationship between experience and service quality which has been neglected in earlier studies. Some researchers have

Proposition 2: Experience has impact on tourist satisfaction creation through value.

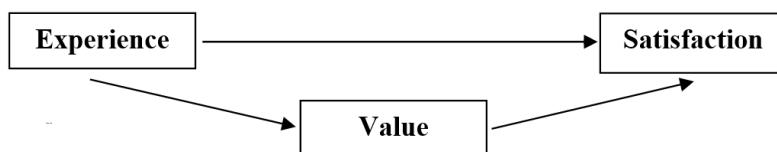


Fig.2: Value as mediator between Experience and Satisfaction

suggested that evaluation on quality does not require customer experience (Oliver, 1980; Caruana, Money & Berthon, 2000). Hence, direct relationship between experience and service quality is not supported. However, indirect relationship may exist because both service quality and experience contribute to the creation of value as well as satisfaction.

After taking into consideration the relationships between all these four constructs, this paper further explores the role of service quality as a moderator between experience and satisfaction by adopting the Kano's philosophy. The Kano Model of Customer Satisfaction classifies product attributes based on how they are perceived by customers and to what extent a product attributes or functions meet customer requirements which are linked to customer satisfaction; this is supported by Utility theory. From the view of economics, utility is the measure of satisfaction, which is related to the greatest happiness gained, where one seeks the highest benefits in relation to what they have sacrificed. Also, the utility concept discovered that not every single customer affords to or seeks premium quality of services because price is the

determinant of the level of quality in most of the time. Some customers seek the highest quality possible with the amount they are willing or can afford to pay. Summing up these perspectives, the demands of the level of the quality of services vary in different customer market segments. Therefore, Kano's philosophy supported by utility theory will illustrate how customers from different markets weigh the importance of service quality differently.

There are two possibilities for service quality to perform the moderator effect in the relationships shown in Fig.3: a) moderate the relationship between experience and value; b) moderate the relationship between value and satisfaction. However, bearing in mind the service quality-value-satisfaction relationship discussed in previous section, service quality is indicated as the antecedent variable of value and appears to affect value before it has impact on satisfaction level. For this reason, we suggest that service quality moderates the relationship between experience and value foremost with an impact on satisfaction level later. The second possibility, however, is not examined in this paper due to the above-mentioned reason.

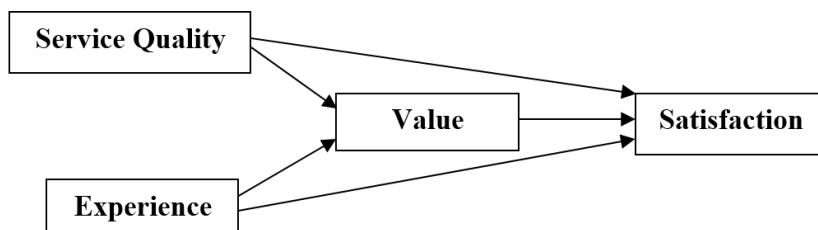


Fig.3: The role of value as mediator

The different role of service quality can be associated with the KANO model. Generally, KANO classified the product attributes into three categories: threshold, performance and excitement attributes (see “Kano Model Analysis”, (Dodson, 2010). Indeed, Kano analogy application is not limited to goods/products only but is also relevant in the context of tourism services. By assuming similar experience level, service quality has a different role with different tourist groups that affect value and satisfaction level.

Normally, service quality is a “must” element in the luxury goods and services market. The absence of high service quality will result in low value creation and lower satisfaction accordingly. Nevertheless, the presence of high service quality will not raise value and satisfaction. For high-end tourists who are willing to pay extra for good and services like five star hotels, first class cabin seat and others luxury services, high service quality is a must. These up-market tourists expect high quality services for the price they pay. Consequently, when quality of services appears as the threshold attribute for tourists in high-end market, it can be expected the latter can become dissatisfied when quality of service does not meet their expectation. However, higher service quality does not automatically enhance the value and satisfaction level (Högström, Rosner, & Gustafsson, 2010).

However, in the context of medium-priced goods and services, service quality may be categorised as the performance feature. Under this circumstance, the higher

the service quality, the higher the value derived from experience and the level of satisfaction subsequently. Tourists in this group are willing to spend a moderate amount during their trip such as business class cabin and three star hotels among others. With the amount they spent, they expect to receive a certain level of service quality. That is, if middle class tourists view service quality as a performance attribute, the tourists are satisfied if the quality of services perceived meet their expectation, but become dissatisfied when the quality of services failed to meet their expectation (Högström, *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, the higher the quality of services perceived, the higher the level of value and satisfaction created (Högström, *et al.*, 2010).

Alternatively, in the discounted or low-priced products and services market, service quality may function as an excitement attribute. In this market, consumer sensitivity on price is greater. To get the utility provided by low prices, consumers have to give up the disutility inherent in quality as a sacrifice. Therefore, presenting high service quality concurrent with low-priced service is expected to enhance the value derived from experience and level of satisfaction subsequently. In the context of tourism, this applies to budget travellers and backpackers for whom price is a major concern. As long as the price is cheap, they are willing to give up high service quality. Nevertheless, if service providers are able to perform good services at low price, it is expected to increase the perceived value and satisfaction level of these tourists.

Service quality affects the level of value and satisfaction in different ways when the customer weighs the importance of service quality differently. This point of view appears reasonable. Kano (2001, cited in Högström, *et al.*, 2010) claimed that an effective service attribute is dynamic and fluid. When the importance of service quality appears to be varied across different customer markets, the impact of experience on the creation of value and satisfaction is different for high level and low level service quality which suggests that service quality may be a good moderator that influences experience related to value and satisfaction.

Thus, we could say that when service quality interacts with experience, it is expected to alter the strength of association between experience and value, which in turn influences satisfaction level. The effect of service quality on this relationship is expected to be significant because service quality has been proven to affect value positively (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998; Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Lai *et al.*, 2009). Based

on the above arguments, a third proposition is proposed as shown in Fig.4.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this paper, review of the literature provides the basis for the development of a conceptual model in understanding how the concept of satisfaction can be explained by experience, value and service quality directly and indirectly. Even though the model suggested has yet to be empirically tested, the discussion of the relationships and interactions between the constructs studied in this paper will be of significance to academicians and service providers to understand related theories in the field of quality management and consumer behaviour especially in the tourism context.

From the academic point of view, the discussions in this study will enrich the knowledge in satisfaction literature, particularly tourist satisfaction. Based on literature review, the present author believes the interactions of service quality, value, experience and satisfaction could

**Proposition 3:** The service quality received during the trip moderates the relationship between tourist experience and value, which in turn, influences the level of satisfaction.

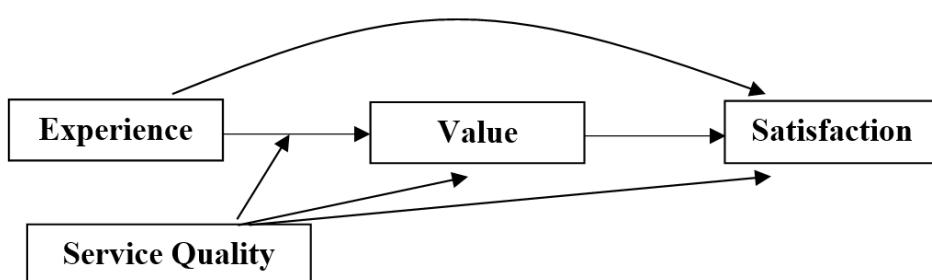


Fig.4: The suggested framework

be more complex and not limited to a one-to-one relationship. The role of value as a mediator in service quality-satisfaction relationship and experience-satisfaction relationship were also discussed. Indeed, adopting service quality as a moderator in satisfaction research is a new attempt to gain better understanding on satisfaction creation. Hence, the discussion in this paper that examined the interactions of experience, value and service quality on satisfaction creation conceptually will open new directions for future research.

From the business perspective, future studies are expected to present better and practical solutions in increasing customer satisfaction level. Satisfaction is the key in creating and sustaining good service in the service provider-customer relationship. Better understanding of satisfaction creation is crucial and thus, clarifying the factors related to satisfaction and the interactions between these factors is important. The discussion and the framework proposed in this study provides tourism service providers a guide to design and cater products and services that meet today's tourist needs and wants. This study has identified three vital factors that affect tourist satisfaction i.e. experience, value and service quality. The complex interaction between these constructs were reviewed and discussed. Based on the discussion in this study, it is suggested that in order to increase tourist satisfaction, tourism service providers should first start constructing a tourism environment that is able to create positive tourism experience and increase quality of

services which enhance tourist's perceived value and satisfaction level. The importance of service quality appears to vary across different tourist markets. Therefore, based on the degree of importance of the services from different market segment perspectives, tourism service providers can effectively allocate their limited resources in order to achieve the highest customer value and satisfaction.

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## The Concept of a Social Organism: The Response of Javanese Society to Modernism in the *Serat Wedhatama* by Kangjeng Gusti Pangeran Adipati Arya (K.G.P.A.A.) Mangkunegara IV

**Sahid Teguh Widodo**

*Javanology Institute, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Jl. Ir. Sutami 36A, Kentingan, Surakarta 57126, Indonesia*

### ABSTRACT

The specific goal of this research is to discover the socio-cultural response of Javanese society to the wave of modernism at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on the ancient Javanese manuscript, the *Serat Wedhatama*, written by Kangjeng Gusti Pangeran Adipati Arya (K.G.P.A.A.) Mangkunegara IV. The form of the current research is qualitative. The type of research is a library research, which includes a literature review and makes use of the Javanese manuscripts found in the Reksa Pustaka library in Pura Mangkunegaran Surakarta. The philological approach was used for this study, which includes: (1) an inventory of the manuscripts, (2) a description of the manuscripts, (3) reading of the texts, (4) translation of the texts, and (5) comprehension of the texts. Results of the research showed the existence of a concept for a social organism which describes the figure of modern man in the socio-cultural life of a Javanese society, which is harmonious, mutually synergising and able to preserve the "Javanese world". The concept of a social organism is a response by intellectuals and writers (poets) from the Karaton and also the Javanese people who have an inclination to preserve the existence of the Javanese culture that has belonged to them for centuries.

*Keywords:* Social organism, Javanese, *Serat Wedhatama*, Mangkunegara IV

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*E-mail address:*

sahidteguhwidodo@yahoo.com (Sahid Teguh Widodo)

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### INTRODUCTION

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of an era of modern industrialisation on the Island of Java. The court, or *karaton*-centric orientation of the social lives of the Javanese community, began to be criticised by members of the middle class aristocracy themselves.

Grangsang (1989) states that at that point in time, the Javanese society was constructed in a rigid, strict fashion, which had begun to show no harmonious functional relations (Darsiti, 1989). Abidin (2000) adds that the ideal life structure of the traditional Javanese society can be understood mechanistically by its single measure, or the availability of facilities and infrastructure which formed a chain of linear and monotonous causal relations. Javanese man was positioned as an object that was controlled and determined by the systemic organisation of his social group. The onset of a new era of capitalism was considered to have damaged the principles and rules of the predecessors (Pruwitt & Rubin, 1996) of the Javanese society and go against the reality of life in the Javanese society, which had been well established with its own social structure and system for centuries.

The weakening of social bonds, due to the damaged social structure, encouraged the literary scholars or writers of the court, or *karaton*, to create literary works which were educational (*wulang*) in nature and would help rebuild the autonomy of the Javanese social system, its structure and the inbuilt function of Javanese man. Just before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, classical Javanese literary works began to appear and were aimed to restore the integrity and creativity of Javanese people (both physically and mentally) by renewing and recycling the world of civilisation without straying away from the grandeur of the classical Javanese aesthetics, morals, and knowledge (Mulder, 2001).

One of the more popular and well-known Javanese literary works is the *Serat Wedhatama*, which was written by a leader in the Mangkunegaran court by the name of K.G.P.A.A. Mangkunegara IV (1853—1881), and subsequently by Geels (1997), referred to as the “*Renaissance of Modern Javanese Letters*” (1757—1873 AD). There are two versions of the *Serat Wedhatama*: version A (consists of 72 verses) and version B (consists of 100 verses). Version B No. Ca. A 215 consists of 100 verses and 5 types of songs, namely, *Pangkur*, *Sinom*, *Pocung*, *Gambuh*, and *Kinanthy* (Simuh, 1996). In general, the *Serat Wedhatama* is understood to contain moral teachings on how to attain the identity of a Javanese. The characteristics and noble characters of the Javanese are described through symbols with an “average” distance to the field of meaning, making which is not too difficult to understand or comprehend.

One of the values presented in the *Serat Wedhatama* is the concept of a social organism, which may be referred to as a new conceptual framework stemming from a life process that has moved dynamically in Javanese society since just before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The value of a social organism has become an alternative for Javanese society in its response to modernisation, while retaining the existence of the “Javanese world” so that a new and more flexible (internal-external) social structure could be created. The concept of a “Social Organism” in the context of social science essentially describes a structure of the social life of a holistic Javanese society. Each part

of this life is connected harmoniously, with mutual synergy and an essential interdependence that leads to an organismic working interpretation like that of a body, among various kinds of bodies within the universe (Sahid, 2010).

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

The type of this study is library research, or research which is carried out by making use of the data from texts or manuscripts stored in libraries, or in this case, specifically the *Reksa Pustaka* library in the Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta. The approach used is a philological approach, as recommended by Baried (1985). The research makes use of the five steps of a philological study, namely; (1) an inventory of the manuscripts, (2) a description of the manuscripts, (3) reading of the texts, (4) translation of the texts, and (5) comprehension of the texts.

The inventory of the manuscripts was carried out by recording the contents of the manuscript catalogue in the *Reksa Pustaka* Library at the Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta using a catalogue study (Baried, 1985), which succeeded in establishing the *Serat Wedhatama* as a data source for the research. The next step was to carry out a description of the manuscript by making comprehensive notes about the manuscript (Darusuprapto, 1984). The reading of the text was carried out by translating the text into Indonesian. The next stage was understanding of the texts (Miles & Huberman, 1992), which required a display of the data based on the problem and concluded with a verification of the entire

contents of the *Serat Wedhatama* in order to discover the new values in line with the goal of the research.

## RESULTS

### *Contents of the Serat Wedhatama*

The genre of the *Serat Wedhatama* can be categorised as *sastra wulang* (educational literature), which contains teachings on the eminence and perfection of life of the Javanese. All the elements found in the teachings of the *Serat Wedhatama* form the ideal figure of a Javanese person who has (spiritual) vitality and (physical) strength for life, originating from “nobleness and power” (*wirya*), “prosperity” (*arta*) and “knowledge” (*winasis*). All three works in such a way that the “ultimate truth” will appear:

... /melok tanpa aling-alings/ kang ngalingi kalingling/ wenganing rasa tumlawung/ keksi saliring jaman/ angelangut tanpa tepi/ yeku ingran tapa tapaking Hyang Suksma (Serat Wedhatama, Sinom, 16)

*(trans) ... clearly visible with no obstacle, that which obstructs it is eliminated, a resounding feeling is opened, until the entire horizon appears, deserted and without boundaries, all called contemplation in the way of God.*

Based on the structure of the *Serat Wedhatama* text, its values and teachings

are related to morality, self-identity, human quality, true Javanese spiritual teachings and the identity of the Javanese (see Darusuprapto, 1975).

It is evident in the *Serat Wedhatama* that the traditional Javanese spiritual values are given the main priority in an endeavour to cleanse one's moral character (Mangadeg, 1975; Dhanu, 2010), to always remain humble, and to "take pleasure in pleasing others" – all of which are given special attention in the *Serat Wedhatama*. The sentence "take pleasure in pleasing others" appears three times in the text, using a variety of different terms, at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the manuscript. The variations of this sentence are:

- a. *Amamangun karyenak tyasing sesami* "always work to make other people happy" (*Sinom*, verse 1)
- b. *Wigya met tyasing sesami* "skilled at refreshing the heart/bringing happiness to the heart of others" (*Sinom*, verse 17)

- c. *Mung ngenaki tyasing liyan* "only to please other people" (*Kinanthi*, verse 13)

All the three sentences above have the same prerequisite, namely, the "ability" and "skills" that are presented explicitly in the *wirya*, *arta* and *wasis*. *Karyenak tyasing sasami* is a concept of "serving" other people in order to gain a higher level of "service" for themselves. The concept of serving and being served is not in the sense of bartering (*mechanic-normative*), but it is rather reciprocal, complementary, creative and innovative (*organic*) in nature (Fodde & Denti, 2005). As a starting point, I wish to use the *Serat Wedhatama* to explore the collection of social teachings presented by K.G.P.A.A. Mangkunegara IV.

The *Serat Wedhatama* not only shapes the figure of an eminent human being as a person, but also as a social figure who will develop and be able to show his identity with a Javanese character (....*rehne ta sira*

TABLE 1  
Content of the teachings in the *Serat Wedhatama*

No. of Verses ( <i>pada</i> )	Name of Song	Value of the Text ( <i>Content of the Text</i> )
14	<i>Pangkur</i>	Identity, education, knowledge, human character, competence, etc.
18	<i>Sinom</i>	Desire, personality, professionalism, social identity, life obligations, social position, spiritual foundations
15	<i>Pocung</i>	Knowledge of life, philosophy of process (Javanese), noble character in social life, education, basic social and religious resources
35	<i>Gambuh</i>	Homage, Javanese identity, process of strengthening the spirit, body, self, micro & macro cosmos, and divine source
18	<i>Kinanthi</i>	Various forms of concept by which to live one's life, examples and social symbols, knowledge and eminence of life

*Jawi*). The writer's awareness of the reality of the universe and totality of human life is described as the destiny of life in a much broader and more perfect dimension.

#### *The Concept of Modern Man in the Serat Wedhatama*

The *Serat Wedhatama* is the representation of a Javanese intellectual and literary movement, which responded to the conditions of society in its age. The value of humanism that is offered is none other than to uphold human value and dignity so that a person is able to take his place (*manggon*) in an important and (even) central cosmic position in this modern era. Unlike the teachings of Western philosophy, in which man is at the centre of reality

(anthropocentric), the *Serat Wedhatama* views human beings as cosmocentric, as human beings who are part of the universe and must perfect their lives in order to receive "guidance from God" (*wahyuning Gusti Allah*).

Description on improving the quality of a human being (to become perfect), which is one of the central themes in the *Serat Wedhatama*, is presented in steps (see Table 2).

This (ideal) concept of modern man, of course, needs to be reinterpreted in accordance with the context of the present day. Today, Javanese man faces a damaged social environment, as indicated by the appearance of various diseases of civilisation. An increase in social depression, a decline

TABLE 2  
Central themes in the *Serat Wedhatama*

No. of Verses ( <i>pada</i> )	Name of Song	Themes of the Text
1 – 14	<i>Pangkur</i>	the writer explores more about identity, the importance of knowledge, human nature and character, competence, and the concept of perfection for describing the figure of a complete Javanese human being (descriptive-static)
1 – 18	<i>Sinom</i>	Elaborates on a Javanese person who has been given clothes, has identity and character, is professional, is aware of his rights and obligations, and knows the spiritual foundations for life.
1 – 15	<i>Pocung</i>	The section which explains the position and status of man in the cosmos, that is, the importance of striving to gain knowledge to obtain <i>wirya</i> (power), <i>arta</i> (wealth), and <i>wasis</i> (skill) as the basic requirements of life.
1 – 35	<i>Gambuh</i>	The concept of Javanese Sufism, the mystical concept of the union between man and God ( <i>manunggaling kawula-Gusti</i> ). In order to attain a deep understanding of this union with God, a formula known as <i>sembah catur</i> , or "four kinds of homage", is described (body, mind, soul, and feeling) as a way of gaining the grace of God
1 – 18	<i>Kinanthi</i>	Contains the teachings or concept about how to live life well

in social quality, an increase in crimes, violence, accidents, suicide, alcoholism, drug abuse and a decline in the mental condition of the young generation (resulting in vandalism, a lack of self-confidence, in addition to other problems) have all led to social defects that are difficult to cure. Diseases such as stroke, liver problems, cancer, diabetes and HIV have become the primary causes of death on a grand scale.

The questions that need to be asked are: is the figure of modern man in the *Serat Wedhatama* still able to remain eminent “in the life of society today” (*samangsane pasamauan*)? Or has he become like “useless trash” (*yekti sepi asepa lir sepah samun*)? Is he able to prevent and overcome this? Can the teachings still be beneficial? Are all the points in the teachings of the *Serat Wedhatama* relevant to be used (at least) as an alternative hold on life?

#### *The Concept of a Social Organism: An Offer*

The figure of the modern man in the *Serat Wedhatama* is a figure who can always be accepted by and engage in dialogues with nature and his surroundings and is able to represent a state of “existing and meditating in the universe” (*keningratan: ka-hening-ing-rat-an*), as reflected in the noble attitude and speech of a well-respected Javanese person. An aristocrat is a person who endeavours to “make other people happy” (*karyenak tyasing sasama*) so as to avoid conflicts. This kind of attitude can only exist in a person who continually “engages in self-appraisal or introspection” (*mamangun*

*martamartani*) so that he does not behave wrongly, continues to display the correct attitude, and his actions do not hurt others.

A person who always “refines and perfects his character” (*masah amemasuh budi*) will not have a character that is easily prejudiced, likes to gossip about and slander others (Rasjidi, 1971) or “always underestimates the ability of others” (*pendhak-pendhak angendhak gunaning janma*), which ultimately leads to shame and anger. The *Serat Wedhatama* offers a character, who is forgiving as he “forgives other people’s mistakes and avoids wrong actions” (...*den ngaksama kasisipaning sesami, sumimpanga ing laku dur*). In another section, it includes the words, “genuinely accepting a loss without regret, being patient when done wrong by showing grace and surrendering to God” (*lila lamun kelangan nora gegetun/ trima yen ketaman/sakserik sameng dumadi/tri legawa nalangsa srah ing Bathara*).

The above explanation shows a personal relationship with other figure from “The Beyond”. A human being becomes a tiny unit of a society, and as such, this teaching wishes for an organic inter-element relation within the immanent construct of a human being, both with his natural and social environment. The *Serat Wedhatama* offers a life concept which is simple, romantic and dynamic. It is this life concept that I refer to as the concept of a Social Organism. In the *Serat Wedhatama*, a social life which is supported by a high-quality personal life shows the presence of three basic principles for a dynamic life:

### a. Principle of Self-Control

The principle of self-control is an independent social system and as such, a human being is encouraged to prepare himself as well as possible in the midst of a life with other people. Every person must have the ability to control and improve the quality of internal elements organically. In the *Serat Wedhatama*, the principle of self-control is manifested in an understanding of the importance of a person having identity, education, knowledge, character and certain skills in his life.

### b. Principle of Self-Renewal

A principle of self-control that is implemented well will give rise to the ability for a life system to engage in a continual process of renewal in order to maintain the integrity of a person's overall awareness. Every person is required to have the ability to cooperate with others, complement each other and synergise according to his own competence and professionalism, and must always endeavour to solve all problems peacefully, without conflict, as an essential asset of his social and religious life.

### c. Principle of Self-Advantage

This is the ability of a life system which is creative, that is, creative outside the physical and mental boundaries, in the processes of knowledge, development and evolution. A superior human being is recognised by his ability and commitment to live life, his social symbols and his virtuous life.

## DISCUSSION

The concept of a social organism in the *Serat Wedhatama* can ultimately be understood as a systemic-modern life view. The values contained in the teachings of the *Serat Wedhatama* can be summarised in three basic principles of support, which indicate clearly the existence of a line of connection that is organic-systemic rather than being constructed with the aim of creating new static-mechanistic norms. The concept of a social organism provides direction for conceptual guidance in a life that is harmonious, contextual and dynamic, whereby all three are issues of modernity that the writer has managed to capture.

Serat Wedhatama offers an alternative to face various turmoil of era. The emergence of transitional phases, each with their own characteristics, forms and characters, is an important lesson that can be used as reflection, data and valuable information for the society's life at the present moment. The concept of a social organism in the *Serat Wedhatama* also describes a strategy to achieve a condition of dynamic balance which guides the life of a modern human being in the midst of a constantly and dynamically moving natural and social environment. The quality of a person's life in terms of his character, morals, knowledge, skills and intelligence is presented as a complementary dialectic, and for this reason, it has an essential inter-element dependence.

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## The Fall of National Identity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Abdalhadi Nimer A. Abu Jweid

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

This article examines Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* within a postcolonial discourse. While the majority of postcolonial critiques argue over indigenous identity, this study explores the deterioration of national identity in *Things Fall Apart*. Such deterioration is brought about by the spiritual and tentative defeat inherent in the failure of the protagonist, Okonkwo, to face the colonial whites. Ultimately, the protagonist's failure leads to a tragic death. In the novel's context, Achebe exhorts the fall of national identity and its pathetic aftermath. The deterioration in national identity symbolically correlates to the protagonist's personal irresolute experience which is at first physically powerful but in the end spiritually weak. The focus of this article is a textual analysis of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, applying postcolonial theoretical concepts, especially aboriginality, hegemony, subaltern and identity. These concepts facilitate a smouldering conceptualisation of national identity as it is exterminated in the novel. Thus, these terms will be cited mainly with reference to Bill Ashcroft, Gayatri Spivak, and Laura Chrisman's postcolonial critiques.

*Keywords:* Aboriginality, Achebe, hegemony, identity, postcolonialism, subaltern

### INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on deteriorating national identity in Chinua Achebe's seminal novel, *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe's fictional writing is seen to accost the national identity

of Nigerian society. His historical and cultural sense of colonisation gives him a distinctive place among those "original conceptions" promoted in his *An Image of Africa* (2010) in which he postulates an inclusive argumentation "on an appropriately positive note in which [he] would suggest from [his] privileged position in African and Western cultures some advantages" (p.104). Consequently, Achebe's diction delves

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*E-mail address:*

abdulhadiabujweid@gmail.com (Abdalhadi Nimer A. Abu Jweid)

into European colonisation in the wake of global realignment after disastrous events, specifically the two world wars.

*Things Fall Apart* exhibits regenerative literary power. This relates to synthesising multifarious quality of Achebe's erudite fiction, which eludes imperialistic ratification through its minimal interpretive approximation. To support this last point, Achebe's formal efficacy asserts his mode as a recurrent national writer; or as Fagruthen (2014) puts it: "Achebe, who never patronizes his own culture shows how rival priests function as political agents and have shallower roots than their rhetoric implies" (p.36). In this way, *Things Fall Apart* exteriorises Achebe's literary originality as a novelist examining national chauvinism.

Incontrovertibly, there are also capricious issues and conceptual contradictions associated with ethnicity. One of them is "congenial ethnic" tendencies. But for all that, all the domestic and imperial tensions support the fabrication of multiple racial ethnicities. Hence, ethnic levels of hierachal communities reject a unified power and, consequently, the colonial agenda has ramifications. Thus, *Things Fall Apart* lays bare the international divisions of ethnic groups in a Nigerian context, so that "Achebe's novel shatters the stereotypical European portraits of native Africans. By unfolding the devastating effects of colonialism on the life of the Igbo people in *Things Fall Apart* Chinua Achebe has successfully made a comprehensible demarcation between the pre-colonial and

the colonial Igbo land" (Alam, 2014, p.105).

There is a steadily growing body of fiction that deals with the depiction of national identity in *Things Fall Apart*. The novel's protagonist, Okonkwo, duplicates the complex encounters between Whites and Blacks within a traditional Nigerian periphery. Achebe, being a conscious advocate of anti-colonial power, negotiates possible exits from the colonial influence. However, this exit confronts self-destruction, as exemplified by Okonkwo's unexpected suicide. In "Foregrounding Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*", Maryam Navidi (2011) discusses fundamental consciousness present in Achebe's anti-racial tone. Achebe's magnanimous sensibility, argues Navidi, is projected, so that, "into this new African world of literariness comes Chinua Achebe, a conscious artist, who as a native of Africa, penetrates through the root cause of the problems of his native fellow beings" (p.10).

The essential subjectivity of Nigerian national identity is constrained by colonial Eurocentrism. The divergent methods inherent in this intricacy emerge as a double encounter in Achebe's *Things Fall apart*. The first encounter is between British colonialism and its ramifications in Igbo, which is a fictional place in the novel. The second is with the Christian missionaries with different ideas of life and which clashes with the vernacular conceptualisation of life. The death of Okonkwo may have been hastened "due to his individual character weaknesses" (Nnoromele, 2000, p.146). Nevertheless, colonialism leads to

polarities affecting ethnic minorities in real society. Okonkwo's actions and discourse are entrenched in physical resistance to colonialism in all of its aspects but, he fails to authenticate his positivistic vision of a burgeoning and independent village.

The eugenic fundamentals of colonial enterprises had led to demographical fragmentation. Imperialism acts as an influential proxy on suppressed people. The oppressor is undoubtedly motivated by a desire to impose his power on the oppressed. The main objective of this article is thus, to explore the fall of national identity in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. The life of the protagonist will be examined through four postcolonial concepts, namely aboriginality, hegemony, subaltern and identity. These concepts will provide relevant critical insights into postcolonial discourse.

### **INDIGENOUS ABORIGINALITY IN *THINGS FALL APART***

*Things Fall Apart* centres on a brawny warrior named Okonkwo who is a descendant of the Umoufia clan. The novel is set in a nine-village consortium. Okonkwo is haunted by his father who had brought disrepute to the village. In challenging that, Okonkwo strives hard to improve himself and becomes a noble clansman extraordinaire. He develops a tremendous virility and gains Umoufia's attention and respect. Okonkwo brings fame and development to his tribe, as opposed to his father who made Umoufia unsettled with his reckless actions. Okonkwo "wins" a boy called Nwoye in a settlement with a

neighbouring tribe. Nwoye shows a lot of affection to Okonkwo as a father, though the latter neglects this. Gradually, he comes to love Nwoye because of his exceptional contribution and help during the locust attacks on the village farms. Okonkwo's village, Igbo, is later ransacked by British colonialists and Christian missionaries. Okonkwo resists these foreign invasions and is thus exiled. After returning from exile, he is summoned up by the leader of the white government for a court inquisition. The colonial government is stunned to find Okonkwo has hung himself, preferring death to what he perceived as a kangaroo court.

Okonkwo's story encapsulates Nigerian national identity. The conglomeration of events in nine connected villages typify the national collective desire for independence and welfare. Yet, his tragic suicide stirs the Nigerians' inert passion for communal prosperity. That being so, this national sense means a reconsideration of Nigeria as a site for the European conquering powers. Both the colonial expansion and Okonkwo's suicide happened in the colonial circuits. Different colonial categories crop up within fictional European dominions. The most distinct category is the geographical location where all the colonial manoeuvres take place. Geographical places are, typically, unequivocal components of ethnic aboriginality in *Things Fall Apart*.

In *Things Fall Apart*, there are nine tribal villages. They form a topographic element in the novel's spatial setting. All of them seem to be ignored especially in Abigail Guthrie's (2011) focus on "both

pre and post colonization, remains both an ideal aim and a source of cultural pride” (p.6). Guthrie emphasises the Nigerian identity through tackling the linguistic peculiarities of the novel’s discourse and thus, the topographic dimension is not well regarded. The focus of this study is on this neglected area and to do so from the vantage point of the present author’s perspective on authentic ethnic groups and aboriginality. Before embarking on an in-depth analysis of the formal and artistic characteristics of aboriginal people in *Things Fall Apart*, it is first necessary to note some of its basic aspects.

Hence, a first point is the anthropological proponents of finding, identifying, allocating, inspecting and appraising a growing body of knowledge on indigenous identity. This falls under the rubric of “ethnic aboriginality”, entailing a topographical verification of the novel and asking questions about the author (Achebe) who produces its context. In *Postcolonial Liberalism*, Duncan Ivison (2002) approaches the motif of the “association” of different human groups in certain circumstances. Ivison claims “the terms of association would have to be ones acceptable to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples – and therein lies the challenge” (p.72).

This recurring motif is reminiscent of Achebe’s spatial setting in *Things Fall Apart*. I refer specifically to the Igbo scene with Okwonko and his people who have forsaken their true authenticity through regional devotion. Instead, they pursue empty dreams and become a lonely

embittered clan. Achebe employs his art to evoke the place-cursed pathos of human existence. Throughout the novel, the shadow of death looms as an omniscient narrator that deprecates the natives with tribal origins. For example, the clan elders direct Okwonko to take care of Ikemefuna in an overwhelmingly indigenous sense: “the elders of the clan had decided that Ikemefuna should be in Okonkwo’s care for a while. But no one thought it would be as long as three years. They seemed to forget all about him as soon as they had taken the decision” (p.8). This vision of the native land, in accordance with national faithfulness, includes the novel’s persistent themes which forge patterns of aboriginal authenticity. National dedication in the form of fragments, explicit dialogues and abrupt subjective changes are also tackled. In fact, as with many of the writings of his counterparts, Achebe’s works document a national identity.

In *Postcolonial Contraventions*, Laura Chrisman (2003) contends that aboriginality is treated in ways related to colonial power. This power can change the cultural and geographical attributes of a colonised people. In the long run, these powers result in “canonical” fiction that addresses the conventions of colonial practices. In this regard, Chrisman argues that a critical appraisal of postcolonial theory and fiction provides a “profound” interpretation of aboriginal identity. Here, fictional critiques become a powerful means to treat current colonial practices, Chrisman comments “there is always a risk that critique will

be construed as an ad hominem attack, and indeed several critiques ... It is their profound intellectual substance, as much as their canonical power, or their typicality, that has prompted my critical engagement" (p.2).

Achebe depicts colonised people powerfully in *Things Fall Apart*. He engages in a multi-dimensional portrayal of the Igbo people and how they endure the hardships of colonisation. These are substantiated through Okika's speech. Okika and many others are imprisoned. He tries to liberate the others so they can go back to their clan. Here, the depiction of Okika and his companions' imprisonment typify Achebe's canonical fictional presentations: "the first man to speak to Umuofia that morning was Okika, one of the six who had been imprisoned. Okika was a great man and an orator. But he did not have the booming voice which a first speaker must use to establish silence in the assembly of the clan. Onyeka had such a voice, and so he was asked to salute Umuofia before Okika began to speak" (p.66). Additionally, Achebe presents a sensational perception of suppressed people in their aboriginal surroundings.

Suppressing aboriginal people is further addressed in postcolonial studies. Bill Ashcroft *et al.* (2000) discuss the effects of close encounters between aboriginal people and their colonisers who disapprove of authentic aboriginality is deprecated. Notwithstanding this, there are several periods before real colonisation happens. The colonisers approach lands to be colonized in successive raids and "describe the indigenous inhabitants of

places encountered by European explorers, adventurers or seamen" (p.4). Ashcroft *et al.*'s references to regional exploration and adventures propagate the advent of the "oppressor" as one "being considered by many to be too burdened with derogatory associations" (p.4).

In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo confronts the Christian missionaries and orders his people not to follow them. As a result, they "ostracise" the Christian missionaries and reject the Christians: "everybody in the assembly spoke, and in the end it was decided to ostracise the Christians. Okonkwo ground his teeth in disgust" (p.49). Okonkwo's resentment of the Christians provokes a national sense via his peoples' fanaticism. They are committed to ethnic aboriginality.

Aboriginality is also discussed in relation to the "accumulation" of the coloniser in the land of the colonised. Such accumulation brings violence and destruction of aboriginal belongings negatively affecting national identity. Every domestic attribute will deteriorate in parallel with a sequence of colonial settlements. Achille Mbembe (2001), in *On the Postcolony*, contends that colonial violence affects all the cultural customs of the colonised: "the violence insinuates itself into the economy, domestic life, language, consciousness. It does more than penetrate every space: it pursues the colonized even in sleep and dream. It produces a culture; it is a cultural praxis" (p.175).

Igbo's cultural customs are endangered by the arrival of white Europeans.

Correspondingly, Igbo people increasingly change. When Mr. Brown, a white missionary, begins paying them social calls, they become socially different. Accordingly, their social life becomes different. Their cultural customs change implicitly and they become accustomed to the white missionary traditions: “the Christians had grown in number and were now a small community of men, women and children, self-assured and confident. Mr. Brown, the white missionary, paid regular visits to them. ‘When I think that it is only eighteen months since the Seed was first sown among you,’ he said, ‘I marvel at what the Lord hath wrought’ (p.52). As such, the “small community” of whites epitomises Mbembe’s notion of the accumulation of the coloniser in suppressed, or colonised, lands.

Once the accumulation process takes place, national aboriginality steadily disappears. This is evident in the degrading of national authenticity in *Things Fall Apart* whereby aboriginal people could not maintain their indigenous social aboriginality. Yet, the spirit of their national adherence is preserved in the fortitude of the novel’s protagonist, Okonkwo. The residuals of national aboriginality are preserved in Okonkwo’s resistance to the whites and his regional faithfulness. This faithfulness is achieved through the preservation of his national identity. But this national identity confronts a great colonial hegemony in the novel. The following section will examine the relationship between aboriginality and colonial hegemony.

## THE NOTION OF CULTURAL HEGEMONY

In postcolonial theory, the concept of hegemony distinguishes colonial systems and their agendas as applied to colonised territories. In a broader sense, the concept refers to the coloniser’s ability to apply a suppressive methodology in order to occupy certain regional boundaries. In particular, it refers to a special process implemented by the coloniser in order to gain power over the colonised. In *Postcolonialism, Psychoanalysis and Burton: Power Play of Empire*, Ben Grant (2009) tackles the racial aspect of colonial hegemony: “if the trope of a racialised space institutes clear borders between different races, the temporal nonetheless returns as an ambivalent factor in the institution of these boundaries: by positing the negro as inferior, by which is meant backward” (p.102).

Correspondingly, *Things Fall Apart* portrays different racial encounters between whites and aboriginal Igbo people. The notion of hegemony extrapolates the conquest of the Igbo by bringing education. The white colonisers essentially use culture and via education and new methods of learning, attempt to dominate the Igbo people. They construct schools and even include the women in educative disciplines. In the extract below, women are preparing for lessons. In essence, this is the first token of colonialism in Igbo. People first change their social customs, as dictated by Mr. Brown. Then they get involved in learning through the colonial educational system.

Hence, they progressively change adopting the colonial mentality and outlook:

*It was Wednesday in Holy Week and Mr. Kiaga had asked the women to bring red earth and white chalk and water to scrub the church for Easter, and the women had formed themselves into three groups for this purpose. They set out early that morning, some of them with their water-pots to the stream, another group with hoes and baskets to the village earth pit, and the others to the chalk quarry.* (p.56)

Introduction of a new form of education ensures implementation of the white Christian blueprint. The colonial power offers incentives like education to help conquer the Igbo and the rest of the nine villages. This colonial practice relates to the hegemonic prototypical enterprise pursued by the colonial power. By the same token, through hegemony, “the destabilizing process set in motion by colonial mimicry produces a set of deceptive, even derisive, ‘resemblances’ that implicitly question the homogenizing practices of colonial discourse” (Huggan, 2008, p.22). Huggan argues for the aftermath of hegemony in colonial literature.

In *Things Fall Apart*, the disabling effects of hegemony are obvious. A group of anonymous young men, for example, severely punish a few Igbo women for not bringing water-pots. Their identity is revealed through their growing number;

so that the young men are suspected to be Christians: “The Christians had grown in number and were now a small community of men, women and children, self-assured and confident” (p.52). Here, hegemony is concentrated in the hands of young men who have control over the women. They attack the women to serve the colonials: “the women had come to the church with empty water pots. They said that some young men had chased them away from the stream with whips. Soon after, the women who had gone for red earth returned with empty baskets. Some of them had been heavily whipped” (p.52). Most importantly, hegemony takes effect as one of the women describes the actions of other women, calling them “outlaws”: “‘the village has outlawed us,’ said one of the women. ‘The bellman announced it last night. But it is not our custom to debar anyone from the stream or the quarry’” (p.52).

The effects of hegemony can be seen in the women’s description of other women as outlaws. To some extent, disobedience is an effect of cultural hegemony. According to Shirley Chew (2010), hegemony approximates to the concept of a nation. This concept unilaterally refers to different nations and their amalgamation into one nation. The process of amalgamation specifically expands the European empires; Chew writes: “the concept of nation and the concomitant advocacy of various nationalisms have offered colonized peoples significant political and imaginative resources in contesting the authority and legitimacy of the European empires” (p.32).

Colonial hegemony reaches its peak when Okonkwo grows his last harvest in Mbanta: “it was going to be Okonkwo’s last harvest in Mbanta” (p.54). This is an indication that Okonkwo is no longer able to grow food in his own territory. The land has almost been conquered by the whites who exploit Igbo and other villages. The Igbo people become despondent and rely on the colonial power in their national affairs. In this way, they become subalterns.

### SUBALTERN AND IDENTITY

The concept of subaltern is associated with inferiority. It indicates the subjugation of others via exploitation. It is generally connected to the treatment of women in an inferior way. In *Things Fall Apart*, for example, Okonkwo treats his wife, Ekwefi, in a harsh way. He orders her to manage domestic affairs. This inflicts a tremendous burden on Ekwefi as a housewife: “Okonkwo never did things by halves. When his wife Ekwefi protested that two goats were sufficient for the feast he told her that it was not her affair” (p.54).

Women’s inferiority negotiates the theme of women as “subjects” of men. This leads us to another perception of women’s position, “If we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us; it is not our dialectical negation, it contains us as much as it flings us away” (Spivak, 2003, p.73). Furthermore, women’s subjectivity is implied, especially in “insurgency” contexts, because “‘the subject’ implied by

the texts of insurgency, packaged with an insurgent-consciousness, does not freeze into an ‘object of investigation’, or, worse, yet, a model for imitation” (Spivak, 2010, p.82).

Okonkwo’s treatment of his wives implies his static personality. He does not change when the whites invade their villages. Here, he clings to his national identity and maintains his domestic responsibility towards his wives and children: “but it was a resilient spirit, and in the end Okonkwo overcame his sorrow. He had five other sons and he would bring them up in the way of the clan” (p.56). Okonkwo shows manly fortitude in maintaining his national customs in a “spiritual” quest for independence. Therefore, his national longing gives him the power to resist.

This power to resist resides in his individual stamina to accomplish independence. That being so, “resistance is the substitution, or offsetting, of one form of power by another” (Thiele, 2002, p.95). Okonkwo’s power is clearly depicted in *Things Fall Apart*. His power turns out to be negative, because it changes the traditional “moods” of his family. Such moods are an outcome of his subjugation of his wives and daughters. He forces them to engage in domestic and cultivation work: “Ekwefi [Okonkwo’s second wife] rose early on the following morning and went to her farm with her daughter, Ezinma, and Ojiugo’s daughter, Obiageli, to harvest cassava tubers. Each of them carried a long cane basket, a machete for cutting down the soft cassava stem, and a little hoe for digging out

the tuber. Fortunately, a light rain had fallen during the night and the soil would not be very hard (parentheses added)" (p.54). The domestic responsibility imposed on his wife and his daughters indicate Okonkwo's strict behaviour. He tries to keep his identity by inflicting heavy labour on his family. More specifically, he dominates his daughter Obiageli since he believes that she can perform strenuous work like boys: "I wish she were a boy," Okonkwo thought within himself. She understood things so perfectly" (p.56).

The critical nuances of identity in postcolonial theory relate to individuals seeking refuge from the advent of the "other". Thus identity involves a "desire" to preserve the national heritage. Consequently, the individuals' "nationalism may be due to the relatively stronger desire to define their cultural identity" (Talib, 2002, p.21). In *Things Fall Apart*, Oduche and other men from Okonkwo's villages are put in prison. But Oduche dies of sorrow and his friend Anedo is hanged: "he was imprisoned with all the leaders of his family. In the end Oduche died and Aneto was taken to Umuru and hanged" (p.57). These tragic events represent the powerful national résistance to the whites. Such resistance implies a national desire to maintain the aboriginal identity.

Preserving national identity requires a "flux" within the aboriginal circumference. This flux includes a complete change to the indigenous identity. In the long run, colonialism brings about "constant" change in colonised lands. Shirley Chew

(2010) argues that: "as a consequence, identities are also in a constant state of flux. Colonialism has been a major engine driving an accelerated pace of change, forcing different cultures into new forms, 'unfixing' what was thought to be solid, and creating new identities" (p.19). The flux of national identity in *Things Fall Apart*, for example, does not affect Okonkwo because he does not recognise the white colonial government. Before he returns from exile to his native land, he has affectionate memories of it: "Okonkwo's return to his native land was not as memorable as he had wished" (p.59).

Okonkwo's return is a perennial reference to his nationalism. He does not undergo the colonial influx, whereby "replacing any earlier constructions of location and identity, is to establish at least partial control over reality, geography, history, and subjectivity" (Gilbert *et al.*, 2002, p.165). The new white government affects the lives of all indigenous people except Okonkwo: "the new religion and government and the trading stores were very much in the people's eyes and minds" (p.59).

Oknonkwo's resistance leads to deep bitterness in his spirituality. He cannot be affected by the colonial government. When he returns from exile, his people ignore him as they are only interested in the white religion and government. Peoples' constant change makes him agitated, as if he were at war: "Okonkwo slept very little that night. The bitterness in his heart was now mixed with a kind of childlike excitement, before

he had gone to bed he had brought down his war dress, which he had not touched since his return from exile" (p.65).

The affirmation of national identity in the midst of western colonialism describes the absurdity of aboriginal individuality. By the same token, national identity reveals a "reinterpretation of colonial experiences influenced by local, national and international postcolonial contexts and circumstances" (Trovao, 2012, pp.261-262). Notwithstanding this, maintaining national identity in colonial circumstances degrades the essence of identity. Okonkwo, for example, cannot change like the others. The idea of aboriginality is influenced by the white colonial power through their cultural expansion.

Okonkwo is the last indigenous man to keep his identity. But his resentment of both colonial power and his people's "flux" alienated him. Almost all of his comrades have been killed or imprisoned by the whites, so he becomes the last chauvinistic sentinel. Thus, he decides to commit suicide to escape the aboriginal disgrace. When the colonial leader summon him for trial, they find him hanging from a tree: "they came to the tree from which Okonkwo's body was dangling, and they stopped dead" (p.68). Okonkwo's tragic end portrays the collective fall of his people. Thus, Okonkwo represents the fall of the national identity of the Igbo people and their surroundings.

## CONCLUSION

This article has studied the fall of national identity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall*

*Apart*. This study corresponds to "spatial and regional contexts, and especially in relation to social injustice, literary humour likely plays a more important and serious role than it would at first seem" (Juha, 2014, p.712). The study has focused on the aboriginal circumstances of a fictional setting composed of nine Nigerian villages. This land is invaded by colonial whites who subjugate the indigenous people.

The study discusses aboriginal qualities of the Igbo and the other villages during the advent of white colonial power. The new power instils a social, religious and military mentality into indigenous "trans persons, living authentically may or may not involve physical changes to their body" (Dargie *et al.*, 2014, p.60). Indigenous people gradually began to change after being influenced by the new colonial culture. As a result, different ethnic behaviours change in accordance with colonial agendas.

The result is that indigenous individualism adapts and there is "a growing awareness of the faultiness and conflict that characterise relationships between indigenous people and settler states around the world" (Maddison, 2012, p.696). Such awareness leads the protagonist, Okonkwo, to act according to his national identity. Hence, he inflicts "subaltern" treatment on his family, especially his wives. The white hegemony intensifies, and the national mood advocates eventually die or exiled. Okonkwo, being the sole national survivor, rejects colonialism and commits suicide. His individualism represents the remnants of the national identity of the Igbo and other

villages. Thus, committing suicide is but a token of national decline that is, Oknokwo's death embodies the fall of the Nigerian indigenous identity.

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## Project Zero: A Benchmark for Developing an Analytical Framework

Dass, L. C.\* , Arumugam, N., Dillah, D. and Nadarajah, D.

*Department of English Language and Linguistics, The Academy of Language Studies,  
Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

This paper marks the beginning of a project aimed at trialling a Western learning model in a Malaysian context which has not been tested before. This is the first of a series of research papers that shows the process in which a framework that is usually used in larger studies was designed. The framework was modified and developed from The Visible Thinking (VT) Project of Project Zero research to identify and categorise manifestations of pedagogical interactions. A summary of selected PZ research projects presented in this paper highlights the learning benefits of establishing patterns of thinking within the classroom as projected by PZ studies of Harvard Graduate School of Education, a hallmark institution. Having looked at the many aspects of classroom teaching that have been shown by PZ research to enhance learning, a framework was derived arising from these school settings. Part of the focus of the study was to check if the ideas and paradigms are transferable to a Higher Education ESL context of a culturally different setting in terms of the manifestations of classroom interactions. However, for the purpose of this paper, PZ research that focuses on VT is discussed. The literature on the findings of VT project, mainly the thinking routines employed, the importance of establishing thinking routines in the classroom and examples of instances where these routines were visible in the classroom contexts are the highlights of this paper. Empirical findings on the use of this framework will be discussed in the next research paper in this series. Most of PZ research was conducted in school classrooms in

a Western setting. This study prides itself in taking PZ research to a whole new level to study undergraduate students in a Malaysian classroom setting.

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*E-mail addresses:*

laura404@salam.uitm.edu.my (Dass, L. C.),  
nalini@salam.uitm.edu.my (Arumugam, N.),  
doreen@salam.uitm.edu.my (Dillah, D.),  
darma168@salam.uitm.edu.my (Nadarajah, D.)

\* Corresponding author

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## INTRODUCTION

The Project Zero or PZ is a research group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and since 1967, it has devoted itself to investigating the progresses in learning practices among groups of people and institutions. Its mission is to comprehend as well as improve learning, thinking and creativity. The PZ research is grounded in the belief that learning can be enhanced when the thinking processes of teacher and learners are made visible in the context of learning. It is built on social constructivist theory which explores classroom interaction in detail. It was selected as an important informant for framework for the present study because PZ endeavour has clear theoretical links with social constructivist theory on which this study was based. The most central perspective of social learning theory that stems from the works of Vygotsky points towards the learner being actively involved in the learning process and interaction being an important aspect in developing the creative potential that is latent in every learner. Consequently, the adoption of social constructivist approaches inevitably shifts the focus to the learner and the latter's greater empowerment within the teaching / learning dynamic. The Visible Thinking (VT) among the many projects initiated by PZ research which are grounded in social learning theory that depict modern day Vygotskian classrooms. The findings of the VT project were turned into a framework (Table 1 – sample framework) which was then later utilised in analysing data. Thus, research conducted under PZ, namely

the Visible Thinking (VT) project, whose findings informed the framework, is given prominence in this paper.

## VISIBLE THINKING (VT)

VT is a teaching and learning approach that places importance in the use of thinking routines in classrooms and in documenting the thinking processes. Being exposed to the steps leading to the acquisition of a certain skill, be it art, dancing, sewing, writing or sport are all more important than being exposed to the end product whether in art work, novel, dance performance and sport event among others (Tishman & Palmer, 2006).

*“Too often, students are exposed to the final products of thought – the finished novel or painting and the established scientific theory among others etc. They rarely see the patterns of thinking that lead to these finished products and yet, it is precisely these habits of mind that students need to develop.”*

(Tishman & Palmer, 2006, p.10)

The authors contend as thinking is very much invisible, sophisticated and powerful thinking only develops very slowly, the reason being learners are not able to see their own thinking process or of others (peers and teachers). “Making thinking visible in the classroom provides students with vivid models of what the process of good thinking looks like and shows them how their participation matters” (Tishman

& Palmer, 2006, p.10). This is precisely the goal of the VT project. The core of VT is basically making thinking apparent or available to the learner and the teacher (Visible Thinking PZ, n.d.). It is a systematic approach based on considerable research, to integrate thinking skills and disposition into content and by making explicit thinking a part of classroom routine, VT makes way for powerful learning and thinking to occur (Tishman & Palmer, 2006). Thinking routines are simple strategies in the form of short sequence of steps that are used repeatedly in the classroom which are designed to be used across various grade levels and subjects (Tishman & Palmer, 2006). Focus areas of thinking established in PZ research are understanding, truth & evidence, fairness and creativity among others (Visible Thinking PZ, n.d.).

### **THE BENEFITS OF MAKING THINKING VISIBLE**

Learning occurs best when learners can see and hear, which will then be tailored and adapted to individual style and preference, thus scaffolding in the form of new knowledge or new skills built on existing ones takes place within the learner (Visible Thinking PZ, n.d.). For example, dancers need to watch other more professional dancers perform and athletes need to watch the moves of better players in action in order to learn and adapt what they see and hear to their own individual styles in order to be able to become better performers of the art. However, for one important area of learning that is ‘learning to think’ (Visible Thinking

PZ, n.d.), learners are expected to do it without a model to imitate. Visible Thinking has several proposals whereby students’ thinking is made apparent to them as well as others including peers and teacher so as to make them aware of their own thinking versus the thinking of others. The benefits when thinking is visible include:-

- i. Greater meta cognitive awareness among students,
- ii. School becomes a place for discovering new ideas rather than a place for inert learning,
- iii. Teachers are aware of their students misconceptions, prior knowledge, mental ability, and understanding,
- iv. All of which are important discoveries which could be used by the teacher to address challenges and build on students’ thinking to a greater level

(Visible Thinking PZ, n.d)

Thinking occurs in the minds of individuals, which unless explained would not be known to others. The core concern here is to devise strategies to *make thinking visible* in the context of learning (Visible Thinking PZweb, n.d.). This article explains that a high level cognitive activity develops slowly because it happens inside the head and therefore children are unable to see how their own thinking as well as that of peers work. Most classroom practices aren’t designed to engage children in substantive thinking around context or in making thinking apparent to others. The VT however, aims to make thinking

explicit and a routine part of classroom activity that is both natural and manageable (Visible Thinking PZweb, n.d.). It is a research intended to systematically integrate the growth of students' thinking around content learning across all subjects in addition to being an extensive and flexible compilation of practices, with the goal of attempting to deepen subject-matter learning and to develop the characteristic of thinking among students (Visible Thinking PZweb, n.d.). There are a number of areas of thinking represented through a collection of classroom routines that are simple and adaptable enough to be integrated with content learning. These areas are namely understanding, truth and evidence, fairness and moral reasoning, creativity, self-management and decision and VT comes forth with a realistic structure upon which "cultures of thinking" could be built around the learning community and in particular in the classrooms (Visible Thinking PZweb, n.d.).

### **MAKING LEARNING VISIBLE (MLV) PROJECT**

Generating and maintaining strong cultures of learning within the school community that cultivates and enables individual as well as group learning to be made as clear as possible and 'visible' is the general aim of Making Learning Visible - MLV (Project Zero Harvard Education, 2007). The overall goal of MLV is to create and sustain powerful cultures of learning in and across classrooms and schools that nurture and make visible individual and group

learning. The MLV address three aspects of learning and teaching:

- i. What teachers and students can do to support individual and group learning in the classroom
  - ii. How observation and documentation can shape, extend and make visible children and adult individual and group learning
  - iii. How teachers, students and others are creators as well as transmitters of culture and knowledge
- (Project Zero Harvard Education, 2007, p.13).

Key recommendations and highlights of the MLV research are as below:-

- i. The ability to listen plays a pivotal role for sharing and adaptation of ideas but teachers often admit of the poor listening skills of their students.
- ii. The centre of learning in learning groups contributes to a larger and more meaningful body of knowledge apart from enhancing individual learning. Learners get a sense of making a meaningful contribution to a larger whole.
- iii. Realising the difference between task completion and real learning is useful to focus efforts on genuine learning groups instead of forming groups that focus on completing task.
- iv. Learning to document verses documenting to learn – learning is made visible when it is the focal

point of documenting and when it generates conversation and intensifies understanding of student thinking and successful teaching, instead of a mere record of some activity carried out.

(Project Zero Harvard Education, 2007)

The following research projects use the idea of Visible Thinking as an overarching construct in their work:

- Innovating with Intelligence
- Artful Thinking
- Cultures of Thinking
- Ongoing collaboration with members of the International Schools Consortium

(Visible Thinking PZweb, n.d.)

Visible Thinking is an adaptable approach that incorporates teaching and expansion of thinking into the content and curriculum. VT could be used in three ways:-

- Routines
- Ideals
- Documentation

(Visible Thinking PZ, n.d.)

For the purpose of constructing the framework below, classroom routines that have been found to help make the thinking of teacher and learners more discernible within the classroom is discussed. The next section deals with the patterns of thinking in the classroom recommended by VT.

## **THINKING ROUTINES: ESTABLISHING PATTERNS OF THINKING IN THE CLASSROOM**

Starting with the thinking routines is thought to be the best way to get started with VT (Visible Thinking PZ, n.d.). They are a group of short strategies used repeatedly in the classroom either in the form of a set of questions or a brief series of steps applied across grades and content. Each routine aims at a specific form of thinking which teachers can embed into the content of their daily lesson plan. Routines are useful to focus student thinking and organise classroom discussion and though there is no guideline which routine to start with, they can be categorised into four Thinking Ideals of Truth, Fairness, Creativity and Understanding (Visible Thinking PZ, n.d.). A comprehensive summary of the thinking routines is listed in Appendix 1, which is then used in preparing the framework for the study. The thinking routines used in the visible thinking classroom are summarised and episodes that correspond to these routines are described in the framework as in Table 1.

Routines which are a part and parcel of everyday classroom living form the very structure that dictate the way basically everything runs in a classroom from the start to the end of the lesson (Ritchhart *et al.*, 2006). Routines which are important for developing the intellectual dimension of the classroom are called ‘thinking routines’ which are simple word formations that are used repeatedly to enhance certain

activities, like Think-Pair-Share (TPS) (Lyman, 1981). Students are able to use these simple formations in the classroom to begin, discover, talk about, record and administer their thinking (Ritchhart, 2002). Thinking routines pave the way for making thinking a visible feature of the classroom which enable students to acquire a nature of thinking, a vital component for thoughtful learning to occur (Perkins, 2003; Tishman & Palmer, 2006). The Visible Thinking Team at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education has embarked on designing, improvising and executing the thinking routines in the last five years (Brown, 1992; Collins, 1992; Cobb *et al.*, 2003; Collins *et al.*, 2004). Thinking and disposition towards thinking need to be carefully developed among students to form a culture that encourages a specific manner of thinking (Tishman *et al.*, 1993). The method employed is more than a prospect that allows thinking but goes further to enhance desired thinking abilities within the school curriculum (Perkins *et al.* 1993a, 1993b; Perkins *et al.*, 2000). An enculturative point of view depicts that a classroom culture has a role to play in building the character of thinking (Barell, 1991; Costa, 1991; Perkins *et al.*, 1993b; Tishman *et al.*, 1995; Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000).

The question of how to form a classroom culture that is centred on thinking can be answered by exploring some of the factors involved in culture formation (Ritchhart *et al.*, 2006). In an ethnographic study of the thoughtful classroom, Ritchhart (2002)

identified eight forces that shape classroom culture: expectation, time, modelling, routine, opportunities, relationships, physical environment, and language. Of all these, routine was picked to be the most powerful to build a classroom that centred on thinking and enhancing the thinking character among students. The thinking routines that were devised and built for the teacher to execute in the classroom also enable contact with other cultural forces, thus forming a solid foundation that could affect the formation of classroom culture (Ritchhart *et al.*, 2006).

Thinking routine enables the thinking of the learner and the teacher to be made available to the entire class by emphasising embedding thinking into the culture of the classroom (Perkins, 2003), which in turn, becomes models of thinking. According to Lee (1997) and Tishman and Perkins (1997), these routines also enable the language of thinking in the classrooms. The notion of thinking routines is more than just a change in the name. Leinhardt *et al.* (1987) and Ritchhart (2002) point out that the idea is based on its ability to develop classroom culture. Ritchhart (2002) found student thinking was developed by teachers through designing and repeatedly using a set of routines. He adds that though these work routines appear to be habitual, they are in fact well designed to meet a set of specific goals; the fact that routines are useful tools to arrive at specific points in learning is acknowledged by teachers. The various types of routines that have been designed for use in most classrooms are characterised

by this explicitly spelt out and goal-driven nature of routines (Ritchhart, 2002). If this relatively new approach to learning could be carried out successfully, language learning which many students struggle with could greatly benefit. Studies clearly indicate this.

Naginder Kaur (2013) states classrooms in Malaysia need a change in the method of instruction (in English learning) to one where learners learn vocabulary more meaningfully.

TABLE 1

Framework developed from PZ research: Episodes to look out for in the classroom interaction that promotes thinking routines

No	Episodes to look out for in the classroom	Comments
1	<p>Questions thrown out to class seeking interpretation and justification (<i>See/Think/Wonder – Core Routine, similar to What makes You Say That- UR</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do you see? What's going on?</li> <li>- What does it make you think/ feel?</li> <li>- What makes you say that?</li> <li>- What does it make you wonder?</li> </ul> <p>(UR – Understanding Routines)</p>	This routine helps students describe what they see or know and build explanations, promotes evidential reasoning, encourages students to understand alternatives and multiple perspectives. Initially, teachers need to scaffold students by continuously asking follow-up questions but over time they will automatically support their interpretations with evidence
2	<p>Effort to link students prior knowledge to the lesson (<i>Connect extend challenge- UR/ 3-2-1 Bridge-UR</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How are the ideas and information presented connect to what you already knew?</li> <li>- What new ideas did you get that extended or pushed your thinking in new directions?</li> <li>- What is still challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around?</li> <li>- What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?</li> <li>- Students response either in writing or verbally to '<i>I used to think ...</i>'</li> <li>- Students response either in writing or verbally to '<i>Now I think ...</i>'</li> </ul>	Works well with whole class, in small groups or individually, students share some of their thoughts and collect a list of ideas in each of the three categories, or write their individual responses to add to class chart- keep students' thinking alive over time, continue to add new ideas to the lists and revisit the ideas and questions on the chart as students' understanding around the topic develops
3	<p>Effort to enable students to capture essence of an issue and present them in verbal or non-verbal ways (<i>Headlines- UR</i>)</p> <p>If you were asked to give a headline for this topic or issue right now that captured the most important aspect that should be remembered, what would that headline be?</p> <p>How has your headline changed based on today's discussion?</p> <p>How does it differ from what you would have said yesterday?</p>	

TABLE 1 (*continue*)

4 Effort to encourage students to think about something (problem, question or topic) and articulate their thoughts either in:- ( <i>Think Pair Share- UR</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pairs</li> <li>- small groups</li> <li>- whole class</li> </ul>	Can be applied in the classroom, students should be encouraged to listen carefully and ask questions of one another and take turns. Students should write or draw their ideas before or/and after the sharing
5 Effort to encourage students to explore diverse perspectives involved in and around a topic. ( <i>Circle of viewpoints- FR/ can be linked to Tug of war-FR</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>I am thinking of ...the topic... From the point of view of ... the viewpoint you've chosen</b></li> <li>- <b>I think ... describe the topic from your viewpoint. Be an actor – take on the character of your viewpoint</b></li> <li>- <b>A question I have from this viewpoint is ...</b> ask a question from this viewpoint</li> <li>- What new ideas/questions do you have about the topic that you didn't have before?</li> <li>- What new questions do you have?</li> </ul> <p>(Give enough time for initial brainstorm for students to really explore diverse viewpoints. Prompts to help students think from different viewpoints)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does it look from different points in space and different points in time?</li> <li>- Who (and what) is affected by it?</li> <li>- Who is involved?</li> <li>- Who might care?</li> </ul> <p>(FR – Fairness Routines)</p>	Students should take turns to briefly speak about their chosen viewpoint, encourage different viewpoints if the same character is chosen by more than one student as well as consider thoughts and feelings of character rather than just description of scenes. Students' ideas should be written on the board so to have a list of different perspectives
6 ( <i>Extension of the above</i> ) Effort to identify and evaluate specific actions that might make a situation fair. ( <i>Making It Fair: Now, Then, Later- FR</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask students to brainstorm ideas for things they might do to make a situation fairer: now, in the future or to change the situation so it would have been fair in the past.</li> <li>- <b>I wonder what might happen if...</b> to further encourage students to think about possibilities.</li> </ul>	
7 Effort to develop thoughtful interpretations by encouraging reasoning with evidence. ( <i>Claim/Support/Question – TR</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What claim/interpretation can you make about this topic?</li> <li>- Can you identify support for the claim?</li> <li>- What is left unexplained in your claim?</li> <li>- What new reasons do your claim raise?</li> <li>- What are some other questions you might want to ask about this statement?</li> <li>- Can you think of reasons why this may be true?</li> </ul>	Encourage friendly disagreement and to come up with creative suggestions for support and questioning.

TABLE 1 (*continue*)

8	<p>Effort to encourage the ability to spot situations that need more thought or to see thinking opportunities in situations. (<i>Hot Spots – TR</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify a topic or situation. Is this idea clearly true or false, or where between the two?</li> <li>- What makes it so certain/uncertain?</li> <li>- How important is it? What makes it important or less important?</li> </ul>	<p>Can be used on almost any topic or situation and works best when students have some knowledge. This will give some basis to judge its importance. Spotting routine surfaces thinking hotspots around truth, raises our awareness of these hotspots for other situations too.</p>
9	<p>Effort to provide students with the opportunity to practice developing good questions that provoke thinking and inquiry into a topic. (<i>Creative Questions – CR, similar to Questions Starts – UR</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why?</li> <li>- How would it be different if...?</li> <li>- What are the reasons?</li> <li>- Suppose that...?</li> <li>- What if...?</li> <li>- What if we knew...?</li> <li>- What is the purpose of ...?</li> <li>- What would change if...?</li> </ul>	<p>This routine encourages students to create interesting questions and then explore their creative possibilities. Asking deep and interesting questions help to get at the complexity and depth of a topic. Suitable to work as an entire group, once they have generated sufficient questions, ask them to pick one to investigate further- write an essay, draw a picture, create a play or dialogue etc.</p>
10	<p>Effort to help students investigate truth claims and issues related to truth, which allows students to stand back and think about ways to obtain information and to think critically about sources. (<i>Stop, Look, Listen- TR</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be clear about the claim. Define your question from your list of facts and uncertainties.</li> <li>- Find your sources. Where will you look? Consider obvious and non-obvious places</li> <li>- Hear what the sources tell you with an open mind. Is it possible for your sources to be biased and how does it affect your information?</li> </ul>	

## CONCLUSION

The development of patterns for housekeeping, and administration plays an important role in the proper management of classrooms, failing which will affect class control adversely in the long-term. As important is the need to structure the mental characteristics of students. Ritchhart (2002)

in a study of teachers who were successful in establishing cultures of thinking in their classrooms, discovered that significant time was invested by these teachers, in establishing thinking and learning routines at the beginning of the school year. In this article, Ritchhart explains that these routines give students an idea on some of

the important aspects of their learning, for example, how their learning in the classroom would be, what it would eventually develop into and how it would be monitored. This area on the important role played by the development of thinking routines in establishing classroom cultures is under research and the importance of establishing thinking routines as part of the development of a classroom culture has not been widely explored or understood (Ritchhart *et al.*, 2006). In a personal interview, Ron Ritchhart expressed that establishing the right classroom culture allows students to demonstrate their thinking in the classroom, the environment needs to be perceived as ‘safe’ enough for students before they are willing to display their lack of understanding on a topic or issue (personal communication, June 1, 2012). Wong & Wong (1997) lend support to this argument on the lack of emphasis on establishing classroom culture when they say that there is more focus instead on management and housekeeping routines within the classroom. In the next paper, the framework established from PZ findings will be used to analyse classroom interaction and classroom discourse that take place in a culture that is very different from where it originated. It will report on the transferability of this model across cultural boundaries from the very perspective of learners and teachers as well as significant players in the field of education.

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## APPENDIX 1

### A summary of Visible Thinking routines

#### Thinking routines

The 7 Core routines that can be used to promote thinking in the classroom

- What Makes You Say That?  
(Interpretation with justification routine)
- Think Puzzle Explore  
(A routine that sets the stage for deeper inquiry)
- Think Pair Share  
(A routine for active reasoning and explanation)
- Circle of Viewpoints  
(A routine for exploring diverse perspectives)
- I used to think...Now I think...
- See Think Wonder
- Compass Points

The three ways recommended by Visible Thinking to develop student thinking are :

- i. Routines
- ii. Ideals
- iii. Documentations

All routines are classified into four major components named Thinking Routines. Each set of routine promotes an important aspect of thinking called Thinking Ideals. The four major areas of thinking are:

- i. Understanding
- ii. Fairness
- iii. Truth
- iv. Creativity

Each of the major component of Visible Thinking Routines/ Ideals and the purpose of employing each routine in the classroom are summarised as below.

### **(i) Understanding Routines**

- Connect Extend Challenge  
(A routine for connecting new ideas to prior knowledge)
- Explanation Game  
(A routine for exploring causal understanding)
- Headlines  
(A routine for capturing essence)
- Question Starts  
(A routine for creating thought-provoking questions)
- Think Pair Share  
(A routine for active reasoning and explanation)
- Think Puzzle Explore  
(A routine that sets the stage for deeper inquiry)
- What Makes You Say That?  
(Interpretation with justification routine)
- 3-2-1 Bridge  
(A routine for activating prior knowledge and making connections)
- Colour, Symbol, Image  
(A routine for distilling the essence of ideas non-verbally)
- Generate, Sort, Connect, Elaborate  
(A routine for organising one's understanding of a topic through concept mapping)
- Peel the Fruit  
(A map for tracking and guiding understanding)

**(ii) Fairness Routines**

Circle of Viewpoints

- Here Now There Then  
(A routine for considering presentist attitudes & judgements)
- Making if fair, Now Then Later  
(A routine for finding actions)
- Reporter's Notebook  
(A routine for separating fact and feeling)
- Tug of War  
(A routine for exploring the complexity of dilemmas)

**(iii) Truth Routines**

- Claim Support Question  
(A routine for clarifying truth claims)
- Hot Spots  
(A routine noticing truth occasions)
- Stop Look Listen  
(A routine for clarifying claims and seeking sources)
- True for Who?  
(A routine for considering viewpoints on truth)
- Tug for Truth  
(A routine for exploring tensions of truth)
- Red Light, Yellow Light  
(A routine focusing students on signs of puzzles of truth)

**(iv) Creativity Routines**

- Creative Hunt  
(A routine for looking at parts, purposes and audiences)

- Creative Questions  
(A routine for generating and transforming questions)
- Does it fit?  
(A routine for thinking creatively about options)
- Options Diamond  
(Exploring the tensions of decision making routine)
- Options Explosion  
(A routine for creative decision making)
- Step Inside: Perceive, Know, Care about  
(A routine for getting inside perspectives)

**Thinking Ideals** – Ideals are aspects or components in which thinking developments could potentially occur. They provide a form of organisation for the different routines, as such thinking ideals are similar to thinking routines. The former acts as areas in which thinking could be enhanced while the latter the tools to achieve them. An overview of the Thinking Ideals is given below.

The four major areas of thinking are:

- i. Understanding Ideal
- ii. Fairness Ideal
- iii. Truth Ideal
- iv. Creativity Ideal

#### **(i) Understanding Ideal**

- What Makes You Say That?
- Think, Puzzle, Explore
- Think, Pair, Share
- Headlines
- Question Starts
- The Explanation Game
- Connect, Extend, Challenge

### **(ii) Fairness Ideal**

- Think, Pair, Share & What Makes You Say That?
- Circle of View Points
- Here Now, There Then
- Making it Fair, Now, Then, Later
- Reporter's Notebook
- Tug of War

### **(iii) Truth Ideal**

- Tug for Truth
- Claim, Support, Question
- True for Who ( a truth ideal version of the Circle of Viewpoints)
- Spotting Hotspots
- Stop, Look, Listen

### **(iv) Creativity Ideal**

- Creative Hunt
- Creative Questions
- Does it Fit?
- Options Explosion
- Options Diamond
- Step Inside

**School Wide Culture of Thinking** – is on the importance of creating an environment that promotes thinking and the ways in which a culture of thinking could be cultivated within the school. An overview of the subsection are given below.

- Introduction and Overview
- Study Group Materials
- Institutional Structure & Supports
- Tools for Assessing Culture of Thinking

However, this section is not dealt with in detail as it is not included in developing a framework for this study.

The Thinking Routines and Thinking Ideals summarised above are used alongside with the episodes that take place in the classrooms under study to develop the framework. For each of the routines, the corresponding episodes indicate the kind of classroom interaction necessary in promoting a desired thinking as established by Project Zero's VT research.

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George Swan<sup>1</sup> and Nayan Kanwal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA.,

<sup>2</sup>Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (R&I), Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia.

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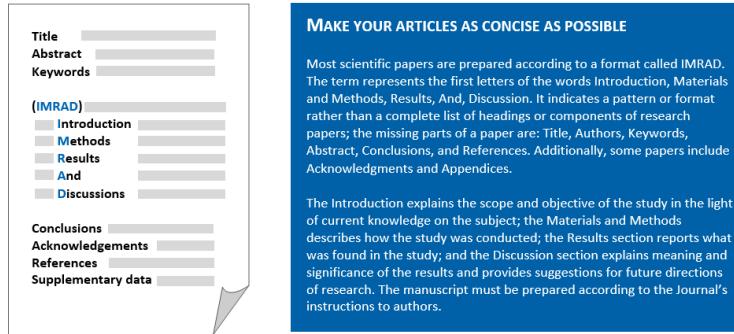
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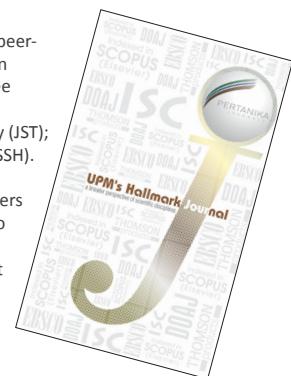
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