



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**IDENTITY COMPLEXITIES OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS IN
MALAYSIA**

GERALD NG KEA CHYE

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**IDENTITY COMPLEXITIES OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS IN
MALAYSIA**

By

GERALD NG KEA CHYE

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

April 2014

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Abstract of thesis in preparation to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
Fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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GERALD NG KEA CHYE

April 2014

Chair: Gisa Jähnichen, PhD

Faculty: Human Ecology

Symphony orchestras in Malaysia serve as an example where their organisational identity is neither sustained nor defined. In fact, they have had their identity altered and changed numerous times in their short history. The lack of consistency with the identity of any organisation could possibly lead to bigger problems for the organisation itself. Organisational identification is important because there is a relationship between identification and commitment towards the organisation. This will in turn create a positive outcome for work attitude and behaviours, which will have its implication on productivity, efficiency and, then, profit.

The research designed for this research uses qualitative research methods such as passive observation, participant observation, semi-structured interview as well as document analysis. Samples and respondents were identified using predetermined criteria and depending on the receptiveness of the samples, both passive observation and participant observation was employed in order to obtain the data. Observations were conducted for an accumulative period of two [2] months to six [6] months determined on various factors such as rehearsal scheduled, concert schedule and approval of the orchestra administration and management.

The two main perspectives of identity that is being studied with regards to symphony orchestras in Malaysia are firstly, how the identity of the orchestra is being perceived and secondly being how the identity of the orchestra is being portrayed. In order for this to be presented clearly, the active and passive factors that contribute to the

portrayal of identity by the organisation and perception of the identity by the society is identified, observed, analysed and understood.

Through this study it is identified that change of leadership figures, change of official names, economy and sponsorship as well as government policies are strong factors which indirectly affects the portrayal of identity of these orchestras as well as the perception of these orchestras by the society which houses them. With the case of the four orchestras being studied, it seems that an alteration or change in their core purpose of being established is inevitable when they are faced with a change of leadership figures. The economy, sponsorship and government policies have on the other hand altered the manner in which the orchestras operate which in turn will affect the portrayal and perception of the orchestras' identity.

It is essential for any form of arts to be independent from other influencing factors such as finance and infrastructure as the philosophy behind practicing art is about nurturing creativity. Thus it is found that it is more realistic for symphony orchestras to search for individualised solutions to their problems as the artistic needs of the orchestra as well as the society which houses them could potentially be different from others. Orchestras after all reflect, metaphorically, the functioning of social communication and mutual understanding which depends on democratic structures and rules within their artistic world as well as the community that houses them.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

KERUMITAN IDENTITI ORKESTRA SIMFONI DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

GERALD NG KEA CHYE

April 2014

Chair: Gisa Jähnichen, PhD

Fakulti: Ekologi Manusia

Orkestra simfoni di Malaysia menjadi contoh baik di mana identiti organisasinya tidak dikekalkan atau ditakrifkan dengan baik. Malah, identiti mereka telah kerap kali diubah dalam sejarahnya yang singkat. Organisasi-organisasi yang mempunyai identiti yang kurang konsisten ini kemungkinan menghadapi masalah yang lebih rumit pada masa akan datang. Organisasi identiti yang ditakrifkan dengan jelas adalah penting kerana terdapat hubungan yang akrab antara identiti and komitmen terhadap organisasi tersebut. Ini akan melahirkan tingkah laku dan hasil kerja yang positif yang akan mendatangkan implikasi positif terhadap produktiviti, tahap kecekapan dan akhirnya mendatangkan keuntungan.

Kertas penyelidikan ini ditulis berdasarkan reka bentuk kajian kualitatif dan menggunakan kaedah-kaedah seperti pemerhatian pasif, pemerhatian peserta, temu bual separa berstruktur serta analisis dokumen berkaitan. Sampel dan responden telah dikenal pasti menggunakan kriteria-kriteria yang telah ditetapkan dan bergantung kepada sikap dan tahap pengaluan yang ditunjukkan oleh sampel, pemerhatian pasif dan pemerhatian peserta akan digunakan sewajarnya untuk mendapatkan data yang secukupnya. Pemerhatian telah dijalankan antara sejumlah tempoh dua [2] hingga enam [6] bulan. Ini bergantung kepada beberapa faktor seperti jadual latihan, jadual persembahan dan kelulusan pihak pengurusan orkestra berkenaan.

Dua perspektif utama yang berkaitan dengan identiti telah dikaji berkaitan kepada orkestra simfoni di Malaysia ini. Dua perspektif yang dimaksudkan adalah yang pertama, apakah persepsi identiti orkestra ini diterima dan dilihat oleh golongan masyarakat dan keduanya, bagaimana identiti ini dipaparkan oleh orkestra itu sendiri. Dalam usaha untuk menggambarkan kedua-dua perspektif ini, faktor-faktor aktif dan pasif yang menyumbang kepada persepsi dan pemaparan identiti ini telah dikenal pasti, diperhati, dianalisa dan difahami.

Melalui kajian ini, faktor-faktor seperti perubahan dalam pucuk pimpinan, perubahan dalam nama-nama rasmi organisasi tersebut, keadaan ekonomi negara, jenis penajaan yang diterima dan polisi kerajaan telah dikenal pasti sebagai faktor penting yang memberi kesan secara tidak langsung kepada pemaparan dan persepsi identiti ini. Melalui keempat-empat orkestra yang telah dikaji, adalah diperhatikan bahawa terdapat bukti-bukti bahawa perubahan kepada matalamat asal orkestra ini ditubuhkan adalah sesuatu yang tidak dapat dielakkan apabila orkestra-orkestra ini berdepan dengan perubahan dalam pucuk pimpinan. Keadaan ekonomi, jenis penajaan yang diterima dan polisi kerajaan pula telah menyebabkan perubahan kepada operasi harian orkestra-orkestra ini. Ini telah seterusnya memberi kesan kepada pemaparan dan persepsi identiti orkestra-orkestra ini.

Ini adalah penting untuk sektor kesenian untuk tidak dipengaruhi oleh faktor-faktor lain seperti tahap kewangan dan infrastruktur kerana falsafah utama disebalik pengamal kesenian adalah untuk memupuk kreativiti. Oleh itu, didapati bahawa ia adalah lebih realistik untuk orkestra-orkestra simfoni untuk mencari jalan penyelesaian tersendiri kepada masalah-masalah yang mereka hadapi. Ini adalah kerana keperluan artistik sesebuah orkestra serta masyarakat yang menempatkan orkestra-orkestra ini berkemungkinan berbeza sesama sendiri. Lagipun orkestra, secara metaforanya mencerminkan fungsi komunikasi sosial dan persefahaman yang bergantung kepada struktur dan peraturan demokratik yang tertakluk kepada dunia artistik orkestra itu sendiri serta masyarakat yang menempatkan mereka.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 11 April 2014 to conduct the final examination of Gerald Ng Kea Chye on his thesis entitled “Identity Complexities of Symphony Orchestra in Malaysia” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded Master of Science.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

Syuhaily binti Osman, PhD

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Yeoh Pei Sze, PhD

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Adlina binti Ab Halim, PhD

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Osamu Yamaguti, PhD

Professor
Nanhua University
Taiwan
(External Examiner)

NORITAH OMAR, PhD

Associate Professor and Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 23 June 2014

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of (Master of Science). The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Gisa Jänichen, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Chan Cheong Jan, PhD

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Signature: _____

Name of

Chairman of

Supervisory

Committee: _____

Signature: _____

Name of

Member of

Supervisory

Committee: _____

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