

# ESTEEM

## Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities

Volume 7, No. 2, September 2023



# **E S T E E M**

## **JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

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# **ESTEEM**

## **JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

### **Journal Description**

Introduced in 2017, ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities is an official journal of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Pulau Pinang with a registered e-ISSN 2600-7274. It is an open-access journal that publishes articles in English and Bahasa Malaysia. Initially, it was published once a year, from January 2017 to December 2020, but changed its publication frequency to twice a year starting in January 2021 to accommodate the increasing number of manuscript submissions. The journal adheres to traditional standards of double-blind peer review with an average acceptance rate of 30%. Currently, the journal does not charge any article processing fees for manuscripts submitted personally or collaboratively by authors.

### **Aim and Scope**

The ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities aims to serve as a platform for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to exchange new knowledge and ideas in social sciences and humanities areas. The journal provides an avenue for scholars and practitioners to document unpublished, original manuscripts related to emerging issues, developments, and trends that examine how people interact, integrate, behave and influence the world around them. Specifically, the journal aims to provide new knowledge on the relationships between individuals and societies and the operation and progression of organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The key topics covered in the journal relate to emerging issues, trends, and challenges that shape individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors across societies, businesses, industries, and governments worldwide. As the journal covers two separate but interrelated areas of social sciences and humanities, authors are welcome to submit manuscripts that systematically investigate questions around humanities development, namely language, linguistics, culture, arts, religion, health, and wellbeing. For social sciences, the journal invites manuscripts related to human psychology and sociology in education, law, political science, business, and hospitality, among others.

### **Frequency of Publication**

- January 2021 to present: ONE (1) volume TWO (2) issues per year, published in April and September.
- January 2017 to December 2020: ONE (1) volume ONE (1) issue per year, published in November.
- The publication frequency of the journal does not include special issues.

### **Duration of Publication Process**

The publication process takes approximately 90 – 120 days, based on current practice. All manuscripts are processed accordingly:

- Review Process (within 30 days after the closing date)
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- Revision (within 30 days after the manuscript acceptance)
- Copy Editing (within 10 days after final revision)
- Publication (within 10 days after the copy-editing process)

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ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences  
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13500, Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang,  
Malaysia  
Email: ejssh.esteem@uitm.edu.my  
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Unit Penulisan dan Penerbitan  
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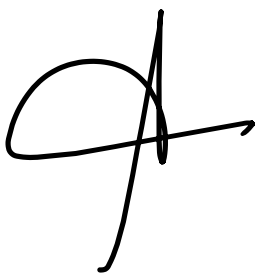
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## EDITORIAL NOTE

On behalf of the ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (EJSSH) Editorial Team, I am delighted to present Volume 7, Issue No. 2, September 2023. Out of 72 submissions received, only 30 manuscripts were accepted for publication after the stringent review process, representing a 41% acceptance rate. After multiple series of the double-blind peer review process, only 21 high-quality manuscripts met the standard empirical paper requirement and were successfully published.

For the next issue, we are looking forward for more insightful and thought-provoking articles from distinguished authors across various disciplines in social sciences and humanities. We welcome international-based papers across countries, regions, and continents that align with these important global objectives focusing on Sustainable Development Goals. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the authors, reviewers, and our editorial team members for their invaluable contributions in bringing this edition to fruition. We hope you find this journal issue both informative and inspiring, and we look forward to your continued support and engagement.



**Editor-in-Chief**

Noor Ashikin Basarudin, Ph.D.  
ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities  
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang



# The Impact of Retailer's Corporate Social Responsibility Activities on Customer Loyalty at Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Shaikh Multazim Hasan Ali<sup>1</sup>, Chandramalar Munusami<sup>2\*</sup>, Hamidah Md Yusop<sup>3</sup> and Siti Aishah Hussin<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,4</sup> School of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Business, Hospitality and Humanities, Nilai University, 71800 Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

<sup>3</sup> Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

\*corresponding author: <sup>2</sup>chandramalar\_cm@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### KEYWORDS

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Corporate social responsibility is one of the largest and most growing factors that has a potential impact on the organization's performance in the long term. The main purpose of the study was to identify the impact of retailer's corporate social responsibility activities on customer loyalty. The main objective of the study is to determine the relationship between retailers' corporate social responsibility activities and customer loyalty. The quantitative research method was used for this study, and the data was collected randomly from 100 respondents residing in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. The several other factors that were examined in this study to gain a better understanding of the impact of corporate social responsibility activities on customer loyalty were corporate reputation, financial benefits, service quality, transparency, and customer loyalty. The results of this study show that people in young and middle ages give the most positive responses. From this study, there is a strong positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and customer loyalty. From this study, it can be seen that people value those companies that constantly engage in social responsibility and meet people's needs and demands by addressing the basic values, beliefs, and morals of society as a whole.



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is one of the business models that helps the company to be socially responsible to its various stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, buyers, unions, and employees. CSR activities are usually profitable for the company, and with the help of other philanthropic programs, the company can help the society to benefit. The business world is changing, and different companies are trying different methods to attract and retain loyal customers. In the same way, customers are looking for companies that conduct business in the most ethical way. CSR activities not only benefit the company, but important and helpful in building a good relationship between companies and customers. Socially capable companies have more benefits, better execution, stakeholder loyalty, and better credit offers (Sindhu, 2017). The main objective of the study is to identify whether CSR has an effect on customer loyalty. For organizations, CSR is the main tool they use to demonstrate their commitment to the environment in which they operate. It is known from previous research that customer loyalty can be influenced by a variety of factors, the most important of which are customer service, price, convenience, rewards, and reputation. Carroll and Buchholtz (2003) stated, the company's increasing CSR efforts have led to society's satisfaction with the company, which translates into less involvement in the conflicts that arise for the company. This shows that CSR has helped to increase trust in the company in terms of overall satisfaction and optimal performance. According to Tanggamani et al. (2022), disclosure of CSR practices in public listed companies in Malaysia has recently been made mandatory. Furthermore, good CSR performance directly affects a company's reputation and financial performance. This research also shows that reputation mediates the relationship between CSR and financial performance, especially corporate profitability.

Therefore, the main objective of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility on customer loyalty, and considering the other research objectives of this study, the following hypotheses were tested:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between retailer's corporate social responsibility activities on customer loyalty.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between retailer's corporate reputation on customer loyalty.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between the financial benefits provided by the retailers on customer loyalty.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive relationship between service quality provided by the retailers on customer loyalty.

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive relationship between the transparency provided by the retailers on customer loyalty.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The CSR is the business model which helps companies to be socially accountable and to its stakeholders and the public (Chen, 2020). In reality, the term CSR is a broader term, and it can take various forms depending on the company and industry. In order to remain socially responsible, the company first needs to be accountable to itself, considering all the members of the organization, and then to its stakeholders. One thing then comes out of the implementation of CSR is that companies become more of their users and have successfully grown their

businesses which helps them give back to the society. There is no one significant way to practice CSR in the company, but it is seen that many company CSR activities contribute positively to the economy, public, and the environment (Schooley, 2020). CSR has nothing to do with the size of the business, whether it is small, big, or medium. All types and sizes of firms now practice CSR activities in their businesses but the thing is that medium and small businesses will not have that much funding or their efforts are not being publicized as compared to the larger sized firms. Although CSR is also referred to as one of the company's approach towards corporate governance, and this helps in scrutinizing every part of the business like human resources, manufacturing, supply chain, and operations. The reason CSR is important is due to the fact that a company runs its business in society, and if the customer or the community as a whole does not approve of their business, then won't be able to do it successfully, and overall, they will start losing their business (BDC, 2020).

The objective of CSR endeavours is to maximise the industry's long term satisfactory outgrowth on society while minimizing its antagonistic continuations (Petkus & Woodruff, 1992). The norms of the manufacturers and vendors seeking CSR actions are various and entail businesses as diverse as Apple, Converse, Emporio Armani, and the Gap. Google shows responsibility to the habitat by endowing renewable energy sources and endurable offices. The company's CEO, Sundar Pichai, is also recognized for standing up against civic problems such as discrimination. Customer skepticism about CSR investment results more from the inadequacy of consumer awareness of such factual community litigation outcomes than from the buyer's disbelief of the company's intentions for pursuing such action (Singh et al., 2009). Responding to the consumer needs for more CSR activities and tremendous corporate clarity has been crucial in recent years (Saeidi et al., 2015).

### ***2.1 Ethical Responsibility***

The ethical responsibility takes into consideration looking into the aspects of welfare of the employees working in the organization and also the employees of the supplier. Now, here the ethical labor practice for the employees of the supplier correlates to the fair usage of products that potentially meets the certification and meet the other standard fair trade terms (Nafi, 2018).

Whereas to remain fair for the employees of the organization directly signifies giving equal wages, equal pay according to the working hours that meets the labor laws, and appropriate living wage compensation (Krohn, 2018). Also, one thing that the company should also focus on is that while providing or implementing labor practices they it should also covers the fact that there will be no discrimination based on caste, religion, race, gender, or age among the employees, and each of the employees will be given equal rights throughout the organization. There are many organizations that ensure this responsibility is properly addressed. For example: Google gives each and every one of its employees a very good salary package based on their experience, skill and ensures that they are meeting labor laws, and also pay serious attention to their employee well-being.

### ***2.2 Environmental Responsibility***

Companies the environmental responsibility generally involves two things: limiting the pollution and reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. A superfluity of company have set up their CSR efforts to minimize the environmental pollution. Environmental CSR involves the appraisal of the company's production ordeals to locate wasteful activities and eradicate them from the business structure (Hernick, 2020). Due to the increase in the issues and problems in the environment the company which is taking this issue as a serious concern and taking steps

in order to reduce the or minimize the levels of pollution also increases their chances in gaining good corporate citizenship by benefitting the society.

### ***2.3 Economic Responsibility***

This is the field that is interrelated and mainly targets afflicting balance between the environmental, philanthropic, and business practices. The major concerns for the company in this section is are to ensure that they are able to generate profits and grow substantially while benefiting society and the community. Nowadays, consumers are becoming more logical and sensible in approaching a company, and they do believe that profits should not come from the means of expenses (Walters, 2019). One of the other ways corporation handle the economic responsibility is by ensuring and implementing the most efficient practices so as to reduce wasted capital.

### ***2.4 Customer Loyalty***

Customer loyalty greatly signifies the purchasing power or the spending power, and the customer always has a keen eye on the products and services that are being offered at regular prices and help them save money. In other words, Customer loyalty can be defined as the way customers are more likely to do repeat business with the company and prefers their products and services over those of their competitors. For the firm, this is the biggest challenge ensuring that they carry out successful efforts in maintaining and getting repeat purchases from the customers. It is important to note that the firms that are adhering to the boundaries and practicing CSR activities are taking dominant steps in protecting the issues and interests of the current as well as future generations. This is where CSR actually plays a role in attracting a large number of customers, and it is the fact that the customer will potentially give reward to the organization who are taking steps in CSR and through which the society is getting benefits through indirect means. By generating and maintaining buyer integrity, a corporation develops a long-term, mutual beneficial mutual with its customers. A faithful client base outcomes in a maintainable competitive advantage (Mandhachitara & Poolthong, 2011). By enticing faithful customers, administrators can reduce promotion costs and decrease the impact of price sensitivity. Additionally, a high grade of buyer loyalty outcomes in the recommendations through optimistic word-of-mouth. When the customer feels an emotional attachment with the products and services then there are higher chances and the company is withholding their strong position with 306%, and the customer will endorse such products and services of the company to 26% as compared to those customers who cannot make a sense of emotional attachment with the product (Brad Davis, 2019).

### ***2.5 Corporate Reputation***

Corporate reputation is the most important segment of the business and it is an overall estimation of how the company is held by its internal and external stakeholders by considering its past actions. Because of the corporate reputation, there are many decisions that the stakeholder seeks to decide on regarding the transaction process with particular firm (Walsh & Beatty, 2007). Corporate reputation is anticipated as one of the aspects that discern one corporation from another. Also, it is important to note that reputation for any firm is not built in one single day or with minimum efforts but it is a constant and continuous effort made by the firm and the customer or who plays a crucial role in getting the company to achieve the desired brand recognition by passing information from one individual to another and making sure that it flows along the way (Herbig & Milewicz, 1993). In the study done by Cretu and

Brodie (2009), it was stated that the company that enhances its corporate reputation tends to have a stronger impact on customer value and loyalty.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire because a structured survey limits the number of possible responses. In addition, the questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part contained five demographic questions. The second part contained the main research questions, which were divided into five categories: CSR, corporate reputation, financial benefits, service quality, and transparency. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to 100 participants, and at the end of data collection, the researcher had 100 responses. All participants participated in the survey on their own initiative and discretion and responded with their own knowledge and understanding of the study conducted by the researcher. All questionnaires were distributed at Tesco in Nilai.

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Demographic Data

The demographic data of the respondents, including gender, education, age, race, and marital status, can be used to determine their primary characteristics. Table 1 shows a summary of the description analysis.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Demographic	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	73.0
	Female	27.0
Education	High School	37.0
	Diploma	23.0
	Bachelor's Degree	27.0
	Master	11.0
	PhD	2.0
Age	Below 18 years	15.0
	18-25 years	71.0
	26-35 years	9.0
	36-45 years	3.0
	45 and above	2.0
Race	Malay	69.0
	Chinese	14.0
	Indian	10.0
	Others	7.0
Marital Status	Single	88
	Married	12

Based on this distribution, it can be determined that there were more male than female respondents. Of the 100 participants, the researcher received responses from 73 males and 27 females. From the collected data, it can be seen that the age group of 18 to 25 years old has the highest percentage of responses with 71%, followed by the age group of under 18 years old with 15% of responses. The results of the different age groups show that most of the responses are from the young population. This shows that the young population is more aware of CSR, has social consciousness, and believes in changing the social community (Cheng, 2019). From



the 100 responses and Table 1, it can be seen that most of the responses came from the Malays participants, which accounted for 69% of the responses, followed by the Indian participants, which accounted for 14%, and finally the Chinese participants, which accounted for 10%. Table 1 also shows that 7% of responses were collected from other countries. From the table above, it can be seen that 37% of the responses were from participants who attended high school. The second highest number of responses came from participants who had completed their bachelor's degree (27%), followed by participants who had completed their graduate degree (23% of total responses). Participants who had a master's degree had the lowest percentage, contributing to 11% of the total responses, and participants who had a doctorate had the lowest percentage, contributing only 2%. Finally, the responses indicate that 88% of the participants were single and only 12% were married.

#### 4.2 Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis is important for every study, and it shows the degree to which the research study can produce same, stable, and consistent result. All the items formed for the purpose of collecting the information were analyzed under IBM SPSS 25 for the reliability analysis.

Table 2: Reliability statistics

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Corporate social responsibility	0.887	5
Corporate reputation	0.778	5
Financial benefits	0.726	5
Service quality	0.745	5
Transparency	0.848	5
Customer loyalty	0.836	5

According to the reliability testing in Table 2, it is noticeable that the Cronbach alpha value for each variable is greater than 0.7. As Pallant (2020) indicated that the perfect score of Cronbach alpha should be closer to 1 or higher than 0.7, and by checking the value of Cronbach alpha of the overall data, which is 0.829, it is very reliable.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Construct	CSR	CR	FBNTS	SQ	TP	CL
Corporate social responsibility	1	.699**	.179	.409**	.629**	.854**
Corporate reputation	.699**	1	.088	.405**	.790**	.690**
Financial benefits	.179	.088	1	.225*	.223*	.184
Service quality	.409**	.405**	.225*	1	.295**	.428**
Transparency	.629**	.790**	.223*	.295**	1	.528**
Customer loyalty	.854**	.690**	.184	.428**	.528**	1

\*\*, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 3 it is noticed that all five independent variables (Corporate social responsibility, corporate reputation, financial benefits, service quality, and transparency) shows positive Pearson correlation, and their values are: 0.854, 0.690, 0.180, 0.428, and 0.528. By looking at the Pearson correlation values of all the independent variables it can be said that all the variables are positively significant and correlated to the dependent variable.

### 4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

As shown in Table 4, the value of R was 0.876, or 88 percent, indicating a high level of prediction. The coefficient of determination for corporate reputation, financial benefits, service quality, and transparency had a value of 0.767 ( $R^2=0.0767$ ), representing 76.7 percent of the variability of customer loyalty. Consequently, 23.3 percent of the variation in this model could be attributed to other factors. The coefficient values were significant predictors of the independent variables.

Table 4: Model Summary

<b>Model Summary<sup>b</sup></b>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.876 <sup>a</sup>	.767	.755	.29866

a. Predictors: (Constant), TP, FBNTS, SQ, CSR, CR

b. Dependent variable: Customer loyalty

At last, the coefficients of the multiple regression analysis were conducted, and the result of the multiple regression analysis is shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Coefficient Value

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>							
		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.076	.273	.277	.782	-.466	.618		
	CSR	.780	.077	.733	10.113	.627	.934	.471	2.121
	CR	.323	.093	.326	3.477	.139	.508	.282	3.551
	FBNTS	.039	.033	.062	1.160	-.028	.105	.875	1.143
	SQ	.052	.062	.048	.840	-.070	.174	.766	1.305
	TP	.212	.083	.219	2.564	.376	.048	.340	2.944

a. Dependent Variable: CL

Table 5 shows that financial benefits and Service quality are the two factors that are not significant for the dependent variable, which is Customer loyalty. Also, Corporate social responsibility (0.000;  $p \leq .05$ ), Corporate reputation (0.001;  $p \leq .05$ ) and Transparency (0.012;  $p \leq .05$ ) are the three most influential factors and show high significance on dependent variable. Apart from that, Table 5 indicated that the study was not multicollinear, as the variation inflection factor (VIF) for each of the five independent variables was less than 10, and the tolerance was greater than 0.1.

From this study, it is clear that CSR is gaining its importance in the market, and the companies that associate themselves with such activities seem to have a better impact on their overall performance. In this study, it is clear that retail businesses CSR has a positive impact on customer loyalty. Based on Brad Davis (2019), it shows that the majority of the global market is occupied by millennials, and they take a larger share of spending power, which will nearly reach \$1.4 trillion by 2020. The importance of CSR is increasing rapidly. The social responsibility potentially helps in promoting social awareness, sensitivity, society's values, and business ethics, and from the study, it can be said that the customers demand and value the

contribution of the firm in conducting their business in the most ethical way, and therefore, this makes it easier for them to work and becomes a part of their profitability.

Furthermore, this study clearly shows that corporate reputation has a direct link to customer loyalty. It is a common belief and understanding of the consumer that if a firm has been able to gain a good corporate reputation in society, then it is easier for the customer to choose that firm and rely on their products and services. Also, the studies done by Helm et al. (2010) show that corporate reputation is an antecedent of customer loyalty, and there has been a significant positive relationship between corporate reputation and customer loyalty. Nowadays, companies are using this to remain competitive in the market. The firm usually gives its core attention to building a strong corporate reputation in the society to which it can potentially serve their products and services. By doing so they are making remarkable identifications of their firm in front of customers.

Next, the financial benefits provided by the retail businesses are not quite good enough for people to consider making repeated purchases. There are factors in the financial benefits, like the way retail businesses provide various opportunities to explore, that will influence the customer to come back and do business with the firm, but when we compare the overall determinants of the financial benefits, it shows the least significant relationship customer loyalty. From this, we can say that factors like financial benefits are not a great contributor to the customer's ability to recognize a brand or a company and make a positive impression about them. It has been seen that there is a lot of competition in the market, and for the firm, it is necessary to know that the cost of retaining a customer is usually 6-7 times lower than the acquiring new customer, which may differ depending on the basis of industry the company is serving. Thus, alone financial benefits will not help the company build a positive relationship with its customers, and potentially, there will be fewer chances for the company to get back their old customers. Therefore, it is important for the business to make a strategic approach plan in order to gain maximum customer loyalty, which must be incorporated with other business functions collaboratively.

On the other hand, researchers have found that the second least positively influencing factor in customer loyalty is service quality. There has been a different opinion about the quality of service offered to its customers. There is a certain dimension in this research study regarding the service quality that makes an agreeable contract of the majority of the customers in responding to the ability of the retail businesses to deliver their promises as set by the standards to their customers. This shows there has been a lack of understanding of the core values and attributes retail businesses should focus on. To make a positive impact on the customer through service quality, the firm must realize the quality measures and the general ideology of approaching customers by exceeding their expectations which can leave them fully satisfied with the firm's available service and positively influence their buying decision. This purely signifies that it is the firm's ability to make a quicker response to customer needs, and along with this, the firm should be in a position to hire the best qualified employees to serve the customers. Also, for the firm, it is important to understand that every business activity has an impact on the customer, and one functionality of the business can change the overall attitude of the customer towards the firm.

Finally, the results shows that there is a positive relationship between transparency and customer loyalty. It is common for the firm to use this factor to make elements like trust, reliability, and honesty more meaningful and addressable to the customers. It is important for the firm to understand the competitiveness of the market they are serving and should realize that the majority of customers these days are becoming more information centric and are

looking for reliable and honest information from the brands. From this research study, it is seen that retail businesses at Nilai are able to create a platform whereby they show a complete flexible approach in showing transparency of the firm regarding relevant information that the customer will look for, and through this, it can have a positive impact on their buying decision. For the firm, it is an easier way to build trust among its potential and targeted customers, and according to a study it is found that 34% of the customers fully rely on the companies they trust the most for the business they do with them (Lee, 2020). By analyzing the results obtained from this research, it is found that there are similar results in which the transparency has created a positive impact on customer loyalty. Therefore, overall, the firm has been able to use this as a way to stand out from its competitors and attract more customers, which will help in building long-term relations.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The main purpose of this study is to find out the impact of retailer's CSR activities on customer loyalty. As we find out in this research study, there are firms that are constantly using CSR as a strategy in their business operations. But it also depends on the organization as to how they execute such activities for the customers and from which they can get benefits in the long run. Despite the fact that CSR is an effective approach to making a brand or company more meaningful to its target customers, there are few companies that can actually get positive results from the conduct of such activities in their operations. From the research retail businesses has embraced the practice of CSR activities consistently. Analyzing the retail businesses at Nilai, is greatly connected with the activities of CSR, which overall shows that the firm gives importance to each and every customer and changes their lives by adhering to quality, which is a great factor in making long-term relationships with the customers. The major challenge that came out of carrying out this research was the web-survey because collecting information from geographical region and there are multiple ethnicities and different opinions that can be influenced by culture, background, and different levels of understanding usually poses a possible threat to getting unexpected results from the participants.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

This paper is completed by the contributions of the authors concerning the following tasks: The introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion, and conclusion have been written by SMHA. Supervision by CM. Adding more points, reviewing, editing, proofreading, and providing technical support are done by HMY and SAH. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Shaikh Multazim Hasan Ali** is a MBA student at Nilai University. His research interests include: (1) Management; and (2) Corporate social responsibility.

**Dr. Chandramalar Munusami** is a Senior Lecturer at Nilai University. Her research interests include: (1) Economic valuation of environmental resources; (2) Environmental economics; and (3) Environmental sustainability.

**Dr. Hamidah Md Yusop** is a Senior Lecturer at Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Selangor. Her current research interests include: (1) Human Resource Management; (2) Change Management; (3) Knowledge Management; (4) Strategic Management; and (5) Organizational Behaviour.

**Dr. Siti Aishah Hussin** is the Head of School of Management and Marketing, Nilai University. Her research interests include: (1) Organizational behaviour; (2) Employee behaviour; (3) Gender studies; and (4) Leadership.

# The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement Towards Buying Decision Using Online Advertisement

Noryusnita Ramli<sup>1\*</sup>, Zulkifli Abd Latif<sup>2</sup>, Siti Nasarah Ismail<sup>3</sup>, Nur Alyani Mohd Shukri<sup>4</sup>, Mohd Shazreeq Mohd Alhadi<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,3,4</sup>Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Rembau Campus, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor, Shah Alam Campus, Selangor, Malaysia

<sup>5</sup>Department of Marketing, IHH Healthcare Berhad, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>noryusnita8954@uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### KEYWORDS

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*A lot of brands use celebrity endorsement as a way to get people to pay attention to their marketing messages. Advertisers are willing to pay a lot of money to get the endorsements of these celebrities because they are the personal and social favourites most likely to influence consumers' buying decisions and lifestyles. The purpose of this study is to find out how celebrities are used to market to postgraduate students, how postgraduate students decide what to buy, and how the use of celebrities and buying decisions are linked. To do this, a quantitative survey was sent out to 170 postgraduate students by using a non-probability sampling. Findings show that using celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy has a big effect on postgraduate students' buying decisions. Correlation coefficient analysis is used to identify the relationship between attractive, trustworthy, expertise, and congruence towards buying decisions. The takeaway from this study is that brands should not just choose celebrities based on how they look. Instead, they should use a strategy to choose the right celebrities to represent their brands.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising influences people's lives daily through its persuasive communication, which aims to raise awareness about a product or service in order to stimulate purchasing intent. Each year, the marketing environment has been changing rapidly and aggressively to accommodate different consumer patterns and attitudes. Regardless of the product or brand category, consumers believe that these celebrities have a certain level of credibility due to the widespread use of this technique. This phenomenon is known as the halo effect. Using celebrities to represent a company's brand can improve the company's image and help the company gain consumer brand loyalty (Yeo et al., 2019). Nike, for instance, is one of the well-known brands that began to take celebrity endorsement to a new level. In 1984, Nike signed Michael Jordan to endorse their basketball shoe line, which became Nike Air Jordan and gave Nike a new meaning in the eyes of consumers, basketball fans, and Jordan's fans. To popularized golf, Nike has also done the same with Tiger Woods. Golf has become more popular than ever especially among the youth. Through this method, Nike's brand loyalty increased, and they continue to use it in addition to many others.

According to Khan et al. (2020), celebrities are well-known people with strong and friendly looks who influence consumers by being attractive or by making them trust the brand. So, some of the values that marketers need to use to create brand perceptions are celebrity traits, credibility, physical appearance, and image consistency. In marketing research, the effect of famous people endorsing products has been looked at. It means how likely it is that a consumer will buy a certain product. If the buying decision is high, it means that the consumer is more likely to buy the product (Teng et al., 2018). Several authors have also looked at a number of related topics, such as how celebrity endorsement affects product recall, how celebrity endorsement affects credibility and competence, and how celebrity image affects people (Nelson et al., 2017). Using celebrity endorsements is an expensive way to market a brand, but it can give the brand more benefits than drawbacks. Brands that are endorsed can get immediate attention and more media coverage, which makes them more visible on the market (Khan et al. 2016).

Contrary to popular belief, celebrities do not always have a substantial impact on product promotion. A possible interaction effect between negative celebrity publicity and celebrity identification could influence consumers' purchase intent (Maslikhan, 2015). These contradictory findings demonstrate that celebrity endorsement is a multifaceted process subject to a variety of influences. For instance, Hollywood A-lister Johnny Depp and his ex-wife Amber Heard were involved in a domestic violence accusation trial. Prior to the conclusion of the case, the sales of Sauvage by Dior, which Johnny Depp endorsed, had increased by 50 percent (Matthew, 2022). The trial had improved the reputation of both parties. This demonstrates that interest in a certain product is not just based on the brands, but also on endorsements. Similar to the example of English football icon David Beckham and the company Brylcreem hair cream. Beckham had negotiated a six-million-dollar, four-year contract to advertise Brylcreem. Beckham's decision to shave his head during the middle of his contract must have upset his brand. It is quite difficult for a brand spokesperson to advertise hairstyling product without hair. Unfortunately, once Beckham shaved his head, Brylcreem sales plummeted by 25%.

There are many ways to use celebrity endorsements in marketing campaigns. Some common methods include using celebrities to appear in advertisements, to endorse products on social media, and to be brand ambassadors. However, it is not clear which method is most effective in influencing buying decisions. The challenge for most companies is to follow the current trends when celebrity endorsements take place as priority in their marketing strategy for online advertising. Return of investment is something that ought to discuss versus product awareness

and existence. In order for companies to make a decision on using celebrities as the face of their products, a study needs to be done. Therefore, the research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine the impact of celebrity endorsements on the buying decisions of postgraduate students.
2. To identify the factors that influence the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements on the buying decisions of postgraduate students.
3. To identify the relationship between the use of celebrity endorsement and buying decisions.

UiTM's Mass Communication postgraduate students were chosen as the population and sampling of this study because UiTM is the largest public university in Malaysia based on enrolment (MOHE, 2020), students and employed people are the top internet users in Malaysia (Statista, 2022), and postgraduate students studying communication and media should be more media literate and have a better understanding of online advertising and buying online than those who do not study communication and media.

Significantly, this study will benefit companies in deciding whether or not celebrity endorsement will help in affecting consumers' buying decisions and what kind of celebrity will fit their brands. This is supported by Morgan et al. (2018) who stated that knowledge is important for developing theoretical understanding in marketing. From a professional perspective, this study has value for future researchers regarding celebrity endorsement topics.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Celebrity Endorsement***

The term "celebrity" refers to individuals who are well-known for their achievements in a specific field. Politicians, athletes, actresses, entertainers, models, and pop singers are all examples of celebrities. According to Schimmelpfennig (2018), a celebrity endorser is a public figure who uses their fame to promote a product or brand through advertisements. Celebrities may serve as spokespeople for brands, lending credibility to their claims and assertions about their products by leveraging their fame.

### ***2.2 Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise and Congruence***

The term "attractiveness" refers not just to a person's physical beauty, but also to the characteristics that customers desire in an endorser, such as academic accomplishment, personality qualities, a certain way of life, and athletic performance (Deshbhag & Mohan 2020). The authors hypothesise, based on source credibility theory and prior research, that regardless of the product category being endorsed, a consumer's perception of the attractiveness of a celebrity endorser will influence the customer's attitude towards the endorsed brand, also known as brand attitude. According to Deshbhag & Mohan (2020), trustworthiness is the consumer's sense of the endorser's sincerity, integrity, and credibility as expressed via their words. According to study conducted by Tzoumaka et al. (2016), the only credibility element that influenced the buying intention of clients was the credibility of sports idols.

Expertise is the knowledge, skill, or competency possessed by the endorsing party (Deshbhag & Mohan 2020). The expertise does not depend on whether the one advertising the product is an expert; rather, it is contingent on how the target audience perceives the individual. When selecting a celebrity to market a product, compatibility between the celebrity and the product should take precedence. The purpose of the idea of congruence is to identify the best match between a product and any connected variable. The level of congruence refers to the degree to

which the most pertinent features of the endorser match with the most vital aspects of the product (Freire et al., 2018).

## 2.3 Buying Decisions

When it comes to the buying decision behaviour of consumers, it is crucial to understand the many sorts of customers, whose buying decision behaviours vary based on their level of participation and their capacity to discern major variations across brands. This is due to the fact that various sorts of consumers make buying decisions differently. According to Hawkins et al. (2012), "purchasing participation" refers to a buyer's amount of involvement in the act of purchasing a product or service. The first type of consumer buying behaviour model is complicated purchasing behaviour, which refers to customers' significant purchase involvement and their ability to perceive substantial company differences. Dissonance-reducing purchasing behaviour is the second type of shopping behaviour. This form of purchasing behaviour is characterised by clients' high level of purchase involvement and inability to discern meaningful brand differences. Lastly, there is the purchase pattern known as habitual purchasing behaviour. This pertains to the consumers' lack of interest in the purchasing process as well as their inability to distinguish significant brand differences.

## 2.4 Online Advertising

Online advertising refers to the use of websites and other online venues for the purpose of advertising. In another words, internet advertisements. Promotional messages appear on the screens of computers, desktops, tablets, smart TVs, and smartphones in internet advertising. The purpose of online advertising is to acquire, keep, and expand the consumer base. In addition, it fosters a long-lasting and cost-effective connection with clients by allowing them to learn about products and services whenever and wherever they want, with the intent of making a purchase or repeat purchase (Mishra & Mahalik, 2017).

## 2.5 Research Framework

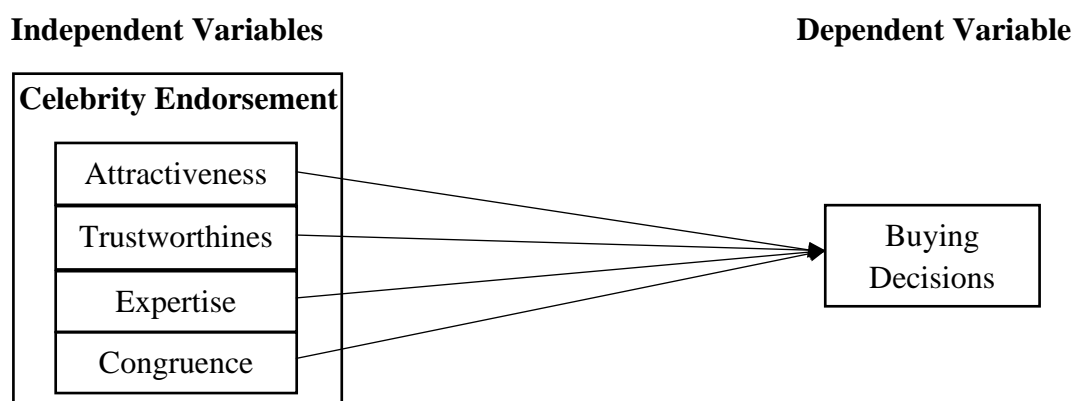


Figure 1: Research Framework on The Relationship of Celebrity Endorsement and Buying Decisions towards Postgraduate Students

## 2.6 Research Hypotheses

These are the hypotheses to be tested in this study to find the significance of each variable. Further discussion of the findings are discussed in the results section.

H1: There is a significant relationship between attractiveness of celebrity endorsement and postgraduate students' buying decisions.



H2. There is a significant relationship between trustworthiness of celebrity endorsement and postgraduate students' buying decisions.

H3. There is a significant relationship between expertise of celebrity endorsement and postgraduate students' buying decisions.

H4. There is a significant relationship between congruence of celebrity endorsement and postgraduate students' buying decisions.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

This quantitative study uses an online questionnaire to analyse the relationship between celebrity endorsement and the buying decisions of postgraduate students. In order to gather data, a link to an online questionnaire collection was issued to postgraduate students. To evaluate the impact of celebrity endorsement on the buying decisions of postgraduate students, an English-language four-point Likert scale was adapted from Albaum et al., (2014) (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree).

#### 3.2 Population and Sampling

UiTM's Mass Communication postgraduate students were chosen as the population and sampling of this study because UiTM is the largest public university in Malaysia based on enrolment (MOHE, 2020), students and employed people are the top internet users in Malaysia (Statista, 2022), and postgraduate students studying communication and media should be more media literate and have a better understanding of online advertising and buying online than those who do not study communication and media. The survey was conducted regardless of the respondents' demographic characteristics, as the study was previously limited to postgraduate students. Non-probability sampling and convenience sampling were employed to choose respondents for this study. According to Krejcie and Morgan's Table (1970), the minimum needed sample size based on the population was 161 respondents, assuming a margin of error of 5% and a degree of confidence of 95%. The Faculty of Communication and Media Studies reports that there are 275 postgraduate students in total. The researcher rounded the number up to 170.

#### 3.3 Instrument Development

This study's results were collected via a questionnaire comprising of closed-ended questions that was distributed via online. In order to test research hypotheses, the questionnaire has been separated into six sections: demographic profile; attractiveness; trustworthiness; expertise; congruence; and buying decisions. Albaum et al., (2014) is a 4-point likert scale beginning with (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree, and (4) Strongly agree. The instruments for each variable in this study are presented as questionnaires in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Questionnaires

Part	Questions	Sources
A	A1 – Gender A2 – Age A3 – Race A4 – Occupation	Adopt from (Nawi et al., 2019). [5]
B	B1 – I prefer to watch advertisements with physically attractive (beautiful, elegant, classy) endorsers	Adopt from Khan, Marium et al., 2018).

	B2 – I think that attractiveness is an important characteristic for celebrity endorser	[13]
	B3 – I feel that a physically attractive endorser influences my buying decision towards a celebrity endorsed brand	
	B4 – I remember a brand that is endorsed by an attractive celebrity more	
C	C1 – I think the advertisement with a trustworthy (dependable, honest, sincere, reliable) endorser receives less negative recalls C2 – I feel that an advertisement with a trustworthy endorser pushes me to remember that advertisement and the product that is being endorsed C3 – I prefer to buy a product if the celebrity endorser is a trustworthy person C4 – I will stop buying the product if it is endorsed by a celebrity involved in a scandal C5 – I think that a brand endorsed by a trustworthy celebrity is more respectable and desirable	Adopt from (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2017) [30]
D	D1 – I think an advertisement with a celebrity endorser who has expertise (skilled, qualified, knowledgeable, experienced) is more respectable D2 – I pay more attention to advertisements using a celebrity with expertise D3 – I will buy a product if the celebrity endorsing is an expert D4 – I think a brand being endorsed by a celebrity with expertise is more trustable	Adopt from (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2017) [30]
E	E1 – Product and celebrity match influence my buying decision E2 – I believe celebrities use the product they have endorsed E3 – The alignment between endorsers' field and product attributes stimulates my purchase intentions E4 – If the celebrity fits the brand endorsed, it will influence my buying decision	Adopt from Khan, Marium et al., (2018). [13]
F	F1 – Brands endorsed by celebrities are of high quality F2 – Brands endorsed by celebrities influence my buying decisions F3 – If my favourite celebrity endorses a brand, I will buy it F4 – I buy a brand because I like the personality of the celebrity endorser F5 – I buy a brand that is endorsed by my favourite celebrity F6 – I feel happy in buying a brand endorsed by famous celebrity F7 – I would continue to buy the same products from the market irrespective of advertising the same product through any specific celebrity	Adopt from (Tingchi Liu & Brock, 2011) [14]

### 3.4 Reliability Test

The questions were adopted from previous studies which are in the same field of study. There were 30 respondents selected for the pilot study. According to Whitehead et al. (2015), 30 respondents are sufficient to conduct a pilot test. As for this pilot test, the total reliability score was 0.975 (Good). As can be seen in Table 2 below, for Part B – Endorser Attractiveness value is 0.919, Part C – Endorser Trustworthiness value is 0.910, Part D – Endorser Expertise value is 0.923, Part E – Endorser Congruence value is 0.885, and Part F – Consumers' Purchase Intention value is 0.930. This indicates that the questionnaire is reliable for this study.

Table 2: Summary of Reliability Test

Section	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	N of Items
Part B: Endorser Attractiveness	0.919	4
Part C: Endorser Trustworthiness	0.910	5
Part D: Endorser Expertise	0.923	4
Part E: Endorser Congruence	0.885	4
Part F: Consumers' Buying Decision	0.930	7

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The survey questionnaire collected data from 170 respondents and were analysed using SPSS software. Table 3 shows the demographic profile of the respondents that have been analysed in terms of gender, age, race and occupation among the postgraduate students. It is important to identify the respondents' background and the findings are as follows; the frequency of male respondents is 47 with a percentage of 28% as compared to female respondents of 123 with a percentage of 72%. The respondents' age is highly distributed at the age range between 31 to 40 (55.3%), between 21 to 30 (35.3%), between 41 to 50 (7%) and between 50 and over (2.4%). Majority of the respondents are Malay (94%), followed by others (6%). In terms of the respondents' job profile, the majority of them are working in the private sector (44%) and others government sector are (22.4%), self-employed (21.1%), students (12%) and unemployed (1.2%).

Table 3: Summary of Demographic Profile

Profile Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47	28%
Female	123	72%
<b>Age</b>		
21 to 30	60	35.3%
31 to 40	94	55.3%
41 to 50	12	7%
50 and over	4	2.4%
<b>Race</b>		
Malay	159	94%
Chinese	0	-
Indian	0	-
Others	11	6%
<b>Occupation</b>		
Government sector	38	22.4%
Private sector	74	44%
Self-employed	36	21.1%
Student	20	12%
Unemployed	2	1.2%

## 4.2 The Use of Celebrity Endorsement

A seventeen-item questionnaire was used to identify the use of celebrity endorsement towards postgraduate students. The attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and congruence of the endorser were measured by asking these questions that are presented in Table 4 below. The table presents the mean and standard deviation of the use of celebrity endorsement towards postgraduate students. The results of the descriptive analysis show that *'I think that a brand endorsed by a trustworthy celebrity is more respectable and desirable'* is what most of the postgraduate students felt towards celebrity endorsement with a mean value = 3.17, followed by *'I think an advertisement with a celebrity endorser who has expertise (skilled, qualified, knowledgeable, experienced is more respectable'* (Mean=3.15), *'I believe celebrities use the product they have endorsed'* (Mean=3.06), *'I think that attractiveness is an important characteristic for celebrity endorser'* (Mean=3.05), *'I pay more attention to advertisements using a celebrity with expertise'* (Mean=3.05), *'I think the advertisement with a trustworthy (dependable, honest, sincere, reliable) endorser receives less negative recalls'* (Mean=3.03), *'I feel that an advertisement with a trustworthy endorser pushes me to remember that advertisement and the product that is being endorsed'* (Mean=3.03), *'I prefer to buy a product if the celebrity endorser is a trustworthy person'* (Mean=3.01), *'I prefer to watch advertisements with physically attractive (beautiful, elegant, classy) endorsers'* (Mean=2.99), *'I think a brand being endorsed by a celebrity with expertise is more trustable'* (Mean=2.99), *'I remember a brand that is endorsed by an attractive celebrity more'* (Mean=2.97), *'The alignment between endorsers' field and product attributes stimulate my buying decisions'* (Mean=2.97), *'Product and celebrity match influence my buying decision'* (Mean=2.95), *'If the celebrity fits the brand endorsed, it will influence my buying decision'* (Mean=2.93), *'I feel that a physically attractive endorser influences my buying decision towards a celebrity endorsed brand'* (Mean=2.84), and *'I will stop buying the product if it is endorsed by a celebrity involved in a scandal'* (Mean=2.81).

Table 4: The Use of Celebrity Endorsement Towards Postgraduate Students

Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I prefer to watch advertisements with physically attractive (beautiful, elegant, classy) endorsers	170	2.99	.761
I think that attractiveness is an important characteristic for celebrity endorser	170	3.05	.763
I feel that a physically attractive endorser influences my buying decision towards a celebrity endorsed brand	170	2.84	.833

I remember a brand that is endorsed by an attractive celebrity more	170	2.97	.801
I think the advertisement with a trustworthy (dependable, honest, sincere, reliable) endorser receives less negative recalls	170	3.03	.753
I feel that an advertisement with a trustworthy endorser pushes me to remember that advertisement and the product that is being endorsed	170	3.03	.761
I prefer to buy a product if the celebrity endorser is a trustworthy person	170	3.01	.822
I will stop buying the product if it is endorsed by a celebrity involved in a scandal	170	2.81	.843
I think that a brand endorsed by a trustworthy celebrity is more respectable and desirable	170	3.17	.847
I think an advertisement with a celebrity endorser who has expertise (skilled, qualified, knowledgeable, experienced) is more respectable	170	3.15	.703
I pay more attention to advertisements using a celebrity with expertise	170	3.05	.767
I will buy a product if the celebrity endorsing is an expert	170	3.03	.722
I think a brand being endorsed by a celebrity with expertise is more trustable	170	2.99	.772
Product and celebrity match influence my buying decision	170	2.95	.789
I believe celebrities use the product they have endorsed	170	3.06	.876
The alignment between endorsers' field and product attributes stimulates my buying decisions	170	2.97	.673
If the celebrity fits the brand endorsed, it will influence my buying decisions	170	2.93	.762

#### 4.3 Postgraduate Students' Buying Decisions

A descriptive analysis representing the factors contributing to buying decisions among postgraduate students are presented in the Table 5. It shows that *'I would continue to buy the same products from the market irrespective of advertising'* is what most of the postgraduate students felt about their buying decisions with a mean value of 3.79. A total of 134 respondents answered "Agree" and 36 respondents answered "Strongly Agree" for this statement. Followed by *'Brands endorsed by celebrities are of high quality'* with a mean value of 3.22 derived from 128 respondents who answered "Agree" and 42 of them answered "Strongly Agree". Next is *'I buy a brand because I like the personality of the celebrity endorser'* with a mean value of 2.97 with respondents answering "Agree" (170). *'I buy a brand that is endorsed by my favourite celebrity'* is the next contributing factor with a mean value of 2.93 with 149 respondents answered "Agree". Next is *'I feel happy in buying a brand endorsed by famous celebrity'* with a mean value of 2.80 derived from 102 respondents who answered "Agree", followed by *'Brands endorsed by celebrities influence my buying decisions'* with a mean value of 2.83 and lastly is *'If my favourite celebrity endorses a brand, I will buy it'* with a mean value of 2.75.

Table 5: Postgraduate Students' Buying Decisions

Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Brands endorsed by celebrities are of high quality	170	3.22	.590
Brands endorsed by celebrities influence my buying decisions	170	2.83	.540
If my favourite celebrity endorses a brand, I will buy it	170	2.75	.419
I buy a brand because I like the personality of the celebrity endorser	170	2.97	.282
I buy a brand that is endorsed by my favourite celebrity	170	2.93	.317
I feel happy in buying a brand endorsed by famous celebrity	170	2.80	.754
I would continue to buy the same products from the market irrespective of advertising	170	3.79	.391

#### ***4.4 Relationship between Celebrity Endorsement and Buying Decisions***

Guilford's rules of thumb have been used for this study to assess the strength of the relationships between variables. As referred to Table 6, this indicator helps to answer the third research objective of this study.

Table 6: Guilford's rules of thumb

Correlation Coefficient	Strength of relationship
< 0.20	Negligible relationship
< 0.21 – 0.40	Low correlation, weak relationship
< 0.41 – 0.70	Moderate relationship
< 0.71 – 0.90	High correlation, strong relationship
> 0.90	Very strong relationship

Therefore, Table 7 describes the relationship between the dimensions of celebrity endorsement with buying decisions. Earlier hypotheses can be reported as:

*H1*: There is significant relationship between attractiveness of celebrity endorsement and postgraduate students' buying decisions

Pearson product correlation of celebrity endorsement attractiveness and buying decision was found to be moderately positive and statistically significant ( $r = .715$ ,  $p < .000$ ). Hypotheses accepted.

*H2*: There is significant relationship between trustworthiness of celebrity endorsement and postgraduate students' buying decisions

Pearson product correlation of celebrity endorsement trustworthiness and buying decision was found to be moderately positive and statistically significant ( $r = .673$ ,  $p < .000$ ). Hypotheses accepted.

*H3*: There is significant relationship between expertise of celebrity endorsement and postgraduate students' buying decisions

Pearson product correlation of celebrity endorsement expertise and buying decision was found to be moderately positive and statistically significant ( $r = .648, p < .000$ ). Hypotheses accepted. *H4*: There is significant relationship between congruence of celebrity endorsement and postgraduate students' buying decisions

Pearson product correlation of celebrity endorsement congruence and buying decision was found to be strongly positive and statistically significant ( $r = .862, p < .000$ ). Hypotheses accepted.

Table 7: The Relationship between Celebrity Endorsement and Buying Decisions

Variables	Analysis	Celebrity Endorsement
Attractiveness	Pearson Correlation	.715**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	177
Trustworthiness	Pearson Correlation	.673**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	177
Expertise	Pearson Correlation	.648**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	177
Congruence	Pearson Correlation	.862**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	177

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings show that the data may be broken down into three distinct categories: the use of celebrity endorsements, the buying decisions of postgraduate students, and the relationship between celebrity endorsements and buying decisions. It is shown that celebrity endorsement has a favourable and considerable influence on buying decisions online, and that the four factors of attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and congruence play a vital part in the formation of the variables. The contribution of celebrity endorsement may be shown by looking at the correlation values of the four different variables, which are attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and congruence. In addition, the celebrity's congruence with the product is the factor that has the greatest impact on the celebrity endorsement variable. This is followed by the celebrity's attractiveness, trustworthiness, and knowledge.

This may be helpful for marketers, particularly those working in the field of online marketing, to enhance customers' intention to make a purchase by using a celebrity who is associated with the brand or product in question and who is also appealing. This study agrees with the findings of earlier research conducted by Rachbini (2018). In contrast to another study by Shrestha (2019) which found that competence and trustworthiness did not have a role in consumers' decision-making about purchases, the current investigation found the opposite to be true.

According to Priyankara (2017), in order to ensure that the marketing campaign is successful, it is imperative that the celebrity who is selected to appear in the advertising meet all of the criteria listed below. First and foremost, it is essential that the celebrity be well-versed in the product or brand that they are advertising. The second step is for the celebrity to actually use the thing that they are endorsing. Thirdly, the celebrity in question has to have a positive image and personality. Fourthly, in order to present the goods, the celebrity should be able to



communicate well with the audience. Last but not least, the celebrity must have some connection to the product.

In conclusion, the usage of celebrity endorsement can be considered to be one of the marketing tactics that can be used and is worthy of the marketing budget of the firm. Increasing the likelihood that a consumer will make a purchase may be accomplished through the use of celebrity endorsement as a distribution channel. When selecting a celebrity endorser that is a good fit for the firm, marketing managers should give careful consideration to a number of different factors. It is essential to make certain that the histories of famous people are related with their attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and congruence.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

NR was responsible for conducting the introduction and literature review sections, while MSMA collected and refined the data. SNI performed the data analysis. ZAL and NAMS also collaborated on writing the methodology section. NR, ZAL, SNI, NAMS and MSMA collectively worked on finalizing the findings and discussion section. ZAL took on the role of coordinating and assisting with drafting the manuscript. All authors thoroughly read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Noryusnita Ramli** (Master of Art in Communication) is an Advertising lecturer at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies in UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Rembau branch, Malaysia. Her research interests includes but are not limited to marketing communication, creative advertising, and AIDA Model.

**Zulkifli Abd. Latif** (Doctor of Philosophy, Scholarly Publishing) is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies in UiTM Cawangan Selangor, Shah Alam branch, Malaysia. He has published several books and presented papers at local and international conferences related to the field communication and media. He also holds the title of Professional Technologist (Ts.) from MBOT IN 2021.

**Siti Nasarah Ismail** (M.A. Mass Communication) is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies in UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Rembau branch, Malaysia and currently is pursuing her PhD in the same university. Her research interests includes but are not limited to publishing, digital publication, sexting and technology acceptance.

**Nur Alyani Mohd Shukri** (M.A. Mass Communication) is Mass Communication lecturer at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies in UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Rembau branch, Malaysia. Her research interests includes but are not limited to broadcast media, communication theories and actively involved in innovation events.

**Mohd Shazreeq bin Mohd Alhadi** (M.A. Mass Communication) is Digital Manager at IHH Healthcare Berhad. He obtained his Master's Degree in Mass Communication from Universiti Teknologi MARA. His research interests include digital marketing, website optimization, and search engines.

# Competence Gap of Board Members Cooperatives in Malaysia

Rosmalina Che Yakzam<sup>1\*</sup>, Norfaezah Mahmood<sup>2</sup>, Nor Irzaq Nor Hamid<sup>3</sup>, Azianti Ismail<sup>4</sup>, Adila Hashim<sup>5</sup>, Siti Nuraini Abu Bakar<sup>6</sup>, Nur Yazira Hamsan<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,5,6,7</sup> Cooperative Institute of Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

<sup>4</sup>Smart Manufacturing Institute, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: [rosmalina@ikma.edu.my](mailto:rosmalina@ikma.edu.my)

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*The National Entrepreneurship Policy (NEP2030) aims to contribute RM100 billion in cooperative revenue by the year 2030. This can be seen because cooperatives play an important role in contributing to the economic development of Malaysia. However, the effectiveness of cooperatives depends on the competence of Cooperative Board Members (CBM) in carrying out their duties and responsibilities as catalysts in the cooperative movement. Nevertheless, research on the current competence gap in CBM is still lacking. Competence gap among CBM is often an obstacle in achieving excellent performance. The approach of this study can help CBM to build personal competence and can be used as an effort to improve organizational performance through competency empowerment. Accordingly, this study aims to identify current CBM competency gaps based on 44 competency items and five task areas. By using quantitative research methods, questionnaires were distributed to 420 people from 14 states in Malaysia. The research data collected was analysed using the Rasch Measurement Model with Winstep 5.2.20. The results of the analysis show that the most difficult item for CBM to implement is conducting business activities through digital channels. The study also found that financial management is the most difficult task for CBM. The results of this study provide important implications for agencies related to cooperatives, such as the Malaysian Co-operative Societies Commission (MCSC), and the Cooperative Institute of Malaysia (CIM), so that they can provide appropriate training and guidance and focus on the cooperative movement.*

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# Jurang Kompetensi Anggota Lembaga Koperasi di Malaysia

Rosmalina Che Yakzam<sup>1\*</sup>, Norfaezah Mahmood<sup>2</sup>, Nor Irzaq Nor Hamid<sup>3</sup>, Azianti Ismail<sup>4</sup>, Adila Hashim<sup>5</sup>, Siti Nuraini Abu Bakar<sup>6</sup>, Nur Yazira Hamsan<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,5,6,7</sup>Institut Koperasi Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

<sup>4</sup>Institut Penyelidikan Pembuatan Pintar, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>rosmalina@ikma.edu.my

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### KATA KUNCI

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*Dasar Keusahawanan Negara (DKN2030) menyasarkan sumbangan perolehan koperasi sebanyak RM100 bilion menjelang tahun 2030. Hal ini dapat dilihat kerana koperasi memainkan peranan penting dalam menyumbang pembangunan ekonomi negara Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun, keberkesanan koperasi bergantung kepada kompetensi Anggota Lembaga Koperasi (ALK) dalam melaksanakan tugas dan tanggungjawab sebagai pemangkin dalam gerakan koperasi. Namun, penelitian penyelidikan berkenaan jurang kompetensi semasa ALK masih kurang. Jurang kompetensi di kalangan ALK sering kali menjadi halangan dalam mencapai prestasi yang cemerlang. Pendekatan kajian ini dapat membantu ALK untuk membina kompetensi diri serta boleh dijadikan usaha dalam menambah baik prestasi organisasi melalui pemeriksaan kompetensi. Sehubungan itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti jurang kompetensi ALK semasa berdasarkan 44 item kompetensi dan lima bidang tugas. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan kuantitatif, soal selidik telah diedarkan sebanyak 420 dari 14 negeri di Malaysia. Data kajian yang dikumpulkan serta dianalisis menggunakan Model Pengukuran Rasch dengan Winstep 5.2.20. Hasil analisis menunjukkan item paling sukar dilaksanakan oleh ALK adalah menjalankan aktiviti perniagaan melalui saluran digital (item ES1). Kajian juga mendapati pengurusan kewangan merupakan bidang tugas yang paling sukar bagi ALK. Hasil kajian ini memberikan implikasi penting kepada agensi yang berkaitan koperasi seperti Suruhanjaya Koperasi Malaysia (SKM), dan Institut Koperasi Malaysia (IKMa) supaya dapat menyediakan latihan dan bimbingan yang bersesuaian dan berfokus kepada gerakan koperasi.*

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## 1. PENGENALAN

Sektor koperasi merupakan sektor yang amat penting selaras dengan Dasar Keusahawanan Negara (DKN2030) yang menyasarkan sumbangan perolehan koperasi sebanyak RM100 billion menjelang tahun 2030. Sehingga tahun 2022, statistik koperasi merekodkan sebanyak 15,315 buah koperasi yang telah didaftarkan. Keanggotaan koperasi meningkat sebanyak 7.31 juta orang anggota, modal syer dan yuran berjumlah RM 16.98 billion, aset bernilai RM 159.61 billion dan pencapaian perolehan sektor koperasi adalah sebanyak RM 45.50 billion (Suruhanjaya Koperasi Malaysia (SKM), 2022). Justeru, sektor koperasi perlu memainkan peranan penting dalam peningkatan perolehan dan juga pemangkin ekonomi negara. Semua koperasi yang berdaftar harus lebih aktif, progresif, dan berdaya saing serta mempunyai keupayaan untuk menjana pendapatan yang lebih tinggi untuk mencapai matlamat yang ditetapkan oleh Kerajaan memandangkan sektor ini ditinggalkan dengan tempoh masa yang terhad untuk mencapai sasaran DKN2030 (Kawi, 2020). Kompetensi yang mantap amat perlu bagi melahirkan ALK yang dapat melaksanakan tugas dan peranan dengan baik di koperasi. Perolehan merupakan salah satu kaedah yang digunakan untuk mengukur prestasi kewangan koperasi. Antara kriteria yang diperlukan untuk sesebuah koperasi tersenarai sebagai salah satu daripada 100 Koperasi Terbaik di Malaysia termasuklah hasil pendapatan yang tinggi dan tadbir urus yang baik (Kasim, 2021).

Pada tahun 2020, KUSKOP telah memperkenalkan TransKoM 2021-2025 bagi memperkasakan Gerakan Koperasi di Malaysia sebagai pemangkin kepada pertumbuhan sosioekonomi Malaysia yang seimbang, inklusif, progresif dan mampan menerusi 5 Bidang Tujahan (Kementerian Pembangunan Usahawan dan Koperasi (KUSKOP), 2020). Salah satu daripada 5 bidang tujahan tersebut memfokuskan kepada pengukuhan bakat dan pembangunan modal insan. Bidang tujahan ini memfokuskan juga elemen kompetensi yang terdiri daripada pengetahuan, kemahiran dan sikap. Tambahan pula, ALK merupakan modal insan koperasi yang memegang jawatan terpenting dalam struktur koperasi dan mampu menentukan hala tuju serta mencorakkan kejayaan koperasi pada masa akan datang. Elemen ini perlu ada bagi mencapai tahap yang diperlukan oleh koperasi dan mempunyai hubung kait dengan kecekapan individu supaya mampu memberi kesan dalam pencapaian koperasi. Hal ini kerana, kompetensi ALK sangat berkait rapat dengan kejayaan koperasi dan seterusnya kepada lonjakan perolehan koperasi dari tahun ke tahun. IKMa sebagai pusat latihan bertanggungjawab dalam pembangunan modal insan koperasi bagi meningkatkan kemahiran dan pengetahuan mereka dengan memberikan latihan dan program yang bersesuaian dan berfokus berasaskan kompetensi khusus yang diperlukan oleh ALK.

Namun, penyelidik mendapati kajian lepas agak terbatas dan kurang kajian berkaitan kompetensi ALK di Malaysia. Justeru, kajian ini dijalankan bagi mengenal pasti jurang kompetensi ALK semasa berdasarkan 44 item kompetensi dan lima bidang tugas. Hasil penyelidikan berkaitan jurang kompetensi ini dapat memberikan langkah-langkah yang betul untuk diambil bagi meningkatkan kemahiran dan keupayaan ALK dalam menjalankan tugas dan tanggungjawab seterusnya dapat meningkatkan prestasi koperasi secara menyeluruh. Kajian ini juga untuk membantu pihak berkaitan koperasi di bawah Kementerian Pembangunan Usahawan dan Koperasi (KUSKOP) seperti SKM, IKMa dan ANGKASA untuk menyediakan keperluan program latihan yang berfokus dan bersesuaian dengan ALK. Tambahan pula, kajian ini bagi mengkaji kesukaran yang dihadapi oleh ALK melalui lima skop bidang tugas untuk meningkatkan prestasi dan kompetensi ALK di koperasi. Melalui kajian ini, agensi yang terlibat dapat merangka strategi dan membantu gerakan koperasi menambah baik kursus sedia ada yang disediakan agensi kepada ALK untuk meningkatkan prestasi ALK di koperasi.

Perbincangan berikutnya, menjelaskan perincian berkaitan kompetensi dalam sorotan kajian. Seterusnya, bahagian metodologi menerangkan rangka kerja bagi penyelidikan yang dijalankan. Bahagian analisis dan dapatan pula, membincangkan hasil analisis kajian. Manakala bahagian terakhir menerangkan rumusan dan cadangan kajian.

## **2. SOROTAN KAJIAN**

### ***2.1 Definisi Kompetensi***

Kompetensi merujuk kepada pengetahuan, kemahiran, dan sikap yang diperlukan untuk menjalankan tugas atau tanggungjawab (Abdullah, 2017; Din, Mohd Nor, Rashid, & Ibrahim, 2012; Fuad, 2016; Abdul Rahman, Zulkifli, Hashimee, Wazir, & Sayed, 2019; Triwani, Zulfadil, & Syapsan, 2020). Ia digambarkan sebagai satu ukuran yang menentukan pencapaian seseorang pegawai dalam melaksanakan tugas atau tanggungjawab yang disandang (Ibrahim, Abdul Razak, & Kenayathulla, 2015). Hal ini turut disokong oleh Abbas (2018) yang menyatakan kompetensi merupakan kelayakan, kemampuan, kesanggupan, dan kecekapan seseorang untuk melakukan tugas. Ia merujuk kepada apa yang diperlukan oleh seseorang untuk melaksanakan kerjanya dengan baik (Ahmad & Ahmad Khalid, 2009) dan merupakan kebolehan seseorang untuk melaksanakan tugas serta mampu mempengaruhi prestasi individu dan organisasi (Shariff, 2015). Malahan, kompetensi juga dapat memberikan jangkaan prestasi yang positif kepada keberhasilan sesebuah organisasi (Baharuddin & Hashim, 2004; Campion, et al., 2011; Shippmann, et al., 2000).

### ***2.2 Elemen Kompetensi Anggota Lembaga Koperasi***

Model kompetensi menunjukkan gabungan kompetensi asas yang diperlukan untuk menjalankan tugas dan tanggungjawab dengan hasil yang cemerlang (Abbas, 2018). Kompetensi asas adalah seperti berikut:

- i. Pengetahuan:** Pengetahuan merujuk kepada pemahaman dan kesedaran tentang fakta, konsep, prinsip, teori, dan informasi dalam sesuatu bidang atau topik. Ia melibatkan kefahaman terhadap perkara yang berkaitan dengan bidang tugas ALK.
- ii. Kemahiran:** Kemahiran merujuk kepada kebolehan untuk melaksanakan tugas, aktiviti, atau prosedur secara berkesan. Ia melibatkan kebolehan untuk mengaplikasikan pengetahuan dan melaksanakan aktiviti dengan sempurna.
- iii. Sikap:** Sikap merujuk kepada cara individu memberi maklum balas atau bertindak dalam sesuatu situasi. Ia melibatkan aspek keperibadian, nilai, etika, dan moral yang mempengaruhi tingkah laku seseorang.

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian yang dilakukan oleh Din et al. (2012) terdapat beberapa bidang tugas yang telah digariskan untuk ALK dengan mengambil kira elemen kompetensi asas. Bidang tugas tersebut adalah seperti berikut:

- i. Pengurusan dan Pentadbiran:** Kompetensi ALK dalam bidang pengurusan dan pentadbiran melibatkan kemahiran dalam merancang, mengorganisasi, dan mengawal aktiviti-aktiviti penting dalam lembaga koperasi. ALK perlu memahami prinsip-prinsip pentadbiran yang berkesan, proses pengurusan sumber manusia, serta pengetahuan dalam pentadbiran kewangan dan undang-undang yang berkaitan.
- ii. Pengurusan Kewangan:** Kompetensi ALK dalam bidang pengurusan kewangan merangkumi kemahiran dalam menyediakan dan menganalisis penyata kewangan,

memahami prinsip-prinsip perakaunan, serta menguruskan aspek-aspek kewangan yang berkaitan dengan operasi lembaga koperasi.

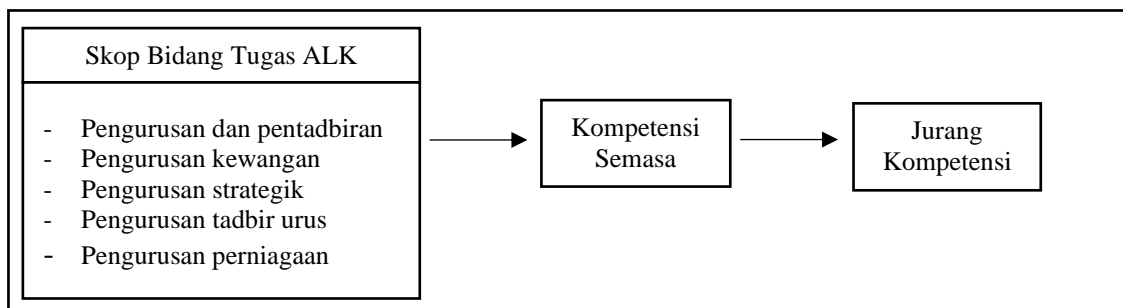
- iii. **Pengurusan Strategik:** Kompetensi ALK dalam bidang pengurusan strategik melibatkan kemahiran dalam merancang dan melaksanakan strategi-strategi yang akan membolehkan lembaga koperasi mencapai matlamat dan sasaran yang ditetapkan. Ini termasuklah pemahaman terhadap persekitaran perniagaan, analisis pasaran, serta keupayaan untuk merancang strategi jangka panjang dan taktikal.
- iv. **Pengurusan Tadbir Urus:** Kompetensi ALK dalam bidang pengurusan tadbir urus merujuk kepada kemahiran dalam mengendalikan proses-proses administratif, termasuklah penyediaan dokumen, penyimpanan rekod, pengurusan fail, serta penggunaan teknologi maklumat dan komunikasi yang berkaitan.
- v. **Pengurusan Perniagaan:** Kompetensi ALK dalam bidang pengurusan perniagaan merangkumi kemahiran menyediakan aturan aktiviti koperasi. Ini termasuklah kemahiran dalam pemasaran, jualan, perancangan produk, serta pemahaman terhadap isu-isu perniagaan yang berkaitan.

Dengan memiliki kompetensi ini, ALK akan dapat mengurus koperasi dengan baik dan mencapai kejayaan dalam operasinya.

### 2.3 Jurang Kompetensi Anggota Lembaga Koperasi

Jurang kompetensi secara umumnya merujuk kepada perbezaan atau kekurangan dalam pengetahuan, kemahiran, dan sikap yang diperlukan untuk melaksanakan tugas dan tanggungjawab dengan efektif (Le, Doan, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2020; McGuinness & Ortiz, 2016). Jurang kompetensi boleh timbul akibat kurangnya latihan dan pembangunan kemahiran, ketidaksesuaian antara keperluan tugas dengan kemahiran yang ada, atau perubahan dalam persekitaran perniagaan yang memerlukan kemahiran baru (Kaur & Kumar, 2013).

Dalam konteks koperasi, hasil kajian lepas menunjukkan ALK mempunyai jurang kompetensi yang amat kritikal dalam beberapa bidang kompetensi seperti komunikasi, kerja pasukan, pemasaran dan pembangunan diri (Yaakub, 2015). Malahan dalam konteks koperasi sekolah juga menunjukkan tahap kompetensi ALK koperasi sekolah mempunyai jurang yang negatif, ia menunjukkan ALK koperasi sekolah tidak kompeten dalam setiap faktor kompetensi (Din et al., 2012). Hal ini juga dapat dilihat melalui kajian lepas luar negara yang menyatakan terdapat jurang kompetensi, terutamanya dalam bidang kewangan dan teknikal. Hasil kajian Dobbin & Jung (2011) mendapati tahap kompetensi dalam bidang kewangan adalah rendah. Selain itu, kajian Colomo-Palacios et al. (2013) terhadap jurutera perisian mendapati tahap kecekapan dalam bidang teknikal juga agak rendah. Dapatan ini menunjukkan bahawa terdapat keperluan latihan untuk pembangunan kompetensi ALK. Dengan menyediakan peluang latihan bagi pembangunan kompetensi, jurang kompetensi mungkin dapat ditangani dan mampu meningkatkan prestasi ALK.



Rajah 1: Kerangka Kajian



### 3. METODOLOGI KAJIAN

Kajian ini ingin meneliti jurang kompetensi semasa berdasarkan 44 item kompetensi dan lima bidang tugas. Pelaksanaan kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif iaitu melalui pengedaran borang soal selidik. Kajian ini melibatkan 420 ALK dari koperasi yang berkluster sederhana dan kecil. Sebanyak 30 responden ALK dari setiap negeri dipilih menjadi responden dalam kajian ini berdasarkan ukuran saiz sampel dalam Model Rasch pada aras keyakinan 95% (Linacre, 1994). Menurut Said, Haron & Surat (2019), jumlah sampel ini mencukupi untuk menjadi penentu ukuran yang konsisten.

Kajian ini memfokuskan kepada tiga ALK yang memegang jawatan terpenting dalam koperasi iaitu pengerusi, setiausaha dan bendahari. Pendekatan soal selidik sendiri telah digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk memastikan data dapat dikumpulkan dengan cepat, tanpa memerlukan kos yang tinggi, efisien, dan tepat dalam menilai maklumat yang diberikan oleh setiap responden (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Pembangunan instrumen soal selidik ini merupakan hasil borang soal selidik yang sedia ada daripada pembacaan jurnal dan diubah suai untuk mengukur konstruk. Bagi mengukuhkan soal selidik ini, penyelidik juga turut mendapatkan pengesahan daripada dua orang pakar rujuk dalam mengukur elemen kompetensi dan Model Pengukuran Rasch selepas instrumen dibangunkan. Untuk instrumen soal selidik kajian ini, 44 item kompetensi digabungkan kepada lima bidang tugas ALK: pengurusan dan pentadbiran (A), pengurusan kewangan (B), pengurusan strategik (C), pengurusan tadbir urus (D) dan pengurusan perniagaan (E). Soal selidik ini juga mengandungi tiga konsep asas kompetensi: pengetahuan (K), kemahiran (S) dan sikap (A). Seterusnya bagi memenuhi keperluan objektif kajian, analisis dijalankan menggunakan perisian Model Pengukuran Rasch dengan Winstep 5.2.20.

### 4. PERBINCANGAN ANALISIS KAJIAN

Dalam dapatan kajian ini, jurang kompetensi dianalisis berdasarkan tahap kesukaran berkaitan dengan 44 item kompetensi dan lima bidang tugas. Hasil penilaian analisis Rasch menunjukkan urutan kesukaran kompetensi daripada yang paling sukar hingga yang paling mudah untuk dilaksanakan. Analisis ini memberikan gambaran jurang kompetensi ALK di Malaysia berdasarkan subtopik:

#### ***4.1 Jurang Kompetensi Berdasarkan Tahap Kesukaran Berkaitan Dengan 44 Item Kompetensi***

Jadual 1 menunjukkan senarai 44 item yang dikategorikan berdasarkan kompetensi asas iaitu pengetahuan (K), kemahiran (S), dan sikap (A). Berdasarkan min item, terdapat 26 item yang sukar dilaksanakan oleh ALK ( $\text{logit} > 0.00$ ) dan memerlukan perhatian khusus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kemahiran merupakan tahap kesukaran tertinggi (36%), terdiri dari 16 item. Sementara itu, terdapat 18 item yang mudah dilaksanakan oleh ALK ( $\text{logit} < 0.00$ ) dan kategori sikap merupakan yang paling mudah dilaksanakan iaitu sebanyak 11 item.

Jadual 1: Tahap Kesukaran Berdasarkan Kompetensi Asas

Kompetensi Asas	Item	Logit > 0.00	Logit < 0.00	Tahap Kesukaran
Kemahiran	19	16	3	36 %
Pengetahuan	13	9	4	21 %
Sikap	12	1	11	2 %
<b>Jumlah</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>59 %</b>

Berdasarkan Rajah 2, kategori kemahiran menunjukkan tiga item dengan tahap kesukaran tertinggi adalah mampu menjalankan aktiviti perniagaan melalui saluran digital 85.07% (logit 1.74), mengadaptasi teknologi dalam perekodan kewangan 78.75% (logit 1.31), dan menjalankan usaha sama dan jaringan perniagaan untuk meluaskan perniagaan 69.64% (logit 0.83). Seterusnya, kategori pengetahuan pula menunjukkan tiga item dengan tahap kesukaran tertinggi adalah mendapatkan sumber modal secara dalaman dan luaran 71.09% (logit 0.90), memahami fungsi penubuhan anak syarikat bagi aktiviti tertentu 68.14% (logit 0.76), dan menyediakan rekod atau dokumentasi mengikut arahan semasa 66.15% (logit 0.67). Manakala, kategori sikap menunjukkan satu item dengan tahap kesukaran tertinggi adalah berfikir dan bertindak seperti seorang usahawan 0.48% (logit 0.43).

Secara keseluruhan, jurang kompetensi tertinggi berada dalam kategori kemahiran, diikuti oleh pengetahuan dan sikap. Tiga item paling sukar dilaksanakan oleh ALK adalah menjalankan aktiviti perniagaan melalui saluran digital (item ES1), mengadaptasi teknologi dalam perekodan kewangan (item BS1), dan mendapatkan sumber modal secara dalaman dan luaran (item BK1). Manakala, tiga item paling mudah dilaksanakan oleh ALK adalah menjaga kerahsiaan dan keselamatan maklumat koperasi (item DA2), menjalankan tugas secara berpasukan (item AA2), dan bersikap jujur dalam menguruskan transaksi (item BA1).

Item STATISTICS: MEASURE ORDER													
ENTRY NUMBER	TOTAL SCORE	TOTAL COUNT	3MLE MEASURE	MODEL S.E.	INFIT [MISQ]	ZSTD	OUTFIT [MISQ]	ZSTD	PTMEASUR-AL CORR.	EXACT EXP.	MATCH OBS% EXP%	Item	
41	1167	420	1.74	.09	1.82	9.45	2.04	9.90	.60	.73	52.6	65.5	ES1_PERNIAGAAN_DIGITAL
15	1214	420	1.31	.10	1.55	6.64	1.68	7.39	.65	.72	63.0	67.0	BS1_APPS_KEWANGAN
13	1257	420	.90	.10	1.12	1.56	1.15	1.87	.68	.71	67.7	68.9	BK1_SUMBER_MODAL
42	1264	420	.83	.10	1.16	2.05	1.20	2.41	.69	.71	68.5	69.1	ES2_JARING_NIAGA
40	1271	420	.76	.10	1.35	4.36	1.37	4.21	.67	.71	62.8	69.4	EK3_ANAK_SYARIKAT
30	1280	420	.67	.10	.91	1.20	.91	1.19	.75	.70	73.9	69.7	DK2_SEDIA_REKOD
16	1281	420	.66	.10	.92	1.03	.89	1.34	.73	.70	74.4	69.7	BS2_BELANJAWAN
24	1282	420	.65	.10	.80	2.89	.79	2.77	.76	.70	75.2	69.8	CS1_STRATEGI_PERNIAGAAN
7	1288	420	.59	.10	1.70	7.84	1.71	7.21	.60	.70	63.3	70.0	AS4_APPS_PENTADBIRAN
19	1290	420	.57	.10	.85	2.09	.86	1.82	.73	.70	73.2	70.0	BS5_MODAL_KERJA
6	1298	420	.49	.10	1.14	1.77	1.13	1.52	.64	.70	64.0	70.2	AS3_REKOD_FAIL
23	1302	420	.45	.10	.81	2.73	.78	2.88	.75	.70	77.4	70.3	CK2_ANALISIS_SNOT
43	1304	420	.43	.10	.93	2.99	1.01	.89	.73	.70	69.7	70.3	EAL_MINDA_USAHAWAN
18	1310	420	.36	.10	.87	1.86	.81	2.33	.75	.70	73.0	70.4	BS4_PULANGAN_FAEDAH
33	1311	420	.35	.10	.80	2.93	.78	2.78	.76	.70	76.9	70.4	DS2_SKD_RISIKO
34	1313	420	.33	.10	.88	1.70	.87	1.58	.73	.70	73.7	70.5	DS3_WUJUD_KPI
14	1320	420	.26	.10	.82	2.48	.79	2.57	.74	.69	72.2	70.6	BK2_LAPORAN_KEWANGAN
17	1320	420	.26	.10	.80	2.82	.78	2.75	.74	.69	76.4	70.6	BS3_DAPATASET
26	1325	420	.21	.10	.74	3.74	.71	3.77	.76	.69	78.4	70.7	CS3_PELAN_TINDAKAN
31	1326	420	.20	.10	.92	1.08	.88	1.40	.74	.69	75.2	70.7	DS1_CANGGAM KEPENTINGAN
29	1327	420	.18	.10	.81	2.76	.83	2.04	.73	.69	74.9	70.7	DK1_STRUKTUR_PERUNDANGAN
3	1341	420	.03	.10	.97	2.41	.92	2.84	.70	.69	72.2	71.0	AK3_CARTA_ORGANISASI
22	1341	420	.03	.10	.70	4.52	.69	3.95	.76	.69	78.7	71.0	CK1_VISI_MISI
25	1341	420	.03	.10	.79	3.01	.76	2.92	.74	.69	73.7	71.0	CS2_KANAL_AKTIVITI
4	1342	420	.02	.10	1.03	3.81	1.02	2.22	.68	.69	71.2	71.0	AS1_KENDALI_MESYUARAT
39	1343	420	.01	.10	.92	1.01	.88	1.33	.72	.69	71.7	71.0	EK2_MANG_LEBIHAN
1	1351	420	-.07	.10	1.15	1.95	1.17	1.83	.64	.69	68.7	71.2	AK1_NILAI_KOPERASI
35	1359	420	-.16	.11	.83	2.36	.78	2.58	.71	.68	77.7	71.4	DS4_NILAI_PRESTASI
32	1362	420	-.20	.11	.89	1.47	.83	1.89	.71	.68	75.9	71.5	DK3_PANDANGAN_AUDIT
38	1365	420	-.23	.11	.72	4.10	.67	3.98	.75	.68	78.2	71.6	EK1_ATURAN_AKTIVITI
5	1369	420	-.27	.11	.87	1.77	.92	2.80	.68	.68	74.7	71.6	AS2_DAFTAR_ANGGOTA
28	1379	420	-.39	.11	.68	4.77	.63	4.35	.73	.68	78.9	71.8	CA2_KERJA_BERKUALITI
21	1380	420	-.40	.11	1.05	1.69	1.05	1.53	.65	.68	71.2	71.8	BA2_BERHIMPAT TEKUN
2	1384	420	-.44	.11	.85	2.10	.84	1.66	.70	.67	74.9	71.9	AK2_PRINSIP_KOPERASI
11	1408	420	-.72	.11	.94	2.80	.89	1.00	.65	.66	75.2	72.5	AS5_MAKLUMAT_JELAS
12	1415	420	-.80	.11	.91	1.21	.90	2.92	.64	.66	75.4	72.6	AA4_KANAL_EMOJI
36	1415	420	-.80	.11	.83	2.37	.84	1.55	.68	.66	75.9	72.6	DA1_PROAKTIF
44	1419	420	-.85	.11	.95	2.70	.98	2.14	.64	.66	75.9	72.8	EA2_TERIMA_TANGGUNGJWB
8	1423	420	-.90	.11	.96	2.56	.91	2.84	.64	.66	74.4	72.8	AA1_PROFESIONAL
10	1428	420	-.96	.11	.90	1.44	.88	1.11	.65	.65	76.2	73.0	AA3_JALANAN_TUGAS
27	1439	420	-1.09	.11	1.21	2.75	1.23	1.80	.57	.65	71.5	73.2	CA1_KEPUTUSAN_MAJORITI
20	1453	420	-1.27	.11	1.19	2.54	1.09	.74	.58	.64	68.5	73.7	BA1_BERSIKAP JUJUR
9	1459	420	-1.34	.11	1.02	2.81	.96	2.29	.60	.64	76.2	73.9	AA2_BERPASUKAN
37	1467	420	-1.44	.11	1.19	2.46	1.24	1.68	.55	.63	72.7	74.1	DA2_KERAHSIAAN
MEAN	1341.7	420.0	.00	.10	.98	2.41	.98	2.41			72.6	71.0	
P.SD	64.7	.0	.70	.00	.24	3.06	.28	2.98			5.2	1.6	

Rajah 2: Tahap Kesukaran bagi 44 Item Kompetensi

#### 4.2 Jurang Kompetensi Berdasarkan Tahap Kesukaran Berkaitan Bidang Tugas Anggota Lembaga Koperasi (ALK)

Kajian ini juga menganalisis lima bidang tugas ALK dan menunjukkan jurang kompetensi berdasarkan tahap kesukarannya. Jadual 2 menunjukkan tahap kesukaran item tertinggi berdasarkan bidang tugas ALK ditemui berkaitan digitalisasi, terutama dalam bidang tugas pengurusan dan pentadbiran (item AS4), pengurusan kewangan (item BS1) dan pengurusan perniagaan (item ES1). Manakala, bidang tugas pengurusan strategik pula ALK menghadapi kesukaran dalam membangunkan pelan strategi perniagaan yang berfokus (item CS1) dan dalam bidang tugas tadbir urus, ALK menghadapi kesukaran dalam menyediakan rekod atau dokumentasi mengikut arahan semasa (item DK2). Oleh itu, dapat disimpulkan bahawa dari lima bidang tugas ALK, terdapat tiga bidang yang menunjukkan kesulitan dalam menerapkan penggunaan teknologi.

Jadual 2: Hasil Pengukuran Tahap Kesukaran dalam Bidang Tugas ALK

Bil.	Bidang Tugas	Kod	Logit	%
<b><u>Pengurusan dan Pentadbiran</u></b>				
1.	Saya boleh menggunakan aplikasi teknologi dalam urusan pentadbiran koperasi (cth: Ms Office, Google Meet dll.)	AS4	0.59	64.34
<b><u>Pengurusan Kewangan</u></b>				
2.	Saya boleh mengadaptasi teknologi dalam perekod kewangan (Cth. Excel, Mr Accounting dll)	BS1	1.31	78.75
<b><u>Pengurusan Perniagaan</u></b>				
3.	Saya mampu menjalankan aktiviti perniagaan melalui saluran digital (Cth: shopee, lazada dll.)	ES1	1.74	85.07
<b><u>Pengurusan Strategik</u></b>				
4.	Saya membangunkan pelan strategi perniagaan yang berfokus.	CS1	0.65	65.70
<b><u>Pengurusan Tadbir Urus</u></b>				
5.	Saya mampu menyediakan rekod atau dokumentasi mengikut arahan semasa (cth suruhanjaya, LHDN dan dll)	DK2	0.67	66.15

Jadual 3 menunjukkan analisis keseluruhan terhadap tahap kesukaran dalam bidang tugas ALK. Dapatan kajian mendapati pengurusan kewangan merupakan bidang tugas yang paling sukar bagi ALK. Kajian-kajian terdahulu juga menunjukkan tahap amalan pengurusan kewangan meliputi aspek pengetahuan, kemahiran, perancangan dan pengalaman dalam bidang kewangan berada di tahap sederhana (Ahmad & Yusop, 2021; Sepeai & Ramli, 2019). Ini jelas menunjukkan bahawa terdapat keperluan untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran ALK dalam bidang pengurusan kewangan (Byabashaija, Bernard, & Doreen, 2017; Koros, 2015).

Jadual 3: Tahap Kesukaran bagi Lima Bidang Tugas

Bidang Tugas	Item	Logit > 0.00	Logit < 0.00	Tahap Kesukaran
Pengurusan Kewangan	9	7	2	16 %
Pengurusan Perniagaan	7	5	2	11 %
Pengurusan Tadbir Urus	9	5	4	11 %
Pengurusan Strategik	7	5	2	11 %
Pengurusan & Pentadbiran	12	4	8	10 %
<b>Jumlah</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>59 %</b>

## 5. RUMUSAN DAN CADANGAN

Kesimpulannya, hasil analisis menggunakan Model Pengukuran Rasch menunjukkan item-item yang paling sukar dilaksanakan oleh ALK adalah menjalankan aktiviti perniagaan melalui saluran digital dan pengurusan kewangan merupakan bidang tugas yang paling sukar bagi ALK. Jurang kompetensi ini menunjukkan keperluan untuk menyediakan latihan dan bimbingan yang sesuai kepada ALK dalam membangun kompetensi mereka. Sekiranya jurang kompetensi sedia ada telah diketahui, tindakan susulan yang betul dapat diambil untuk memperbaiki kekurangan tersebut. Melalui peningkatan kompetensi ALK, koperasi dapat meningkatkan prestasi dan mencapai matlamat pembangunan ekonomi negara Malaysia, seperti yang diimpikan oleh Dasar Keusahawanan Negara (DKN2030).

Penemuan ini memberikan implikasi penting kepada Suruhanjaya Koperasi Malaysia (SKM), Institut Koperasi Malaysia (IKMa), dan Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Berhad (ANGKASA) untuk memperkuat gerakan koperasi melalui pemerksaan kompetensi ALK. Bagi memperbaiki jurang kompetensi, terdapat beberapa cadangan yang dapat dilakukan untuk meningkatkan kompetensi ALK dan prestasi koperasi secara keseluruhan:

- i. Menyediakan program latihan dan pembangunan: SKM, IKMa, dan ANGKASA perlu menyediakan program latihan yang sesuai dan berfokus untuk meningkatkan kompetensi ALK, terutama dalam bidang pengurusan kewangan dan penggunaan teknologi digital dalam perniagaan.
- ii. Meningkatkan kesedaran digital dan kemahiran teknologi: Program-program latihan perlu memberi tumpuan kepada penggunaan teknologi dalam aktiviti perniagaan koperasi. ALK perlu diberi latihan untuk menggunakan aplikasi dan perisian yang relevan dalam urusan pentadbiran, perekodan kewangan, dan menjalankan perniagaan secara digital.
- iii. Membangunkan modul pengurusan kewangan yang spesifik: SKM dan IKMa boleh membangunkan modul latihan khusus dalam pengurusan kewangan untuk membantu ALK memahami prinsip-prinsip perakaunan, penyediaan penyata kewangan, dan pengurusan aspek kewangan dalam operasi koperasi.
- iv. Mewujudkan program mentor-mentee: Program mentor-mentee dapat membantu ALK yang kurang kompeten dalam bidang-bidang tertentu. ALK yang berpengalaman dan berkompoten boleh menjadi mentor kepada ALK yang memerlukan bimbingan dan nasihat dalam menjalankan tugas serta tanggungjawab mereka.
- v. Meningkatkan komunikasi dan kerjasama antara koperasi: SKM, IKMa, dan ANGKASA perlu menggalakkan kerjasama antara koperasi untuk berkongsi pengalaman dan pengetahuan. Ini dapat dilakukan melalui bengkel, seminar, atau program pertukaran antara ALK dari koperasi yang berbeza.

Kajian ini memberikan sumbangan penting dalam pemahaman jurang kompetensi ALK dalam konteks koperasi di Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun, perlu diambil kira bahawa kajian ini melibatkan sampel terhad dan hanya melibatkan ALK dari koperasi berkluster sederhana dan kecil. Oleh itu, kajian lanjut yang melibatkan pelbagai jenis koperasi dan sampel yang lebih besar boleh dilakukan untuk mendapatkan gambaran yang lebih komprehensif.

Secara amnya, sumbangan kajian ini menekankan betapa pentingnya untuk memadankan kecekapan organisasi dengan matlamat strategiknya. Organisasi boleh meningkatkan prestasi keseluruhan dan kelebihan daya saing mereka dengan mengenal pasti dan memupuk kecekapan yang menyokong visi dan misi organisasi. Kebanyakan organisasi di seluruh dunia telah

menambah baik prosedur pengurusan bakat mereka dan meningkatkan prestasi individu dan pasukan melalui pendekatan yang sistematik dan komprehensif. Penyediaan rangka kerja untuk formulasi pelan pembangunan individu yang menyokong pendidikan berterusan dan kemajuan kerjaya dapat disediakan. Oleh itu, program untuk latihan dan pembangunan boleh dibuat dengan menyasarkan keperluan khusus ini, menghasilkan pengalaman pembelajaran yang lebih berkesan.

## **PENGHARGAAN**

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## **SUMBANGAN PARA PENULIS**

SNAB dan NYH melaksanakan bahagian pengenalan dan sorotan kajian. AH dan AI mengumpul dan melakukan analisis data menggunakan model pengukuran Rasch. RCY menulis bahagian perbincangan metodologi dan analisis kajian. NINH dan NM menulis bahagian rumusan dan cadangan. Semua penulis membaca dan meluluskan manuskrip akhir.

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Tiada.

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## BIOGRAFI PARA PENULIS

**Rosmalina Che Yakzam** ialah Pegawai Penyelidik di Institut Koperasi Malaysia (IKMa), Petaling Jaya, Selangor dalam bidang penyelidikan koperasi.

**Norfaezah Mahmood** ialah Pegawai Latihan di Institut Koperasi Malaysia (IKMa), Petaling Jaya, Selangor dalam bidang kewangan koperasi.

**Nor Irzaq Nor Hamid** ialah Pegawai Latihan di Institut Koperasi Malaysia (IKMa), Petaling Jaya, Selangor dalam bidang pengurusan dan tadbir urus koperasi.

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**Adila Hashim** ialah Pegawai Latihan di Institut Koperasi Malaysia (IKMa) zon selatan, Johor Bahru, Johor dalam perakaunan dan pengauditan koperasi.

**Siti Nuraini Abu Bakar** ialah Pegawai Latihan di Institut Koperasi Malaysia (IKMa) zon selatan, Johor Bahru, Johor dalam bidang perakaunan dan pengauditan koperasi.

**Nur Yazira Hamsan** ialah Pegawai Latihan di Institut Koperasi Malaysia (IKMa) zon selatan, Johor Bahru, Johor dalam bidang perundangan dan strategik koperasi.

# Gastronomic Tourism of Sebuyau, Malaysia: An Ecosystem for Sustainable Development

Abang Zainoren Abang Abdurahman<sup>1</sup>, Johanna Adlin Ahmad<sup>2\*</sup>, Jati Kasuma Ali<sup>3</sup>, Lenny Yusrina  
Bujang Khedif<sup>4</sup>, Zubaidah Bohari<sup>5</sup> & Silverina Anabelle Kibat<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Sarawak, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

<sup>4,5</sup>Faculty of Computer & Mathematic Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Sarawak, Malaysia

<sup>6</sup>Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

\* Corresponding Author: [johan921@uitm.edu.my](mailto:johan921@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*Sebuyau is a fishing village located an-hour drive from Kuching town of Sarawak, Malaysia. As a fishing village, Sebuyau is rich in seafood resources and local culinary experience that can be a stepping stone for gastronomic tourism. However, the local Sebuyau stakeholders has yet to leverage on this opportunity as there is a lack of promotion of the town for its culinary experiences. As such, the premise of the paper is based on two objectives which are to identify the community's local gastronomy, and to propose the gastronomic tourism ecosystem based on the feedback given by the local community. The methodology employed is qualitative approach by conducting personal interviews with the local food service operators, contestants and local resident attending a community cooking competition in Sebuyau. During the competition, the culinary menus generated from the events were recorded to determine the cuisine of Sebuyau. The findings identified 54 types of localized cuisines. The challenges identified in developing gastronomic tourism in Sebuyau include the lack of knowledge among the local community on starting a business including financial management, loans and licencing application, and knowledge on food handling. In conclusion, six components have been identified as the ecosystem for Sebuyau's stakeholders which include training, financial and assistance advisory, infrastructure development, license and permit, innovation programs, and leadership. These ecosystems can serve as guidelines for stakeholders in planning for development of Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism and contribution towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 and 9.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

For many years now researchers have acknowledged the importance of gastronomic tourism towards tourism development of a destination (Aydin, 2019; Hall & Mitchell, 2006; Horng & Tsai; Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020). A year prior to Covid-19 pandemic, Malaysia's tourism industry had total revenue receipt of MYR86.14 billion in which food and beverage expenditure contributed MYR11.46 billion (Mohd Sanip et al., 2021). Gastronomy and tourism industry are complimentary to one another as seeking local food during travel is a product of tourism activities. A popular definition by Hall and Mitchell (2006) refers to gastronomic tourism as tourist visiting primary and secondary producers, restaurateur, or specific locations of a region to taste the specialty of food. It goes by other names in the industry including culinary, gourmet, and food tourism. Long (2004), as cited in Kalenjuk et al., 2015, defines gastronomic tourism based on the characteristic of the food which is an authentic traditional food that uses local spices and ingredients, prepared using traditional cooking methods and servings, which in turn intrigue tourists. It can be seen here that local food plays important role in tourism experiences. Smith and Xiao (2008) posited gastronomy tourism as any travel experience where traveller learns, appreciates, and enjoy local gastronomy product. Therefore the primary motivation for gastronomic tourism is to taste the national food and beverages that reflects the local culture of a country (Kalenjuk et al., 2015).

The tourist activities within this context are varied. Ignatov and Smith (2006) and Smith and Xiao (2008), as cited in Horng and Tsai, 2012, had grouped the culinary tourism based on individual groups namely the facilities, activities, events, and organizations. Hong Kong and Singapore primarily promotes food tourism through food festivals and dining at local restaurants (Horng and Tsai, 2012). Cappadocia of Turkey arranges wine tours, wine tasting, wine conferences, and local food competition for gastronomic tourism (Aydin, 2019). One can also acquire gastronomic experiences by tasting *poikilia* of food in a local market in Greece (Pavlidis and Markantonatou, 2020). In the Penang state of Malaysia, the destination offers various cooking class for tourists that are interested to cook traditional dishes with the local hosts. Food tourism can also be part of tour packages where shopping and side-trips to sample local food are included in the itinerary, which is common for countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, and India (Zain et al., 2018). As such, gastronomic tourism is an attraction itself that involves the "unique pursuit of eating and drinking" as it does not only satisfy the sense of taste but stimulate other senses such as sense of sights and touch (Pavlidis and Markantonatou, 2020; Sormaz et al., 2016). Tourists tasting the traditional food and beverage while delving in a foreign environment allows them to learn the local culture which creates emotional bonds (Stone et al., 2018). It is these gastronomic experiences that entails the importance of gastronomy as one of the primary activities in tourism.

Gastronomic tourism contributes towards the local economies. When food is carefully integrated into tourism through effective strategies such as marketing and policymaking, it can enhance local economic development (Hall et al., 2003). World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2019) attest gastronomic tourism contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) where it is a driver to assist various areas in economy such as rural development, job creation, economic growth, and responsible consumption and production.

Durkin Baduria et al., (2023), Mguni and Giampiccoli (2020), and Sosa et al., (2021) sees gastronomic tourism as a make-way for rural developments. For homestay and community-based tourism that operates in rural regions, indigenous food and beverage becomes an important cultural resource for the host community and tourist. The cultural resources for the award winning Panauti Community Homestay in Nepal mainly revolves around domestic

sources such as serving tourists with local meals, tourists participating in cooking class, and visiting farms (Chitrakar et al., 2022). In Jordan, the Covid-19 pandemic had surprisingly pushed many small-time entrepreneurs in rural villages to open traditional cafes and restaurants as more people travelled locally due to closing of international borders (Obeidat, 2023). These traditional cafes make-use of villages' cultural resources such as serving hookahs, use traditional tables and tribal carpets. A study in Sabah, Malaysia (Zain et al., 2018) shows international tourists had high interests in ethnic restaurants, food court and street stalls which reckoned the states to consider food tourism as its cultural tourism resources.

The food business also creates job opportunity and diversify people's source of income. In the case of food stalls business at Amphawa Floating Market, it managed to stimulate job opportunity for the local people, create primary and secondary income through food trade, and encouraged more SMEs (Lunchaprasith, 2017). For the Jordanian rural community, many local people garnered permanent jobs in running the traditional café and restaurants once the destination grew in tourism (Obeidat, 2023). Raji et al., (2018) and Pratt (2013) concurred that food business at rural destination help reduce food miles. Food miles refers to the distance food travels from its production sites which is the farms to the final consumer (Pratt, 2013). Consequently, creating large carbon footprints as the food travels between the value chains. Hence, the nearer the food are consumed from the farm, the lesser the food miles. This in turn encourages tourists to buy locally produced food and help preserve the farmland. Though gastronomic tourism brings positive values towards the rural economy, the grassroot of its success comes from its important players which is the stakeholders.

### ***1.1 Identifying Local Gastronomy and Gastronomic Tourism Ecosystem in Sebuyau, Sarawak***

Sebuyau currently posed great potential for rural tourism as the local government is investing on major road redevelopment that will make Sebuyau a gateway to other destinations in Sarawak (Jee, 2023). Based on observation, Sebuyau town currently has food establishment owned by independent small-scale entrepreneurs who are living in the area. It also has local market where visitors can purchase seafood and send it to nearby stalls to cook the dishes. However, the food sectors in Sebuyau only attracts residents living nearby that comes in to dine. Some of the outlook of food establishments found in Sebuyau looks old and the infrastructure require upgrades. Defining the attributes of local food and cuisine identity is crucial when planning for attractive food image at destination (Lai et al., 2018). Conversely, internet search shows there is a limited coverage and promotion on Sebuyau's culinary offerings from formal websites and social media where only two blogs were found to cover on Sebuyau's gastronomy. For social media, there is limited video on YouTube that covers Sebuyau's food where the vlogger only speaks local dialect, which may deter potential English-speaking tourist. The observation unfolds two limitations on Sebuyau. Although Sebuyau is well known among the locals for *ikan terobok* (herring fish), there is lack of formal documentation on gastronomic dishes of Sebuyau that can be used to market food identity. The second is for Sebuyau to be developed as gastronomic destination, it requires a framework to model its gastronomic tourism ecosystem. Okumus et al. (2007), as cited in Mguni and Giampiccoli (2019) postulated the problem with destination is that not all capitalize on opportunities, and not all attempts to use food in marketing activities are done efficiently. Therefore, this paper examines the requirement needed by the community of Sebuyau to invest in gastronomic tourism, focusing from the viewpoints of the stakeholders. By defining the food identity and limitation faced by the stakeholders, a gastronomic tourism ecosystem can be formulated to lead economic enhancement and community development. Hence, the objectives of the paper are:

- i) To identify the local gastronomy associated with Sebuyau.
- ii) To investigate the requirements of the stakeholders for gastronomic tourism so that a comprehensive ecosystem model can be developed.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Stakeholders in Rural Tourism Destinations***

The driving force behind gastronomic tourism at rural destinations are the stakeholders who are directly and indirectly links with the provision of gastronomic experience. Freeman (1984) describes stakeholder as any “individuals that affect the achievement of organizational objectives”, which include public bodies such as destination marketing organization (DMO), agricultural producers, entrepreneurs or associations, small shops, restaurants, local community residents through formal and non-formal associations, tour operators and travel agencies (Durkin Badurina et al., 2023; Hribar et al., 2021).

Identifying the different stakeholder’s perspective are intrinsically valuable, as they play significant role in implementing effective development strategies on communities that are dependent upon food products as means of economic gains (Londoño, 2015). As such, different regions and communities modelled different perspectives on what makes gastronomic tourism works for them. However past research has commonly concluded that coordinated efforts and networking by internal and external stakeholders as the main approach for a successful gastronomic tourism among the rural communities (Diaconescu et al., 2016; Durkin Badurina et al., 2023; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Londoño, 2015; Mguni & Giampiccolli, 2019; Quaranta et al., 2016; Sosa et al., 2021). This is due to rural tourism destinations that are located remotely and away from urban areas which is a disadvantage in terms of entrepreneurial opportunities, competitive advantages, and depopulation of residents as the young ones move away to the cities (Quaranta et al., 2016). On the other hand, culinary tourism mainly needs the support from travel agencies and government agencies as small entrepreneurs and farmers do not have the financial means to promote their product using expensive public relations and advertising (Diaconescu et al., 2016). The communities then require strong collaboration between the parties to allow for product development, marketing, and supply chains into the areas. Whereas farmers do not necessarily sell their own products but establish partnership with entrepreneurs to help sell the local produce. Synergies between those who has high knowledge on “know-how” and those with lack of experience (Hribar et al., 2021) should be encouraged where the former can provide guidance to the latter. The sharing of experience is imperative for the community as some of the residents lack exposure and competent knowledge on managing the products. Thus, networking help improves the marketability of tourism regions (Dougherty et al., 2013).

The human resource capital is also a key to sustainable rural tourism. Human capital refers to skills, knowledge, and capabilities of individuals (Becker (1964) as cited in Dougherty et al., 2013). For rural tourism, residents require special knowledge, skills, and motivation to manage and operate gastronomic experience (Durkin Badurina et al., 2023). Stakeholders such as enterprises may have the resources to support gastronomic tourism, however they also require adequate knowledge and skills to utilize those resources (Aydın, 2020). Hence, policies and planning for rural tourism development can be aimed at training to create valuable human resources that can deliver high level of service quality (Nylsuander and Hall, 2005). China’s less-developed destination faced with problem of knowledge on management and marketing due to the resident’s lack of education (Su, 2011). Human capital is crucial for community

economic development because it is low cost and high-impact resource that is transferrable among individuals (Flora and Flora, 1992 as cited in Dougherty et al., 2013). Such the case of Amphawa Floating Market that possess rich resources on ingredients, culinary knowledge and skills by the local people that are rightly used for the development of the floating market (Lunchaprasith, 2017). Therefore, culinary tourism organizations must cultivate professional talent and effectively use human resources to ensure all strategies are implemented properly. (Horng & Tsai, 2010).

There are also challenges faced by stakeholders, particularly the local community in their effort to be involved in gastronomic tourism. Durkin Badurina and Klapan (2022) shares general classification and barriers towards development of gastronomic tourism in rural areas. Though stakeholder collaboration is a success factor towards rural tourism, it is also one of the challenges that negate the development (Diaconescu et al., 2016). Poor governance, lack of trust, poor collaboration culture, and resource constraint are some of the factors that led to poor collaboration in an ecotourism, or else in rural destination (Wondirad et al., 2018).

Infrastructure and financial constraints are two challenges faced by the local community. Both are related as rural community require the financial viability to invest in the infrastructure for their business or at destination (Su, 2011). Cooperations among community is necessary as they require financial support. During the initial opening of agrotourism in Cyprus, the elderly community could not secure bank loans due to their old age and could not cope with the renovation costs on their property (Sharpley, 2002). Furthermore, it is easier if the rural community to have pre-existing infrastructure and food culture as it requires less investment as compared to regions that do not possess infrastructure or culinary offerings at all (Diaconescu et al., 2016).

## **2.2 Gastronomic Tourism in Sarawak**

The state of Sarawak, Malaysia has gained a reputation for gastronomic tourism. In 2021, the capital city of Kuching was honoured with the title ‘Creative City of Gastronomy’ by UNESCO, while also joining the members of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative Cities Network (CCN).

Sarawak’s delicacies are characterized by indigenous food that is passed from generation (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2019). The local flavours are taken from natural resources of Sarawak’s rainforests where each ethnicity owns different delicacies (Langgat et al., 2011). Travel is also an integral part of culinary change. In the past, when people travel (whether for migration, pilgrimage, or trade), they influence both the food environment they travel in as well as foodways of those they interact with (Hall & Mitchell, 2006). Hence, the historical years of Chinese migration into Sarawak have blended the tastes of Sarawak’s delicacies creating a fusion between native and Chinese food (Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan, 2023). Such as one can see the infamous *Mee Kolok* and *Laksa Sarawak* that are both identified as a Sarawak and Chinese-Sarawak delicacies. *Laksa Sarawak* once gained international attention when it was featured in a travel program hosted by the late television host Anthony Bourdain who commended the dish; and it ranked number 1 in Asia by TasteAtlas.com (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2019). This dish is one of the featured stories told on the Kuching Creative Cities website in addressing Sarawak’s cultural heritage in gastronomy.

The recognition of Kuching City as the ‘Creative City of Gastronomy’ presents an opportunity for other regions in Sarawak to benefit from and leverage the potential of gastronomic tourism.

This is seen by the government's support when it encouraged hawkers' business at Ramadhan bazaar (a street market that sells food during Muslim Ramadhan month) to present array of Sarawak's gastronomy in accord with the state's recognition as a 'Creative City of Gastronomy' (C, 2023).

### 2.3 Sebuyau as Potential for Gastronomic Tourism

The case study focuses on rural town of Sebuyau, where Universiti Teknologi MARA in Sarawak has implemented a project called eTourP. eTourP is a Malaysian government-funded project that involves knowledge-transfer program for the community to develop sustainable tourism in areas of ecotourism, homestay, and gastronomic tourism. The project conduct trainings session to equip residents with fundamental business and information technology skills enabling them to venture on tourism business using local resources.

Sebuyau is a one-hour drive away from Kuching city surrounded by fishing villages with direct access to the seas. The population is about 20,000 people (Chiam, 2021) which consists of communities from different ethnic groups from Sarawak-Malay, Chinese, and Iban. These communities mainly work as fishermen, government servants, farmers, small-medium entrepreneurs, and others. The town's position is slightly rural as it is away from the main city where a single-trunk road connects the town with other parts of the Kuching-Samarahan area. During the festive season, the road will be full of vehicles that travel to other regions in Sarawak via ferry in Sebuyau.



Figure 1: Map showing the road and distance from Kuching to Sebuyau  
Source: Google Map

Of late, the Sarawak Government has devised plan to construct the new Batang Sadong Bridge that connects with Sebuyau. The bridge is expected to reduce the travelling time between destinations in Sarawak and is expected to complete by 2025 (Jee, 2023). The improvement in infrastructure will result in increased traffic through Sebuyau. As a result, there will be opportunities for the town's residents to provide food and beverage services, or to create a distinctive marketing strategy to attract visitors to dine in Sebuyau. Raising the standards of living of the Sebuyau residents through road development programs has always been an endeavour by the government as the opening of the road will create positive impacts on the surrounding areas (Jee, 2023). Proximity to urban areas is important in developing food tourism at rural destinations (Dougherty et. al, 2013) as it can attract day tripper. Although rural, Sebuyau has the advantages of the road and locating not far away from Kuching city that can attract day-trip tourists.

Like other locales in Sarawak, Sebuyau's communities are known to serve dishes that are obtained from local resources. Sebuyau is known among the locals for its signature food including the *ikan terubok*, *botok*, *umai obor-obor* dan *sayur umbut nipah* (Majlis Daerah

Simunjan, n.d.) However, having distinctive gastronomy is insufficient for an economic growth as the community must first develop, and market their gastronomic products (Aydın, 2020; Su, 2011).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed qualitative approach by interviewing six (6) respondents consisting of a local foodservice operator, participant from a knowledge-transfer community program called eTourP, cooking competition contestant and local visitor attending the community cooking competition in Sebuyau. The respondents chosen are local residents and based on their ability to communicate with the interviewer to give feedback on their perspective of gastronomic tourism in Sebuyau. During the local cooking competition, the researcher systematically records the dishes menu generated from the events to determine the traditional cuisine of Sebuyau. The cooking competition event was chosen due to the convenience of obtaining the information directly from the contestants. Some of the contestants consisted of local food operators in Sebuyau while others are local community.

### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Gastronomy of Sebuyau, Malaysia

The traditional dishes cooked during the cooking competition was documented and analyzed. The results identified a total of 54 traditional dishes belonging Sebuyau. The menu is separated into breakfast (15 menus), lunch (31 menus) and afternoon tea (8 menus) (table 1). For analysis, the food is grouped into separate categories to determine its nature including rice, *kueh* (dessert or savoury snacks), dishes or *lauk*, vegetable, and fruit-based dishes. Fried rice or *nasi goreng* is mainly served for breakfast menu where the unique fried rice identified is the *nasi goreng dabei* that uses geographically exclusive fruit of Sarawak called Dabai (*Canarium odontophyllum*). While the *kueh* or snacks mainly use ingredients found in Sarawak including coconut, banana, *pandan* leaf, shrimp, and gourd. In general, Malaysian heritage dishes are rice-based, agro-food, seafood, leave-wrapping with combinations of tastes (Omar and Omar, 2018). The dishes or *lauk* cooked during the events are side dishes that is commonly consumed with rice. Apart from the bamboo chicken of *pansuh ayam kampung lada hitam* and *pansuh manok buluh perindu* that uses meat, the rest of the dishes are seafood-based which are the main economies of Sebuyau, such as *ikan terubok* (herring), *ikan panjang* (long fish), blowfish, *ikan pirang* (gold-colored fish), mud crab, shrimp, and jellyfish. The menu indicates the main staple of Sebuyau is seafood cooked into traditional dishes, which can be promoted as an identity of Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism. The vegetable and fruit-dishes cooked in the competition is banana-based such as the banana fruit, *jantung pisang* (banana heart) and *umbut pisang* (banana shoots). The difference for fruit-based dishes is that two of the dishes served is to be eaten alone without rice. Some of the menu names are common in Sarawak (e.g *nasi aruk*, *umai*), while other menu names were adjusted using localized resources such as wild food found in Sebuyau.

Table 1: Sebuyau's Traditional Cuisine Identified from Local Cooking Competition

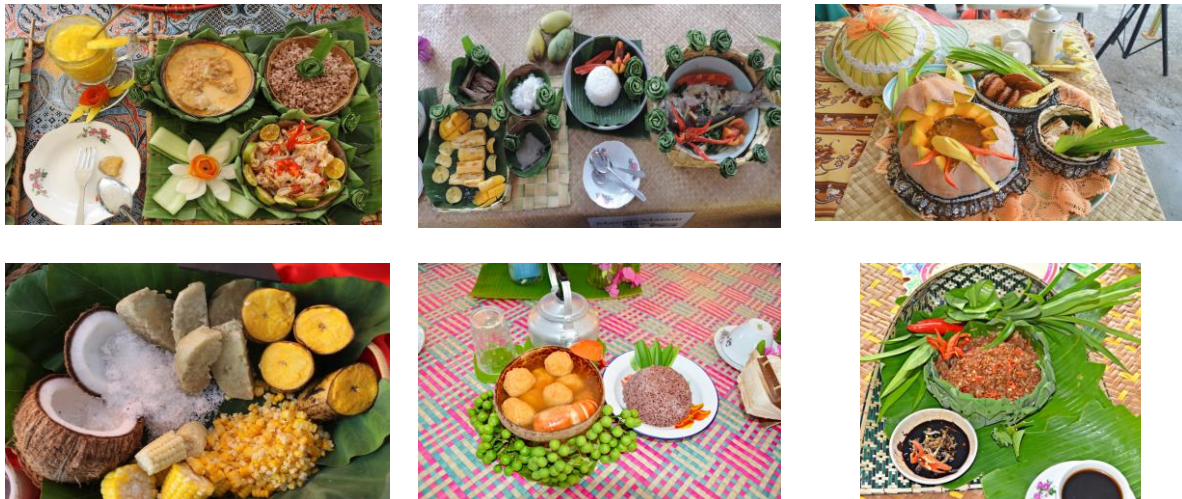
Category of dishes/meal	Breakfast menu	Lunch menu	Teatime menu
<b>Rice</b>	1. Nasi goreng pedas, 2. Nasi goreng dabei,	1. Nasi goreng Urang Buyo	

	3. Nasi aruk ikan semperit				
	4. Nasi aruk Kampung Sri Ru				
<b>Kueh (snacks or dessert)</b>	5. Buah bandung seribu rasa	2. Kalok nyiur muda		1. Anak raja mandi,	
	6. Cucur labu manis	3. Udang kering masak manis		2. Arak-arak bandung	
	7. Kuih chang pandan wangi	4. Pais udang kelapa parut		3. Cucur udang	
	8. Kuih penyaram	5. Otok-otok		4. Cucur payak kekasih hatiku,	
	9. Lepat pulut pisang			5. Hati yuk bonda,	
	10. Putu mayang kelapa parut			6. Jabang goreng cheese,	
	11. Takey pandan wangi			7. Kuih melaka uwais	
	12. Tumpik lemantak madu				
	13. Lempeng tepung gandum				
<b>Dishes or Lauk</b>		6. Asam pedas ikan buntal		8. Bandung perisa kari	
		7. Ikan terubok masak lemak			
		8. Ikan terubok pulau pucuk ubi			
		9. Ikan terubok rempah asam pedas			
		10. Ketam lemak tempoyak			
		11. Lumek salei masak lemak cabik Geronong			
		12. Asam pedas ikan buntal (blowfish)			
		13. Steamed ikan terubuk pucuk ubi			
		14. Ikan panjang masak lemak			
		15. Botok			
		16. Ikan pedas rempah rasa pedas			
		17. Pansuh ayam kampung lada hitam			
		18. Pansuh manok buluh pengrindu			
		19. Udang cincang masak pedas,			
		20. Udang masak cili padi			
		21. Umei ikan pirang			
		22. Umei obor-obor			
		23. Urap bandung			
<b>Vegetable</b>		24. Sayur umbut pisang bumbu pedas			
		25. Sayur umbut pisang masak lemak			
		26. Bumbu pedas			
		27. Jantung pisang sambal belacan			



		28. Jantung pisang masak lemak
		29. Kerabu jantung pisang
Fruit dishes	14. Pisang tanduk	30. Pisang oten masak lemak
	15. Jagung rebus nyiur parut	31. Pisang masak lemak

Source: author's own compilation



Source: Author's own collection

Figure 2: Local delicacies of Sebuyau presented during the cooking competition

#### 4.2 Findings based on Personal Interview with Stakeholders

The proposed gastronomy tourism ecosystem for Sebuyau is the outcome of personal interviews conducted with Sebuyau community members and food service providers. Based on the interview, six (6) components were identified as the areas that need to be developed for the model. The table 2 presents the components for Sebuyau's model to capitalize their gastronomic tourism including training, financial assistance, infrastructure, license and permits, innovation programs, and leaderships. Thus, government agencies and other stakeholders should investigate these components when planning further gastronomic tourism.

Table 2: Components for gastronomic tourism ecosystem

Component	Verbatim
<b>Training on business such as product development, finance and marketing, food handling and halal awareness</b>	<i>"...problem in differentiating product offering...need training to know how to manage resources. The training is important to make others see the opportunity to make money and upgrade standard of living and income generation" (R1).</i>
	<i>"...need to know how to handle food so that it is hygienic and fit for market requirements" (R2)</i>
	<i>"Our food here is suitable for Muslim. We also do not consume pork in our daily food". (R3)</i>
<b>Financial assistance and advisory</b>	<i>"We need help in the knowledge of starting a business". (R1)</i>
	<i>We need someone to guide us on how to apply for loans so that we can open the business" (R5)</i>



<b>Infrastructure development</b>	<p><i>"I think I need a proper shop for me if I need to operate a restaurant". (R4)</i></p> <p><i>"...should be an attractive site with proper amenities provided so people can sell their food" (R2)</i></p> <p><i>"...the road needs electric...sometimes it's too dark...signage for visitors...also the dispensary important" (R1)</i></p>
<b>License and permits</b>	<p><i>"...We need some ideas on how to get permits...grants...license too" (R1)</i></p>
<b>Innovation programs</b>	<p><i>"We should do the competition every now and then so that we can initiate something new for our gastronomy". (R5)</i></p> <p><i>"This competition has a storytelling session...when we do a presentation, we have to talk about the food like how to eat, when to eat and maybe some background of the food". (R6)</i></p> <p><i>"For this competition, we use only local resources for cooking and decorations. Such as coconuts from farms are used as decoration, we use local fish caught by our fishermen". (R6)</i></p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p><i>"We feel leader can bring us together to the vision of a project" (R1)</i></p> <p><i>"...a leader can motivate us...when we are feeling down" (R4).</i></p>

Source: Author's own compilation

## 4.3 Discussion

### 4.3.1 Training

Training is the foremost component that is currently needed by the Sebuyau community members. Training areas varied from basic knowledge on food preparation such as food handling, processing, and culinary skills; to marketing, communication, and digital knowledge to create brand awareness and promotion of Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism. The basic culinary and food handling training is required especially for residents that are directly involved with provision of food and beverage services.

Marketing and digital skills is evident based on observations made on Sebuyau's online promotion through social media. In this age, social media has become an important communication channel by restaurants where it can influence users' decision making (Éva, et. al, 2017). As of the time of research, the exposure on Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism is still limited to personal websites and local news. Furthermore, the current YouTube contributor that discovers Sebuyau's food tourism only spoke of local Sarawak dialect, and not English. Thus, this may restrict the number of viewers to only local viewers. Digital and communication skills training should be given to empower the local villagers to use social media and leverage the marketing opportunities provided by the channel.

Sebuyau's residents also consists of Iban community which majority are non-Muslims. The Iban community's longhouses such as *Rumah Panjang Kampung Belimbing Besi* are communal longhouses that are ready to accept visitors to its homestay. Hence, when they received the guests, they will need to provide food and beverages for the guests. Despite the non-Muslim community's current awareness on Halal concept, a formal training on managing Halal food would be an added advantage. The non-Muslim community can also be trained for Halal awareness if they were to operate food service operation for tourists.

#### **4.3.2 Financial Assistance Advisory**

One of the evident challenges mentioned by the community is their financial management. It was informed by interviewees that finance is one of the barriers for the community to be involved in entrepreneurship. A workshop can be held for the community where related bodies can give advice and guidance on financial assistance available. This is especially in starting business such as guidance on how to apply for grants, loans, and start-up business. As concurred by Londoño (2015) the importance of information to those that are involved in devising strategies in gastronomic industry. Such information should be disseminated among the community members.

#### **4.3.3 Infrastructure**

The newly planned Batang Lupar Bridge that connects Sebuyau to Betong town in a few years' time will provide economic opportunities for the community. Proper infrastructure planning must be addressed to create business opportunities for Sebuyau residents to accommodate travellers that pass through Sebuyau. Therefore, the physical aspect is one of components for Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism development. Proper sites and buildings should be redeveloped at Sebuyau's main town to cater for shops and restaurants. The building can be designed with aesthetic values so that it can appear tourism-friendly and fit for food and beverage outlets. General infrastructure should also be upgraded such as signage, roadside electricity, and internet connections. This calls out for local government and town planners to meet and collaborates with the community for upgrade projects. Consideration should be given to developing rest areas where food outlets and retails can be operated by local Sebuyau community members. Thus, involuntarily promoting local delicacies and local products to the travellers.

#### **4.3.4 License and Permits**

It was revealed the community members needed guidance in applying for a business license and permits. Due to the lack of exposure, the community member does not know how and where to apply for business application. Furthermore, the distance of Sebuyau to Kuching and nearby town deter the community members to travel to do the application at respective offices. Therefore, a program should be organized for the community members to learn about applications for licenses and relevant permits from inland revenue and local authorities. Programs such as a workshop should be set up where representatives from related agencies assist the community members with the documentations needed to apply for the license and permit. It should also cover information such as terms and conditions of the license and permits, and relevant authorities and agencies they can refer to for the applications.

#### **4.3.5 Innovation Programs**

One of the challenges of Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism is identifying its traditional food which could be promoted as the local menu of the place. Sebuyau is well known for its *ikan terubok* (fish) seasons, but its traditional food identity is not well known in tourism. One of the means to achieve this is by organizing annual cooking festivals such as cooking competition events that taps into local traditional dishes cooked by the residents. The cooking competition event that was previously held managed to identify 54 different menus served in Sebuyau. The menu was recorded and will be published into a book as part of the heritage effort in preserving Sebuyau's gastronomic identity.

The cooking competition also sees positive outcome from the participants where innovative dishes and storytelling managed to attract the crowds. The competition should be continued to encourage more participants to promote the culinary experience and innovate the local dishes. Food festivals and events plays significant role in fostering regional development that provide advantages for producers and local business by promoting their product and services (Rinaldi, 2017). The innovation created during the competition is an opportunity for the local community to apply for intellectual property. Application for intellectual property rights on the menu cooked by the residents can be implemented so that the residents have exclusive rights to market the food to the tourists.

To add value in tourism, food storytelling should be researched and recorded. It is common for tourism attractions and destination to leverage on storytelling to captivate tourists and create authenticity (Frost et al., 2020). Mossberg and Eide (2017) studies in Nordic country shows how storytelling on meals enhances creative experiences on restaurants. Narrative interviews with village elderly, cooks, residents and even fishermen on heritage food can be conducted to gain stories on heritage and history of the food. The outcome of the story should be included to promote the food and destinations by travel agents and tour guides, which could help tourist to gain better understanding on the value of the food and the necessity to go for a trip to Sebuyau. The outcome of such innovation can contribute to the list of Kuching's UNESCO Creative City Network for gastronomic tourism.

#### **4.3.6 Leaderships**

The respondents mentioned *"we feel leader can bring us together to the vision of a project"* and *"...a leader can motivate us...when we are feeling down"* indicate the needs for strong leadership to facilitate effective collaboration in the community's project. The community required good leadership to motivate them to undertake tourism projects through local associations so that they can fulfil their visions. Leadership components has been one of the continuous elements in the success of rural communities' development towards tourism. Aydın (2020); Wondirad et al., (2020); Moscardo et al., (2017) suggested that lack of leadership is one of the obstacles in cooperations between stakeholders as leaders need to communicate with different group of stakeholders for development, training, and education. As such, for Sebuyau to instigate infrastructure development and trainings on the local people would require a leader that can communicate with different parties involved. In the context of Sebuyau, the leader's role is directed by head of community associations, head community or head village, and the local government.

Figure 3: Gastronomic Tourism Ecosystem for Sebuyau



Source: Author's own compilation

## 5. CONCLUSION

Sebuyau's gastronomy has been identified with local produce and seafood, local fruits and rice which can be used to promote Sebuyau's dishes in the tourism industry. The finding on the stakeholders shows managerial implications that Sebuyau must consider when developing gastronomic tourism including requirement for trainings, assistance in financing, development of infrastructure, assistance in license and permits, creation of innovative programs and leadership by village leaders of local government. Hence, the development of this model contributes to the theoretical knowledge which can be applied by communities and destinations in developing gastronomic tourism. Thus, promoting SDG 8 and 9 which are sustainable economic growth and building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusiveness.

The food identified in the research is limited to Sarawak-Malay ethnic food whereas there are other ethnic groups living in Sebuyau. The list of food identified is based on food presented at cooking competition. The small sample size of respondents provides limited depth of the study.

The current study can be extended into wider background of respondents in the future. As the food identified is mainly from Sarawak-Malay ethnic, future research can identify Iban ethnic food of Sebuyau. There is an opportunity for research on heritage food of Sebuyau which can assist the different ethnic community in storytelling. Business management research can investigate the service delivery of the local food provider in terms of quality and delivery.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

AZAR led the research by initiating ideas, communicating with Sebuyau residents, and wrote the methodology and analysis. JAA sets the paper structure, writing of introduction, literature review, conclusion, and final editing. JKA contribute ideas of discussion, communicating with local communities and collecting data during competition. LYBK led discussion with local communities and data collection during competition. ZB and SAK assists in discussion of ideas and data analysis.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Prof. Dr. Abang Zainoren Abang Abdurahman** is a Professor teaching in Faculty of Business Management in UiTM Sarawak. He has an array of background in social entrepreneurship projects engagement between UiTM and the local communities including Kampung Tebakang and Sebuyau in Sarawak. His areas of interests include social entrepreneurship, marketing and enterpreneurships.

**Johanna Adlin Ahmad** is a senior lecturer from Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management in UiTM Pulau Pinang branch. She obtained BBA (Hons) Marketing and MBA in Hospitality & Tourism. She is actively teaching in the areas of tourism transportation, culture & geography, and airline reservation. Her interests include community-based tourism, teaching and learning in tourism, and smart tourism.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jati Kasuma** is an academic with Ph.D. in Management from the University of Toulouse. His Bachelor's degree is International Studies, and Master's in Management. He serves the Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Sarawak branch,

and is the Coordinator for the Student Entrepreneurship Program. His areas are social entrepreneurship, consumer behavior, brand loyalty, tourism, and Islamic leaderships.

**Lenny Yusrina Binti Bujang Khedif** is a senior lecturer from Faculty of Computer & Mathematical Sciences in UiTM Sarawak branch. Her areas include Multimedia, Computer Programming, Operating System, and Information Technology. She received her Bachelor of Computer Science from Universiti Malaya, and master's in computer science majoring in Multimedia Systems. She's active in community service programs, innovations, and students' development.

**Zubaidah binti Bohari** is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Computer & Mathematical Sciences in UiTM Sarawak Branch and has more than 15 years of teaching experience. She obtained Bachelor of Computer Science from University of Putra Malaysia, and her Master of Science in Information Technology. She is teaching Algorithm Design and Development, Computer Programming, and Information Technology courses.

**Silverina Anabelle Kibat** is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, UiTM Sabah branch with more than 15 years of teaching experience. Her highest education is MBA (Tourism Management) and she has been teaching Tourism Planning and Cross Cultural Studies. Her current research interests are Community Based Tourism, Tourism Education and Technology.



# A Linguistic Analysis of Farewell Emails by Malaysian Workers

Khairul Firhan Yusob<sup>1</sup>, Khairunisa Nikman<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pahang, Kampus Jengka, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>yune@uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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*Email has been one of the most important means of communication in a workplace since the 1990s. This scenario comes about since email can disseminate information to different groups of people simultaneously. Information that is frequently disseminated via email includes introducing new employees, sending memos of meetings and bidding farewells. Of all types of emails, researchers have paid little attention to farewell emails. Essentially, some of the reasons to bid farewells are due to transfers or retirements. This study adapts a qualitative approach by examining farewell emails from a linguistic perspective. For this purpose, 12 emails were selected and analysed using a genre-based approach. The authors of the emails were employees of a university who differed in terms of their gender, position and reasons for leaving. As the setting of the present study is local, all emails were written in Malay. The findings revealed seven moves, some of which were realised through several steps. All the identified moves were classified as Typical since they had a high percentage of occurrences. The analysis also revealed some differences between the farewell emails sent by staff being relocated and retired. The study could benefit workplace communication and prepare future writers of this genre on what is expected and should be written in their last emails to leave a good impression on their colleagues.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is key to a company's success, regardless of the type of business it conducts. One of the most important platforms for communication is email. Since the 1990s, following the introduction of the internet, email has permeated the world of workplace communication. Since then, the majority of workplace communication, whether for individuals or for different groups of people, has been done through email. This happens because emails can disseminate information simultaneously and can replace other forms of communication such as written memos, telephone conversations and face-to-face meetings (Waldvogel, 2007). It is therefore not surprising that the number of email interactions (received and sent) in the workplace has increased tremendously. In 2012, for example, the number of daily interactions was 89 billion. It was predicted that this number would rise to 143 billion in 2016 (Radicati, 2012). In a more recent development, Ceci (2022) found that there were 319.6 billion email interactions in 2021 and that this number will increase to 376.4 billion by 2025. As email is crucial for workplace communication, more activity takes place in work emails than in personal emails. An example of a workplace email is shown in Figure 1.

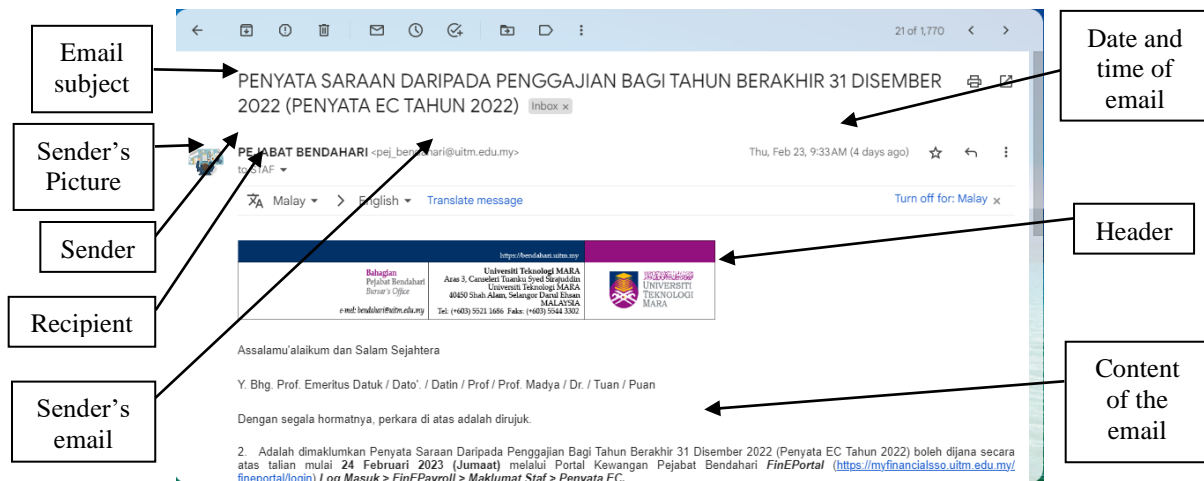


Figure 1: Sample of an email

Emails serve different purposes depending on their category. Personal emails are often used for personal purposes, such as sending CVs to companies, sending large files to personal contacts or sharing important documents with other people. They are usually handled through personal emails as they do not concern work-related matters. However, workplace or professional emails serve other purposes, such as requesting, ordering, complaining, informing, offering, refusing and inviting (Park et al., 2021). The act of informing can be for a variety of reasons, such as introducing new employees, sending memos from meetings, or saying goodbye. Of all the types of emails, farewell emails have received scant attention from scholars hitherto. The reasons for goodbyes are mainly relocations or retirements. The need to conduct this study also stems from the fact that there are few studies in Malaysia on emails in professional settings. This could be due to the unwillingness of Malaysian companies to share their written documents (Yeoh, 2014). To shed light on this issue, the present study aimed to examine the farewell emails of Malaysian employees working at a local university from a linguistic perspective. However, it should be noted that the present study only focused on the content of the email as other features of the email are automatically generated by the workplace email system. This study was guided by the following research questions to understand the rhetorical features of emails:

- i. How are farewell emails rhetorically organised in terms of the move-step structure?

- ii. What is the typicality of each move and step of the emails?
- iii. How is the structure of farewell emails sent by staff being relocated similar to or different from those sent by retired staff?

## 2. GENRE ANALYSIS OF RHETORICAL MOVES

Genre analysis refers to the study of language use in a specific setting (Swales, 1990). It is a branch of discourse analysis that helps researchers make a connection between language and text types. Genre analysis often involves identifying the structural, linguistic and social features of a particular genre. It also provides room for understanding how these features contribute to the meaning and purpose of the text. Hitherto, a plethora of previous studies have focused on examining the structure of a genre. These studies have mainly served to determine the rhetorical features of a genre, which is also one of the main aims of the present study.

Basically, genres can be divided into three main categories: academic, professional and homely. Thus far, scholars have paid the most attention to academic genres. Presumably, when move analysis was first introduced by Swales (1981, 1990), the focus was on introduction of dissertations, which is an example of an academic genre. Some of academic genres studied include conference abstracts (Povolná, 2016; Samar et al., 2014; Yusob & Jelani, 2022), dissertation abstracts (Jalilifar & Dastjerdi, 2010; Kosasih, 2018; Suhadi, 2023), various sections of journal articles (Cheng, 2019; Fallahi & Erzi, 2003; Gao & Pramoolsook, 2023), academic papers (Yaakob, 2014) and academic presentations (Morton, 2009; Singh et al., 2019).

Swales' work was further expanded by Bhatia (1993), who shifted the focus from academic to professional genres. Some of the genres he highlighted were sales promotional letters, job application letters and legal documents. As a result, more studies were conducted on professional genres from different disciplines. The genres are usually genres used in professional settings, such as workplace and public relations-related documents. Some examples of professional genres are sections of annual reports (Aziz et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2019; Yusob et al., 2022), tender documents (Afida et al., 2020), book and product reviews (Dachoviboon, 2019; Skalicky, 2013), business letters (Gillaerts & Gotti, 2005; Pinto Dos Santos, 2002; Zamanian, 2014) and emails (Park et al., 2021; Van Herck et al., 2022; Zarei & Darani, 2013). Since the focus of this study is on farewell emails, the following section discusses emails as a genre in more detail.

The advancement of the genre-based approach has also led researchers to study homely genres. This type of genre often includes texts that are closely related to personal life events. A famous example of the homely genre is wedding invitations. The genre has been examined in countries where English is a foreign language, such as Egypt (Gomaa & Abdel-Malak, 2010), Iran (Faramarzi et al., 2015), Iraq (Al-Zubaidi, 2017), Jordan (Amjad & Riaz, 2020; Banikalef, 2020; Tawalbeh, 2021) and Pakistan (Hussain et al., 2021; Nisar et al., 2022; Yasmin et al., 2019). In addition to wedding invitations, genre analysts have also studied other texts such as obituaries (Al-Ali, 2005; Elekaei et al., 2015; Jalilifar et al., 2014; Jibril, 2019), cooking recipes (Afful, 2017; Klenová, 2010), instruction manuals (Cristobalena, 2018) and even epitaphs (Karimnia & Jafari, 2019). The different types of genres that have been studied so far prove that move analysis is a useful tool for analysing different types of texts.

### 3. EMAIL AS A GENRE

The widespread use of emails began in the late 20th century. Since then, emails have been used as one of the most important means of communication. Researchers around the world have also used emails as variables in their studies. However, there is still much to be studied when it comes to emails, especially from a genre-based perspective. Thus far, several genre studies have been conducted analysing the rhetorical moves of emails. They can be segregated into different categories, such as business emails (Carrió-Pastor & Calderón, 2015; Mehrpour & Mehrzad, 2013; Qasim et al., 2015), marketing emails (Cheung, 2008; McVeigh, 2020; Vanmulken & Vandermeer, 2005) and spam emails (Barron, 2006; Zarei & Darani, 2013).

As an essential communication tool, email writing has become increasingly important in workplace communication in recent decades (Park et al., 2021). Both Mehrpour & Mehrzad (2013) and Qasim et al. (2015) found that employees use certain genre features in their business emails, such as a formal tone, the use of standard phrases and expressions, and targeting the recipient's needs. Their study on comparative genre analysis of English business emails also found some differences between Iranians and native English speakers – such as the use of longer emails with more details and a stronger focus on building a relationship with the recipient in Iranians' emails (Mehrpour & Mehrzad, 2013). Pakistani employees, on the other hand, use business emails in ways that reflect their cultural and organisational context, and that the genre features of business emails play an important role in shaping workplace communication in Pakistan (Qasim et al., 2015), suggesting that these differences in genre characteristics may be influenced by cultural and linguistic factors.

Due to the widespread use and popularity of the email platform, more linguists have been concerned with the structure of marketing emails. According to Cheung (2008), the rise of new media has influenced the way persuasive messages are composed in direct marketing. In the study, he examines the use of hyperlinks as a means of inducing readers to take certain actions, such as clicking on a particular link. The results of the study highlight that this new feature allows for concise and efficient communication in the limited space of marketing materials, and also suggest that these multimedia elements can have a positive impact on capturing readers' attention and encouraging their engagement (Cheung, 2008). McVeigh (2020) also concurred with the findings as his research showed that email marketing has similarities to direct marketing; the language often contains commands or prompts. The method of analysis used in his study found that this is because the buttons that prompt the reader to take action need to be short and concise, and the use of commands allows the writer to address the reader indirectly without taking up extra space.

Another type of email that has come to the attention of linguists is unsolicited commercial email, better known as spam email. In her quest to gain insight into the linguistic and rhetorical features of spam messages, Barron (2006) found that spam emails employ a number of strategies, such as exaggerated claims, urgency and appeals for financial gain, to deceive and seduce recipients. In addition, the study unveils patterns of linguistic variation, including intentional misspellings and the use of multiple languages employed to bypass spam filters and appear more legitimate (Barron, 2006). Similarly, Zarei & Darani (2013) also observed variations in the linguistic features and cultural references used by spammers in each language. The findings highlight the adaptability of spammers in tailoring their messages to specific linguistic and cultural contexts.

## 4. METHOD

### 4.1 Data Procurement

In building the corpus for this study, we first searched for farewell emails in our workplace emails. In our search, we were able to find 12 farewell emails sent by different individuals. The emails were sent between January 2022 and February 2023. Five of the senders were female staff, while the other seven were male. Four of them were academic staff, while the other eight were non-academic staff. In terms of reasons for leaving the institution, the number was even, with six of them being transferred to another campus of the same institution, while the remaining six had to retire. Table 1 summarises the demographic information of the email senders:

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Email Senders

Gender		Position		Reason	
Male	Female	Academic	Non-Academic	Relocated	Retired
5	7	4	8	6	6

### 4.2 Data Analysis

The main objective of the present study was to identify the rhetorical moves of farewell emails. To this end, the analysis of the data was carried out following move analysis by Swales (1990). As the genre of farewell emails is new, the literature was limited. The analytical framework used in the present study was developed using previous genre studies of emails as a guide.

The data analysis of the present study involved a genre-based approach which sought the rhetorical moves of the farewell emails. Thus, the analytical framework of move analysis was used in examining the rhetorical moves of the emails. It should be noted that the data in the present study were written in Malay, as the setting of the workplace is in Malaysia. In determining the demarcation of the moves, we examined the communicative purposes of each sentence. This process is crucial in answering Research Question 1. However, it was found that some sentences comprise more than one move or are also known as embedded moves (Swales, 1990). This was not surprising as similar occurrences had been observed in previous studies (see Doró, 2015; Loh et al., 2017; Tarvirdizdeh & Nimehchisalem, 2021).

Prior to finalising the moves and steps, we annotated the moves and steps individually. This was done to ensure the reliability of the analytical framework. A series of discussion was held to determine the percentage agreement of our analysis. Rau and Shih (2021) argued that the percentage agreement was sufficient to measure the reliability of inter-rater agreement. The result of our percentage agreement was 92%. Later, further discussion was held to address the issue of reliability.

The analytical tool used in this study was Atlas.ti v23. Each move and step was highlighted and annotated to facilitate the calculation of the moves and steps. An example of move annotation using the software can be found in Figure 2.

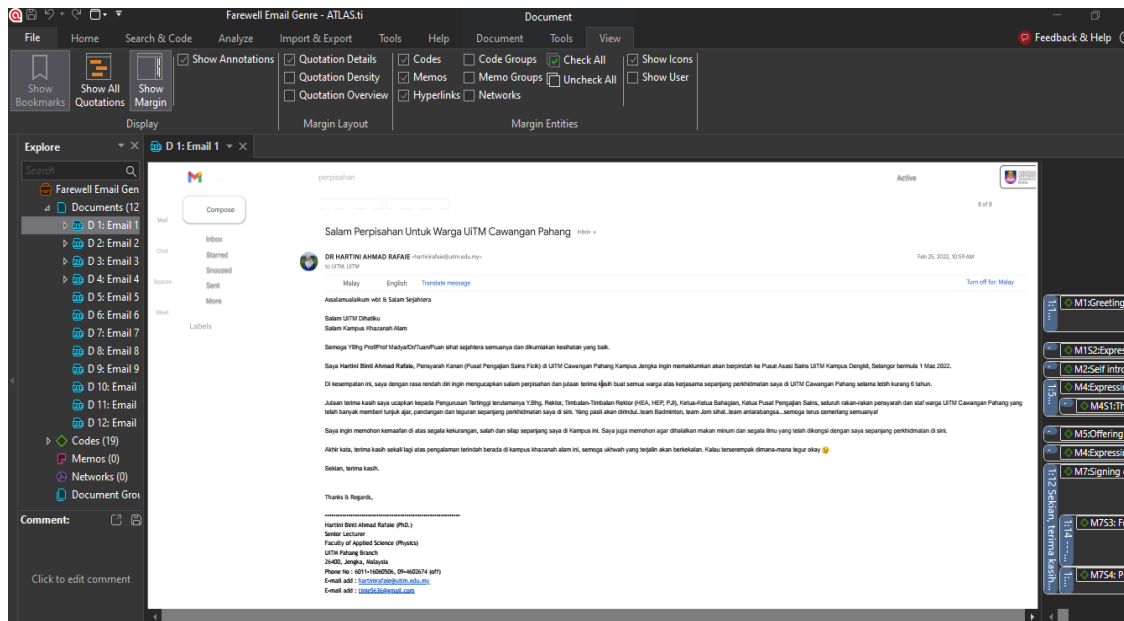


Figure 2: Move annotation using Atlas.ti 23

Upon answering the first research question, the frequency of each move and step was counted and converted into percentages. This was done to determine the typicality of the moves and steps, which is the aim of Research Question 2. They were divided into three categories: typical, conventional, optional and infrequent following Van Herck et al. (2022), as their study also focused on emails. The moves were considered typical if they had 76%-100% frequency, conventional if they occurred 51%-75% in the corpus, optional if the frequency was between 26% and 50% and infrequent if their occurrence was very low, 0% to 25%.

Finally, to answer Research Question 3, the farewell emails of two groups of employees were analysed – those who were transferred and those were retiring. The analysis took place because, through observation, we were able to identify differences in the generic structure of the emails sent by the two groups of senders. In the analysis, we paid attention to the length and rhetorical moves of the emails. It should be noted that for the benefit of the research, translation was provided for each example presented in the results and discussion section.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In answering the research questions, the present study divides this section further into two parts. The first part discusses Research Questions 1 and 2 while the second part answers Research Question 3. Overall, the analysis of the farewell emails shows that the emails often comprise seven moves in which all of them are typical. The analysis also shows that some of the moves are realised by steps. Summary of the moves and steps of the farewell emails is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Move-step structure of farewell emails by Malaysian workers

Moves and steps	Percentage of Frequency	Typicality
<b>M1: Greeting the readers</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>Typical</b>
M1S1: Addressing the readers	58.3	Conventional
M1S2: Expressing good wishes to the readers	16.7	Infrequent

<b>M2: Self introduction</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Typical</b>
M2S1: Announcing the last date of service	83.3	Typical
M2S2: Mentioning the period of working years	58.3	Conventional
M2S3: Mentioning the service start date	16.7	Infrequent
<b>M3: Informing the farewell</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Typical</b>
<b>M4: Expressing gratitude</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>Typical</b>
M4S1: Thanking the Upper Management	58.3	Conventional
M4S2: Thanking all co-workers	91.7	Typical
M4S3: Thanking specific group of people	33.3	Infrequent
<b>M5: Offering General Apology</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Typical</b>
<b>M6: Conveying Hope</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Typical</b>
<b>M7: Signing off</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Typical</b>
M7S1: Ending with a pantun	25.0	Infrequent
M7S2: Signing the email	8.3	Infrequent
M7S3: Full name and position	66.7	Conventional
M7S4: Providing contact details	16.7	Infrequent

### ***5.1 Rhetorical Moves of Farewell Emails and The Typicality of Moves***

#### ***Move 1: Greetings the readers***

The analysis found that all emails begin with greetings. Thus, this move is regarded as Move 1 of the genre. Previous studies by (Carrió-Pastor & Calderón, 2015) and (Van Herck et al., 2022) also found greetings as part of the opening move. Carrió-Pastor & Calderón (2015) however, noted that most emails in her study began with referencing prior to greetings. Nevertheless, it shows that greetings are necessary, and the senders are implying that the recipients of the emails are significant to them (Waldvogel, 2007). In the present study, only one email does not contain the move but this does not change the typicality of the move since it has 91.7% of occurrence. It should be noted that since all email writers were Muslims, they began their email with similar greetings which was “Assalamualaikum” (Peace be unto you) and sometimes followed by “Salam Sejahtera” which has similar meaning to the previous greeting but is usually meant for the non-muslim recipients.

Move 1 is realised by two steps. The first step, M1S1 is addressing the readers which is an optional step with 58.3% of occurrence. Through this step, the email senders include all possible salutations that the recipients possibly might possess such as “YBhg. Prof. / Prof. Madya Dr. / Dr. / Tuan / Puan”. This way of addressing recipients is considered as personal and rather formal (Van Herck et al., 2022). It is interesting to note that this step is a unique way of addressing recipients by Malaysians since previous studies conducted among email writers from other countries showed this step was fulfilled in simpler ways. Mehrpour & Mehrzad (2013) found Iranian writers just wrote “Dear, sir” while Carrió-Pastor & Calderón (2015) noted that Indian

writers usually used “Greetings” such as “Greetings for the week” or “Greetings for business”. However, Van Herck et al. (2022) discovered that some English native speakers in the UK were inclined to practise similar ways of salutations like Malaysians when the marital status of recipients were not confirmed. They preferred to write “Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Smith (name)” instead of general greetings.

The second step, M1S2, is intended to express good wishes to the recipients. This is another unique trait of emails sent by Malaysian workers to their colleagues since similar practice is not found in previous studies. It only has 16.7% of occurrence which makes it an infrequent step. This step is usually embedded with M1S1. An excerpt from Email 1 illustrates the step: “Semoga Y.Bhg.Prof/Prof Madya/Dr/Tuan/Puan sihat sejahtera semuanya dan dikurniakan kesihatan yang baik” (“May Y.Bhg.Prof/Assoc. Prof/Dr/Mr/Ms be in good health and well-being, and be blessed with good health.”). Even though the percentage was low, we found the practice to be common through observation in other types of emails. This consistently shows that genre is closely related to the situation and culture. It also proves that genre is commonly shared by the discourse community and thus it can be exclusively found within the shared community (Ford-Sumner, 2006; Swales, 1990; Thompson & Campling, 2003).

### ***Move 2: Self introduction***

Self introduction is used by the email writers to briefly describe themselves. It often comprises information such as name, current position and department. This can be seen in the following example taken from Email 2: “Saya (name) Kerani Kanan (Pengurusan Stor) ingin memaklumkan akan bersara pada 27 Ogos 2022.” (I, (name), Senior Clerk (Store Management), would like to inform that I will be retiring on 27th August 2022.”). In the example, the move is also embedded with M2S1: Announcing the last date of service since most of the emails were written briefly. Since the move is important, it is not surprising that it can be found in all emails analysed. This makes the move typical with 100% of occurrence.

The first step that realises the move, M2S1 informs readers the last date of service of the email senders. This is often done by announcing the date prior to the farewell (see example in Email 2 above) or after they have left the workplace. For instance, in Email 5, the writer informs that she has reported for duty at the new workplace prior to the email: “Saya (name), Penyelia Asrama Kanan telah melaporkan diri di (new workplace) sebagai Pegawai Eksekutif pada 16 Ogos 2022” (“I, (name), Senior Dormitory Supervisor, have reported to (new workplace) as an Executive Officer on 16th August 2022.”). It is also found that retired staff prefer to send emails on the last day of their job. This can be observed in Email 9: “Hari ini adalah hari terakhir saya sebagai (name of position and department) setelah berkhidmat di (name of workplace).” (“Today is my last day as (name of position and department) after serving at (name of workplace).”) The step is also typical in the corpus since it took place in 83.3% of the emails.

The following step is M2S2 which mentions the staff’s periods of working years. The step occurred in 58.3% of the emails and thus making it conventional. An excerpt from Email 7 shows how the step is written: “Di kesempatan ini saya dengan rasa rendah diri ingin mengucapkan salam perpisahan dan jutaan terima kasih buat semua warga atas kerjasama sepanjang perkhidmatan saya di UITM Cawangan Pahang selama 25 tahun.” (“On this occasion, I humbly wish to bid farewell and express my deepest gratitude to all members for their cooperation throughout my 25 years of service at UITM Pahang Branch.”) Following the step is M2S3 which lets readers know the date which the staff reported for duty. However, the step only has 16.7% of occurrence and making it an infrequent step. An example of the step can



be seen in Email 5: " Saya mula berkhidmat di (name of workplace) pada 4 Jan 1991..." ("I began my service at (name of workplace) on 4th January 1991...").

### ***Move 3: Informing the farewell***

This move functions as the ultimate purpose of writing the emails. Through the move, the email writers inform readers that they are bidding farewell as they are going to leave the workplace due to retirement or being relocated. Thus, it is not surprising that the move occurred in all emails (100% of occurrence) and is regarded as a typical move. The following excerpt (Email 7) serves as an example of the move: "Di kesempatan ini saya dengan rasa rendah diri ingin mengucapkan salam perpisahan buat semua warga atas kerjasama sepanjang perkhidmatan saya di (name of workplace)." ("On this occasion, I humbly wish to bid farewell to all members for their cooperation throughout my service at (name of workplace).").

### ***Move 4: Expressing gratitude***

In expressing gratitude, the phrase "thank you" (or terima kasih in Malay) is often used. The practice is also observable in Move 4. The move is typical and has 91.7% of occurrence. This move is often realised by three steps since the email writers usually dedicate their gratitude to three different groups of people: upper management, general co-workers and specific group of people.

The first step of Move 4, M4S1 functions as thanking the upper management of the workplace. This is a common practice in any official occasions where the people at the higher position will be mentioned first. However, in the case of farewell emails, the step only appeared in 7 emails (58.3%), thus making it conventional. Presumably, the emails are personal for the writers and therefore, they do not follow any official emails they have received. An excerpt from Email 2 shows how M4S2 takes place in the email: "Jutaan terima kasih juga saya ucapkan kepada Pengurusan Tertinggi (name of workplace) terutamanya Y.Bhg. Rektor dan Timbalan-Timbalan Rektor." ("I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Top Management of (name of workplace), especially to Y.Bhg. Rector and Deputy Rectors."). The following step, M4S2 shares similar communicative purposes with the previous step but is meant for all co-workers in general. The step has 91.7% of occurrence and therefore is regarded as a typical step. An example of the step is shown in the following excerpt from Email 11: "Di kesempatan ini saya ingin mengucapkan jutaan terima kasih kepada semua warga UiTM Pahang yang telah banyak membantu dan memberi tunjuk ajar sepanjang kerjaya saya di sini" ("On this occasion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all members of UiTM Pahang who have provided immense assistance and guidance throughout my career here.").

The last step to realise Move 4 is M4S3 which is thanking a specific group of people. It is regarded as infrequent since it is only found in 33.3% of the emails. The step is dedicated to a group of staff who are close to the email writers and often written with an additional note. This is evident in Email 1: "Yang pasti akan dirindui...team Badminton, team Jom sihat, team antarabangsa, semoga terus cemerlang semuanya!" ("The ones that will definitely be missed... the Badminton team, the Jom sihat team, the international team, may everyone continue to shine!").

### ***Move 5: Offering general apology***

Apology is common among Malay people since it is part of showing politeness even in the workplace (Azlina et al., 2019). Thus, it could be the reason for Move 5 to take place in the corpus. The move is typical with 100% of occurrence. The move is considered general since

the email writers do not specify to whom the apology is meant for. This can be seen in the following excerpt taken from Email 3: “Dikesempatan ini, saya ingin memohon maaf kepada saudara saudari semua sekiranya atau memang ada kata-kata saya atau kelakuan saya yang mengguris hati saudara saudari sepanjang perkenalan.” (“On this occasion, I would like to apologise to everyone if there were any words or actions from me that may have hurt your feelings throughout our acquaintance.”).

### ***M6: Conveying hope***

Prior to concluding the email, the senders often express their hopes and well wishes to readers. This is shown in Move 6. In fulfilling the move, email writers often wish for continuous relationship with their colleagues in future as evident in Email 10: “Adalah menjadi harapan agar hubungan sillaturrahiim akan tetap berterusan dan terjalin erat.” (“It is hoped that the bond of friendship will continue to be maintained and strengthened.”). The move has 100% of occurrence since it can be found in all emails.

### ***M7: Signing off***

Closing in a workplace email is just as important as the opening part. The closing part of the email helps strengthen the rapport between colleagues and lay the groundwork for future interactions (Waldvogel, 2007). In the present study, all emails are found to include closing or Move 7 (100% of occurrence) which makes the move typical. The move is often fulfilled by thanking the recipients or greeting them. For example, “Sekian, terima kasih” (Thank you) in Email 4 or “Sekian, Wassalam” in Email 11. Further, Move 7 contains four steps which show variety in concluding the emails.

The first step, M7S1 which is ending the email with a pantun. Pantun is a short poetic rhyme usually consisting of two or four lines in one or more stanzas. It is used on various occasions related to Malay culture and sometimes at the beginning or end of speeches. In the present study, three emails (25% of occurrence) are found to have pantun in the last move. This makes the move infrequent. An example of this can be found in Email 3:

*“Kalau ada sumur di ladang,  
Boleh kita menumpang mandi,  
Kalau ada umur yang panjang,  
InsyaAllah kita berjumpa lagi”*

The next step is M7S2 which is signing the email. However, the step is infrequent since it is only available in one email with 8.3% of occurrence. Following the step is M7S3 which provides the full name and position of the email writers. The step is conventional since it can be found in 66.7% of the emails analysed. Lastly, Move 4 is also realised by M7S4 which provides contact details of the staff. The step has 16.7% of occurrence which makes it infrequent. The contact details shared include address, phone number and alternative email address. To ensure the anonymity of the email writers, no example of these steps will be shown.

## ***5.2 Differences in Structures of Emails Sent by Relocated Staff and Retired Staff***

Through analysis of the farewell emails, there are some noticeable differences between the emails sent by relocated and retired staff. Firstly, the emails sent by relocated staff are relatively longer than retired staff. The former stands at 1314 words with 219 words in average while the

latter only comprises 947 words with 158 words in average. Further observation on emails sent by relocated staff shows their emails contain more emotional attachment which results in the use of more words. This is usually done by recollecting memories from the workplace. Retired staff mostly prefer to write more straightforward emails by just announcing their retirement.

Secondly, the difference also lies in the move occurrence. Since there is no existing guideline in writing farewell emails, the writers write them based on their personal experience. Some of them also use previous farewell emails to a guide. This is noticeable since due to similarities in the word choice and paragraphing of the emails. The practice contributes to similar moves adapted in some emails. Thus, it is not surprising to observe the emails by relocated staff seem to fulfil more moves and steps (except for Email 5) than the ones sent by retired staff. Besides that, relocated staff tend to use more steps in realising the moves. For instance, in Move 7, most of the retired staff are inclined to conclude the emails by thanking the readers only while relocated staff choose to end their emails in various ways. These differences show both groups have their preferred communication style (Waldvogel, 2007) which may occur as a result of generation gap.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The present study investigated 12 farewell emails sent by relocated and retired staff from the same workplace. Using genre analysis, seven moves were found. All of them were categorised as typical due to their high occurrences in the data. Some of the moves were realised by a few steps (Moves 1, 2, 4 and 7) while the rest did not contain any steps. Further, the analysis of farewell emails also reveals distinct differences between emails sent by relocated staff and those sent by retired staff. Relocated staff's emails are longer, while retired staff's emails are shorter. The emails from relocated staff display more emotional attachment through the recollection of workplace memories, while retired staff opt for a straightforward approach by simply announcing their retirement. In terms of the transition, there is no established guideline, leading writers to draw on personal experience and previous emails. As a result, similarities in word choice and paragraph structure are observed. Emails from relocated staff tend to involve more moves and steps, with varied conclusions, while retired staff commonly express gratitude to readers. These distinctions suggest differing preferred communication styles, potentially influenced by a generation gap.

To conclude, the implication of the findings is intended to increase understanding of the different facets of email communication in the workplace setting. The objective of the current study was to contribute in a little way to the research of the structure and characteristics of farewell email communication. Drawing on the study's outcomes, there is an optimistic aspiration that these findings will hold substantial significance in raising awareness about workplace email conventions. Furthermore, it is anticipated that these findings will aid in preparing prospective writers of this genre with the necessary insights on what is expected and should be incorporated within their concluding emails. This, in turn, is aimed to leave a positive impression on their colleagues.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

KFY and KN carried out the introduction and literature review sections. KFY wrote the methodology section, collected the data and refined them. KFY and KN and performed the data

analysis using Atlas.ti. KFY wrote the results and discussion section. KN wrote the conclusion and references sections. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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## AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Khairul Firhan is Lecturer at the Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pahang. At present, he is pursuing his doctorate degree at Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. His research interests include Corpus Linguistics, Genre Analysis, English for Specific Purposes and Language Teaching and Learning.

Khairunisa Nikman is Senior Lecturer at the Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pahang. Currently she is the Coordinator of Akademi Pengajian Bahasa. Her research interests include Sociolinguistics, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Adult Learning.

# A New Proposed Features of Malaysian Legal Framework for Alternative Dispute Resolution in The Tribunal for Consumer Claims

Su'aida Safei<sup>1\*</sup>, Nuraisyah Chua Abdullah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Faculty of Law, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>[suaida@uitm.edu.my](mailto:suaida@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*The Tribunal for Consumer Claims (TCC), is established under section 85, Part XII of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 [Act 599] (CPA). Given the application of ADR under section 107 of the CPA, the vagueness of the provision, as regards the type of ADR to be applied in the TCC, is an issue raised on top of other issues surrounding the decision-making of the President of the TCC and unequal ability of the parties in negotiating their dispute without the supervision of the said President. In the absence of comprehensive discussions on the legal framework of the TCC in the existing literature, the main objective of this paper is to propose a workable ADR for the TCC to adopt in view of the issues faced by the TCC. Using the content analysis, doctrinal legal research, and comparative study with Singapore's Small Claims Tribunal, this paper provides new suggestions in the management of the TCC, such as case management, flexible numbers of Presidents, given the complexity of cases in the TCC and types of ADR being identified as facilitative mediation and evaluative mediation. These are possible innovations in the legal framework of the TCC, hence providing the practical implication of this paper. The findings of this paper also add to the body of knowledge in the domain of ADR at the TCC and expand the current literature. Most significantly, the findings of this paper answer its main objective by proposing a workable ADR for the TCC to implement, thereby enhancing the TCC's professional practice and satisfying the relevance of this study in terms of professional application.*



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Tribunal for Consumer Claims (hereinafter referred to as “TCC”) is established under section 85, Part XII of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 [Act 599] (hereinafter referred to as “CPA”). The TCC operates under the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living. (Official website of Tribunal for Consumer Claims). The TCC can be seen as a form of alternative dispute resolution (hereinafter referred to as “ADR”). This is because it fits into the main features of ADR, which involves dispute resolution processes and techniques that fall outside the court system. (Jan et al., 2010). Some provisions of the CPA support this, one of them is section 107, which will be further elaborated in this paper. This paper highlights issues which relate to section 107 of the CPA as stated in the section for Problem Statement of this paper. It also examines ADR used in various institutions such as the Singapore’s Small Claims Court and the court-annexed mediation practised by the Malaysian courts. The main objective of this paper is to propose a workable ADR for the TCC to adopt, hence, providing a proposed legal framework for its practice from the initiation of a case until its disposal at the TCC. The findings of this paper add to the body of knowledge in the domain of ADR at the TCC and expand the current literature. Most significantly, in answering its main objective, as mentioned earlier, the findings of this paper enhance the TCC's professional practice and satisfy the relevance of this study in terms of professional application.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

ADR components may be found in Section 107 of the CPA. It enables the TCC to determine whether it is appropriate to assist the parties in reaching an agreement on the claim. Section 107 (1) of CPA mandates the TCC in so doing where it is stated that “The Tribunal shall, as regards every claim within its jurisdiction, assess whether, in all circumstances, it is appropriate for the Tribunal to assist the parties to negotiate an agreed settlement about the claim.” However, the said section is somewhat unclear. It does not define the sort of ADR that the TCC may use to help parties in negotiating, whether it is a non-binding form such as mediation or conciliation or a binding one such as arbitration. In addition, there is no procedure on how the TCC handles negotiations between the customer and the suppliers/manufacturers/ traders.

In present practice, the negotiating process between customers and traders is flawed when undertaken without the supervision of the TCC President or any of its officers. There is an imbalance of negotiating power among the parties. Consumers, often in a weaker position than traders, would be denied proper protection if the President hearing the claim, did not supervise the discussions between the consumers and the traders. As the President is not actively engaged in the parties' negotiation process, he or she would be notified of the negotiation result after the conclusion of the process. If the parties can achieve an agreement, it will be recorded as an Award by Consent (Form 9). Nonetheless, if the negotiating process fails, the President will conduct a full hearing, and the decision will be recorded in an Award after Hearing (Form 10) (Ismail & Osman, 2019).

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The TCC was introduced in 1999 and formal commentaries on the TCC started as early as the 2000s. Amin and Abu Bakar, in the year 2010, specifically discussed the deficiencies of the TCC and gave suggestions for improvements. Their discussion included the unclear provision on ADR and the ambiguity of the negotiation process within the ambit of section 107 of the C.P.A. They also pointed out various ADR methods used in the tribunals for consumers in Australia and New Zealand. (Amin and Abu Bakar, 2010). Similarly, nine years later, in 2019,

Ismail and Othman highlighted the same weaknesses of the negotiation process at the TCC as Amin and Abu Bakar mentioned in 2010 and suggested an alternative to negotiation, i.e., mediation.

Azmi, in an article in 2021, wrote about the history of the court-annexed mediation in Malaysia, which included the Practice Direction No. 5 of 2010 (Practice Direction on Mediation) (the "P.D. 2010") and the Practice Direction No. 4 of 2016 Practice Direction on Mediation, which revoked the P.D. 2010 (Azmi, 2021). She also made comparisons to court-annexed mediation in the United Kingdom and Australia. She concluded that the Australian model is superior because mediation is mandated on parties and forcing them to mediate regularly yields results. Comparably, Justice Kiat, a Malaysian Federal Court judge, agreed to a certain extent with Azmi on mandating mediation when he concluded in his 2020 article that court-annexed mediation will be instrumental in helping parties overcome their prejudices or lack of understanding. According to him, studies have shown that parties who entered mediation reluctantly benefited from the process even though their participation was not voluntary at the outset. As a result, court-annexed mediation is required as an expedient because parties do not use mediation voluntarily and should, therefore, be allowed to experience its benefits (Kiat, 2020).

In addition, Safei and Abdullah (2021), among others, wrote about the importance of having non-legal decision-makers, people with skills and competence in the dispute to sit with the President (who has a legal background), establishing mixed presidents.

Apart from TCC, another ADR that is becoming popular is the Ombudsman, and the commentaries on this concept and practice can be seen in more current literature. In Malaysia, Ombudsman can be seen being practised in the public sector and the private sector. Mohamad Bahri et al. (2023) gave an example of using an ombudsman in the public sector. Among others, they quoted the example of Universiti Sains Malaysia as the first higher institution to establish its office of Ombudsman in 2011 to ensure good governance and enhance the integrity of the university. They commented that it is not widely accepted yet since there are other departments within the university, such as the integrity unit and the legal advisor's office to settle complaints made by the complainants (Mohamad Bahri et al., 2023).

In contrast to Mohamad Bahri et al. (2022) wrote about the Ombudsman as practised in the private sector in Malaysia. They elaborated on the Ombudsman for Financial Services ("OFS") and suggested increasing its monetary jurisdiction to make it in tandem with the current market value. They used United Kingdom and Australia as benchmark countries to justify the amendment to the monetary jurisdiction of OFS (Mohd Zain et al., 2022). Such proposal would align with the development in the TCC as seen in the discussion of this paper.

The relevant literature in Singapore's Small Claims Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as "SSCT") included those written by the Referee and the Senior Referee of the SSCT itself. In 2001, a senior Referee of SSCT gave an overview discussion on the processes and the programmes conducted within the SSCT (Heng, 2001). Earlier, another senior Referee of SSCT in 2000 also wrote on the growth of SSCT but focused on issues of natural justice within the operation of the SSCT (Chin, 2000). In both papers in 2001 and 2000, there were brief discussions on the practice of mediation (as a form of ADR) in SSCT.

Later in an article published in 2019, Fakriah and Afriana compared a few foreign jurisdictions with Small Claims Courts in their judicial systems, including the SSCT in Singapore. Their writing updated the development at the SSCT earlier-mentioned by Heng in 2001 and Chin in

2000. They emphasised on two ADR methods used in SSCT; mediation and adjudication, conducted by judges known as "referees" (Fakriah and Afriana, 2019).

Some literature in 2007 and 2008 appeared to introduce the features of SSCT without discussing the ADR practice at SSCT. For example, Tan in 2007 highlighted that the SSCT was established within the Subordinate Courts in 1985 to provide a quick and inexpensive resolution of small claims arising from disputes between consumers and suppliers, not exceeding SGD\$10,000 (Tan, 2007). Equivalent to Tan, Gary 2008 shared the aim of the Small Claims Tribunals Act, which established the SSCT, to reduce costs and delays in Singapore and enhance access to justice for litigants with limited means. While Gary quoted the same monetary limit of SSCT, as quoted by Tan, he added that the monetary limit could be increased to SGD\$20,000 where parties give their consent (Gary, 2008).

Likewise, echoing the same features of the "quick and inexpensive" nature of SSCT as stated by Tan & Gary earlier, Gramckow and Ebeid (2016) opined that SSCT is considered as an ADR mechanism because it resolved the disputes of the litigants in a simpler, quicker, and cheaper manner. They also emphasised that a small claims court is a specialised court created by law with specific duties and powers to adjudicate and resolve small-value monetary disputes (Gramckow and Ebeid, 2016).

In relation to the TCC, even though there are gradual writings on TCC in the literature, the literatures are sketchy and do not illustrate the latest development in the TCC and the similar platforms of TCC in foreign jurisdictions. In the absence of a comprehensive discussion on the legal framework of TCC, this paper seeks to fill the gap.

#### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This paper employs qualitative research since it incorporates doctrinal legal research technique and a content analysis approach that necessitate the examination of several documents. Content analysis is made on the CPA, the TCC Regulations, and related laws on ADR in courts, i.e. the Rules of Court 2012, the Practice Direction No 5 of 2010, Practice Direction on Mediation, the Practice Direction No.4 of 2016, Practice Direction on Mediation, and other relevant statute such as the Mediation Act 2012. The research consists of library-based research on the primary and secondary sources of the applicable Malaysian laws regulating the TCC and the practice of SSCT in Singapore. The Malaysian laws, as stated earlier, regulating court-annexed mediation are reviewed to depict the local practice of ADR in the form of mediation. The CPA and the TCC Regulations are the major sources to be considered for the TCC. For Singapore, the relevant statutes are the Small Claims Tribunal Act 1984, and the more updated law is the Small Claims Tribunals (Amendment) Act 2018. The secondary sources of law consulted include the relevant textbooks, articles from journals, seminar papers, theses, newspaper articles, and online sources. A semi-structured interview with the Head of Section at the office of the Tribunal for Consumer Claims, Shah Alam, was conducted on 20 December 2021 to obtain the statistics of cases for all TCCs in Malaysia and to gain more practical insights on the working of the TCC.

#### **5. STATISTICS OF CASES AT THE TRIBUNAL FOR CONSUMER CLAIMS FROM THE YEAR 2018 UNTIL THE YEAR OF 2021**

As stated in the above Research Methodology section, a semi-structured interview with the respondent at the office of the Tribunal for Consumer Claims, Shah Alam was conducted on 20 December 2021, and the statistics of cases of all the TCC in Malaysia were obtained, which supported the issues raised in the section of Problem Statement in this paper. In the year 2018,

out of 1937 cases filed in all TCC offices in Malaysia, 250 cases representing 12% were given Award by Consent (Form 9), compared to 863 cases representing 44% were given Award After Hearing (Form 10). In 2019, out of 2441 cases filed in all TCC offices in Malaysia, 386 cases representing 15%, were given Award by Consent (Form 9), compared to 1087 cases representing 44%, were given Award After Hearing (Form 10). In 2020, out of 1735 cases filed in all TCC offices in Malaysia, 299 cases representing 17%, were given Award by Consent (Form 9), compared to 799 cases representing 46%, were given Award After Hearing (Form 10). As of 15 August 2021, out of 148 cases filed in all TCC offices in Malaysia, 27 cases representing 18.24%, were given Award by Consent (Form 9), compared to 71 cases representing 47.97%, were given Award After Hearing (Form 10). The TCC's statistics of cases show a steady tendency of fewer cases being reported as Award by Consent (Form 9) instead of Award after Hearing (Form 10) from 2018 to 2021. This signifies that the parties' unsupervised negotiating process has not resulted in an acceptable settlement to both parties, which will be converted into an Award by Consent (Form 9).

## **6. ADR AT SINGAPORE'S SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL (SSCT)**

There are two layers of ADR at the SSCT, mediation and adjudication, conducted by judges known as "referees". Nevertheless, before the two ADRs are adopted, there is a consultation stage, an informal method of settling at the SSCT. The consultation stage is a quick period of time in the processes involved at the SSCT, whereby consultations are held in seven days for consumers and ten to fourteen days for company claims. The hearings are held within seven days of the last consultation day if an agreement is not reached. Once the claim is registered, the clerk will assist parties in reaching an agreement during the consultation stage. If no agreement is reached during the consultation stage, the clerk or an assistant court clerk will conduct a mandatory mediation. On the other hand, if the clerk cannot assist parties in reaching an agreement during the mediation stage, the clerk will set a date for the claim to be settled through adjudication by the referee. The same practice of the clerk that the referee employs, namely, to assist parties in reaching an agreement before a decision is made after parties have failed to do so (Fakriah & Afriana, 2019).

The newly amended section 24 of the Small Claims Tribunal (Amendment) Act 2018 allows mediation and conciliation to be used in its proceedings. This is possible either at the Tribunal's initiative or at the application of any party to the proceedings. Section 24 (2) (a) of the Small Claims Tribunals (Amendment) Act 2018 provides that "A tribunal may, on its own initiative or on the application of any party to the proceedings, and in such manner as may be prescribed, do any of the following: allow one or more individuals to assist in resolving the claim amicably through mediation or conciliation" (Section 24 (2) (a) of Small Claims Tribunals (Amendment) Act 2018).

A typical conciliation at the SSCT has the following stages: Firstly, there will be a preliminary meeting. The lawyers usually brief the Judge presiding over the conciliation session on the facts of the dispute and the issues to be discussed during the conciliation session. Both parties to the dispute need not be present in the Judge's chambers during this time. Secondly, there will be a joint meeting with all parties and lawyers present. The Judge will introduce all parties to the conciliation process and set out any ground rules applicable to the session. Each party will have the chance to speak about the dispute. The Judge will facilitate the discussion, offer his views, and guide the parties on possible solutions. Thirdly, there will be separate meetings. If necessary, the Judge will hold separate meetings with either one party or the other party, together with their respective lawyers. This is a time for each party to discuss further matters and raise its concerns with the Judge, who will provide suggestions for a possible settlement

and adjust the suggestions based on the parties' input. There may be several such meetings, depending on the circumstances of each dispute.

It should be noted here that the processes from the "preliminary meeting," the "joint meeting," and "separate meetings" are processes similarly practised in a facilitative mediation. Nevertheless, in separate meetings, when the Judge/conciliator give suggestions for the settlement to parties, that departs from the features of a facilitative mediation and transform into an evaluative mediation. Last but not least is the stage of Conclusion of Conciliation. If both parties have reached an agreement, everyone will meet the Judge with his/her lawyers to review and confirm the settlement terms. These terms will be recorded before the Judge. If both parties have not reached an agreement, conciliation ends and the case proceeds to trial (States Court Singapore., 2020).

## **7. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTIONS IN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

In Malaysia, these processes of conciliation at the SSCT are similar to the practices of mediation in various institutions. Firstly, it is identical to the court-annexed mediation in the civil courts in Malaysia. On the fact that the judge/ conciliator at SSCT facilitates the discussion between parties, the judge/ mediator at the court-annexed mediation also facilitates the settlement between parties by using mediation. Paragraph 1 of the Practice Direction No. 4 of 2016 Practice Direction on Mediation (hereinafter referred to as "PD 2016 on Mediation"), a Practice Direction issued by the Chief Registrar on 30 June 2016 to explain further the practice of court-annexed mediation in the Malaysian Courts as allowed by Order 34 of the Rules of Court 2012 in the pre-trial case management, provides that "The Chief Justice of Malaysia hereby directs that with effect from 15 July 2016 that all Judges of the High Court and its Deputy Registrars and all Judges of the Sessions Court and Magistrates and their Assistant Registrars may, at the pre-trial management stage as stipulated under Order 34 Rule 2 of the Rules of Court give such directions that the parties facilitate the settlement of the matter before the court by way of mediation."

The practice of the judge/conciliator at SSCT to give suggestions to parties for a possible settlement is similarly practised by the judge/mediator at the court-annexed mediation. Paragraph 5.2 of the PD 2016 on Mediation states, "If a judge is able to identify issues arising between the parties that may be amicably resolved, he should highlight those issues to the parties and suggest how these issues may be resolved."

Similarly, the practice of the judge/conciliator to record the terms of the parties' settlement is also a similar practice at the court-annexed mediation in Malaysia. Annexure A, paragraph 4 of the PD 2016 on Mediation states, "If the mediation is successful, the Judge mediating shall record a consent judgment on the terms as agreed to by the parties."

This requirement of recording the settlement of parties in the court is similarly applicable not only to the first type of court-annexed mediation, the judge-led mediation (where judges become court mediators), but also to the second type of court-annexed mediation, the non-judge-led mediation (where non-judges become mediators). The PD 2016 on Mediation specifies that the non-judge-led mediation consists of the mediators from the Asian International Arbitration Centre (AIAC) [Annexure B of the PD 2016 on Mediation] and the mediators from the Bar Council's Malaysian Mediation Centre (MMC) [Annexure C of the PD 2016 on Mediation]. Paragraph 3 of Annexure C of the PD 2016 on Mediation states, "Any agreement consequent upon a successful mediation may be reduced into writing in a Settlement

Agreement signed by the parties but in any case, the parties shall record the terms of the settlement as a consent judgment.”

It is worthy to note here that the other two institutions in Malaysia which have similarities with SSCT insofar as the facilitative model of mediation adopted and the same processes conducted during the mediation session (from setting the ground rules to having joint meetings and separate meetings) are the court-annexed mediation in the Syariah court (known as “*Majlis Sulh*”) and the MMC (Safei, S., 2009). Similarly, the Malaysian Mediation Act 2012 (hereinafter referred to as “MD 2012”) also has the same provisions regarding joint meetings and separate meetings, where Section 11 (1) of the MD 2012 allows the discretion of the mediator either to meet with the parties together or with each party separately, and the mediator also has a role in relation to the record of parties’ settlement agreement where he or she is required to authenticate such settlement agreement and furnish a copy of the agreement to the parties in accordance with section 13 (3) of the MD 2012. Another similarity of the MD 2012 with SSCT and the Malaysian court-annexed mediation is that even though the role of a mediator in MD 2012 is mainly facilitating a mediation between parties, at the same time, the mediator may also suggest options for the settlement. The long title and section 9(1) of the MD 2012 provide for this. The long title of the Act states “An Act to promote and encourage mediation as a method of alternative dispute resolution by providing for the process of mediation, thereby facilitating the parties in disputes to settle disputes in a fair, speedy and cost-effective manner and to provide for related matters”. Similarly, section 9(1) provides that “A mediator shall facilitate a mediation and determine the manner in which the mediation is to be conducted.” Nevertheless, Section 9 (2) of the MD 2012 states that “A mediator may assist the parties to reach a satisfactory resolution of the dispute and suggest options for the settlement of the dispute” (Mediation Act 2012).

### ***7.1 Evaluative Mediation and Facilitative Mediation***

The TCC could adopt mediation as its choice of ADR. The most commonly practised styles of mediation in Malaysia are facilitative mediation and evaluative mediation. The difference between facilitative and evaluative mediation is that in facilitative mediation, the mediator would identify the issues, focus on the disputants’ fundamental interests, and facilitate the discussion or negotiation between them. The disputants are assisted in arriving at their own conclusions (Low H., B., 2010). In facilitative mediation, the mediator neither makes recommendations to the disputants nor gives advice to them (Jan, M. N. I, 2010). In essence, in facilitative mediation, the mediator works to facilitate communication between the parties, ensuring that they understand the other’s perspective. The end goal in facilitative mediation is to assist the parties in reaching their own agreement (Butlien, 2020).

In evaluative mediation, the mediator evaluates the disputants’ position and point of view, the strength, and weakness of the respective parties’ case, and offer suggestions to them (Low H., B., 2010). An evaluative mediator assumes that the disputants want and need him or her to provide some guidance as to the appropriate grounds for settlement based on law, industry practice, or technology and that he or she is qualified to give some guidance by virtue of his or her training, experience, and objectivity (Jan, M. N. I, 2010). In substance, in evaluative mediation, the mediator takes a slightly more active role by creating a non-binding evaluation of the dispute. Consistent with the voluntary nature of the process, the parties are free to accept or reject the mediator’s assessment as the settlement of the dispute (Butlien, 2020).

## ***7.2 Possibility of Using Ombudsman at the TCC***

It is viewed that Ombudsman may not be suitable for the TCC to adopt, at least in the first instance. For the public sector, which adopts Ombudsman, such as in the public university, Ombudsman works as the second level of complaint resolution. For example, when a university department makes a decision that is considered unreasonable and biased, the complainant is to make a complaint to the ombudsman (Mohamad Bahri, N.A. et al, 2023). Possibly, if Ombudsman is to be adopted by the TCC, it may serve as an avenue for any consumers or traders to make a complaint to Ombudsman if they are not satisfied with the decision of the TCC, which they think is unreasonable or bias. This may be a cheaper and better option for parties rather than challenging the decision of the TCC by way of a judicial review. Nevertheless, there need to be new statutory provisions inserted in the CPA for this new practice to be adopted.

Similarly, in the practice of Ombudsman in the private sector, it was acknowledged that Malaysia has yet to implement an ombudsman for any sector other than financial services. As stated in the above section for literature review, the OFS is an example of an Ombudsman for the financial disputes between the financial consumers and the financial service providers. It is the first-ever implementation of an ombudsman service in Malaysian financial disputes, hence it may require some years to build awareness of OFS's service as a new scheme (Mohd Zain et al., 2022). This shows that the practice of Ombudsman in the private sector is also relatively new; hence it may not be a suitable ADR for the TCC.

The preceding discussions show that mediation may be a better choice of ADR for the TCC as it shares the same features as stated in section 107 of CPA in that the President of the TCC is supposed to assist parties in their negotiation. Mediation is also being practised in the Malaysian courts since the year 2010 by virtue of the PD 2010, and other public and private institutions in Malaysia also use mediation as their chosen method of ADR. Hence, all these provide a solid reason for the TCC to choose mediation as it is a widely used ADR in Malaysia. In addition, Singapore, as our neighboring country, which also practises the identical common law system to Malaysia, also uses conciliation/mediation as one of its ADRs in its SSCT.

## 8. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

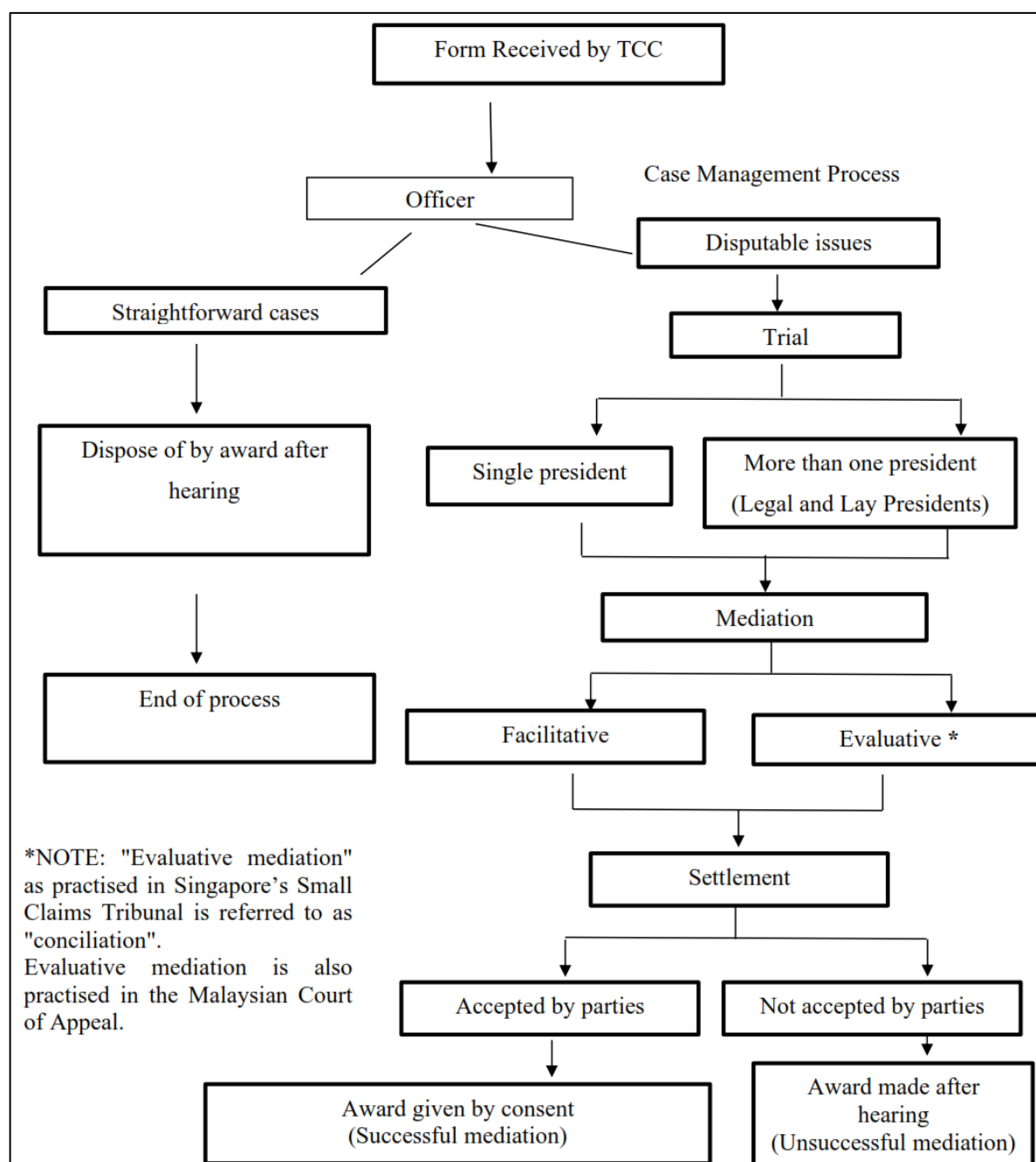


Figure 1: Summary of Flowchart of the Proposed Legal Framework of Alternative Dispute Resolution at Tribunal for Consumer Claims

### 8.1 Explanation of Summary Flowchart of the Proposed Legal Framework of Alternative Dispute Resolution at Tribunal for Consumer Claims

The initiation process at the TCC by the claimant is similar to the current practice where the claimant will file his or her case at the TCC by using Form 1 Statement of Claim. Subregulation 5 (1)(2) of the TCC Regulations provide that “Every claim lodged with the Tribunal shall be in Form 1 (the “Statement of claim”). (TCC Regulations). The claimant shall state in Form 1 the amount and particulars of the claim”. Once Form 1 from the claimant is received by the TCC,



either through filling a case over the counter or through its online system, an officer-in-charge at the TCC will start with the case management process, or this may also be called a pre-trial process. By adopting the practice of the pre-trial process at the SSCT in Singapore, the said officer will decide whether the case is within the jurisdiction of the TCC or otherwise. If the case is not within the jurisdiction of the TCC, then the officer will inform the claimant of the same, and the case will be removed from the list of cases to be heard by the TCC. Nevertheless, if the case is within the jurisdiction of the TCC, then the officer will categorise the case into one of the two possible categories, namely, (i) a straightforward case or (ii) a case with disputable issues.

The first category of the case will proceed to trial without undergoing any ADR process (mediation). The case will undergo a short hearing, and it will be disposed of by an award after hearing (Form 10). Subregulation 23(5) of the TCC Regulations provides that an award made under this regulation (after "Hearing") shall be in Form 10. (TCC Regulations). Whereas, for the second category of the case, it will be forwarded to a trial of either before a single President or a trial before more than one President, which is a combination of one legal President and one lay President. The single legal President or the combination of the legal President and the lay President will conduct mediation before deciding whether a mutually acceptable settlement is possible or otherwise between disputing parties, without needing a full hearing.

The Head of Section for the TCC at each branch of the TCC in all Malaysian states is thought to be the best person to be the officer-in-charge for the task mentioned above of case management. This is because he or she is involved with administrative matters at the TCC rather than hearing cases like the President. As a result, he or she can play a role at the TCC during the initiation stage of the cases before the President begins hearings.

Additionally, it is opined that the TCC should adopt the above suggestion of adding a case management stage for classifying TCC cases into two possible categories: straightforward cases and cases with disputable issues. As mentioned earlier, this should also be handled by the TCC's Head of Section. There are cases at the TCC that are straightforward and thus can be resolved without the parties engaging in negotiation. The simplest example is when the consumer or claimant requests a refund from the trader or respondent after payment has been made. As illustrated earlier in the "Summary of Flowchart of the Proposed Legal Framework of ADR at TCC," this suggestion would improve the TCC's current practice of deciding only whether a case falls within or outside the TCC's jurisdiction.

Furthermore, this proposal will expedite the disposition of straightforward cases and provide the President with additional time to deal with cases involving contentious issues. With the President hearing an average of 20 to 25 cases daily, such classification is critical. (Information obtained from the interview with the TCC). It will ensure that the TCC's spirit of providing simple, fast, and inexpensive processes is carried out. This is also in line with one of the strategies to be used to achieve the goals of the National Consumer Policy, which is to provide a service delivery system that solves problems quickly and cheaply" (KPDNKK., n.d.).

For a case to be heard by a single President, this applies to the type of case which does not require the technical or expert knowledge of the lay President. For a case that is heard by more than one President, this applies to a case that requires the technical or expert knowledge of the lay President. Examples of a case requiring the technical or expert knowledge of the lay President include cases concerning vehicles, vehicle spare part, vehicle workshops and house renovation. If mediation is adopted as an ADR at the TCC, the lay President will be a co-mediator with the legal President in assisting the parties in negotiating their settlement. Whereas

for the single legal President, he will be the sole mediator who will also assist parties in negotiating their settlement.

Regarding the type of mediation, it is suggested that both facilitative and evaluative mediation should be adopted by the two mediators or a single mediator. It will be based on a case-to-case basis. If the situation requires the mediator or mediators to facilitate parties in negotiating without evaluating the weakness and the strength of the case, then the mediator or mediators will adopt facilitative mediation. Nevertheless, evaluative mediation may be possible in any one of the two situations. Firstly, evaluative mediation may be adopted in a situation where parties themselves request the mediator or mediators to evaluate their case by giving their views on the weaknesses and strengths of their case. Secondly, evaluative mediation may also be adopted when the mediator or mediators himself or themselves is or believe that he or they need to make the evaluation of the weakness and the strength of the case before him or them so that it will help parties to see the reality of their case hence they will be persuaded to reach a mutually acceptable settlement.

Last but not least, if the parties can reach a settlement, the mediation is deemed to be successful, and the award which the President or the Presidents of the TCC will give is in Award By Consent (Form 9). Subregulation 22 (1)(2) of the TCC Regulations provide that “At the hearing, the Tribunal shall, where appropriate, assist the parties to settle the claim by consent. An award obtained by consent shall be in Form 9”. Nonetheless, suppose parties fail to settle. In that case, the mediation is deemed unsuccessful, and the President or the Presidents of the TCC will give the award in Award After Hearing (Form 10). Form 10 is an award given after the hearing is made in accordance with subregulation 23 (1)(2)(3)(4) (5) of the TCC Regulations where in essence both disputing parties adduce their evidence, call a witness or produce documents in support of their case. The President may at any time assist them in conducting their cases.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

To conclude, the CPA, through section 107 does not provide any specific ADR for the TCC to follow in assisting parties to negotiate their mutually acceptable solution to their disputes. Hence, the method of assisting parties is left at the discretion of the individual President of the TCC, which may vary from one to another. The absence of any specific method of ADR also has contributed to the least number of cases at the TCC upon which Award by Consent (Form 9) is issued, as shown by the statistics of cases at all TCCs in Malaysia from 2018 until 2021. The practice of conciliation/mediation at the SSCT and mediation which is also a familiar practice in the Malaysian courts and other institutions in Malaysia can be good examples for the TCC to emulate, as discussed in this paper.

Due to the page limitation of this paper, it only confines itself to discussing two possible ADRs; mediation and ombudsman. The other ADRs like conciliation, arbitration, med-arb, and many others are not considered. It would provide a better analysis if comparisons could be made to various other ADRs to justify the most suitable ADR for the TCC. Due to time constraints and the requirement of getting approval from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty, the paper also could not conduct any interviews with the Presidents of the TCC to have their views on the proposed use of mediation at the TCC.

The proposed framework should be tried as a pilot project in one of the TCCs, possibly in Shah Alam, as the most recorded cases filed compared to other branches or in the TCC’s headquarter in Putrajaya. Further research can be made to evaluate the proposed framework's success in using mediation as an ADR method to assist parties in reaching their mutually accepted

solution. This is hoped to contribute more towards increasing Award By Consent (Form 9), which reflects the success of mediation.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS OF AUTHORS

SS prepared the first draft of the paper. NCA reviewed and edited the paper. All authors read and approved the final manuscript of the paper.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None Declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Su'aida Safei (Dip.in Law, LLB (Hons), LLM, PhD)** holds a Diploma in Law from Kolej Agama Sultan Zainal Abidin (now known as Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin) , LLB Hons from University of Aberystwyth, Wales, United Kingdom, LLM from Universiti Malaya and PhD from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). She has also written articles in the local and in the international journals. Her areas of interest in research include alternative dispute resolution, Malaysian legal system and Islamic law.

**Nuraisyah Chua Abdullah (LL.B, MCL, PhD)** holds PhD, Masters degree in Comparative Laws (MCL) and a degree in Law (LL.B) from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). She is also a consultant, trainer, and writer. She has to her credit written more than 10 academic books as a sole writer. Among others, she is the writer of the book, *Legal Research Methodology* published by Sweet and Maxwell in 2018.

# Character Design for A Motion Comic from Textual Classical Malay Narratives Discursive Descriptions: Creativity in an Islamic Perspective

Muhamad Azhar Abdullah<sup>1\*</sup>, Hafizah Rosli<sup>2</sup>, and Voviana Zulkifli<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2</sup>Digital & Animation, College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Independent Educational Researcher, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>azhar624@uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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*Characters in classical Malay textual narratives are predominantly complemented by descriptive qualities of their personalities with atypical portrayals of the physique which are not accentuated by any illustrations. Visual adaptation of the characters for new presentation would require artists to illustrate from the discursive descriptions for character design. Most contemporary references on drawing for character design emphasize the physical or exoteric ascriptions rather than the harmony between inspiration and spiritual or the esoteric perceptions. Although such references encourage novice artists to learn and search for inspiration (ilham), which involves the inner self in the thinking process, the latter is hardly explored, especially through the Islamic perspective. Research has shown that creativity is a skill that can be learned. This article provides a conceptual value to the field of character design for motion comics from an Islamic perspective through content analysis of classical Malay textual narratives and the meanings from various chapters in the Holy Quran which include a range of elements in creativity. It is established that Islam promotes creativity through certain practices, including using the heart or qalb which is also known as the seat of the al-'aql or intellect, and practising tafakkur, or immersing the self in deep contemplation, as suggested in the Quran.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The conceptual work space of creativity is immeasurable that it stretches beyond the real to the unreal and the possible crossing the impossible. Research in creative thinking has evolved beyond the domains of philosophy, theology, psychology, psychiatry, and neurology to specialised fields such as education and arts. In his much earlier writing, Rothenberg (1976) suggested that the innate unique capacity of an individual which facilitates in the production of a masterpiece, a *magnum opus* or great scientific discoveries and inventions, has contributed to the increase interests in research on creative thinking. Regardless of the various theories exist on creativity and the creative thinking process, the ultimate outcome of the process is to produce something that is new and valuable (Rothenberg, 2011). Inspirations that come to the creative minds may emanate from the unseen, unconscious sources, and giftedness though there have been various researchers that study how creativity can be taught as a skill (Robinson & Aronica, 2013).

Meanwhile, in many of its verses, the Holy Quran does not only mention thinking in hundreds of its verses but also poses thought-provoking questions that invoke readers to think and analyse any ideas and creations whether seen or unseen; thus, emboldening readers to connect the esoteric with the exoteric meanings. As shown in the verses of QS Al-Baqarah 2:164 and QS Āli-‘Imrān 3:190 – 191, the Holy Quran invites readers to reflect, observe, and be creative. Creative thinking can be a commonly expected or surprisingly unexpected act either conscious or unconscious that is initiated from the external limits of the bodies to the curiously inner-self. Through creative thinking, one can view the ordinary physical world which may have personal and individual interpretations that are inventive or revolutionary; hence, creativity allows us to view our perceptions of the significant world over something unfamiliar. Hence, to illustrate for motion comics, particularly for character design, the artist has to construct and refine concepts towards creating and presenting new ideas and meanings.

Therefore, this paper attempts to provide a notional value to the field of character design in the motion comic “*Liga Pendekar vs Dukun Lintah*” (Figure 1) through an Islamic perspective which contains the spectrum of elements in creative thinking skills.



Figure 1: *Liga Pendekar vs Dukun Lintah*

## 2. VISUAL ADAPTATIONS

### 2.1 Discursive Textual Classical Malay Narratives

Many South East Asian (SEA) classical textual narratives have been re-presented into visual sequential narratives. The narratives are entrenched in their traditional beliefs, while the characters in the stories are perpetually illuminated with its cultural resplendence (Manaf, Hamzah, & Abidin, 2021). Similar to the *sastera Melayu klasik* or classical Malay textual narratives, they are usually unaccompanied by any visual images as the texts are appended by any illustrations. Characters in the narratives are mostly complemented with descriptive qualities of their personalities with atypical portrayals of the physique. Thus, requiring the artist to illustrate the characters in obscurity by leveraging the abstruse textual descriptions for character design when adapting these classics in the form of visual narratives through motion comics.

A review on prior and existing literature on character design for comics and animation have brought to the deduction of the views that; firstly, most contemporary references emphasize the physical or exoteric ascription rather than the harmony between inspiration and spiritual or the esoteric perceptions. Accordingly, in a much earlier examination by Lioi (2009), it was discovered that a substantial number of references, including online media and printed references, as well as scholarly literature, had focused more on the technicalities of character design. This is primarily evident, as many books on the making of renown comics and animation by either comic artists, publishers or production companies and studios such as those by Anderson, Cady-Lee, and Mengert (2019), Kurtti (2020), and Dimartino and Konietzko (2020), emphasize on matters of anatomy, client's brief, and the technicalities towards the final product.

Secondly, although these references for animation encourage novice artists on learning and searching (or re-searching) for inspiration which also involves the inner-self in the thinking process, the latter is hardly ever being shared or explored in writing especially through the Islamic perspective. Artists would retreat in empirical and rational invocation for inspiration detaching from the unconscious creative inner-self. It is implied by Jung (2015) that the artist's inner creative process can be described as superior introverted thinking with intuition which may also be augmented with unconscious facts. This can be reflected in the Islamic view through *tafakkur* which is to think deeply that is directed to problem solving through utilizing anticipated and available information guided by deep inward contemplation in the essence of the unseen inspiration (*ilham*) (Jalam Badi & Mustapha Tajdin, 2009; Sidek Baba, 2017).

## 3. METHODOLOGY: A MOTION COMIC - RE-PRESENTING CHARACTERS FROM DISCURSIVE NARRATIVES

The motion comic '*Liga Pendekar vs Dukun Lintah*' (Abdullah, 2022) retains the eight main characters; namely, *Hang Tuah*, *Badang*, *Tanggang*, *Kebayan*, *Orang Minyak*, *Kelembai*, *Awang Kenit*, and *Malim Deman*. The characters *Hang Tuah* and *Badang* are present in the prominent classical Malay text '*Sulalat al-Salatin* ya'ni *Perteturan Segala Raja-Raja*' or '*Sejarah Melayu*' which is also known as '*Genealogy of Kings*' or '*The Malay Annals*' (Tun Seri Lanang, 1997; Tun Seri Lanang, 2019; Tun Seri Lanang, 2020). Meanwhile, the character *Malim Deman* is adapted from the classical text '*Hikayat Malim Deman*' (Pawang Ana & Raja Haji Yahya, 1984). Through content analysis of the references mentioned, only the character

design of '*Hang Tuah*' (*Pak Tua*), *Badang*, and *Malim Deman* are included in the discussions of the present paper.

The following sections will further discuss the act of contemplation and the evaluation of thoughts as implied in the Islamic perspective through content analysis of the meanings in various chapters from the Al-Quran that are essential for a creative person. This should be able to spark off the inspiration or *ilham* that is indispensable in developing a character design. Consequently, the paper will delve into visualising the discursive textual narratives of the selected three characters in the character design. The interpretation process is described in Figure 2.

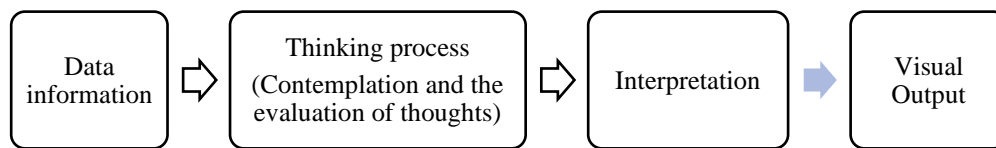


Figure 2: Conceptual framework of content analysis

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS: INTROSPECTION AND CREATIVITY

A creative person would ruminate on his or her subject and field because creative ideas usually emerge gradually and may extend over the course of time. It has been suggested to consider that spiritual conviction could enhance the artist's introspection and creativity (Hui, He, & Wong, 2019). Creativity can be a distinctive, unprecedented, and a bewildering process; however, it has been revealed by various researchers that creative thinking is a skill that can be taught and trained. There have been many programs designed for training people to think with better means both creatively and critically including Edward de Bono's six thinking hats which is developed from the progression of the Cognitive Research Trust (CoRT), *Isaksen and Treffinger's* Creative Problem-Solving Program, Covington, and team's Productive Thinking Program, and Harvard Project Zero, (Sternberg, 2019). Accordingly, such programs also indicated that knowledge garnered from various disciplines and experience opens up for newfound and ground-breaking thought. When this is followed with cognition, contemplation, and the evaluation of thought or reasoning, it would transpire the manifestation and burgeoning of newfound and ground-breaking creativity.

##### 4.1 Contemplation (*Tafakkur*) and the Evaluation of Thought

Creative thinking requires some forms of profound contemplation, reflection, reckoning and deep comprehension. Levenson and Aldwin (2013) consider that contemplatives are specialists who are transcend towards the transpersonal. The unconscious effectively complements the conscious into transfiguring the imagined into 'reality' with immediacy. It is also recognised that meaning-making pragmatically influences engagement in the creative process and actions among adults (Hui, He, & Wong, 2019). Hence, artists are able to transform experience and manifest their personal creativity as well as give original interpretation and meaning to their artwork. In view of that, character design is a symbiotic process involving different conceptual ideas assembled by the artist in researching relevant materials of references. It is necessary to perform research prior to illustrating character design and later vet the script thoroughly to ensure its authenticity, accuracy, and appropriateness (Rheault, 2020) especially when designing characters with a story that is adapted from any cultural content. Accordingly, it is



necessary to look into the Quranic viewpoint towards using the intellect in deep thinking or contemplating (*tafakkur*).

Respectively, the Holy Quran admonishes its readers to make discerning observations and reasoning of their surroundings. It is imperative that the intellect is to be edified as decreed in the Al-Quran by observing, thinking, and reflecting the signs of The Creator and history of man's experiences. With that, it is indicated by Jamal and Mustapha (2009, p. 3) that contemplation (*tafakkur*) is perceptibly mentioned in the Holy Quran such as in the following verses: QS Al-Baqarah 2: 219, 266; QS Āli 'Imrān 3: 191, QS Al-An'am 6: 50; QS Al-A'raf 7: 176, 184; QS Yūnus: 10: 24; QS Ar-Ra'd 13: 3; QS An-Nahl 16: 11, 44, 69; QS Al-Rūm 30: 8, 21; QS Saba 34: 46; QS Az-Zumar 39: 42; QS Al-Jāthiyah 45: 13; QS Al-Hashr 59: 21, and QS Al-Muddathir 74 : 18. If we observe, ponder and reflect, Ali (1996) believes that we should be able to understand that the verses from the Al-Quran are revelations that illuminate The Creator's "wisdom and goodness" and of the "beautiful handiwork in the material creation of His dealings in history are signs to us".

It needs to be emphasised that creative thinking encourages adaptability in thinking and actions through analysis and evaluation of thought or *al-fikr*. This is in reference to using the *al-'aql* (the Intellect) in QS Yūsuf 12:2, and *'aqluun* (عَقْلُونَ) in QS al-Ra'd 13:4, which are located at the end of the verses, that encourage the act of contemplation (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1996). The Holy Quran further cultivates probing for its readers through phrases such as (i) *afala ta'qilun* (do you not reason?) (QS Al-Baqarah 2: 44, 76; QS Āli-'Imrān 3: 65; QS Al-An'am 6: 32; QS Al-'Araf 7: 169; QS Yūnus 10: 16; QS Hud 11: 51; QS Yūsuf 12: 109; QS Al-Anbiya' 21: 10, 67; QS Al-Mu'minun 23: 80; QS Al-Qasas 28: 60; QS As-Saffat 37: 138), (ii) *afala tafaqqarun* (so, will you not contemplate?) QS Al-Baqarah 2:266; QS Al-An'am 6: 50), and (iii) *afala tadabbarun* (do they not consider {with care}?) (QS An-Nisaa 4:82; QS Muhammad 47: 24) (Rosnani Hashim & Wan Mazwati, 2022; Sidek Baba, 2017; Jalam Badi & Mustapha Tajdin , 2009). Correspondingly, verses from the Holy Quran also imply that creative thinking should be viewed alongside critical thinking because they complement one another and should be deliberated in an integrated thought. This is clearly encouraged in the Qur'an for its readers to use their thoroughgoing intellect such as in QS Al-Baqarah 2:164 that describes with graphic descriptions of the natural phenomenon in its harmony. Essentially, each creation has some special and distinct meanings.

The Al-Quran has clearly provided descriptions of the various creations and the history of man's experience through the different degrees of its verses from the 114 *surahs*. It is highlighted by Ali (1996) that if a person is to study on nature and give thought to the processes, they would be able to recognize The Creator's wisdom and "benign providence in making the processes of nature subserve man's use and refined life" (p. 639). Hence, the readers are encouraged to use their higher intelligence and study the creations with careful reasoning for deeper understanding. Such provision is revealed in the verses of QS Al-Nahl 16:11-12.

## 5. KNOWLEDGE (*'ILM*) AND INSPIRATION (*ILHAM*)

Knowledge is retained in the faculty of memory and holds distinctive roles with the attribution of various characteristics and qualities. It is conceptually abstract and does not appertain to the physical world (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). Nevertheless, Audi (2011) asserted that it is important to have a significantly grounded and justified belief so that the typical matters discerned are substantiated on the same basis that it is known. It was also prompted that

knowledge or matters that are stored in the memory may wither or are difficult to retrieve, or remain unchanged. Some knowledge stored in the memory is either instinctive or ingrained and we could generate memories of occurrences as recollections that can act as inspirations in order to simulate the future or in this matter, creating works of art. Artists are able to demonstrate continuity by maintaining fundamental anchoring of knowledge learnt, acquired, and stored in the memory.

Knowledge may also be described as a body of experience, appropriate information, and skilled insights or potentials. De Jong and Furgeson-Hessler (1996) implied that it serves as the foundation in evaluating and incorporating new experiences and novel information. The researchers further suggested two levels of knowledge, namely; surface-level knowledge and deep-level knowledge. The surface-level knowledge lacks critical evaluation and judgement. Its characteristics include imitation, repetition, or replicating through trial and error. Meanwhile, the deep-level knowledge is consummately processed by means of comprehension and abstraction. Judgement and evaluation are then rendered with granularity and structured to be retained in the memory and can be purposefully efficient when used. Hence, knowledge is dynamically processed in relation to the space and time continuum but good judgement requires not only a collection of experience but also some form of wisdom (*al-hikmah*) which is much deliberated in the Islamic view towards the acquisition of knowledge.

The Arabic verb *awhā* means ‘revealed’ which derives from the noun *wahy* and they are radiated throughout the Al-Quran in various shades of meanings. One of the meanings include ‘inspiration’ or *ilham* that is terminologically used in reference to God inspiring man with concepts and ideas, or guiding and directing His creations. In QS An-Nahl 16:68, Allah swt inspired (*awhā*) the bee to build its hives in hills, trees, and other habitations. According to Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1996), “*awhā* (أَوْحَى) ordinarily means inspiration, the Message put into the mind or heart by Allah” (p. 654). This is illuminated in other verses of the Al-Quran including QS Tāhā 20:38 and QS QS Al-Qaṣaṣ 28:7 When God granted inspiration to Prophet Musa a.s mother (*Umm Musa*) in a time of persecution and to save him from being exterminated by the Pharaoh’s command. In this sense, inspiration (*ilham*) can be considered as a divine grace. As art is seen as a mean of expressing one’s devotion to God; hence, the concept of inspiration is formidably connected to the idea of spiritual inspiration as affirmed in QS Al-Najm 53:10; (10) *So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant – (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey.*

The divine inspiration draws out the artist’s innermost thought and feelings transcending language and culture. The creative inspiration or intuition that is believed to come from God, The *Al-Khaliq* (الْخَالِق), The Creator, enables artists to produce work of arts that are not only beautiful but also meaningful and has that pleasing effect to the physical eyes and the spiritual eyes of the *qalb*.

### **5.1 Knowledge (*‘ilm*) and Inspiration (*Ilham*) for Character Design**

Knowledge (*‘ilm*) according to Ali (1996) is the “power of judgement in discerning the value of truth and acquaintance with previous revelations” (p. 1000). Various verses in the Al-Quran revealed that God bestowed the prophets with knowledge that even the angels do not have. In QS Al-Baqarah 2:31-33, the verses revealed that God taught Prophet Adam a.s. the names of things. From QS Al-Anbiyā’ 21:74 and 79, God inspired and provided Prophet Lūt and Prophet Sulaimān with the right judgement and knowledge of matters. Similarly, QS Al-Naml 27:15 and 16 also revealed that God had bestowed Prophet Dāwūd with knowledge favoured upon

him. These verses are among many others in the Al-Quran which indicate God's goodness and erudition are manifested in man's heart (*qalb*) also known as the seat of the intellect (*al-'aql*).

Artistic creations would typically present exquisite details but with camouflaged meanings or metaphorically articulated. The works of art transmit the artists' intents, the concealed inferences, and underlying principles, so those who are interested must engage their attention to ponder and explore. Classical Malay textual narratives are works of art that are copiously composed metaphors and often with equivocally profound details. The narratives may perceptibly condense several meanings that impel the readers to engage their attention in deep thoughts. A critical mind is also multi-dimensional as it observes, contemplates, reflects, analyses, synthesise, evaluates, and makes criterion-based judgement about all information that entered the mind (Rosnani Hashim & Wan Mazwati, 2022). Hence, works of art invite others to create a profound connection through extended thought.

Although the mind is physically influenced by what is seen, heard, or smelt from its worldly surrounding, it is however free from the elements spiritually; a realm that is unrestricted of time and space. With that, the ideas come to the artist by intuition to which Al-Ghazali describes as "inspiration spring up in the mind unconveyed through any sense-channel" (Al-Ghazali, 2021). Ali (1996) upheld that work of arts that are praiseworthy should be "... those which emanate from minds steeped in the Faith, which try to carry out in life that fine sentiments they express in their artistic work", and the objective of the creation is not endeavoured towards self-glorification or the effusive praises from others. This is imperative according to Ali (1996) if "one who wishes to become a supreme artist, not only in technique but in spirit and essentials". Successively, the merging of knowledge and strong conviction in Faith become the essence bypassing consciousness that transpire inspiration (*ilham*) which is the impetus for perception and action for an artist to seamlessly draw.

### **5.2 The Heart (*Qalb*) – The Seat of the Intellect**

The heart (*qalb*) is mentioned more than a hundred times and deliberated extensively in the Holy Quran with reference to its physical and spiritual substance. Islamic philosophers and theologians have written extensively about the heart and its importance to human spirituality and knowledge. Being considered as the seat of the intellect, the heart is also the epicentre of consciousness, the emotion, and the spiritual (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1996). In studying the works of the great philosopher Al-Ghazali, Osman Bakar (1998) identified that the *Hujjat al-Islām* (Proof of Islam) views that the heart (*qalb*) holds the sight of the inward realities just like the bodily eyes that sees the physical world. According to Al-Ghazali (2010), the heart, like a mirror, is potentially capable of reflecting the true nature of all things and thus recognising them. There are three factors for this recognition: First, the intellect or heart in which the image of the specific nature of things exists is like the mirror; second, the intelligence or specific nature of the thing recognised is like the object reflected in the mirror; third, the intelligence or representation of the thing recognised in the heart is like the representation of the image in the mirror.

Al-Ghazali also implies that man can have the mirror of his heart polished and shined by acts of obedience so that it reflects the image of the true reality. The heart of man has two kinds of knowledge: the intellectual and the religious. Likewise, knowledge of arts in the Islamic perspective does not only consider the peripheral values but it should be complemented with the inward. Importantly, art is also a revenue to demonstrate one's devotion to God; thus, art

creators may imbue their creations with spiritual themes or symbols. In this sense, the artists acknowledge that the inspirations emanate from The Divine Source so, they characteristically express their gratefulness to God, The *المُصَوِّر* (*Al-Musawwir*) or The Bestower of Forms, The Fashioner, and The Shaper of Unique Beauty.

## 6. RE-IMAGINING TEXT TO VISUAL

Traditional classical Malay textual narratives are crafted faithfully close to its people's heritage and customs. The narratives do not revel in glorifying discrete personal ideals or giving individual flattery in fulsomeness to the characters that appear in the stories. It was highlighted by Hamid (2017) that the textual classical Malay narratives also are not reinforced with illustrations that could provide substantial background knowledge to its readers that they may benefit from having. Although legendary characters in classical Malay narratives are illustriously described and oft-discursive in the stories, the physical descriptions are only given in fringes, revealing discretely the physical description that is more often than not would be supplemented with metonymy.

### 6.1 Description Through the Audience or Onlookers Behaviour

It is narrated in the classical texts that *Hang Tuah* was never deceased in the time of the Malaccan Sultanate; instead, he simply vanished and became the chieftain to an indigenous tribe (Harun Mat Piah, 1986). For the purpose of the motion comic "*Liga Pendekar vs Dukun Lintah*" and its prequel "*Liga Pendekar: Perikatan Adiwira*" which was first published in 2008, *Hang Tuah* has been adapted as the character *Pak Tua* (Figure 3: Pak Tua (Hang Tuah)). However, his discursive appeals from available classical narratives are appropriately maintained for the purpose of the character design of the storyline. *Hang Tuah* or in the comic known as *Pak Tua* retains the epitome of a valiant Malay *pendekar*.

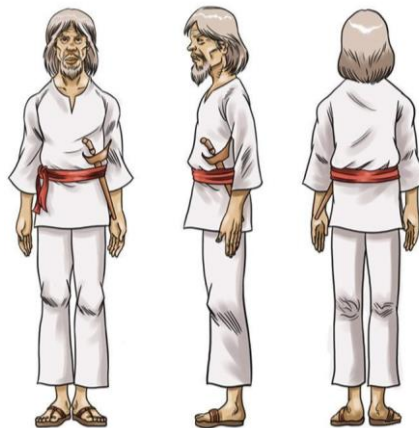


Figure 3: Pak Tua (Hang Tuah)

Prominent characters in classical Malay narratives are also considerably glorified through the atmosphere of the onlookers' infatuated behaviour upon seeing their fetching looks instead of providing distinctive physical attributes. For instance, the striking countenance of the legendary Malay admiral and *pendekar*, *Laksamana Hang Tuah* is described obliquely in the original manuscript and is demonstrated in John Leyden's translation of the 'Malay Annals' (Tun Seri Lanang, 2019, pp. 99-100);

*Wherever Hang Tuah came, he also excited the greatest awe by his resolute carriage, and he even excited admiration by his commanding presence in the royal hall of audience. If he entered the market, he excited admiration; if he entered the theatre, he excited admiration; and all the ladies of Java and all the virgins, were enamoured of Hang Tuah. And whenever Hang Tuah was passing, the women would spring from their husbands' arms and wish to go out to see him, and the poets of Java thus mention him in their songs in the Javanese language.*

*"Uni-suru tangka-pana panylipor saban, Den catan puran dine dunangugi - "*

Which signifies;

*This is the betel-leaf, come and take it, to allay the sense of love.*

*It is true we have beheld his form, but love still continues to subsist.*

Meanwhile, Prince *Malim Deman* is described to be strikingly pleasing to the eyes of the onlookers beyond any comparison – *"Maka dipandang Nenek Kebayan sangatlah elok rupanya, cahaya muka gilang-gemilang tiadalah dapat ditentang nyata"*; *"Maka sabda Tuan Puteri Bongsu, 'Orang mana itu nenek, yang terlalu amat elok itu, gilang-gemilang cahaya mukanya?'"* (Pawang Ana & Raja Haji Yahya, 1984, p. 22 & 31).

It was further pointed out by Hamid (2017) that descriptions of important characters in the Malay royalty realms and the aristocracy for the most part are stereotypical only to further engender conceptual ideas that the characters have comparable appeals both physically and in personality. For instance, in the *hikayat*, prince *Malim Deman* (Figure 4) is figuratively described as remarkably dashing beyond imagination in his era. The royalty is further physically illuminated in the most metaphorically gleaming descriptions (Pawang Ana & Raja Haji Yahya, 1984, p. 6 & 23);

*Sekali digosoknya,*

*Dua tiga panau tercelik;*

*Tiga empat panau tercelik:*

*Hilanglah cahaya matahari,*

*Timbullah cahaya Malim Deman.*



Figure 4: Prince Malim Deman

## 6.2 Qualifying Ascriptions of Prowess and Personality

There are also indistinct portrayals of the characters in the narratives that only provides qualifying ascriptions of their prowess and good nature. *Badang* (Figure 5) is described to be “exceptionally robust and strong”, an “extremely sturdy warrior” (Tun Seri Lanang, 2020, p. 36 & 40) and his strength was intensified after he consumed the vomit of a demon that he caught that has been eating his catch of the day. *Badang*’s invincibility was further substantiated when even after falling from a tall tree and hit a rock; “The rock was riven, but his head was intact” (Tun Seri Lanang, 2020, p. 38). *Badang* is so mighty that;

*One day, His Majesty, Seri Rana Wikrama built a trading vessel. When it was completed even two hundred people could not push it down to the water. But when Badang arrived, he single-handedly launched it and it glided right over to the opposite bank.*



Figure 5: Badang

The external image of characters in classical Malay narratives are perfected by their internal essence through the discursive descriptions of their decorum (*adab*) and wisdom (*al-hikmah*). Ali (2007) holds the view that the external image is enriched by the nonpareil inner reality which is its hidden internal essence (*bātin*) and further suggested that the outward form or external image (*zāhir*) functions as an intelligible vessel. Hence, in order to visualize a character in classical Malay narratives in its completeness, one must seek the understanding of its being not only through its outward image or physicality but also its inward qualities or characteristics. This is revealed in the accounts of Prince *Malim Deman* and *Badang*. After barely recognizing *Malim Deman* as a prince of the realm, *Nenek Kebayan* who had helped cleaned the prince after his misfortunate travel adventure was awestruck to see his good looks but she was certainly assured when observing his good mannerism (Pawang Ana & Raja Haji Yahya, 1984, p. 23). Meanwhile, *Badang* demonstrated his sharp perceptiveness when he succeeded in preventing a fight between him and *Bendarang* due to a challenge by their respective kings (Tun Seri Lanang, 2020, pp. 40-43).

In the beautiful passages of QS Al-Mu'minūn 23: 12-14, God's work in the creation of man is described from the innermost process within the silent and concealed womb that man's growth develops until birth. Man is further urged to ponder of its creation in QS 36 Yāsīn 36: 77. Along the growth process, the Al-Quran also mentions that God breathed into the foetus His spirit (QS Al-Hijr 15: 29) to which Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1996) views this as God breathing in to man “the faculty of God-like knowledge and will” (p. 625) or implants His attributes but reminded that

they should be justly ('*adl*) and rightfully used. Hence, art inevitably encourages deep and extended thought. Naturally, an artist who sincerely ponders, observes, and acts in deep contemplation or *tafakkur* may intuitively know his senses as his hands weave through the drawing tools when illustrating for character design even from the embellished discursive textual descriptions. In QS As-Shams 91:8, the word '*ilham*' is terminologically used in reference to when Allah accorded inspiration into man's heart (*qolbu*).

Al-Ghazali has also addressed the idea that man is the image of The Archetype. He relates this to the *al-lawh al-mahfūz* (The Preserved Tablet) in which The Archetype of the world is written on The Tablet. The true nature of things is made known to man by revealing to him what is written there through the reflection of these truths in the mirror of the heart (*qolb*). Hence, creativity can be a serendipitous discovery of something that is novel, useful, and surprising.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Creating art is like a dream and a vision to be made clear. The perspicuous Quranic text provides access to knowledge and understanding by imbuing the hearts with a firm belief on the articles of faith that also sets the foundation for instructions and emergent skills. The artist focuses on the Arcadian collectedness in contemplation towards achieving God's grace with the hope of attaining the vision of inspiration. Osman Bakar (1998), in viewing Al-Farabi, has indicated that man gains knowledge either through the rational faculty, the imaginative faculty, or sensation. Allah SWT has given man the emergent properties of knowledge that match with the growing human consciousness for the right guidance which is necessary in making art. More comprehensive look into the relationships between divine inspiration (*ilham*) and the heart (*qolb*) with the appropriate practices that kindle creativity in character design is valuable to further encourage artists to exercise the praxis in interpreting and adapting discursive descriptions from classical narratives for character design.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

MAA is the creator and artist of '*liga pendekar*' comic book series who also performed the initial research and introduction, methodology, discussion, and conclusion of the article. HR provides support in the refining of the organisation, analysis and discussions of the article. VZ refines the literature review, discussion, language structure, and line editing of the article. All authors contributed, read and approved the final manuscript.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Ts. Muhamad Azhar Abdullah** is a senior lecturer with the college of creative arts, universiti teknologi mara (uitm) at the department of digital and imaging arts: animation. He is also an active comic creator with multiple comic publications to his name. Muhamad azhar also has substantial experience in the pre-production stage for animation including the animated series 'ibn batutta' and the animated-philharmonic presentation of 'lat's window to the world' (petronas philharmonic presentation, 2009). He is also an experienced concept and storyboard artist for motion pictures including 'tanda putera' and 'pulang'. His prior academic publications include 'classical malay literature and folktale characters in fictional fantasy comic' (2022).

**Ts. Dr. Hafizah Rosli** is a senior lecturer with the College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) at the Department of Digital and Imaging Arts: Animation. Her expertise encompasses the study of visual communication and new media, digital storytelling, and animation (idea and concept). Ts. Hafizah Rosli is also a recipient for multiple grants with publications in high indexed journals and book chapters. Her recent publication include 'A Conceptual Framework of Digital Storytelling (DST) Elements on Information Visualisation (Infovis) Types in Museum Exhibition for User Experience (UX) Enhancement' (2020).

**Voviana Zulkifli** holds an M. Ed. TESL also an independent educational researcher with experience teaching in the ESL context, and interests in the Arts and Humanities. She works closely with her acquaintances including producing academic papers while keeping in touch with current issues and trends in education.

# Navigating Copyright: Strategies for Managing Orphan Works in Cultural and Memory Institutions in Malaysia

Muhamad Helmi Muhamad Khair<sup>1\*</sup>, Farizah Mohamed Isa<sup>2</sup>, Haswira Nor Mohamad Hashim<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Faculty of Law, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>muham8041@uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### KEYWORDS

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*"Orphan works" are works (such as essays, songs, photographs, paintings, and sculptures) that are still copyrighted but cannot be contacted or identified by prospective users. While permission to use is essential in copyright law, it cannot be obtained, particularly in the context of "orphan works". Several international organisations have attempted to estimate the size of orphan works. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Collections Trust and Strategic Content Alliances surveyed 500 institutions and estimated that their collection contains approximately 13 million orphan works. Malaysia is not immune to the situation. According to preliminary findings from interviews with major cultural and memory institutions in Malaysia, orphan works are likely to make up between 1 and 20% of their collections, indicating the potential legal risks in collection management, necessitating an effective and secure management strategy. This situation is exacerbated further by the lack of existing policies and legal loopholes in Malaysia regarding orphan works. On this basis, this paper sought to address the following two research questions: (i) What are the current strategies for providing access to orphan works? and (ii) "What strategies can cultural and heritage institutions in Malaysia implement? Through doctrinal analysis and library-based research, this paper discovered that Malaysia's existing laws are insufficient to assist cultural and heritage institutions in the management of orphan works in their institutions. Following that, this paper included several strategic recommendations, such as thorough search procedures and accurate record maintenance for items placed in the aforementioned institutions.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### ***1.1 Orphan Works***

Copyright law protects a variety of works, including written works, books, drawings, music, and paintings, provided that these works satisfy certain conditions, such as originality and fixation requirements. Once the requirements are met, the works are automatically copyright-protected, and the copyright owners are granted certain rights under the Copyright Act 1987. As a result, prospective users must obtain permission from the copyright holders before using their works. However, these copyright-protected works will be deemed "orphan" if users cannot identify and contact the copyright holder for copyright clearance purposes (US Copyright Office, 2006). Multiple factors, including non-requirement of work registration (Greismann, 2012), the Internet and technological advancement (Young, 2016) contribute to the existence of orphan works.

Orphan works pose a conundrum for the copyright community and, more broadly, copyright law. On the one hand, the law grants copyright holders exclusive rights. Section 13(1) of the Malaysian Copyright Act 1987, for example, specifies reproduction and distribution rights. The law does, however, prohibit the use of copyright-protected works without the permission of the copyright holder. In the case of orphan works, such consent cannot be obtained because users cannot locate and contact the copyright holders. As a result, the work would be abandoned in a copyright limbo, exposing prospective users to legal action from the copyright holders (Muhamad Khair, Mohamad Hashim & Anagnostopoulou, 2021). As a result of the restrictive nature of orphan works, these materials would become inaccessible to scholars, researchers, artists, and the general public. The consequences of not using orphan works may also impede cultural preservation efforts and derivative work creation (Boyle, 2005).

The orphan work problem is also present on a global scale. In China, for example, a woman gave the Shanghai Movie Museum the only known copy of the 1940s film "Fake Phoenix" (Li, 2018). However, the restoration process was hampered because the museum was unsure of the identity of the film's copyright holder. Several photographs of Jewish families were discovered in an abandoned hotel room in Germany shortly after World War II (Sarwate, 2008). The photographs were then given to the US Holocaust Museum for safekeeping. Nonetheless, because the photographers' copyright holders were unknown, obtaining permission to use the images was difficult. In the United States, Billy Mize's grandson planned to use his grandfather's music for a documentary (Crispino, 2019). However, the plan was also interrupted as he could not identify the music's copyright holders (the record companies that originally owned the rights were no longer exist).

### ***1.2 Cultural and Memory Institutions in Malaysia***

A cultural and memory institution is a generic term for institutions such as galleries, archives, libraries, and museums (Stainforth, 2016; Kumar, 2015). These organisations oversee, document, and preserve materials with educational, cultural, historical, and scientific values (Manžuch, 2009; De Laurentis, 2005). They also have a shared interest in serving as a vital information hub in a community and bringing together objects of social interest for the purposes of research, education, and entertainment, as well as making them available to the general public (Evans, 2008; Bates, 2006).

Collections in cultural and memory institutions are generally acquired in three ways. The first method of acquisition is through the operation of law, which is also referred to as "legal

deposit". Legal deposit is a statutory requirement that requires individuals or organisations to deposit one or more copies of their works with a nationally recognised institution such as a national library or a national archive (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, 2016; Larivière, 2000). For example, Sections 4(1) and 4(2) of the Deposit of Library Material Act 1986 (Malaysia) require the deposit of five copies of all printed materials such as books, serials, maps, charts, and posters, and two copies of non-printed materials such as films, microforms, video, audio recordings and other electronic materials, with the National Library of Malaysia. The purpose of legal deposit is to facilitate the collection, preservation, availability, and accessibility of the works for the public good (Larivière, 2000). The second method of acquisition by voluntary surrender. Under this method, collections are typically donated, gifted, or bequeathed to the cultural and memory institutions by members of the public (US Copyright Office, 2006). The collections obtained in this manner are diverse, with some containing accurate and complete copyright information, and others containing little or incomplete details about copyright ownership (Sarwate, 2008). The third and final method of acquisition is through purchase. The cultural and memory institutions will use this method to acquire a specific object or collection from a third party, who will be involved in a legal transaction involving the transfer of ownership the object to them (Law Collections, 2008).

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture is tasked with strengthening, promoting, conserving, and preserving national arts, culture, and heritage. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture Malaysia also oversees all public cultural and memory institutions particularly in West Malaysia. The institutions include the National Art Gallery, National Archives, National Library, and National Museum. Besides the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture Malaysia, there are also state-level ministries in Sabah and Sarawak that oversee the cultural and memory institutions in the respective states. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Sarawak oversees the state's cultural and memory institutions which include Sarawak state library, archive, museum and gallery. On the other hand, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Environment of Sabah oversees both state museum and gallery. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation oversees the state library. Other than that, the Sabah state archive is placed under the purview of the Chief Minister's Department.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The size of orphan works that may be kept in cultural and memory institutions such as museums, libraries, and art galleries is difficult to estimate. Nonetheless, international organisations have made attempts to do so. The Collections Trust and the Strategic Content Alliances, for example, surveyed 500 institutional respondents in the United Kingdom and estimate that they have 13 million orphan works in their collections (Korn, 2009). Wilkin discovered in 2011 that the body of orphan works in the HathiTrust collection could potentially reach 2.5 million, with over 800,000 being US orphan works (Wilkin, 2011). Malaysia, like other countries, is also dealing with the orphan works issue. Preliminary findings from interviews with Malaysia's major memory institutions suggest that orphan works may account for between 1% and 20% of their collections (Muhamad Khair, 2022). Though no formal study has been conducted in Malaysia to precisely determine this, the above findings indicate a symptom of problem that is worth noting.

The Malaysian legal framework is insufficient in assisting prospective users, such as cultural and memory institutions, in dealing with orphan works (e.g. mass digitisation, preservation and restoration, commercialisation, and creation of derivative works). Malaysia currently lacks a legal provision comparable to the European Union's specific exception for the use of orphan works (i.e., Directive 2012/28/EU on Certain Permitted Uses of Orphan Works). This Directive

authorises cultural heritage institutions to use the works in their collections for indexing, cataloguing, preservation, restoration, and providing cultural and educational access to such works. While the Directive only applies to European Union members, such an approach is worth to be considered by other jurisdictions due to its ability to provide legal clarity regarding the use of orphan works in cultural and memory institutions.

Malaysia recently revised the Copyright Act 1987, making changes to copyright infringement exemption provisions. In light of this development, making and issuing copies of any work (including orphan works) to meet the special needs of hearing and visually impaired people will not be considered a copyright infringement under Section 13(2)(gggg) and (ggggg) of the Copyright Act 1987. As a result, if a museum wishes to make copies of an orphan literary or artistic work for the benefit of the deaf and blind communities, such activity will not constitute a copyright infringement. While these exemptions are welcomed and laudable, it is observed that their application is limited because the aforementioned provisions are context-specific (i.e. for hearing and visual impaired people) and subject to the phrase "on such terms as the Minister may determine" (i.e. not based on the user's wishes). As a result, the revisions do not cover situations that are not covered by the same, such as mass digitisations for the general public's benefit and the production of derivative works for commercial purposes. Furthermore, Section 13(2)(a) of the Malaysian Copyright Act 1987 may provide a broad fair dealing exception that can be used to protect prospective users. While the fair dealing exception may absolve any unauthorised use of orphan works, it is not automatic, has a limited scope, and is subject to the four-factor statutory test enshrined in Section 13(2A) of the Copyright Act 1987. Due to the uncertainty created by the limited scope of fair dealing and its test, users face the risk of legal action. The subjective application of the fair dealing exception demotivates potential orphan work users, undermining Malaysia's efforts to exploit orphan works.

The preceding analysis shows that Malaysian cultural and memory institutions may also house works that pose legal risks, such as orphan works, and that these works must be managed in a variety of ways. In the absence of specific laws in Malaysia for orphan works, Malaysian cultural and memory institutions must carefully strategise and implement well-accepted approaches to reduce the risk of being sued by copyright holders. Guided by this concern, this research aimed to answer two research questions. Firstly, "What are the current strategies for providing access to orphan works?". This study anticipated that the current strategies would take the form of a legal exception for orphan works or a balanced public-private interests framework, such as a licencing scheme. Secondly, "What strategies can cultural and heritage institutions in Malaysia implement?" and this research believes that those strategies should protect the interests of the keepers and users of orphan works while also upholding the rights of the copyright holders in their absence. The following section will describe the methods used by this study to suggest potential strategies for the parties involved.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This research design of this study was exploratory, as the main objective was to investigate the problems faced in dealing with orphan works in general and to propose several management strategies for cultural and memory memorial institutions in Malaysia. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, two research methods were utilised: (i) doctrinal analysis and (ii) library-based research. Regarding the first research question, "What are the current strategies for providing access to orphan works?" a doctrinal analysis was used. This method was suitable because this research required an examination of several relevant laws concerning orphan works, especially in the EU, UK, Canada and India. These jurisdictions were selected as they are Commonwealth countries that share a Common legal system with Malaysia. The EU was

also chosen because its strategy is unique and should be explored and considered by legislators. The researchers then performed library-based research to answer the second research question: "What strategies can cultural and heritage institutions in Malaysia implement?" This method was used to extract information from secondary sources like reports, textbooks, and journal articles. In light of this, the researchers investigated and compiled a list of strategies that these institutions can use to protect their positions while dealing with the orphan works housed in their collections.

## **4. FINDINGS**

### ***4.1 Strategies in Other Jurisdictions***

For the first research question, this study discovered at least two common strategies for providing access and permitting the use of orphan works in the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, and India. The first strategy involved making a specific exception for the use of orphan works (exception-based model), while the second involves using a licensing model. The next section will briefly explain the exception-based model.

#### ***4.1.1 Specific Exceptions for the Use of Orphan Works***

The law governing the management of orphan works in the EU is governed by Directive 2012/28/EU on Certain Permitted Uses of Orphan Works (the Directive), which applies to all European Union member states. The Directive's goal is to allow cultural heritage institutions to use orphan works in their collections for indexing, cataloguing, preservation, restoration, and providing cultural and educational access to such works. In this light, this model has been lauded for its ability to provide clarity and certainty in terms of its implementation while securing the rights of the copyright holders at the same time (US Copyright Office, 2006). According to Article 1 of the Directive, four types of cultural heritage institutions are eligible to use this specific exception: (i) publicly accessible libraries, educational establishments, and museums, (ii) archives, (iii) film or audio heritage institutions, and (iv) public-service broadcasting organisations established in member states. Once the status of an orphan work has been determined, Article 6(1) of the Directive allows cultural heritage institutions to reproduce and make such orphan works available to the public. Article 2 of the Directive mentions determining the status of the relevant works as "orphan." The provision requires cultural heritage institutions to conduct a search for the copyright holder. In other words, a work can only be considered "orphan" if cultural and heritage institutions have conducted a search before using the orphan works in question. The categories of activities are also specifically mentioned in the Directive. Article 6(1)(a) and (b) state that orphan works may only be reproduced for digitisation, making available, indexing, cataloguing, preservation, or restoration. Article 6(2) further states that orphan works may only be used to further the public interest missions of cultural heritage institutions, which include the preservation, restoration, and provision of cultural and educational access to such orphan works in their collections. The next section will briefly explain the second strategy mechanism i.e the licensing model.

#### ***4.1.2 Licencing Model***

The second (and possibly most advantageous) method is a licencing model, as used in the United Kingdom, Canada, and India. The implementation of this strategy is, for the most part, identical in these countries. In terms of licencing authority, their laws delegate authority to an agency in charge of intellectual property matters. This is to ensure efficiency and transparency by establishing a one-stop shop for orphan works licences. In the United Kingdom, for example,

Regulation 6 of the Copyright and Rights in Performances (Licensing of Orphan Works) Regulations 2014 empowers the UK Intellectual Property Office to grant licences for both commercial and non-commercial uses of orphan works. Section 77 of the Canadian Copyright Act of 1985 authorises the Copyright Board of Canada to grant a non-exclusive orphan works licence. Section 31A of the Indian Copyright Act of 1957 empowers the Appellate Board of India to grant a non-exclusive orphan works licence. Additionally, the requirement to search the copyright holder is the most notable feature shared by all three jurisdictions. Prior to applying for an orphan works licence from the licencing authority, the applicant must conduct a search of the copyright holders of the relevant works and provide evidence of such a search. If this requirement is not met, the licencing authority will refuse to grant the licence. In the United Kingdom, for example, Regulations 2 and 4 of the Copyright and Rights in Performances (Licensing of Orphan Works) Regulations 2014 state that anyone may apply for an orphan work licence if the diligent search requirement is met. The same is true for Canada and India under Section 77(1) of the Canadian Copyright Act 1985 and Section 32(4)(b) of the Indian Copyright Act 1957. This search requirement should be emphasised because responsibility should be placed on the shoulders of the user rather than the licencing authorities (as they are just acting as a licence issuing body).

Ahmed and Al-Salihi (2020), Walker (2014), and Gompel and Hugenholtz (2010) agreed that it is the best approach because of its ability to create a one-stop shop for orphan works matters and reduce biased decisions. Nonetheless, the system is not without flaws. According to Sarid and Ben-Zvi (2023), it is still prohibitively expensive for users to identify and contact copyright holders prior to applying for a licence. However, the cost-related impediment and criticisms, while should be highlighted, should also be acknowledged for two reasons. Firstly, the cost associated with it is unavoidable - unless there is a scheme in place to provide free search services. While the cost is unavoidable, the prospective user is at least acting in good faith by contacting the copyright holder of orphan work before using it. Second, the monetary preparations and implications that will be incurred in defending a legal action (if the prospective users are being sued by reappearing copyright holders) are possibly much more prohibitive - considering the time, legal service, and damages that must be paid to the relevant parties.

## **4.2 Strategies for Cultural and Memory Institutions in Malaysia**

In response to the second research question, this paper proposed several strategies that cultural and heritage institutions in Malaysia may employ to manage the orphan works in their collections and reduce the risk of copyright infringement lawsuits (by the orphan work copyright holder). As previously stated, Malaysia lacks a specific mechanism for allowing the use and exploitation of orphan works. In the absence of specific legislation or mechanisms for providing access to these materials, this paper proposes several strategies in the hope that they will aid these institutions in more efficiently managing their collections – including orphan works.

- a. Determine the copyright status of the relevant collections. This step is crucial because it determines which works are still protected by copyright and which are no longer protected. As per Section 17 of the Copyright Act of 1987 (Malaysia), the copyright of literary, musical, and artistic works typically lasts for the author's lifetime plus 50 years following his death. Therefore, if a collection is extremely old (e.g., an ancient manuscript or an old sculpture), permission is not required, as these items are most likely in the public domain. However, if the institution is still unsure about the copyright status of the collection, it is prudent to err on the side of caution and treat the collection as "orphan works." That is, prior to handling the collection, attempt to identify and search the

copyright holder. The section that follows will elaborate more on the necessity of "search."

- b. Search for the work's copyright holder and properly document the search results. This procedure is essential for two reasons. Firstly, it is an international standard practice in most jurisdictions, as described in the "Findings". To recap, the requirement of "search" is essential in both the exception-based model (e.g. the EU model) and the licencing model (e.g. the orphan works licencing scheme in the United Kingdom, Canada, and India). Second, this search activity signifies the good faith of organisations engaged in efforts to locate the copyright holders of works prior to dealing with the same. Simply put, it reflects the organisation as a responsible institution that respects the rights of copyright holders. The "search" results may also be recorded and stored in a database managed by the relevant department, such as the collection management department of the organisation.
- c. Check whether the proposed activities such as the digitization, reproduction, and distribution of works are covered by any copyright exceptions and defences under the relevant laws. One of the most common defences is the fair dealing defence under Section 13(2)(a) of the Copyright Act of 1987. This step is essential because, if the proposed activities are exempted by one of the applicable exceptions, it can eliminate the costs and time associated with "search," thereby boosting the institution's confidence in using a collection. However, it should be noted that most of these exceptions and defences are subjective in nature (e.g. the fair dealing exception, which is subject to a statutory test) and sometimes also restrictive in the sense that they are subject to government direction (e.g. Section 13(2)(i) of the Copyright Act 1987). Therefore, it is essential to consult the legal department.
- d. Revise the organisation's policy on the management of intellectual property. In addition, cultural and heritage institutions must include a notice or a dedicated section on their websites devoted to potential orphan works housed in their repositories. This notice or section should outline at least two points: (i) the organisation's commitment to respecting the rights of copyright holders, and (ii) the procedure for filing a complaint with the institution and removing infringing works (including orphan works) from the organisation's activities. Similar to point B above, this step is essential for demonstrating the organisation's good faith and commitment to complying with the law. One point worth mentioning; however, while there are a number of templates available online that can be used as a guide when drafting the notice, it is advised to consult the legal department in order to draft a clear notice and policy on this matter.
- e. Subscribe to an insurance policy for intellectual property. This type of insurance policy is designed to protect organisations financially against the risks and costs associated with intellectual property infringement claims. In other words, should the organisations be sued by copyright holders, the insurance provider would cover the litigation-related expenses and damages, thereby mitigating the financial impact from the lawsuits. While some may oppose this strategy (given that the organisations are still being brought to court to answer the claims), this type of coverage is still essential as it serves as cost-saving and risk-mitigation mechanisms. However, this recommendation is highly dependent on a number of variables, including the industry, risk profiles, and insurance company's packages. Therefore, organisations are advised to consult with their insurance provider.



## **5. CONCLUSION**

This paper summarised the current legal treatment of orphan works under Malaysian copyright law, with a particular focus on those kept in cultural and memory institutions. The legal analysis revealed that there are insufficient mechanisms in this country for granting access to and allowing for the use and exploitation of orphan works. In the absence of a specific law on orphan works in Malaysia, activities such as mass digitisation, the creation of derivative works, and commercialisation by cultural and memory institutions would be problematic and place them in a dilemma. Abandoning the works would leave the orphan works in a copyright limbo, whereas continuing the aforementioned activities would expose them to the risk of legal action from reappearing copyright holders. In addition, the legal analysis revealed two strategies currently utilised in other jurisdictions, namely (i) a specific exception for the use of orphan works (European Union) and (ii) an orphan works licencing scheme (the UK, Canada, and India). Before dealing with the orphan works, both approaches involve locating the owners of the copyright. In accordance with the primary objective of this study, this paper concluded by proposing several strategies that cultural and memory institutions in Malaysia can employ. These strategies involve determining the copyright status of the relevant collections and identifying and contacting the copyright holders in advance of their use.

The implications of this paper are also worth mentioning. Firstly, the current paper broadens the discourse on orphan works in the context of cultural and memory institutions and raises awareness about the careful management of orphan works housed in these institutions. Secondly and finally, this paper contributes to a proper understanding and planning of legal risk reduction and management. On this note, it should be emphasised that the strategies proposed in this research paper are global in nature and are not limited to the Malaysian context. This is because the recommendations proposed here are consistent with the standards used in the EU, the United Kingdom, Canada, and India. It is also worth noting that research in this field is not stagnant. Future research is encouraged, especially in expanding and venturing further into other mechanisms for providing access to orphan works, such as the application of the adverse possession doctrine (Meeks, 2013) and Chesbrough's Open Innovation concept (Muhamad Khair & Mohamad Hashim, 2021). In addition, data and responses from cultural and memory institutions would be of great assistance to policymakers and legislators in developing the optimal model that would not only benefit their institutions but also the general public.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

MHMK prepared the introduction, problem statement, reference sections. FMI prepared the methodology and conclusion sections. MHMK and HNMH analysed the relevant laws for orphan works and prepared the report. All authors prepared the way forward for cultural and memory institutions. Final manuscript was also approved by all authors.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None Declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Dr. Muhamad Helmi Muhamad Khair** is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law, UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia. He holds a PhD (Law) from UiTM Malaysia, LL.M (Intellectual Property) (Distinction) from Queen Mary, University of London, and LL.B (Hons) from the International Islamic University of Malaysia. He is currently the Coordinator of the Intellectual Property Management Unit at the Business Innovation & Technology Commercialization Centre, UiTM. His current research interests include copyright law, orphan works, and open innovation strategy.

**Dr. Farizah Mohamed Isa** is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law of UiTM with more than 20 years of teaching experience. Her areas of specialization are intellectual property law, contracts as well as tort law. She obtained her Bachelor of Laws (LLB Hons) from Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom and continued her Masters and PhD studies at UiTM. She is currently attached at Business Innovation and Technology Commercialisation Centre UiTM (BITCOM), the technology transfer office of UiTM, as the Deputy Director for Legal and Intellectual Property Management.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Haswira Nor Mohamad Hashim** graduated with PhD in Law from the Queensland University of Technology in 2012. His area of interest is in intellectual property and innovation with a special focus on open access, open data and open innovation. He was appointed as the Head, Intellectual Property at Research Innovation Business Unit (RIBU), Universiti Teknologi MARA in 2013. He also leads a group of researchers conducting research on open innovation model for unexploited intellectual property, funded by the research grant from the Ministry of Education.

# Development of Cash Waqf Framework Investment-Based Ar-Rahnu Model For Islamic Pawn Broking

Wan Mohd Al Faizee Wan Ab Rahaman<sup>1\*</sup>, Hamidah Mat<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Open University Malaysia, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>alfaizee@uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

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*Researchers have discussed the model and framework of cash waqf investment in Malaysia to give insight into the development of waqf in Malaysia's State Religion Islamic Councils (SIRCs). Whilst, ar-Rahnu is an Islamic pawn broking that objectively provides customers with financial well-being through pledging and borrowing. However, ar-Rahnu providers need more funds to provide borrowing funds, which increases from time to time and affects customers' interests. Therefore, ar-Rahnu providers should embark with new solutions to ensure institutions' sustainability. As a result, this research aims to look into cash waqf investment models that can be implemented in ar-Rahnu's activities. This qualitative study used a data collection method in the form of content analysis. The data was analyzed based on inductive methods to obtain the result of the study. This paper found that cash waqf investment models have been extensively discussed, however, less of it has focused on the ar-Rahnu scenario. As a result of the paper's discussion, the ar-Rahnu framework based on the cash waqf investment model was developed. By utilising cash waqf in ar-Rahnu operations, ar-Rahnu can sustain and compete with other counterparties.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social financial investment is not just about giving money to charities and other good causes. From both social and economic point of view, social finance is a type of investment that makes money. Islamic social finance includes traditional Islamic instruments that are based on helping others. These instruments refer to traditional Islamic financial products based on charity work (like zakat, charity, and waqf) and cooperation with financial transactions (like al-Qard and Kafalah) (Islamic Social Finance Report, 2015: 8).

Islamic pawnbroking, or ar-Rahnu, is one micro-Islamic finance product based on credit or debt. Microcredit has become an important way to fight poverty, and small businesses in rural areas benefit from the attention of the microcredit sector. In Malaysia, ar-Rahnu-based microcredit facilities have become more important due to the increase of Islamic finance awareness among the community. On the other hand, "Pawning" has been around for a long time and is done by people of many different races in Malaysia. This ancient financial practice was also discovered in the Greek and Roman civilizations (Md. Yusuf et al., 2015; Bhatt and Sinnakkannu, 2008).

After the year 2019, many people were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and required financial assistance due to the work ban imposed as part of the COVID-19 control process. In order to survive, they are forced to pawn their jewellery. Due to the circumstances mentioned earlier, the demand for ar-Rahnu increased while the shortage of available cash for financing lessened. Eventually, pawn businesses struggle to obtain sufficient funds because the pawnbroker can't pay off the debt with the jewellery that was put up as collateral. Thus, the issue of the sale and purchase of mortgage letter transactions has arisen whereby buying and selling activities happen between the owner of the pawning letter and the broker based on the weight of gold listed in the letter.

No one can deny that the social finance sector, such as al-Rahnu, provides assistance to Muslim financial intermediaries. COVID-19 has affected household income globally. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), many middle-income households have moved to lower-income groups (DOSM, 2021). Consequently, many people ask to pledge their wealth to cover their obligations.

In the worst-case scenario, some customers go to traditional pawn shops or borrow money from illegal sources like Ah Long. This is because conventional pawn shops and illegal sources like Ah Long can offer a higher margin to value collateral and unlimited loan repayment time (Bhatt & Sinnakkannu, 2008; Shah & Yaacob, 2018).

Aznan Hasan and Nor Razinah Mohd Zain (2021) came up with the idea to mix al-Rahnu products with waqf. In contrast, Ar-Rahnu products can also be combined with other Islamic social and financial instruments such as Waqf and Sadaqah through Waqf investment in Ar-Rahnu by relevant institutions. Numerous research has been made to develop innovative ideas through cash waqf to achieve a community's socio-economic success (Aldeen et. al., 2020). Waqf is a continuous act of charity that was set up to help people in different ways. It has been used successfully in many social and human development services, like education and health.

More research on financial intermediaries, financial self-sufficiency, and financial management in ar-Rahnu institutions is needed in Malaysia, prompting researchers to investigate the solution and innovation further. As a result, the purpose of this paper was dual. The first step was to identify the operational issues with ar-Rahnu. It aimed to answer the question of what constraints exist on the operation of Islamic pawnbroking, particularly in post-covid-19.

Second, it sought to investigate cash waqf contribution funding and investment opportunities. It sought to answer the question, "What is the framework of investment to cope in ar-Rahnu operational?". It may be possible to increase ar-Rahnu operational sustainability by tapping cash waqf for ar-Rahnu operations.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 The Development of the Islamic Pawnbroking Industry in Malaysia***

Ar-Rahnu has several Arabic meanings. Literally, ar-Rahnu is derived from the Arabic term *rahana*, which indicates either continuity, holding, or binding. Technically, the phrase ar-Rahnu refers to pawning, mortgage, collateral, charge, lien, and pledge, which include taking property as security against debt, with the secured property being used to settle the obligation in the event of nonpayment (Dusuki, 2012).

al-Rahnu has been referred to as an Islamic pawnbroking transaction involving two parties: the Islamic financial institution and the customer of al-Rahnu. The Islamic financial institution has the right to keep the pledged item after providing a loan to the customer (Cokro, 2014). Retention fees are charged monthly, and the loan is due after six months and can be renewed for up to five years. Meanwhile, the storage fees will be charged monthly, and the loan is due after six months and can be renewed for up to five years.

Muasasah Gadaian Islam Terengganu (MGIT) was the first Islamic pawnshop. It was set up in 1992 by the Terengganu State Islamic Affairs and Malay Customs. MGIT was very important to the Muslim community when it was first established, especially for women and small businesses, because it provided them with instant cash and small loans. Pawnbroking was later established in 1992 by Permodalan Kelantan Berhad and Yayasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Islam Malaysia.

Bank Rakyat, Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad (BIMB), Agrobank, Bank Muamalat Malaysia Berhad (BMMB), and Affin Islamic were among the banks that provided al-Rahnu. Additionally, Al-Rahnu can be obtained from non-financial entities such as the Malaysian Islamic Economic Development Foundation (YAPIEM), the Malaysian Post Office, al-Rahnu Express, and Felda Cooperative (Azli et. al., 2016).

There have been two working ar-Rahnu models in the past. The first was pawnbroking, which focused on the welfare of the money by lending it without extra fees or interest, like MGIT. Second, institutions conduct business by providing loan facilities and charging deposit fees.

According to Thaker et al., (2019), there is progress in assessing products containing Ar-Rahnu in Malaysia. This is because of several important things, such as higher productivity, easier access to financial services, more religious symbols that follow Islamic rules, more positive social capital, and a faster approval process.

Ar-Rahnu has been seen as important to society and the people. Mansor (2014) and Amuda and Deraman (2015) discovered that the majority of frequent clients of ar-Rahnu services are from lower- income groups because these low-income earners are comfortable with ar-Rahnu services and do not feel burdened by the reduced service prices imposed. According to Nik Hadiyan et. al., (2016) women microentrepreneurs at Pasar Siti Khadijah, Kota Bharu, Kelantan, use ar-Rahnu as an instrument to finance their businesses.

Ar-Rahnu is a financing mechanism that has three stages: lending, redeeming, and auctioning. Customers approach the institution during the lending process, offering to place their gold jewellery under the rahn contract (pledge). Customers are given loans based on the qard (loan) contract by the institution providing ar-Rahnu.

The maximum loan amount available to customers is approximately 70% of the gold value. The pledged gold, known as the marhun, is kept by the ar-Rahnu institution according to the wadiah yad damanah principle (guaranteed deposit for safekeeping). Customers must pay service charges based on the *ujrah* (fee) principle at this point. Customers pay the service charges when they pay off their loan. The service charges imposed by the arrahnu institution are typically lower than the 2% imposed by traditional pawnshops.

Traditional pawnbrokers and Islamic pawnbrokers compete with each other. Traditional pawnbroking can offer up to 85%–90% of the jewellery's value. Unlike al-Rahnu, most operators' providers have a lower margin of financing, between 65% and 80% of the value of *marhun* (Azila, 2011). Islamic pawnshops will charge an *ujrah* (fee) much less than regular pawnshops. In current practice, the charge will be on the value of the marhun (pledge item) (Appannan and Doris, 2011).

The storage fee is a monetary amount charged to customers by al-Rahnu institutions. Meanwhile, every institution has a different storage fee rate, like Bank Rakyat, which has imposed RM0.65–RM0.70 for every RM100 of the pledged item value, whereas Agrobank has imposed RM0.50 for the same amount (Mohd Azli et. al., 2017). Also, traditional pawnshops can give customers loans that are easy to get, don't require collateral, and can be paid back at any time (Bhatt & Lecturer, 2008).

In 2017, 40% of households without a bank account or with insufficient funds in their bank account visited a pawnshop (Pawn Industry Statistics, National Pawnbrokers Association, 2018). Awareness of Islamic pawnshops has increased in Muslim countries (Hanudin Amin, 2007). The study by Azila et al., (2013) showed the growth percentage of Arrahnu YaPEIM scheme borrowers in 2008 increased by 152.8 percent compared to the previous year, which was only 53.9 percent. According to Azila Abdul Razak et. al. (2013), ar-Rahnu provides the entire population with a more viable economic and political system. In terms of microcredit, Islam can help people improve their economic situation by growing new institutions like Pos Malaysia that don't focus on making money in the long run. With so many options, people have more ways to do business and can pay off their debts faster.

The primary income of Ar-Rahnu providers comes from savings wages (99%), followed by service charges and processing fees. This business gives a very fast return on capital, between six months and three years. This business will do well if customers trust the service provider, the staff is skilled, the wage retention rate is high, the operating system is good, and there is enough working capital.

The al-Rahnu institution has trouble making commercial versions of marhun like debt notes, sukuk, and shares (Barjoyai Bardai, 2014). This is due to external variables, including industry competitiveness, capital limits, and technical requirements. As a result, the financial stability of ar-Rahnu institutions has been jeopardized.

Moreover, the capital limit curbs ar-Rahnu service providers who don't get money from their parent company or other sources. This problem mostly affects small and medium-sized Ar-Rahnu service providers, like cooperatives and businesses in the state network. Operational Rahnu's business needs to be efficient and flexible to grow. However, getting money from banks

is challenging because of their strict evaluation standards, such as credit criteria and qualitative elements. Small businesses, like cooperatives and businesses that work with the government (Asiaah & Salmy, 2017), often need help getting enough money to run. Besides, there is a need for stimulus funds because the loan rate at the bank is high, coupled with the low deposit savings rate at the bank.

The empirical study by Nafisah Mohamed et. al., (2013) on 135 respondents from traditional and Ar-Rahnu pawnshops in Malaysia showed that the level of competition is a threat to the growth of micro-credit service providers. So, to be competitive, a business needs a better marketing plan and a lot of money to meet market demand.

## ***2.2 Overview of Cash Waqf and Investment of Cash Waqf Schemes***

Cash waqf is defined as the confinement of a sum of money or cash by the founder and the dedication of its usufruct, in accordance with the creator's conditions, to the welfare of society in perpetuity (Magda, 2009). Cash waqf is one of the muamalah activities that have spiritual, social, and economic dimensions (Said & Amiruddin, 2019; Adirestuty et. al., 2021). Most Muslim jurists agreed on the legitimacy of cash waqf (al-Zuhaili, 2004). Cash waqf is the constant gathering of money from donors so that it can be invested in productive assets that generate income or usufruct for future use, taking into account the rules and guidelines set by both donors and recipients. In Arabic, this is known as the Waqif conditions (Shart al Waqif) (Lahsasna, 2010).

The fifteenth Islamic Fiqh Academy conference was held in Muscat in the year 1425H and agreed with cash waqf for the following reasons;

1. The concept of money in today's world differs from what was practiced in ancient times.
2. The use of cash waqf in Qard Hasan and investments, which can be direct investments or the allocation of money from different waqf founders into the waqf fund pool, or the issuance of waqf shares as another way to get people to donate.

Cash waqf should last forever, and its use should be for the good of society. They provided a comparative example between the waqf of date palms and money, emphasizing that if the former is permissible, then there is no issue with the latter. To explain further, planting date palms will always give fruits that are the same as cash waqf, which means that investments will make money grow.

Muslim jurists approved the investment of cash waqf if the investment complied with Shariah law. In its Resolution No. 140 (15/6), the Fiqh Academy said that cash waqf should be invested in Shariah-compliant ways as long as the following conditions are met:

1. First and foremost, the perpetuity of the waqf must be ensured.
2. Investments in haram industries such as liquor and gambling are not permissible
3. Precautions must be made to minimise risk, including taking out guarantees, conducting feasibility studies, etc. void high-risk, speculative investments.
4. There must be annual reports on the investment, and all key stakeholders should be informed regarding waqf fund collection and distribution.

Cash waqf is classified as movable assets and thus falls under the purview of this resolution. It is feasible to assess and forecast how effectively cash waqf collection will go since the International Council of Fiqh Academy approaches things from several perspectives. It is hoped



that these efforts will help choose a good way to invest in the future and help a larger number of people. Also, evaluating how well cash waqf is collected will boost trust in cash waqf management and make it more professional.

Cash waqf is increasingly being used to finance and develop waqf assets in Malaysia. According to Razali (2001) in Malaysia, waqf is viewed as an institution that does little to help the economy grow. Cash waqf is regarded as a viable solution to this issue. In 1983, Majlis Agama Islam Johor (MAIJ) established the first cash waqf scheme, known as waqf shares (Abdul Hamid and Mohammad, 2014). Waqf shares are similar to cash waqfs in that they are made up of cash or money (Razali, 2015). Waqf shares were created to generate revenue to fund waqf development projects, and they were the brainchild of Dato' Ahmad bin Awang, the then-Mufti of the State of Johor (Abdul Hamid and Mohammad, 2014). Individuals and businesses both contribute to the waqf shares. In 2001, MAIS implemented monetary waqf in Selangor (Fadhilah, 2017).

Cash waqf has substantially aided the field of socioeconomics, as seen by its substantial collection, widespread application, and supply of assistance. It provides additional evidence that cash waqf is not an obsolete instrument and should be managed professionally. Thus, not only will the conduct of cash waqf be ethical, but it will also be compatible with the current economy, which is transparent and progressive.

Recently, many cash waqf investment schemes have been proposed and practiced in several countries. Mohsin (2013) mentioned that there are six, which are: 1. the waqf shares scheme; 2. the deposit cash waqf scheme; 3. the compulsory cash waqf scheme; 4. the corporate waqf scheme; 5. the deposit product waqf scheme; and finally, 6. the cooperative waqf scheme.

Mohsin (2013) expands on the above cash waqf investment practices to create a framework called cash waqf fund investment (CWFI). Using murabahah financing, this plan will put 30% of the cash waqf that comes from direct or indirect sources into a low-risk portfolio. A mudharabah financing method will be used to put 20% of the money into high-risk investments.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative method is used to address the research questions and objectives in this conceptual paper, which aims to develop a cash waqf investment-based ar-Rahnu model framework for Islamic pawn broking. To build the framework, it thoroughly reviews the literature on cash waqf and ar-Rahnu. Secondary data sources include papers, journal articles, and published studies. The result was obtained through content analysis based on an inductive study. The proposed conceptual framework has been developed to provide an alternative possible mechanism for maximising the benefits that can potentially be generated from cash waqf.

### **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

#### ***4.1 Cash Waqf Investment Initiative Ar-Rahn Based Model***

The sale and purchase of a mortgage statement (SAG) happen because the mortgagor can't get the money he or she needs to pay off the debt secured by certain jewellery. During this buying and selling activity, some people called brokers set prices based on the amount of gold listed in the SAG. The things that SAG buys and sells are allowed by Sharia because the thing that is being sold is the promised object, not a letter or pledge instrument. The letter is proof because it details the promised item and other important information. Also, all experts agree that, within

the activities of sale and purchase, no transactions affect the mortgagee's rights (Mohamad & Ali, 2015).

The buying process begins when a customer provides a (SAG) to the broker. The broker uses this information to determine the product's price, the number of units purchased, and the expiration date. The information is needed to determine how much the letter is worth, and the customer doesn't get any extra money until a value agreement has been made. This is because the amount of debt and savings must be considered. The broker and customer will then go to the pawn shop to make a redemption. The redemption process will be carried out by the broker or pawnbroker, depending on the conditions set by the institution that offers the pawnbroker facility. An illustration of the process is depicted in figure 1 below.

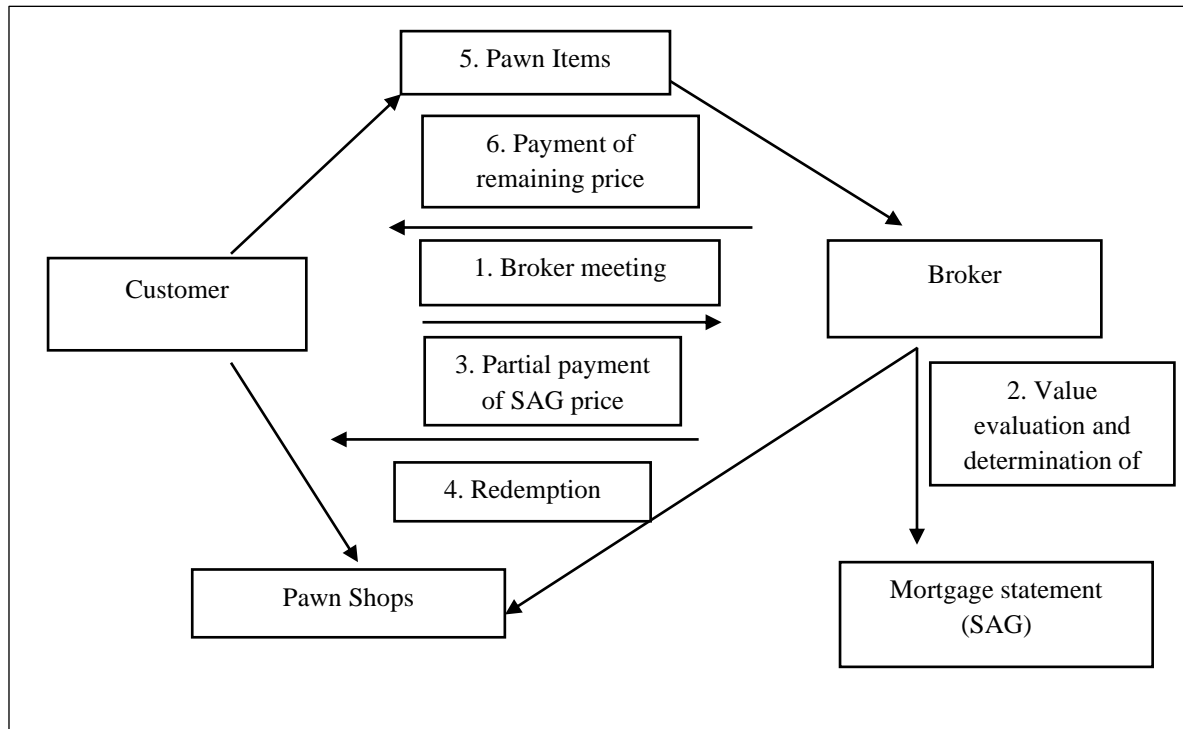


Figure 1: An illustration of Pawnbroker Activities (Mohamad & Ali, 2015)

The proposed model in this paper is based on cash waqf, and such cash waqf will be used in the design of this model to overcome the main challenges faced by the Islamic pawnbroking industry.

The cash waqf investment model can be founded on either a direct cash waqf model or an indirect cash waqf model. Mohsin (2014) says that "direct cash waqf" is a type of donation made by donors in the form of money that will be used directly to develop waqf property. This model has been widely used in Muslim societies. Direct cash waqf is often used to help the poor and those in need (Mohsin, 2016; Shukri et. al., 2019). It can also be used to build and maintain mosques, Islamic schools, and libraries. Indirect cash waqf refers to cash donations that are accumulated and invested before distribution to the beneficiaries (Mohsin, 2014). Under this model, donors contribute directly to the waqf institutions by depositing cash to a specific bank account, and the collected waqf funds are then invested according to Shariah principles (Pitchay et. al., 2018). In turn, the waqf institutions channel revenue from the investment towards humanitarian causes or religious matters.

The proposed model in this paper suggests tapping into cash waqf, whereby cash waqf will be employed to overcome the main challenges ar-Rahnu institutions encounter. First, to raise the required funds, cash waqf certificates will be extended to collect the required funds from individuals, institutions, and government donors. Figure 2 below illustrates the conceptual model.

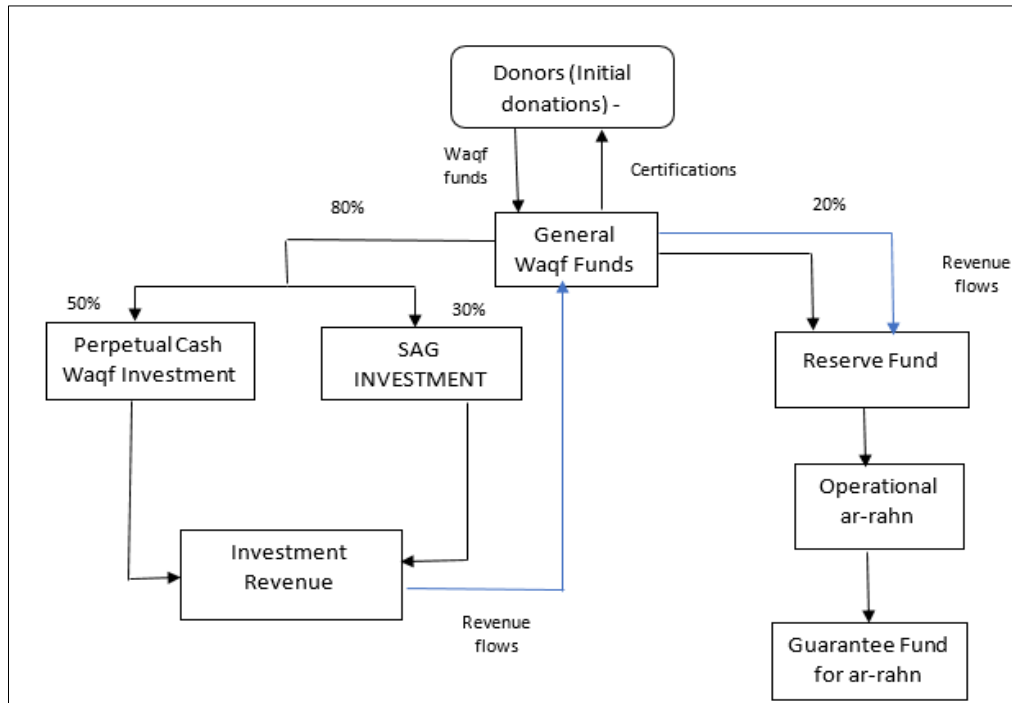


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Cash Waqf Investment Based ar-Rahnu (Author, 2023)

This model will employ both temporary and permanent cash waqf to ensure participation by as many people as feasible. The full details of the proposed model are provided in the following points:

1. Cash waqf is accepted from individuals and institutional donors
2. Donor/ waqf founders are giving waqf certificates to prove their contribution (to use on tax exemption or to redeem their cash waqf back as the case in the temporary cash waqf)
3. The collected cash waqf funds are divided into the waqf investment fund and the reserve fund.
4. The objective of the waqf investment fund is to invest the collected cash waqf funds in shariah-compliant projects (by buying SAG from the ar-Rahnu institutions and putting 30% out of the targeted portfolio) and business activities.
5. The objective of reserve funds is to assist ar-Rahnu management fund in maintaining the operational and achieving objectives of shariah
6. Adequate funds must always be maintained in the reserve fund according to the agreed professional threshold
7. Returns generated from the waqf investment must constitute a major source of funds to top up any shortages in the reserve funds

Surplus funds, if any full top-up of the reserve fund, should be channeled to cover the operational expenses; otherwise, a specific percentage of donated funds, such as 5-10%, can be deducted upfront from the principal cash waqf donation upon a clear notification to the donors

to this effect. Additionally, a nominal fee can be charged from ar-Rahnu applicants, and these fees will be directed to the operational expenses.

## **4.2 Component of the Conceptual Framework**

### **4.2.1 General Waqf Fund (GWF)**

The GWF is a pool where all cash Waqf funds are kept. There are two types of cash waqf: permanent and temporary waqf. The donations may come from individual donors, government entities, or institutions. In the structure of GWF, two sub-divisions were established: the Waqf Fund Investment Unit (WFIU) and the Waqf Reserve Fund (WRF). The functions of the GWF are explained as follows:

- a. Issues cash waqf certificates (perpetual and temporary) and collects the funds from the donors
- b. Channel the accumulation of funds to waqf investment fund
- c. Maintain an adequate level of funds in the reserve funds
- d. Conduct feasibility studies on the use of funds among ar-Rahnu institutions
- e. Pay guaranteed amounts to the affected beneficiaries (ar-Rahnu institutions).

### **4.2.2 Waqf Fund Investment Unit (WFIU)**

This unit is established to invest waqf funds professionally, optimally, and effectively in any investment opportunities. The mandate of this unit is as follows:

- a. Design the investment policies and strategies for the fund
- b. Look for potential investment opportunities. It could be in any formation as:
  - Project initiated and managed by the fund
  - Projects are run and managed by external consultants such as government entities and private sectors.
- c. Prepare feasibility studies, make investment decisions, and follow up with investment partners.

### **4.2.3 Waqf Reserve Fund (WRF)**

WRF will constitute roughly 20% of the total WGF. The money from this fund will be used for two purposes:

- a. Guarantee funds that assist ar-Rahnu institutions
- b. Operational expenses incurred by the managing entity

The reserve fund has been built into the model to ensure its long-term viability. It will comprise funds or charities gathered from individual contributors and the income earned by the permanent cash waqf investment. These small-scale gifts are likely to be accepted throughout the year. If the returns on investments don't cover all of the costs and expenses, the reserve fund is expected to help pay for the model's operation. Staff salaries, utility bills, office rent, and other costs may be included. The reserve fund would also hold any extra money that might be made from investments after operational costs have been paid.

As a guarantee to the buyers of SAG, ar-Rahnu institutions should be:

- a. To guarantee that the borrower will pay on the date of payment
- b. To provide a conditional purchase undertaking to purchase the SAG on the repayment date if the borrower fails to repay
- c. To provide a guarantee that the gold as collateral is pure and has a certain quality

The proposed cash waqf investment-based ar-Rahnu model's main goal is to provide shariah-compliant credit guarantees to the ar-Rahnu industry. Waqf institutions can agree with any ar-Rahnu operator to provide this model by purchasing SAG as part of their investment portfolios. The significance of this proposed model stems from its contribution to solving the existing challenges in current ar-Rahnu operations from the shariah perspective and securing an additional source of funding for ar-Rahnu institutions and waqf institutions.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper examined the concepts of ar-Rahnu and cash waqf before delving into the institutional constraints of al-rahnu. To compete with counterparties, Islamic pawnbroking requires an alternative model of investment. This paper demonstrates that the cash waqf investment model discussed by several scholars can be adopted and adapted to the ar-Rahnu operational. The waqf system was established during the Islamic period. It has made significant contributions to many fields, including health, education, and others. In this conceptual model, the idea of suggesting using cash waqf to purchase mortgage statement (SAG) in ar-Rahnu institutions can achieve three outcomes: increasing the value of the ar-Rahnu company, extending the variables of cash waqf investment initiatives, and extending the theory of Islamic social finance through the integration of cash waqf and ar-Rahnu.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

WMAFWAR carried out the introduction, literature review, collected the data and performed the data analysis. HM refined the literature review and wrote discussion and implication sections together with WMAFWAR. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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## **AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES**

**Dr. Wan Mohd Al Faizee** is a senior lecturer at Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, (AAGBS), UiTM Shah Alam. He published several articles in waqf and risk management. He got his first degree from University of Hassan II, Morocco in Islamic Studies, MA in Islamic Studies, and PhD in risk management and waqf from UKM. The current research interests in risk management, Islamic Banking, and Islamic Social Finance.

**Dr Hamidah** is a senior lecturer at OUM's Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. She obtained her first degree from Alil al-Bayt University, Jordan in Islamic Jurisprudence, MA in Islamic Studies, and PhD in Contemporary Fiqh from University of Malaya. She has 23 years of teaching experience and is actively involved in research and publications in the areas of Islamic studies, education, Sustainability Development Goals, and Open and Distance Learning(ODL). She has written a few books including Fikah Luar Negara (Jurisprudence Abroad) and Batakah Puasa Saya? (Is My Fast Nullified?), Siasah Madani and several non-academic articles have been published on websites and local news portals such as Malaysiakini, Malaysia Gazette, and Malaysia Dateline. She actively contributes to society through participation in non-governmental organisations.

# Factors Influencing Hibah Practice: A Scoping Review

Nurul Yafisa Sahera Bolkan<sup>1\*</sup>, Raudha Md Ramli<sup>2</sup>, Mohd Amzari Tumiran<sup>3</sup>, Ramlan Mustapha<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan

<sup>2</sup>Centre for Sustainable and Inclusive Development, Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan

<sup>4</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Cawangan Pahang, Felda Krau, 27600 Raub, Pahang Darul Makmur

\*corresponding author: <sup>3</sup>amzari92@uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### KEYWORDS

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Knowledge

Religiosity

Self-efficacy

*Hibah is a tool used by Muslims to manage their wealth distribution. Statistics in 2006 showed the number of frozen assets was recorded at RM38 billion. The number of frozen assets has reached RM90 billion in 2022. To reduce this problem, researchers agreed and recommended that Muslims in Malaysia should plan their wealth through hibah. However, hibah practice among Muslims in Malaysia is still low. Thus, this study aims to identify factors that influence the practice of hibah among Muslims in Sabah. This study adopted a scoping review analysis underpinned by the Arksey and O'Malley five-stage framework to categorise the factors that influence hibah practice. The findings show that knowledge, religiosity, and self-efficacy significantly influence hibah practice among Muslim communities. Using hibah as estate planning is the best alternative for the Muslim community. This study suggests a conceptual framework of hibah practice to prove the proposed hypothesis for Muslim communities in Sabah.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Hibah is a tool used by Muslims to manage their estate distribution. Early planning in estate distribution is crucial to ensuring the estate benefits the dependents, non-dependents, and society. Several types of hibah have been practised in Malaysia, namely trust hibah, hibah mutlaq and conditional hibah (hibah umra, hibah ruqba and hibah takaful). Hibah mutlaq is the transfer of assets ownership from donor to donee that occurs immediately. Trust hibah or hibah amanah is property given by the donor during his lifetime, but the transfer of asset ownership to the donee or beneficiary will occur after the donor's demise. Hibah services are provided by Tabung Haji and Amanah Saham Nasional Berhad.

However, conditional hibah is carried out based on the requirements set by the donor to the donee. It is categorised into three, which is the transfer of asset ownership to a donee by limiting the period of ownership based on the death of the donor or donee. For example, a house given by a husband to his wife can only be lived with the condition during his lifetime. This practice is called hibah umra. Meanwhile, hibah ruqba refers to the event of the death of a donor or donee to obtain the ownership of hibah assets. For example, a house given by the husband will be given to the wife as a hibah if the husband dies first. The house will be returned to the husband if the wife dies first. The third hibah is hibah takaful, which is becoming / getting popular among Muslims. The practice of hibah takaful begins when the participant nominates heirs or non-heirs as beneficiaries. When the participant dies, the takaful benefits (hibah) will be given to the beneficiaries.

According to Azmi et al. (2021), hibah is deemed one of the best instruments for estate distribution. Although it does not mean disregarding the advantages of faraid, hibah is used as an alternative for Muslims to plan and manage their estates and wealth, primarily to protect the welfare of biological children, non-biological children, spouses, or non-heirs after death. The distribution of properties through faraid sometimes leads to delays and failures. Several factors may cause this problem, as stated by Shafie et al. (2016), namely the ignorance of heirs, lack of knowledge and understanding, and delay in the administration and distribution process. Complex procedures will confuse heirs and not want to cooperate to manage the inheritance, subsequently increasing the number of frozen assets.

Statistics in 2022 showed the amount of frozen assets has reached RM90 billion (Utusan Malaysia, 2023). This amount increases annually. Table 1 shows that the number of faraid applications is higher than hibah in Sabah.

Table 1: Faraid and Hibah Application in Sabah Syariah Court

Type of Cases	Number of Cases
Faraid Case	1761
Hibah Case	16

Source: Malaysian Legal Aid Department (2017)

This explains the low hibah practice among Muslims in Sabah. The Muslim people should be aware of how Islamic estate planning is implemented and its negative impact on the economy if not managed properly. Frozen assets cannot be used or invested without heirs' permission, not benefiting others. Therefore, researchers agreed and recommended that Muslims in Malaysia should apply estate planning through hibah. However, hibah practice among Muslims

in Malaysia is still low. Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors that influence the practice of hibah, especially in Sabah.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the scoping review methodology to find suitable articles for this study. The approach for the scoping review is underpinned by Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-stage framework, which is (1) identifying the initial research questions, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) study selection, (4) charting the data and (5) collating, summarising and reporting the results used in the factors influencing hibah practice. This section begins based on the stage listed above.

### 2.1 Identifying the Initial Research Questions

This review was guided by the question, 'What are the factors influencing hibah practice among Muslim communities?'

### 2.2 Identifying Relevant Studies

This study started with retrieving articles by identifying synonyms or terms related to the keywords hibah, hibah practice, and factors that influence hibah practice. The appropriate keywords were selected based on the research question stated by Okoli, 2015 in Shaffril et al. (2021) studies. After identifying the keywords, several search strings were used throughout this process, using Boolean operators (OR, AND), which are "hibah" AND "knowledge" AND "religiosity" AND "self-efficacy". The purpose is to combine keywords in the advanced searching process on Semantic Scholar, Dimensions, Core UK, Emerald Insight, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Besides that, manual searching is done by searching the articles page by page and identifying and tracking the articles through citations and references. A total of 11 articles were searched manually. These search techniques were suggested by Shaffril et al. (2021).

The first search process in these databases has resulted in 306 potential articles. Then, the inclusion criteria such as publication type, language, year of publication and content of the related articles were determined. Thus, the criteria for article selection are discussed in the following subsection.

Table 2: Searching for the Literature Process

Keywords	Database	Initial results	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Number of relevant
• Hibah	Semantic scholar	45	32	13	4
• Knowledge	Dimensions	40	40	0	1
• Religiosity	Core	137	117	20	2
• Self-efficacy	Scopus	2	2	0	0
	Web of science	3	3	0	0
	Google scholar	64	51	13	4
	Emerald insight	4	4	0	0
<b>Overall</b>		<b>295</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>12</b>

## 2.3 Study Selection

The next process of retrieving the articles is study selection. This process is similar to the screening process in the systematic literature review. DiCenso et al. (2010) stated that in Pham et al. (2014) studies, scoping and systematic literature reviews share the same process in identifying relevant literature. A total of 260 selected articles were screened. Screening is made based on two criteria: inclusion and exclusion. The inclusion criteria are by looking at the language, publication timeline and publication type suggested by Linares-Espinos et al. (2018) in Shaffril et al. (2021) studies. Thus, the decision to review and analyse the articles from 2014 to 2023. Because the hibah studies regarding giving behaviour are still scarce, this study needs to choose a longer publication timeline to solve the unanswered research questions and fill the study gap. This statement is also supported by Kraus et al. (2020). Apart from that, this study only selects publications in English and Malay as the foreign language might be hard to understand, confusing, and need a higher cost to review and takes up time. This study only selected journal articles, thesis dissertations and conference papers. The process excluded 227 articles as they did not fit the inclusion criteria. The remaining 33 articles were used for the third process: eligibility. The last process is discussed in the following subsection.

Table 3: The Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Timeline	2014-2023	<2014
Publication Type	Article, thesis dissertation and conference paper	Other than article, thesis dissertation and conference
Language	English and Malay	Other than English and Malay
Access	Open access or only content can access to	Non-open access or cannot access to

## 2.4 Data Charting and Collation

The next process of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) scoping review framework is charting selected articles. Each article was summarised based on the author, year, study location, study design, study methodology and sample size, and a brief overview of the limitations and recommendations of the selected study. Table 4 contains information about the studies that were included.

Table 4: Included Studies

Author & Year	Sample size	Factors influenced	Outcomes
Alias et al. (2020)	100 Muslims community in Perlis	Institutional factor, Islamic financial literacy, knowledge and religiosity	Institutional factor and Islamic financial literacy have significant impact on the intention to adopt wasiyyah.
Aziz et al. (2019)	224 salaried individuals (24–50 years old)	Useful, knowledge, religiosity, trust	Knowledge and usefulness had positive relationships with attitude towards family takaful schemes.
Haron et al. (2023)	198 stakeholders of Waqf	Attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control	All hypotheses were accepted.
Osman & Muhammed (2017)	370 Muslim donors in Selangor	Attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control	All variables are instrumental in determining cash waqf giving behavior.

Othman et al. (2017)	372 public educators in Kedah	Knowledge, Islamic religiosity and self-efficacy	All factors are significant associated.
Rosmana (2021)	251 students Faculty of Business & Economics, Islamic University of Indonesia	Knowledge, religiosity, self awareness, social environment and convenience	All factors are significant influenced.
Sukri et al. (2016)	250 Muslim women staffs in UUM	Attitude, religious value, knowledge and law of zakat	All factors are significant except religious value.
Kamis & Wahab (2022)	195 Muslims in Alor Setar	Education level, education stream, religiosity, social influence and social media	Education stream, religiosity, social influence and social media were identified as significant factors that influence their knowledge of hibah.
Said (2016)	282 academic staff in Kedah, Perlis and Pulau Pinang	Affective attitude, instrumental attitude, interpersonal influence, external influence, religiosity, self-efficacy and service quality	All factors are significant.
Jusoh et al. (2021)	180 muslim teachers in Kedah, Perlis and Penang	Attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control	All factors have a significant relationship with the intention of practicing hibah.
Said & Saad (2016)	No sample because conceptual paper	Attitude, religious value and service quality	All variables are expected to influence hibah giving behavior.
Latib et al. (2022)	100 muslim lecturers and administrative staf in UiTM Sabah and Shah Alam	Knowledge, age, gender, academic qualifications and household income	The finding found knowledge and gender have a significant relationship with hibah, while factors of age, academic qualification, and household income are not positively related with hibah.
Ahmad et al. (2019)	98 respondents in Raub	Attitude, promotion, knowledge	Only knowledge insignificant relationship with hibah.
Awwal & Rini (2019)	97 millennial society	External influence, internal influence, perception of convenience, perception of development, religiosity and attitude.	All factors are significant relationship with sadaqah using non cash.
Busry (2020)	252 students in KUIPS	Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and religiosity.	All hypotheses are a significant linear relationship with cash waqf.
Maamor et al. (2020)	406 Malaysian Muslim who are working or retired	Age, income, health status, number of heirs, knowledge, religiosity, service, advantages of hibah instrument and Syariah compliance	Income and knowledge are significant in explaining the Muslim behaviour to choose Hibah.
Basir & Rahman (2022)	Conceptual paper	Attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and knowledge	All factors are expected to have a positive relationship with purchasing intention of takaful hibah products.
Mustafa et al(2022)	384 Muslim in Selangor's Higher Learning Institutions	Attitude, awareness, religiosity and knowledge	All independent factors show a substantial link with the dependent variable.

Sahban & Johari (2021)	314 zakat payers, and potential zakat payers in Kwara state	Religious, knowledge, family influence, media awareness, trust, transparency and zakat manager	Only transparency and family influence not influence the zakat payers' intention to patronize the zakat institution in Kwara state.
Shukor et al. (2017)	386 individuals in the Klang Valley	Religiosity, knowledge, convenience, informative influence and trust on awqaf institution	Religiosity, trust in awqaf institutions and convenience to endow are significant with cash waqf.
Wahab et al. (2019)	338 Muslims in Alor Setar	Knowledge, wealth management, institutional factor and religiosity	Only institutional factor are not significant.

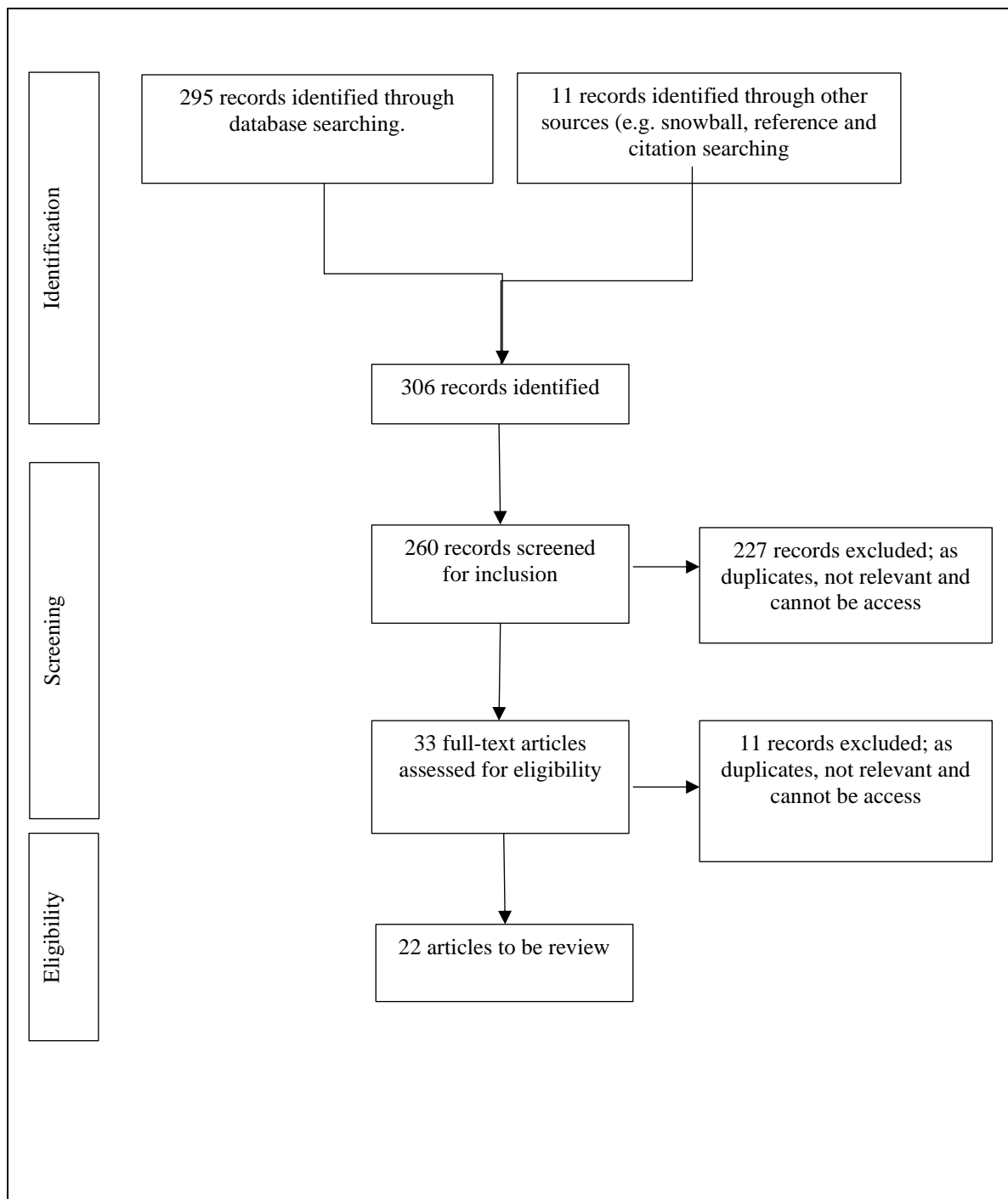


Figure 1: Flowchart of Study Selection Process

## ***2.5 Summarising and Reporting Findings***

The scoping review approach developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) concludes with the fifth and final stage, which summarises and reports findings. An eligibility process was conducted before reporting the findings. This process is like double-checking the remaining articles after the screening process. According to Shaffril et al. (2021), the eligibility process should be considered as there might be a mistake in the database during the screening process, which would supposedly fit the inclusion criteria but was not selected. Therefore, the remaining articles were screened by reading the titles, abstracts, methodologies, and findings. Also, duplicates were not recorded. As a result of this process, 11 articles were excluded due to the focus on factors influencing hibah practice. Overall, there were only 22 selected articles.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, this study presents articles which focus on the initial research questions. Twenty-two articles were reviewed. Knowledge, religiosity, and self-efficacy have been identified as factors influencing hibah practice among Muslim communities.

### ***3.1 Knowledge***

The utilisation of hibah as a strategic tool for estate planning in Malaysia is gaining popularity and witnessing significant growth. It is evident that numerous institutions are now providing hibah services to address the matter of estate planning within communities and facilitate the effective management of their assets. According to Said (2016), Ruslan et al. (2020), and Mustafa et al. (2022), there is a prevailing lack of interest among Muslim communities in Malaysia when it comes to estate planning and management, particularly through the utilisation of hibah. The issue can also be observed by analysing the statistical data pertaining to hibah and faraid cases in Syariah Court. The observed disparities between these examples serve as evident indicators that Muslim communities continue to rely on faraid and exhibit a lack of initiative in terms of estate planning and management. This can be attributed to various factors, including a dearth of information in this domain (Bouteraa, 2019).

Abdullah et al. (2017) and Jamalurus et al. (2019) have identified knowledge as a significant contributing factor to these circumstances. The significance of the knowledge component in predicting hibah was highlighted by a study conducted by Mustafa et al. (2022), which involved the Muslim population in Politeknik Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, MSU, UNISEL, and UiTM in Selangor. Shukor et al. (2017), Alifiandy and Sukmana (2020) and Laila et al. (2022) found a positive relationship between knowledge and waqf-giving behaviour. Ghul et al. (2015), Wahab et al. (2019) and Mohamed et al. (2022) also found that knowledge positively influences wasiyyah practice among Muslims. Sukri et al. (2016), Sahban and Johari (2021), Hakim et al. (2021), Mariyanti et al. (2022), and Batubara et al. (2023) revealed that knowledge influences zakat payers significantly in the zakat environment. Aziz et al. (2019) found knowledge is significantly associated with takaful behaviour.

Knowledge about hibah is generally understood as a voluntary gift by a donor without getting anything in return (Kamarudin & Muhamad, 2018). Nonetheless, it is important to disseminate information on hibah as it is the best instrument for estate planning, besides encouraging potential donors to practice hibah and reduce the number of frozen assets. Basah and Tahir (2019) stated that the motivation for an individual to practice estate planning is knowledge. The higher the level of knowledge, the higher the tendency to do estate planning. It is because knowledge is a basis of human survival that makes human life easier and more efficient (Ahmad et al., 2019). According to the findings of a survey done by Sarip et al. (2017), the level of

awareness among Muslims remains moderate. This is primarily attributed to the existence of uncertainty surrounding the practical and technical aspects of implementing hibah, particularly from the perspectives of Shariah and legislation in Malaysia.

While the aforementioned reason does influence Muslim communities to engage in hibah, it is important to note that the knowledge factor also plays a significant role in the decision-making process of certain Muslims who choose not to manage their estate through hibah. Initially, the individuals in question encountered difficulties in obtaining comprehensive information regarding hibah. Specifically, they lacked knowledge regarding appropriate sources for reference, the necessary steps for implementation, the relevant institutions involved, associated costs, and procedural guidelines. The findings of the research conducted by Latib et al. (2022) indicate that residents of UiTM possess a significant level of awareness regarding hibah. However, it was observed that they face limitations in their ability to exert influence upon donors. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure the widespread dissemination of information regarding hibah management practices. According to Mursidi and Khairi (2019), a deficiency in information can result in misconceptions regarding the authentic principles underlying Islamic estate planning. Therefore, it is imperative to enhance the dissemination of information regarding hibah to increase knowledge of its proper implementation since it is widely regarded as the most effective approach for asset management and the prevention of unclaimed assets (Ahmad et al., 2017).

The comprehension of estate management within Muslim communities could potentially mitigate many risks, such as disputes among heirs, the immobilisation of assets, and the suppression of estate-related matters. This underscores the significance of proactively addressing estate management during one's lifetime. In conjunction with the lack of a legal framework, the emergence of such issues is quite probable (Basir et al., 2022). Hence, individuals who possess knowledge are inclined to engage in proactive planning throughout their lives. Conversely, people who neglect to engage in early planning are regarded as lacking awareness and knowledge of the concept of hibah. Hence, it is expected that Muslims with a high understanding of hibah tend to participate in giving hibah. The following section will discuss religiosity.

### **3.2 Religiosity**

Ghazali (1989) stated that religiosity is not easy to measure. Nevertheless, it can be seen through an individual's actions motivated by their faith or religious beliefs. Obedience to the religious orders he adheres to will manifest in his daily behaviour. Distributing properties through hibah is required in Maqasid Shariah, which protects wealth, as stated in Surah Al-Maidah verse 5. Therefore, religiosity must be examined as it is believed to play a vital role in explaining hibah practice. This factor can be confirmed through a study by Busry (2020), which found religiosity as having a significant relationship with cash waqf-giving behaviour among KUIPSAS students. Awwal and Rini (2019), Bouteraa (2019) and Hassan (2019) also proved religion influences one's decision in practising estate planning. In other Islamic environment behaviour, it is shown that religiosity is significant in determining why Muslims choose wasiyyah (Zainol et al., 2019; Mursidi & Maulan, 2020). Other studies also found that religiosity has a positive relationship with zakat (Farouk et al., 2017; Abdullah & Sapiei, 2018; Rosmana, 2021; Aligarh et al., 2021), infaq (Nursalimah & Senjiati, 2021; Akmila et al., 2022; Munawir & Sartiyah, 2022) and sadaqah behaviour (Daud et al., 2022). While in the hibah context, it is found religiosity influence hibah practice (Kamis & Wahab, 2022).



The level of religiosity is associated with distinct behavioural patterns that are contingent upon the perceived significance of one's religious convictions. Individuals possess varying degrees of religious values. An individual who places great importance on religion may possess a comprehensive comprehension and familiarity with Islamic doctrines, benefit from a supportive social environment that consistently promotes adherence to Islamic teachings and get early education regarding Islamic principles. Individuals with a strong religious orientation are more likely to adhere to the teachings and principles advocated by Islam. A person who adheres to a religious belief comprehends the significance of engaging in religious practises not only in the present life but also in the afterlife. Therefore, religion possesses the capacity to motivate individuals to engage in actions that provide advantages not only for themselves but also for others. According to the findings of Mustafa et al. (2022), religion has the capacity to influence an individual's behaviour and cognitive processes. Furthermore, according to Abdullah et al. (2013), it is asserted that Muslim communities are primarily influenced by Islamic law and beliefs. According to the findings of Said and Saad (2016) as well as Kamis and Wahab (2022), religious values play a significant role in influencing the propensity of Muslims to engage in hibah. In this study, a high religious value is expected to influence an individual to participate in hibah. The last section will discuss self-efficacy in brief.

### ***3.3 Self-efficacy***

Another factor that is expected to influence hibah practice is self-efficacy. According to Meng and Chao (2004), self-efficacy is one of the components of perceived behavioural control. Generally, self-efficacy can be said to be self-assurance in one's ability to do the activity. The choice, preparation, effort, emotional reactions, and thought will be influenced whenever the individual wants to perform the act. For example, someone confident in their ability to use a computer and the Internet is more likely to adopt Internet banking (Tan & Teo, 2000). In the hibah context, distributing property through hibah is one's ability to perform the act. An individual will perform it if they believe in their own abilities. The ability may consider other factors such as financial situation, leadership, age, health, etc. Sharip et al. (2019) examined Leader-member Exchange (LMX) and found that the high quality in it can increase self-efficacy. Besides, according to Muslichah et al. (2023), a high level of financial literacy can also enhance a person's self-efficacy. This is because, with the ability, they are confident to use the financial products or services.

However, after an extensive literature review, this study found self-efficacy in the scope of hibah is still scarce and not tested widely. Therefore, a few studies have been suggested to test self-efficacy to examine the individual's behaviour, especially in the context of Islamic estate planning (Said & Saad, 2016; Othman, 2017; Alias, 2020). In the context of zakat, Rahman et al. (2019), Othman et al. (2021), and Sayuthi and Juisin (2022) found self-efficacy is the main factor that influences zakat payers. Haron et al. (2023) found that self-efficacy and behavioural intention to accept benefidonor concept are significantly positive. However, a study conducted on Muslims in Bantul indicates that self-efficacy has influenced attitude towards cash waqf but did not affect intention towards cash waqf (Hermuningsih et al., 2021). This statement was also supported by Anwari and Primayudra (2023), who found self-efficacy and cash waqf giving behaviour influenced significantly. The study by Said (2016) revealed self-efficacy has a positive relationship with hibah practice. Ajzen (2002) also agreed self-efficacy has a strong relationship with behavioural intention. Thus, self-efficacy is expected to influence hibah practice. The next section explains the conceptual framework of this article.

### 3.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on the previous discussion, this study combined several theoretical frameworks and constructed a conceptual framework into three independent variables; (a) knowledge, (b) religiosity, (c) self-efficacy, and a dependent variable; hibah practice. This conceptual framework (Figure 2) is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Thus, it is expected that the independent variables and dependent variables in this model will have a positive relationship.

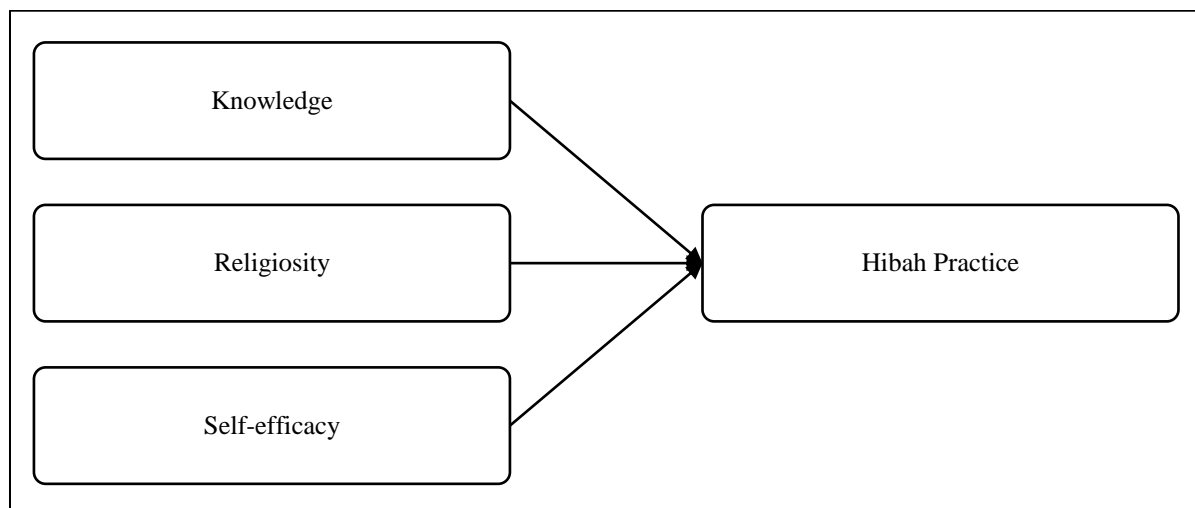


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Based on the objective of this study, these factors (knowledge, religiosity, and self-efficacy) are used to test the relationship towards hibah practice. The significant effect of knowledge and hibah practice has been supported by prior research (Ahmad et al., 2019; Basir & Rahman, 2022; Latib et al., 2022; Maamor et al., 2020). This is because knowledge is essential for human life and will drive and motivates individual acts. Mustafa et al. (2022) and Maamor et al. (2020) also confirmed that religiosity has a positively significant impact on hibah practice. Said (2016) provided evidence on the significant cause of self-efficacy and hibah practice. However, this factor needs to be tested widely as previous literature showed that self-efficacy is a factor that is still scarce and needs to be tested. This study will be conducted using a questionnaire, and all respondents will be asked to choose and rate their agreement based on a scale of 1 to 5 (Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree).

## 4. CONCLUSION

Using hibah as an estate planning tool is the best alternative that the Muslim community can use. Not only can it reduce the number of frozen assets, but it will also boost the country's economy. However, studies conducted on hibah are still scarce, especially in the context of hibah practice. This study proposed a framework to examine the factors influencing Hibah practice. Three factors are taken into consideration, which are knowledge, religiosity, and self-efficacy. Based on the previous literature, all variables are expected to have a significant relationship with the hibah practice. Further research can test this model to prove the proposed hypothesis. The implication of this study is useful to academic institutions and hibah institutions. It may help hibah institutions as they are responsible for educating the Muslim community. Since the study is mainly conceptual, no empirical evidence is provided. For further

research, factors such as financial situation, experience and mass media should be examined, as those may significantly impact hibah practice.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

NYSB prepared the first draft of the paper. RMD, MAT and RM reviewed and edited the paper. All authors read and approved the final manuscript of the paper.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Nurul Yafisa Sahera Bolkan** is the first author in this paper. She is a Master's Degree student in the field of contemporary Islamic studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam. Currently doing her Master's Degree related to Islamic estate planning. This author is very interested in research on Islamic estate planning, especially hibah.

**Raudha Md Ramli.** She completed her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). Currently, she is working as a lecturer at Centre for Sustainable and Inclusive Development Studies, Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Bangi. Her research interest is Islamic economics, Islam, and sustainable development.

**Mohd Amzari Bin Tumiran.** He completed his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Universiti Malaya (UM). Currently, he is working as a lecturer at the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UITM) Shah Alam since October 2018 until now. His research interest is al-Quran (religion & science), neuroscience, education, and Islamic studies.

**Ramlan Mustapha.** He completed his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Universiti Malaya (UM). Currently, he is working as a lecturer at the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UITM) Raub Campus since May 2020 until now. His research interest is Islamic education, integrity, fuzzy delphi method, model development, and development research.

# Acceptance and Use of Virtual Reality and Its Impact Towards Learning Attitude Among Young Adults in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Aris Abdul Rahman<sup>1</sup>, Khairudin Murad<sup>2</sup> & Wardatul Hayat Adnan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> School of Communication & Media, College of Computing, Informatics & Media, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>2022920715@student.uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

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Virtual Reality (VR) technology is a computer simulation system that creates new learning experiences in the virtual world. VR creates a simulation environment that has an impact on learning attitude and this new environment interacts with three-dimensional dynamic views that has an impact physical learning behaviour. Virtual reality is part of an innovation process where the user interacts with real-time simulation and the remarkable advanced technology tools to understand better, on the products. The traditional learning method is monotonous, and the current study is an interactive learning process that saved time, enhanced young people's learning attitudes and gave them the ability to learn anywhere at any time. The study aims to identify virtual reality acceptance and use among young adults and its impact towards learning attitude. Learning attitudes that are measured within this study are excitement and happy feelings when using VR. One of the impactful growths of VR is the use of virtual technology in education institutions where universities and schools are emphasising alternative ways of learning. This confirms the researcher's thoughts that acceptance and use of VR is essential in today's world which focusses on digitalisation technology. A quantitative methodology was applied in this study, where face to face surveys through the distribution of questionnaires was given out to a group of 200 young adults from the Shah Alam community in Selangor, Malaysia. The study shows that Virtual Reality Hedonic Motivation is the highest factor influencing Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention that leads towards acceptance and use (Pearson correlation  $r=.741$  and Regression  $R^2 = .549$ ). Thus, the findings and discussion will be further added to the present literary works and helps future researchers improve learning attitudes towards young adults with the adaptation of VR, specifically in a Malaysian context.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Virtual Reality (VR) refers to a simulated experience which is similar to or completely different from the real world. It typically involves the use of computer technology to create a three-dimensional, interactive environment and immersive feel of a virtual world that users are able to explore and interact with (Godovykh et al., 2022). Users experience immersion in a virtual world through the use of a specialised VR headset, which stimulates their senses of sight, hearing, touch and occasionally even smell and taste. VR technology is used in various fields, including entertainment, education, tourism, medical and business. In education, learning is a development that change and improve present knowledge as a result of experience, and it increases the possibility for better performance and future learning. The process of learning requires knowledge, skills and attitude which lead to improving current knowledge and skills (Thammasitboon, 2022). In order to learn, a good communication must be performed for the sender and receiver to understand the subject matter. Learning is taught through various channels such as education in schools, moral values by parents and learning from a role model. Learning through technology is a common method in today's globalisation world. Technology has developed tremendously over the years and the implication of it has increased in every part of life. Once, mobile phones used to be essential for students' lives as numerous applications for information, education and entertainment purposes are all available through Wi-Fi connectivity (Rashid et al., 2020). Now, VR is an example of technology which is used to grow a simulated environment which has been derived from computer technology (Abich et al., 2021). VR places the user or the reality world into a three-dimensional experience, which is also known as 3D world. The top rated quickly recognisable part of the virtual reality is HMD or Head-mounted display (Samadbeik et al., 2018), but in the process of virtual reality, users are immersed to interact with the three-dimensional world, instead of viewing a screen in front of them. Virtual reality is part of the innovation process where the user interacts with real-time simulation and remarkable advanced technology tools to understand better the products or VR used to "travel" to a destination (Atsiz, 2021). According to the World Economic Forum (2017), consumer spending on VR is expected to reach \$200 billion by 2027.

The use of virtual reality technology in educating young adults is not an idea of the present day. The VR topic has been researched and analysed since 1990. The implication of this idea used in the Anglo-Saxon countries . Using VR in training impacts young adults' knowledge retention and motivation while transforming the learning environment (Shamuratov & Alimbaev, 2022) and by doing so this interactive learning creates learning excitement. Nowadays, technology has spread its arms over each and every sector of life and the biggest spectator of the technology is the educational institution (Akman & Çakır, 2020) and medical education (Erolin et al., 2019). A study carried out by Maresky et al., (2018), tested the effectiveness of a VR simulation in medical teaching particularly in the heart area. These researchers show that, VR has the possibilities to improve student engagement and learning outcomes with this alternative learning in the education sector. Over the years, technology has improved tremendously, and costing has reduced. This has resulted in VR being used in various fields and it is an alternative method of learning. VR environments are usually closed to the physical world in the sense that the environment they create is entirely new (Virca et al., 2021). Commercial VR devices are starting to provide sufficient quality and affordability for informative and entertainment use, which make educational VR experiences more widely available in the future (Ni et al., 2022; Shamsudin & Yunus, 2022). Young adult learning facilitated by VR should create student excitement, interactive and engagement.

Currently, learning in Malaysia starts from primary level to Higher Education Institutions (HEI) where the teachers have whole domination of their student, and the student must obey all the

instructions given by them. The creativity part of students exploring new methods of education is not developing as these students are not given the opportunity. HEI in Malaysia seeks to produce graduates who are knowledgeable with critical thinking, decision making and problem-solving skills (Hasnor et al., 2013). According to Lee (2022), university students face many challenges, adapting to online learning instantly. The VR for interactive learning in Malaysian education is a new method and it is developing (Bistaman et al., 2018). The traditional learning method is monotonous (Lui, 2021) and the current study is an interactive learning process that saves time, enhances young people's learning attitudes, and gives them the ability to learn anywhere at any time (Juřík et al., 2021; Kaliyaperumal et al., 2020). Nowadays, the learning methods in HEI are mainly a one-way interaction where educators speak, and the students listen. The fundamentals of cognitive is being applied in VR through interaction with the three-dimensional world and young adults are eager to learn more through the help of the technology and the updated tools (Yan et al., 2019). Learning through technology creates flexible learning infrastructure where students are able to learn and communicate at the same time even their locations vary, and various online learning methods ensure the continuity of information delivery to students (Hanafi & Kamal, 2022). The study aims to identify virtual reality technology acceptance and use among young adults and its impact towards learning attitude.

VR is a combination of advanced image processing, interactive human computer communication and tracking devices where all these combination leads towards experiential medium (Bistaman et al., 2018). To develop the learning attitude using this approach, VR facilities must be provided by HEI. Learning in classroom by adapting to the games is an exciting way of gaining knowledge in encouraging the intellectual, emotional and character development of a young adult (Tyas et al., 2021; Masturoh & Ridlo, 2020). VR creates a comprehensive way to facilitate alternative learning experiences by enhancing self-learning concept and preparing young adults for future value add knowledge. Virtual reality has become more accessible to young adults in university because of online digitalisation and they should be able to use them easily if they are explanation on the using method. In the history of virtual reality education, there are some sorts of transformations of VR such as fully immersive, semi-immersive and non-immersive simulations. At first, virtual reality education was in the non-immersive stages when there were a few students. Then comes the semi-immersive and fully immersive with the progress of technology and the increasing number of students in virtual reality education all over the world (Jean et al., 2021). Virtual reality education opens the probabilities of alternative learning and teaching through a dedicated device. This method is still growing for more advancement so that the students be more engaged with their interactive learning and absorb more information effectively.

In order to identify virtual reality acceptance and use among young adults and its impact towards learning attitude, this study underlines three (3) main objectives: -

- a) To identify VR factors influencing Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI)
- b) To identify Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI) and its impact towards Virtual Learning Use Behaviour (VLUB)
- c) To study the acceptance and use of Virtual Learning Use Behaviour (VLUB) and its impact towards Learning Attitude (LA)

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 The Development of Virtual Reality Technology***

Virtual Reality (VR) has emerged as one of the most captivating technological advancements of all time. It offers individuals an immersive and interactive experience that transcends the boundaries of the physical world (Hilken et al., 2021; de Keyser et al., 2019). Over the past few decades, the development of virtual reality has undergone remarkable progress, transforming from a concept rooted in science fiction to a tangible reality. In the twenty-first century, technology upsurge in popularity for the educational area such as mobile learning (m-learning) on smartphones, online teaching through Google Meet and assignment are done through various online platform. VR technologies are being integrated into educational learning programs, especially in dynamic environments, to train student in a structured environment without impacting the wear and tear of expensive simulators (Fussell & Truong, 2021). During year 1990's, the development of VR is expensive and largely because of the huge cost only rich people would be able to take advantage of this technology. Major VR evolutions took place in the 1980s, although its origins go back to Ivan Sutherland's 1965 paper 'The Ultimate Display' (Dodge & Kitchin, 2003). In year 1968, Sutherland created the first computer-aided HMD in with internal sensors that traced the user's head movements. The helmet design combined two miniature monitors placed directly in front of the eyes to create binocular 3D vision and certain features have been updated over the decades to suit different human development as well as imminent sorts of physical and cognitive reliability, impressiveness and eyes tracking technology (Juřík et al., 2021; Mat Zain et al., 2011).

### ***2.2 Virtual Reality as New Media***

VR as a new media is a new concept of digital environment where the user metaphorically steps inside a reality world in exploring interactive media, games, online festival, conferences and enjoying performance (Weijdom, 2022). VR applications is being use in medical training, property management, tourism and town planning environments and this way of communicating provide alternative way of knowledge sharing session (Lamb & Etopio, 2020). Virtual reality improved itself in many stages by providing virtual students with immersive and memorable experiences. VR technologies particularly based on HMD, have the prospective to go beyond boundaries of place and time, providing unlimited opportunities to create any particular content and increase student's attractiveness towards the subject (Juřík et al., 2021). It helps the students in increasing their ability to memorize and due to this reason, it becomes more popular with the students, and they are likely to take the advantage of virtual reality education. The advantage of VR is the power of images use colourful descriptions and videos is clear, so the user has a better understanding. It also increases the enthusiasm for the knowledge in the mind of the learners and this helps in boosting their activity and creativity (Yulie et al., 2021). Lamb & Etopio (2020) conducted a study to evaluate the claim that virtual reality ambiances provided a greater learning attitude on the subject. This shows that if virtual reality technology us being acceptance by young adults thus it would be able to provide benefits for the end user towards their learning attitude.

### ***2.3 Implementing Virtual Reality in Malaysia Education***

Wong et al., (2020) conducted research regarding implementing VR in Malaysia tertiary education in studying the acceptance of implementing this technology. The result shows that 76% students accept level of implementation of virtual reality as a learning media. On the same research, 83% of respondents agreed that VR is capable in helping students to understand better

compares to conventional method. 93% responded positively that VR provide better experience in subject related to experiment and practical subject. VR encourage student to participate actively during learning is also being analysis in this research and the outcome of it was 83% respondents agree to the particular statement. On the same research, 88% of respondents from various university, decided that VR assist students in visualisation and reification difficult content. This research indicates that virtual reality is accepted as a new learning interactive method in Malaysia and adaptation of conventional learning would enhance the young adult's knowledge and have an impact towards their learning attitude. Education is an important part of the life and brings reputation to a country and by having excellent education, it will produce the next generation who are expected to have a compassion like the ideology adopted by a country (Mahanani et al., 2022). Investment in education is expensive based on the belief that the quality of education brings differences careers and achievement for its citizens (Syukri, 2019). Ministry of Education in Malaysia has developed Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025 to focus on Malaysian education system where students must be imbued with values, attitude and moral values. In this blueprint, leveraging on digitalisation technology is part of the transformation shift in Malaysia education system. According to Dwivedi et al., (2020), the learning method improved the student's personality attributes. This shows that the findings on learning attitude towards VR technology is vital for the Malaysian policy maker to execute a new strategy on education system.

## ***2.4 Young Adults Learning Attitude***

Young adulthood between ages of 18 to 25 years old is a crucial development period where these adults are engaging themselves to participate in identity formation and self-exploration (Higley, 2019). The young adult's attitude of learning depends on the learning method such as conventional learning, on-line learning or group discussion. Young adult's level of exposure and the quality of the information accessibility and communications technology is a major consideration that influence their readiness to adapt new learning method (Ismaili, 2021). The relationship between young adult and lecturer in university is essential because both plays a significant role of the successful realisation of the learning processes (Delos & Torio, 2020). Therefore, they must work together to build trust and motivation and by having those, it leads towards learning attitude. Recently, VR have arisen as enablers of reality-enhanced communication, where physical service experiences and digitalisation are combined in one platform and seamlessly blended (Hilken et al., 2021; de Keyser et al., 2019). For example, by using virtual reality, young adult's visualise tourism education through VR and decide the best place to visit by having 'a look' first before actually visiting (Shen et al., 2022). This shows that, if the young adults are always excited using VR to improve knowledge, it leads towards happiness attitude when using VR. Young adults learning attitude should respect different opinions and communicate clearly with good articulation. Communication skills are important skills for developing great interpersonal skills among students (Febrianita & Hardjati, 2019). Learning outcomes must be well-structured and the instructions provided to them need to be respectful to their vocabulary. According to Claro et al., (2018), the academic technological performance of the students holds an important criterion that is communication which is engaging digital efficiency in education today. Not only sharing knowledge but gaining subject-based ideology from the mentors is a productive factor on school premises. The importance of giving priority to digital communication skills has a significant in young adult learning attitude.

## **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study adapts Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) (Venkatesh et al., 2012) to evaluate young adult's acceptance in using virtual reality technology

towards learning and the impact on attitude. Venkatesh et al., (2003), uses UTAUT with Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Social Influence (SI), and Facilitating Conditions (FC), as the most important factors for technology acceptance. UTAUT is considered one of the most complete models of technology acceptance since the models are integrated with technology acceptance and many researchers use this model for acceptance and use related research. UTAUT was later combined with three new constructs, Hedonic Motivation (HM), Price Value (PV) and Habit (H) as backgrounds of behavioural intention and use behaviour in the UTAUT2 framework. This VR study uses UTAUT 2, an adaptation of UTAUT in explaining and predicting behavioural intention and use behaviour of young adults towards VR in learning. Figure 1 explains the VR theoretical framework that consists of 2 main dimensions which are Virtual Reality Acceptance & Use and learning attitude. This theoretical framework adapts Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) (Venkatesh et al., 2012) to evaluate young adult acceptance receiving a new technology in learning (Gagne, 1985). This framework assesses acceptance of virtual technology by measuring behavioural intention to use a given technology and its impact on learning attitude. Learning attitude looks into excitement, happiness and confidence level of young adults' VR as an alternative learning tool in the education sector.

The construct of PE is a factor to determine the extent of young adults in perceiving VR as a learning device that would contribute to additional improvement in obtaining new knowledge (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The construct of EE looks into the extent in which young adults perceive VR as easy to use and it has simple operational function (Chao, 2019). The construct of SI is being used to analyse the extent in which young adults perceive the expectations of their friends, peers, family members and lecturers on their use of VR. Wu et al., (2021) have found that social influence has a great impact on users' intentions to accept new technology. HM is the last construct used in this theoretical framework related to UTAUT 2, in order to evaluate young adults perceiving VR as a tool that brings additional joy and enjoyment (Toyoda et al., 2021; Lowry et al., 2015, 2013). All the constructs that have been conceptualised are being used to determine the main factors influencing Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI). The UTAUT 2 is being combined with Domains of Learning by Gagne (1985) to study the relationship of learning attitude among young adults. Gagne (1985) focuses on intentional learning, which is the form of learning that occurs in particular training programs where the environment influences the learning process. The Domains of Learning consists of five (5) learning that affect the learning process which are motor skills, verbal information, intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, and attitudes. This theoretical framework only focuses on learning attitude where young adults observe and learn through feedback by using VR. These capabilities are the behavioural changes in learning and once the learning results are being identified, an analysis of the conditions that manage learning and remembering to occur (Gagne, 1985).

According to Ting & Tien (2021), behavioural change is evaluated through learning effectiveness, motivation, and attitude by having sequential analysis of gaming task. Gagne also describes human performance as established by learning attitude where attitudes have a significant role in influencing an individual's actions and require young adults to observe and learn from those who provide feedback. Young adults are motivated with new learning methods in gaining knowledge thus this motivation brings positive attitude towards learning (Sitepu et al., 2021). A good learning attitude leads towards effective learning (Claro et al., 2018). VR provides different learning experiences for young adults as they have an opportunity to learn by doing rather than just reading (Hilken et al., 2021). The increasing of digitalisation technology is an advantage that the education sector should investigate by boosting young adults' learning attitude by providing interactive learning. The four-construct used, PE, EE, SI, HM are the factors influencing acceptance and use for VR technology towards young adults' learning attitude.

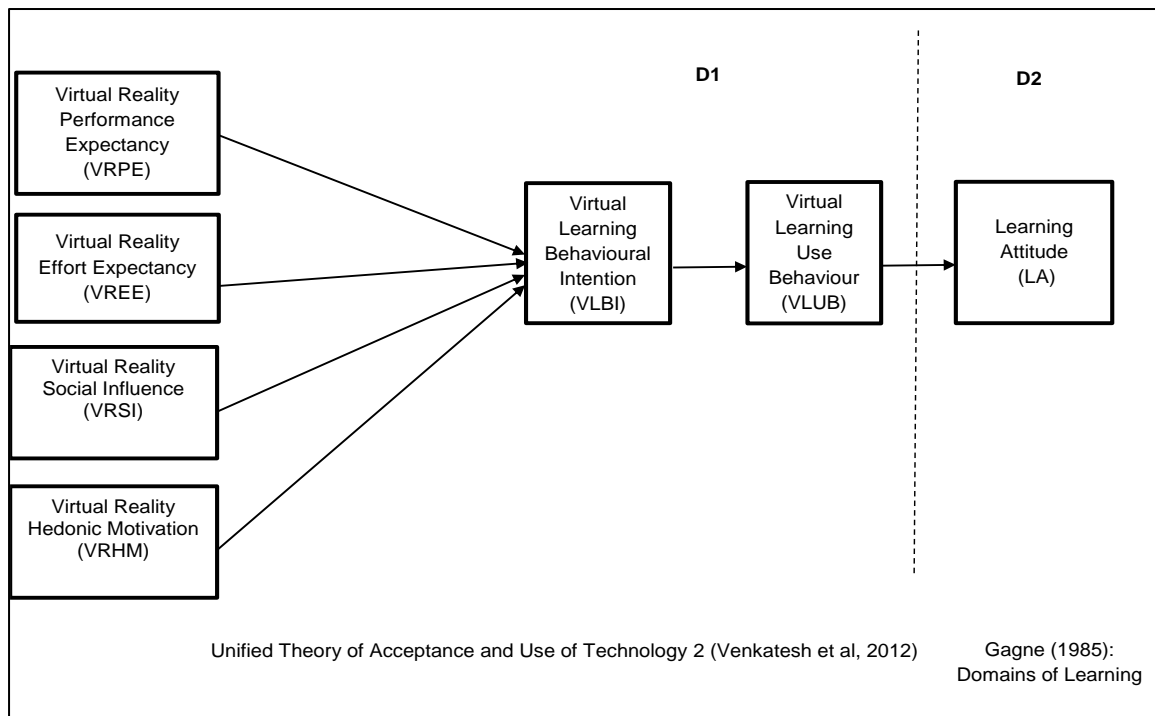


Figure 1 Research Theoretical Framework

The following hypotheses obtain from research theoretical framework in Figure 1.

- $H_1$  There is a significant relationship between Virtual Reality Performance Expectancy (VRPE) and Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI) among young adults.
- $H_2$  There is a significant relationship between Virtual Reality Effort Expectancy (VREE) and Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI) among young adults.
- $H_3$  There is a significant relationship between Virtual Reality Social Influence (VRSI) and Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI) among young adults.
- $H_4$  There is a significant relationship between Virtual Reality Hedonic Motivation (VRHM) and Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI) among young adults.
- $H_5$  There is a significant relationship between Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI) among and Virtual Learning Use Behaviour (VLUB) among young adults.
- $H_6$  There is a significant relationship between Virtual Learning Use Behaviour (VLUB) and Learning Attitude (LA) among young adults.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This research uses cross-sectional survey where questionnaire was distributed to young adults, ages 18 to 25 years old (Adams et al., 2021; Peng et al, 2020; Higley, 2019) in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. The researcher chooses this age category because this age is a development period where young adults emotional changes and substantial cognitive have an impact on brain development and this age group have behavioural adjustments associated with basic psychosocial age-related developmental tasks (Richard at al., 2015). They were 58% of female and 42% of male took part in this questionnaire. Table 1 indicate the age demographic participated for this cross-sectional survey.

Table 1 Demographic for participant (n = 200)

Age Group (years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18 – 20 years old	57	28.5
21 – 23 years old	66	33
24 – 25 years old	77	38.5

The instrument developed is structured in which all questionnaire is straight forward related to VR acceptance among young adults and instrument developed, answers the objective of the research. All items are being divided into 2 section which are A: Demographic, B: Acceptance and Use of Technology. All questions in section B are asked using a 5-Point Likert Scale with “1” being Strongly Disagree, “2” being Almost Disagree, “3” being Neutral, “4” being Agree and “5” being Strongly Agree. They are 42 closed-ended questions including demographic section. The objective of the survey is to describe whether relationship exists between virtual reality technology and learning attitude toward young adults in Shah Alam. This study emphasis on non-probability sampling design as part of the sampling strategy. Non-probability sampling is use in this study because randomisation is impossible for young adults as the population is very large and time limitation to conduct the study (Pace, 2021, Etikan et al., 2016). The result of the research is not being targeted to produce findings that will be used to create generalisations pertaining to the whole population. Therefore, convenience sampling was done where participants of the target population meet age criteria, easy geographical access and willing to participate in the research was given a set of questionnaires. Each respondent answered the same set of survey that was being distributed to 200 young adults in Shah Alam vicinity. Before the data was collected, reliability and normality test were done. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test was run in order to crisscross the reliability of the research instrument (Field, 2009). The acceptable value of this test is 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Table 2 shows all Cronbach’s Alpha values are more than 0.70 except for VREE which is 0.638, close to 0.70.

Table 2 Summary Results of Reliability Analysis (n = 200)

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach’s alpha
VRPE	6	.718
VREE	6	.638
VRSI	5	.716
VRHM	5	.869
VLBI	5	.847
VLUB	6	.792
LA	5	.867

Normality test, namely, Skewness test and Kurtosis was performed to test the data normality. Table 6 shows the test of normality for 7 variables applied to this questionnaire. Skewness and Kurtosis index was being used to identify the normality of the collected data with SPSS (Pallant, 2013, 2005). The data considered being normal for the range of skewness from -3 to +3 and kurtosis -10 +10 (Brown, 2006). The skewness index range was from -1.304 to -.118 and the kurtosis index range was from -.48 to 2.441. Therefore, this conclude that the data collection was normal distributed as both the skewness and kurtosis index of 7 variable presented are within the normal distribution range. Table 3 Test of Normality (n = 200).

Table 3 Test of Normality (n = 200)

Variable	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
VRPE	200	-.297	.172	-.948	.342
VREE	200	-.431	.172	-.234	.342

VRSI	200	-.118	.172	-.765	.342
VRHM	200	-1.016	.172	.315	.342
VLBI	200	-.928	.172	-.035	.342
VLUB	200	-.658	.172	.673	.342
LA	200	-1.304	.172	2.441	.342

The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) was performed to test validation on ensuring the data is suitable to proceed for factor analysis. KMO was performed to analyse the strength of the partial correlation between the variables. KMO values closer to 1.0 are consider ideal while values less than 0.5 are unacceptable (Napitupulu et al.,2017). The Bartlett’s test of Sphericity is being used to test the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, that mean, variables are unrelated and not ideal for factor analysis (Rojas et al., 2015). Table 4 shows the result for KMO & Bartlett’s Test with result .716 which is close value to 1.0 and this result is acceptable.

Table 4 Test of KMO & Bartlett’s Test

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.716
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8769.475
	df	703
	Sig.	.000

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 To Identify VR Factors Influencing Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI)

An assessment using one tailed test was done to review the likelihood of the relationship in single direction and completely disregarding the possibility of a relationship in the other direction. Table 8 indicates the results of factors influencing VLBI by using Pearson Correlation and Regression. Based on the result relating to Pearson Correlation, the researcher finds out that VRHM ( $r = .741$ ) is main factor that influences the relationship between VLBI in the first dimension. Previous research done by Bower & Lai (2020) and Kim & Hall (2019) indicate similar results where hedonic motivation predicts behavioral intention in accepting new technology. The next result of Pearson Correlation follows by VREE ( $r = .594$ ) and VRPE ( $r = .544$ ). The least factor that influences the relationship between VLBI is VRSI ( $r = .304$ ), however this factor is still significant towards the study because young adults perceive the expectations of using VR through of their peers, family members and lecturer. However, based on the result, it shows that young adults in Shah Alam are willing to learn without having strong influences by the society. This is supported by study conducted by He & Li, (2019). The researcher generated the result of Regression for the study using VR towards factors influence VLBI. It shows that, in the first dimension, VRHM relationship towards VLBI ( $R^2 = .549$ ). Thus, this is the main factor influenced the intention among young adults on using VR. The second highest result for regression was VREE ( $R^2 = .352$ ), followed by VRPE ( $R^2 = .269$ ) and lastly VRSI ( $R^2 = .092$ ). The construct of VRPE, VREE, VRSI, VRHM does have significant relationship between VLBI among young adults thus hypothesis  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$  and  $H_4$  has been answered. Several studies confirmed that PE, EE, SI and HM have a significant influence on BI to accept new technology, such as an e-scooter VR service (Huang, 2020), VR intention in chemical industry (Toyoda et al., 2021), VR games for chemical education (Chioma et al., 2021) and head-mounted VR displays in learning (Shen et al., 2019). Since this study focused on acceptance and use of VR and its impact on learning attitude, the constructs play a significant role in young adult acceptance and use of VR technology. This technology has matured to the point where it is practically used in different market segmentation especially gaming and this



alternative learning has enhanced learning process methods and has improve the traditional way of teaching (Bistaman et al., 2018).

Table 5 Summary Results of Pearson Correlation (n = 200, a=0.05)

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	Regression (R <sup>2</sup> )
VRPE > VLBI	.544	.269
VREE > VLBI	.594	.352
VRSI > VLBI	.304	.092
VRHM > VLBI	.741	.549

### ***5.2 To Identify Virtual Learning Behavioural Intention (VLBI) and Its Impact Towards Virtual Learning Use Behaviour (VLUB)***

VLBI has an impact on VLUB where the Pearson Correlation result of the study indicated that ( $r = .804$ ) and the result of Regression for the study is ( $R^2 = .646$ ). This result shows that VLBI has significant values on VLUB thus  $H_5$  has been answered. The globalisation world with the innovation of technology has transform education to digitalisation platform such as virtual learning, online learning and Google Meet in delivering their learning program (Adnan & Bahar, 2019). It's a new norm in the education field especially for universities where learning with digital technology has grown popular in recent years. As the respondents are young adults ages 18-25 years old, they are excited and happy exploring and using new technology as an alternative to learning. Online learning has become more necessary in the year 2020 when the world was attack by COVID-19 (Lee, 2022). During this pandemic outbreak, all sectors were badly hit, including education. Individuals are forced to stay home and encourage social distancing to stop the spreading of the deadly virus. Therefore, worldwide students turned their learning approach from the physical classroom to digital learning education (Marban et al., 2021). VLBI has a strong impact on VLUB because VR for learning may be used anytime comparing to conventional learning where they are time limitation for a subject. This is proven when 60% of the respondent strongly agree that "learning using VR in university is interesting". This shows that young adults could certainly retrieve the knowledge and learn something, anytime and anywhere, as long as the VR device is working. 54% of young adults strongly agree that studying using VR is their top priority and will continue using this device for learning.

### ***5.3 To Study the Acceptance and Use Of Virtual Learning Use Behaviour (VLUB) and Its Impact Towards Learning Attitude (LA)***

On the second dimension, where LA is the dependent variable, researcher find out that VLUB influence LA with Pearson Correlation result ( $r = .708$ ) and the result of Regression for the study is ( $R^2 = .501$ ). This result shows that  $H_6$ , there is a significant relationship between VLUB and LA among young adults. The introduction of graphics-oriented visual has made huge changes in use behaviour that leads towards learning attitude. The application of virtual elements in education such as animated images attract young adults in helping them to understand and remember the substance (Bistaman et al., 2018). The object oriented created in VR technology features improve understanding compare with the complex explanation and it facilitates young adults to learn easier and faster. The analysis shows that 50.5 % young adults strongly agree in using VR as a learning tool and 30 % agree on this particular matter. Mathematically, 80.5 % young adult are interested in learning using VR as this alternative learning support of seamless interaction between real and virtual environments. VR technology improve since the ability of virtual reality provide non-accessible learning environment because

it's too hazardous or too costly like learning in construction site, activity at active volcanoes or even experience real space shuttle (Shamsudin & Yunus, 2022). This advantage of VR is impossible to be provided in conventional learning therefore VR bring the real experience to the classroom. Virtual technology has grown, and more range of education application domains are benefiting from this and it is valuable (Bistaman et al., 2018). Due to rapid growth in online digitalisation (e-sports and e-property) where it affects use behaviour towards learning attitude, VR is initially growing in popularity due to its potential and the advantages that provide good benefits to the education sector. Ministry of Education in Malaysia must emphasis on collaboration with school and university on digitalisation policy. This new method of learning is part of Malaysia Education Blueprint, Shift 7 (System Structure), where its emphasis on leveraging information technology on self-paced learning (Ministry of Education, 2012).

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of this study aims to identify virtual reality acceptance and use among young adults and its impact towards learning attitude. One of the impactful growths of VR is the use of virtual technology in the education sector where university and school are emphasising on alternative way of learning. The emerge of COVID-19 has brought all school and university in the world to shift everything towards online education even the facilities are not good enough. Modern communication technologies such as google meet, zoom meeting, 360-degree videos and google classroom are used to facilitate this online education learning and not everyone would be able to join as they require a device as long as they have internet connectivity. Technology accelerate because of the COVID-19 and this disease has been regarded as one of the most important events of the twenty-first century. This was an important factor of accepting new technology and this study adapts unified theory of acceptance and use of technology 2 by Venkatesh et al., (2012) to evaluate young adult's acceptance in using virtual reality technology towards learning and its impact on young adult attitude. Four main constructs were used to evaluate the acceptance of technology which are Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Social Influence (SI) and Hedonic Motivation (HM) as indicated at Figure 1. The UTAUT2 was used to forecast behavioural intention and use behaviour of young adults towards VR in dynamic learning environment and evaluate influences that are relevant to the technology acceptance.

VR has gained attention as a potential tool for enhancing learning attitudes and outcomes. Several studies have investigated the acceptance of VR in educational settings and its impact on learning attitudes. Astuti et al., (2020) conducted a study on high school students to investigate the effect of 3D visualisation in VR on critical thinking skills and scientific attitudes. The study used a quasi-experimental design and found that the use of 3D visualisation in VR improved students' critical thinking skills and scientific attitudes. A different study was done by Kim and Ahn (2021) that focuses on nursing students and examined the influence of VR-based learning on cognitive and emotional variables. The study found that there is a need to confirm how education through VR affects these variables. The study also highlighted the importance of understanding learners' perception of VR technology and its characteristics in order to assess its impact on learning attitudes. Hussein et al., (2020) investigated the interaction between VR glasses tracking types and cognitive style in the development of English vocabulary skills and immersion among primary stage pupils with learning difficulties. The study found that positional VR glasses tracking helped pupils navigate freely and increased their curiosity and excitement, leading to better English vocabulary skills and immersion. These three studies that is done for different age groups indicated that VR has a significant impact towards learning attitude.

The outcomes of this research have theoretical implications. First, the study contributes in building up knowledge surrounding VR as an alternative learning method. The acceptance validated that established construct in UTAUT2 may be broadened and used to different virtual technology such as Augmented Reality (AR) or hologram as an alternative for learning environments in education sector. The validated acceptance and use could be further adapted to assess user cognitive skills and behavioural on dynamic education and training environments. Second, the framework further validated factors that may be relevant to understand young adults' objective toward using VR for learning purposes. VRHM was validated as the most significant factors acceptance and use of technology toward behavioural intention to used VR in learning. All hypothesis showed that there is a significant relationship between independent and dependent variable. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the framework is a helpful tool to understand how young adults perceive using VR and its impact towards learning attitude. This validated acceptance and use may be adapted by future researchers and value add the construct in order to evaluate VR in different market segmentation such as medical training, operations flight simulation and gaming. This would allow for more understanding of how these factors explain user behaviour and cognitive skills with similar technologies.

This study has four main limitations. First, the representation of this study is limited. Although the findings are based on data collected from young adults, the results may not generalise to all young adults in Shah Alam, Malaysia. However, results may be used to inform future researcher regarding acceptance and use of VR technology towards learning attitude. Second, data were collected using non-probability sampling where convenience sampling method was involved over two months in year 2022. Participants were voluntarism and meet the age criteria. The findings should not be generalised to all young adults in Shah Alam. Moving forward, future researcher should use probability sampling to get more accurate data and use this data as a base of the research. The next limitation is the construct used in the utaut2 model. The scale of the study limited the construct used in evaluating the behavioural intention of using VR. Other construct such as facilitating condition or habit may have a different impact towards the framework and may provide different outcomes.

Future research could possibility look into the factors of the validated acceptance and use and revise them appropriately according to their subject matter. The last limitation is the survey instrument used in this research. The survey instrument on this study focuses on acceptance and use of VR towards learning. However future researcher could value add the instrument based on their subject such as medical, gaming or property management. Moving forward, the future researcher should value add current survey instrument to other immersive simulation technologies, such as holograms, augmented reality or simulators used in task training. By value adding, different outcomes will be generated for different target groups. Proper revision, future researcher may use the validated survey instrument to value-add research contexts, populations and technologies. In conclusion, this study presented recommendations for VR acceptance and use in formulating suitable strategy towards learning attitude among young adults in Shah Alam, Malaysia.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The main author wrote the paper and did all the work. He wrote all the sections that constitute the entire article from Introduction to Conclusion and his supervisor KM and WHA did the checking and value add the article.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Aris Abdul Rahman (M.A)** earned his 1<sup>st</sup> class Master in Mass Communication from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam and currently he is continuing his Ph.D in



this university with research related to virtual reality. He has travel around the world and has great experiences regarding working culture, negotiation skills and conflict management. He is also a speaker for a charity work #ProjekTambahPahala which involved giving motivation talk and leadership skills to university students.

**Dr Khairudin Murad (Ph.D.)** has a Ph.D. in Media and Information Warfare Studies from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam and currently he is a senior lecturer teaching in UiTM Shah Alam for more than 10 years. He has vast experience in visual communication, new media and warfare study. His research interest includes visual symbolism, technology acceptance, digital volunteering and community journalism. He has published and co-author numerous papers in various field with international and local academician.

**Dr Wardatul Hayat Adnan (Ph.D.)** is an expert in new media communication, culture and public relation competency. She graduated PhD from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam and currently she is teaching communication studies. She has published, co-author and presented more than 30 papers in various fields collaborating with another academician. Her study interest is related to new media usage, social networking sites and corporate communication.

## APPENDIX

Series No: \_\_\_\_\_

### THE USE OF VIRTUAL REALITY TECHNOLOGY AND IT'S IMPACT TOWARDS LEARNING ATTITUDE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN SHAH ALAM, SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

#### Section A: Demographic

1. Umur (Age):
  1. 18 tahun – 20 tahun ☐  
(18 years old – 20 years old)
  2. 21 tahun – 23 tahun ☐  
(21 years old – 23 years old)
  3. 23 tahun – 25 tahun ☐  
(23 years old – 25 years old)
2. Jantina (Gender):
  - a. Lelaki (Male) ☐
  - b. Perempuan (Female) ☐
3. Adakah saudara / saudara mempunyai pengalaman menggunakan Virtual Reality? (Do you have any experience using Virtual Reality)? ☐
  - a. Lebih sekali dan kurang 5 (More than once and less than 5 times)
  - b. Lebih 5 kali dan kurang 10 (More than 5 times and less than 10 times) ☐
  - c. Lebih 10 kali (more than 10 times) ☐

#### SECTION B – H : ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY (UTAUT)

- |                        |                 |            |           |                  |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| 1- Sangat Tidak Setuju | 2- Tidak Setuju | 3- Neutral | 4- Setuju | 5- Sangat Setuju |
| (Strongly Disagree)    | (Disagree)      | (Neutral)  | (Agree)   | (Strongly Agree) |

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
<b>B</b>	<b>VIRTUAL REALITY PERFORMANCE EXPECTANCY (VRPE)</b>					
VRPE1	Penggunaan Virtual Realiti (VR) membuatkan saya selesai tugas dengan cepat <i>Using Virtual Reality (VR) would enable me to complete the task quickly</i>					
VRPE2	VR membolehkan saya akses kepada pembelajaran dengan mudah <i>VR would enable me to have easy access to learning</i>					
VRPE3	Penggunaan VR menyebabkan perjumpaan dengan pensyarah menjadi berkurangan untuk menimba ilmu <i>Using VR reduce face to face contact with lectures on learning new knowledge</i>					
VRPE4	Penggunaan VR dalam pembelajaran membantu kemahiran hidup saya <i>Using VR help learning material fit into my life</i>					
VRPE5	Penggunaan VR dalam pembelajaran amat sesuai di universiti <i>VR for learning is useful for in university</i>					
VRPE6	Penggunaan VR membantu saya dalam pembelajaran <i>Overall the use of VR helps me in learning</i>					
<b>C</b>	<b>VIRTUAL REALITY EFFORT EXPENTANCY (VREE)</b>					
VREE1	Interaksi saya dengan Virtual Realiti (VR) amat jelas dan saya memahami pembelajaran <i>My interaction with Virtual Reality (VR) is clear and understandable in learning</i>					
VREE2	VR mudah digunakan dalam pembelajaran di universiti <i>VR is easy to use for learning at university</i>					
VREE3	Saya tidak perlu menggunakan usaha yang tinggi untuk menggunakan VR dalam pembelajaran <i>I do not need high effort to use VR in learning</i>					
VREE4	Saya tidak memerlukan kepakaran teknikal untuk menggunakan VR dalam pembelajaran pengakap <i>I do not require much technical expertise to effectively use VR in learning</i>					
VREE5	Penggunaan VR dalam pembelajaran menjimatkan masa apabila dibuat perbandingan dengan cara pembelajaran lama <i>The use of VR in learning reduces time comparing with conventional learning method</i>					
VREE6	Saya tidak memerlukan kepakaran teknikal untuk menggunakan VR dalam pembelajaran <i>I do not require much technical expertise to effectively use VR in learning</i>					
<b>D</b>	<b>VIRTUAL REALITY HEDONIC MOTIVATION (VRHM)</b>					

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
VRHM1	Penggunaan Virtual Realiti (VR) dalam pembelajaran adalah mengembirakan <i>Using Virtual Reality (VR) in learning is fun</i>					
VRHM2	Penggunaan VR dalam pembelajaran adalah menyeronokan <i>Using VR in learning is enjoyable</i>					
VRHM3	Penggunaan VR dalam pembelajaran adalah menghiburkan <i>Using VR in learning is entertaining</i>					
VRHM4	Penggunaan VR dalam pembelajaran adalah menyenangkan <i>Using VR in learning is pleasant</i>					
VRHM5	Penggunaan VR dalam pembelajaran adalah memuaskan <i>Using VR in learning is satisfying</i>					
E	<b>JUNIOR SCOUT VIRTUAL REALITY SOCIAL INFLUENCE (VRSI)</b>					
VRSI1	Orang yang penting bagi saya mengesyorkan penggunaan Virtual Realiti (VR) <i>People who are important to me recommend using Virtual Reality (VR)</i>					
VRSI2	Rakan sebaya menjangkakan saya menggunakan VR bagi pembelajaran pengakap <i>My peers expect me to use VR for scout learning</i>					
VRSI3	Cikgu menjangkakan saya menggunakan VR bagi pembelajaran pengakap <i>My teacher expects me to use VR for scout learning</i>					
VRSI4	Orang ramai mengharapkan saya menggunakan VR bagi pembelajaran pengakap <i>The public will expect me to use VR for scout learning</i>					
VRSI5	Penggunaan VR amat sukar sekiranya tiada maklumat mengenainya <i>Using VR is difficult if there are no information regarding it</i>					
F	<b>VIRTUAL LEARNING BEHAVIORAL INTENTION (VLBI)</b>					
VLBI1	Saya amat teruja untuk menggunakan Virtual Realiti (VR) bagi pengakap <i>I am so excited to use Virtual Reality (VR) in learning</i>					
VLBI2	Saya mempunyai sifat keterbukaan untuk menggunakan VR dalam pembelajaran <i>I am open to learn on how to use VR in learning</i>					
VLBI3	Penggunaan VR dalam pembelajaran di universiti amatlah menarik <i>Learning using VR in university is interesting</i>					
VLBI4	Saya bercadang untuk menggunakan VR dalam pembelajaran secara berterusan <i>I plan using VR learning continuously</i>					

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
VLBI5	Saya sentiasa akan menggunakan VR dalam pembelajaran dan ulagkaji <i>I always try to use VR in learning and revision</i>					
G	<b>VIRTUAL LEARNING USE BEHAVIORAL (VLUB)</b>					
VLUB1	Saya menggunakan Virtual Realiti (VR) bagi pembelajaran <i>I use Virtual Reality (VR) for learning</i>					
VLUB2	Saya kerap menggunakan VR bagi pembelajaran <i>I often use VR for learning</i>					
VLUB3	Saya mengesyorkan VR kepada kawan dan juga saudara mara <i>I recommend VR to friends and relatives</i>					
VLUB4	Saya pernah hadapi masalah dengan pembelajaran dan menggunakan VR untuk menyelesaikannya <i>I have encountered problems related to my study and use VR to solve it</i>					
VLUB5	Saya meminati pembelajaran melalui kaedah VR <i>I am interested in learning through VR</i>					
VLUB6	Saya menggunakan VR untuk memperbaiki kemahiran komunikasi <i>I use VR for to improve my communication skills</i>					
H	<b>LEARNING ATTITUDE (LA)</b>					
LA1	Saya amat teruja menggunakan Virtual Realiti (VR) untuk pembelajaran <i>I am excited using Virtual Reality (VR) for learning</i>					
LA2	Saya suka meneroka aktiviti dengan menggunakan VR bersama rakan saya <i>I like exploring activities using VR with my friends</i>					
LA3	Saya sentiasa yakin apabila menggunakan VR untuk pembelajaran <i>I am always confidence when using VR for learning</i>					
LA4	Saya sentiasa gembira apabila menggunakan VR untuk pembelajaran <i>I am always happy when using VR for learning</i>					
LA5	Saya sentiasa memikirkan pembelajaran melalui VR <i>I am always thinking of learning through VR</i>					

# Language Maintenance in Malaysia: Identifying the Challenges Faced by the Foreigners in Preserving and Maintaining their Native Languages

Amir Lukman Abd Rahman <sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Haziq Abd Rashid<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

\*corresponding author: <sup>2</sup>haziqrashid@uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

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Foreigners residing in foreign countries often encounter difficulties in maintaining and preserving their native languages, mainly because they find themselves amongst the minority and lack formal platforms to support language preservation efforts. This paper aims to delve into the various issues and challenges faced by foreigners in their pursuit of preserving their mother tongues. To gain insights into these challenges, a qualitative research approach was employed, involving in-depth interview sessions with ten foreigners whose first language is not English. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling methods was used to select the participants. The research framework was constructed based on the Language Identity Theory proposed by Tong and Cheung (2011). The framework comprises of five essential factors of language identity: status, demographic, institutional support, linguistic, and cultural factors. Through this comprehensive framework, the study thoroughly explored the dynamics of language preservation and maintenance among foreigners. The research findings revealed that the foremost challenges faced by foreigners are attributed to environmental influences and their status as linguistic minorities. These factors often push them towards shifting away from their native language and embracing the dominant language of the host country. However, the study also shed light on proactive steps taken by foreigners to prevent language loss and maintain their language identity despite these challenges. In conclusion, this paper offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by foreigners in preserving their native languages. It emphasizes the significance of providing proper support systems and platforms for linguistic minorities to safeguard their language heritage. By understanding the intricacies of language identity and the factors affecting language preservation, policymakers and educators can take informed steps to foster a more inclusive linguistic environment that respects and celebrates the diversity of languages. Ultimately, the research contributes to the ongoing discourse on language preservation and identity in multicultural societies.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The age of globalisation has seen thousands of people immigrate to other countries in search of better employment and educational opportunities. Sometimes people migrate in order to escape conflicts at home and to find safer and more stable living conditions abroad. This movement from one place to another affects peoples' mother tongue. Blommaert (2013), established that language is not simply an assortment of words but an entity that connects an individual to his family, identity, culture, music, beliefs and wisdom. Hiratsuka and Pennycook (2020) added that the focus of language usage in a family is not on legacy language maintenance or any other form of language policy, but rather on getting by translingually, on conducting family life with the help of a repertory of various resources. It is the carrier of history, traditions, customs and folklore from one generation to another. Without language, no culture can sustain its existence especially when the native language is actually a part of a person's identity. The native language plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's personality as well as his or her psychological development, thoughts and emotions (Tseng et al., 2021). The findings by Bruce et al. (2022) revealed the existence of both psychological and biological predictors as they differentially impact several components of expressive language development over the first two postnatal years. According to Norton (2013), the childhood stage is the most important stage of a person's life because children at that stage can comprehend concepts and skills that are taught to them in their mother tongue quite quickly. Cheng and Mayberry (2020) also posited that early language experience is crucial for the formation of fundamental sentence structure especially at a young age.

With the many definitions of the language identity of a person, at the end of the day, it will be related to how they try their best to preserve and maintain their mother tongue; another term for it is native language. Due to globalization, migration happens to many people all around the world in order to find a better education, experience, lifestyle, workplace or simply to explore the world as a journey to understand life better. Questions arise among scholars, researchers and linguists: How do foreigners who are simply visiting or staying in a country for a short while preserve their native languages in order to preserve their language identity? In Malaysia, the Statistics Department under the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) has recorded around 2.1 million foreigners working in various sectors in Malaysia up to June 2022 (The Star, 2022). Moreover, Raja Rahim (2023) also reported that the Malaysian government is expecting to approve the entry of 500,000 foreign workers under the Foreign Workers Employment Relaxation Plan as it is crucial for the manufacturing, construction, farming, agriculture and services (restaurants) sectors and most of the workers are going to be from Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and India. The entrance legality of immigrants into a country is neglected by linguists as they emphasise more on the foreigners' language preservation and maintenance (Wei et al., 2019). With the rising number of foreigners in Malaysia, problems are bound to arise for foreigners in maintaining and preserving their native languages (Stapa et. al, 2013). Furthermore, it was found that Japanese foreigners who are staying in Malaysia for work purposes had a hard time learning the English language and maintaining their native language which is the Japanese language due to their environment where they need to converse in English. Moreover, the challenge escalated with the cultural factor where the locals in Malaysia only speak two languages best, their native languages (either Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin or Cantonese, and Tamil) or the English language. The hardest part of all is trying their best to maintain their language identity because there are not many Japanese in their workplace, to the point that it was hard for them to exercise the accurate languages in the respective settings or domains.

The issue of foreigners having problems communicating in their native language does not only happen in Malaysia but in other countries as well. In countries like the United States of America, United Kingdom, France and Australia, most foreigners who are from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia tend to make grammatical errors in speaking and writing sometimes, to the point that they prefer to use the English language to communicate with their family, relatives and peers back in their home country (Dewaele, 2019; Rintaningrum, 2018; Norton, 2016). Thus, the objective of this study is to investigate the issues and challenges faced by foreigners in preserving and maintaining their language and the steps taken to overcome them. The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What are the issues and challenges faced by foreigners in preserving and maintaining their language identity in Malaysia?
2. What are the steps taken by foreigners in preserving and maintaining their language identity in Malaysia?

### ***1.1 Problem Statement***

Regardless of how many foreigners coming to a country for the purpose of education, finding a better job in another country in order to gain a wider experience, or for any other reasons as an individual, surely it is a challenge for all of these foreigners to maintain and preserve their language especially if their status as an individual in a country is the same as the indigenous people. Romanowski (2021), stated that the issues of preserving and maintaining language identity will not be a problem for foreigners whose native language is the English language because the English language is considered the lingua franca of the world and around 80% of English speakers in the world are non-native speakers. Instead, it is a problem for foreigners whose first language is not the English language because they will have difficulty being the minority in a country due to their condition and status as a person who decided to migrate to another country. Moreover, despite the fact that these language preservation and maintenance issues made headlines before in various newspapers in Malaysia and also in other countries, some of the reports stated the concern of the need to preserve their own language identity to ensure the language status by promoting its use instead of inhibiting it. Furthermore, most long-term migrants or foreigners know what it is like to be a slightly rusty native speaker and the process seems obvious: the longer you are away, the more your language suffers but it is not quite so straightforward (Laila, 2018; Hardach, 2018).

Furthermore, most studies on language identity have delved into investigating how immigrants learn the native language of a foreign country (Fang et al., 2023). As reported by Jahan and Hamid (2019), most past studies have focused more on language identity either in the education or business sector. By setting these two sectors as a point of reference, immigrants or foreigners try to adapt to the current country they are residing in without a clear consideration of how they can preserve and maintain their native language (Norton, 2016). Thus, due to limited studies conducted on the aspect of how foreigners, specifically in Malaysia, preserve and maintain their native language while they are here, this study will focus more on that aspect and what are the steps taken by foreigners in Malaysia to overcome those challenges in ensuring that their language identity will not be affected while staying in another country.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Language Preservation and Maintenance by Foreigners***

Language preservation is the effort to prevent languages from becoming unknown. A language is at risk of being lost when it is no longer taught to the younger generations, while fluent

speakers of the language (usually the elderly) die because language is an important part of any society as it enables people to communicate and express themselves (Vallejos, 2014). When a language dies out, future generations lose a vital part of the culture that is necessary to completely understand it. This makes language a vulnerable aspect of cultural heritage, and it becomes rather important to preserve it. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2007, as cited by Norton (2013), there is a total estimation of 7,000 languages spoken worldwide and half of the population speaks only around 8 languages, while there are more than 3,000 languages which are spoken fewer than 10,000 people. On the other hand, according to Tran et al. (2021), language maintenance refers to the situation where a speaker, a group of speakers or a speech community continues to use their language in the same or all spheres of life despite competition with the dominant or majority language to become the main language in these spheres; whereas spheres can also be defined as the environment, domain or country.

However, despite the definitions of language preservation and language maintenance, in terms of language identity, Kubota (2013) and Stapa et al. (2013) highlighted when it comes to immigrants or foreigners, these two language terms are in accordance with how they decided to preserve and maintain their identity by ensuring that they will not have any difficulties with their native language when they are in another country. Most of the time, foreigners whose first language is not the English language will have certain issues in ensuring that they will not forget some of their own native language's words, syntax or grammatical structure. This will further pinpoint the ability for them to write or speak in their native languages in which they have to preserve their native language identity. At the same time, it is required for them to maintain their communication abilities by practising, finding the opportunity to study or communicating with people from their own country to maintain their language identity (Norton, 2016). The biggest challenge that most foreigners will be facing is their status as the minority since they have to adapt, not just to the culture but also to the languages used by the majority speakers. It is also a common case where they will have to learn the country's national language which is not usually the English language.

## ***2.2 Theoretical Framework – Language Identity Theory by Tong and Cheung (2011)***

Tong and Cheung (2011) viewed the issue of foreigners preserving and maintaining their language identity as an effort to ensure that they will never forget their root despite the fact that they are currently staying in a foreign country for various purposes. With that in mind, Tong and Cheung created a framework that is called the Language Identity Theory (2011) which is actually an improvement from the Language Identity and Maintenance Model by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1987). The improved version of the framework looks at 5 factors of language preservation and maintenance that can be done by foreigners and they are status, demographic, institutional support, linguistic and cultural factors.

The status factor can be divided into three which are economic status, social status and language status where these three statuses concern how easily the minority can shift to the other country's national language due to their status as the minority. Demographic factor concerns the number of members of a linguistic minority group and their social distribution in which the absolute number of speakers of a certain language becomes important when it decreases. Institutional support refers to the extent to which the language of the minority group is represented in the various institutions of a nation or community whether they are being supported by various institutions such as the government, church, cultural organisation and other agencies. Linguistic factor refers to the flexibility of a language is in a foreign country in the aspects of writing, literature, media representation and other platform availability that encourage people to speak



the minority language. Cultural factor refers to whether the cultural aspect of a country can influence a person's ability to preserve and maintain their native language. Hence, this framework is being chosen due to these several factors that will assist with the completion of studying language identity by foreigners in Malaysia through preserving and maintaining their native language.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### ***3.1 Research Design***

This study will apply a qualitative approach in order to gain data regarding the language issues and challenges faced by foreigners in Malaysia to maintain and preserve their languages which have been mentioned in the earlier section and to get descriptive data from interviewees to answer the two (2) research questions. Anney (2014) stated that basic interpretive qualitative research provides descriptive statements in order to get a better understanding of a study using data collected in a variety of ways, such as interviews, observations, and document reviews. Another study conducted by Romanowski (2021) on language maintenance in the Polish community residing in Melbourne, highlighted the significance of conducting a qualitative approach to get a better understanding of the minorities' living situation, honest interaction when meeting physically, to avoid confusion caused by quantitative approach (survey or questionnaire) due to language barriers, and researcher could see whether there are any other environmental factors that contribute to the difficulties in language maintenance in other countries. This is further supported by another study on language maintenance among Chinese-Malaysian families which through a qualitative approach (observation and interview) resulted in a proper understanding of the issues of language transmission and maintenance for the families (Ong & Ben-Said, 2022). It was found that it is not easy for mainland Chinese to be influenced and could not speak Hokkien due to cultural factors and strong ties with family members, relatives and friends from China. Hence, a qualitative approach was used for this study as well in order to get a better understanding of what makes it challenging for foreigners in Malaysia to preserve and maintain their native language.

#### ***3.2 Instruments***

Two instruments were used in this study. One of the instruments used in this study is the Language Identity Theory by Tong and Cheung (2011) where the framework was created in relation to language and cultural identity among the minorities in order to help them in maintaining and preserving their languages. Based on the framework, there are 5 factors that need to be considered in order to analyse language identity among foreigners. The second instrument used in this study was a list of interview questions whereby the questions revolved around language identity. The interview questions consist of 12 items which were edited beforehand in order to achieve the purpose of the study. Tong and Cheung (2011) first highlighted that past studies on language identity often considered sociocultural factors, language and speech, and identity to reflect a person's cognitive understanding in maintaining their language. However, it was found that it lacked consideration of workplace influence (support) and decided to separate sociocultural factors resulting in the development of Language Identity Theory that focuses on five factors – status, demographic, institutional support, linguistic and cultural. Furthermore, the list of questions was adapted to answer the two research questions that heavily rely on understanding the issues and challenges, as well as the steps taken for foreigners to preserve their native language in Malaysia whereby the questions matched the factors considered.

Table 1: List of Interview Questions

Factors	List of Questions
Demographic questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Working status (Name of company and years of service)</li> <li>• Academic background</li> <li>• Living status</li> </ul>
Status factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long have you been living in Malaysia and what is the reason that you decided to come here?</li> <li>• May I know where are you from and what is your native language/mother tongue?</li> <li>• What is your opinion about the many races in Malaysia?</li> </ul> <p><i>(Note that working status and living status are also considered during the data analysis process).</i></p>
Demographic factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At certain point in Malaysia, either when doing shopping, communicating with a Grab driver or on other occasions, have you ever experienced any language barrier?</li> <li>• Have you ever experienced any problem in conversing in your mother tongue to communicate with the people back home or people from your country here in Malaysia?</li> <li>• Are there any challenges that you are facing in order to preserve your mother tongue? For example, in some cases for the Malays, when they go overseas, they tend to make grammatical errors when using the Malay language. Do you have any challenges like that?</li> </ul>
Institutional support factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since you are a minority group in Malaysia, do you receive any support from the embassy, religious places where you are practising, or even your workplace?</li> <li>• What about the people back home in your country? Do you receive support from them in ensuring that you will not lose your native language?</li> <li>• What kind of support/other support you can suggest to receive from the people/organisations/institutions in Malaysia?</li> </ul>
Linguistic factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other language(s) can you speak and what is/are the level of fluency of that other language(s)?</li> <li>• Since your native language/mother tongue is not the Malay language, have you ever experienced any difficulties while speaking with other Malaysians?</li> <li>• Are there any challenges that you are facing in order to preserve your mother tongue? For example, in some cases for the Malays, when they go overseas, they will tend to make grammatical errors when using the Malay language. Do you have any challenges like that?</li> </ul>
Cultural factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think you can do or you are doing it either daily or weekly, the steps can be taken to ensure that you are preserving your language?</li> <li>• In your opinion, for parents who either (husband/wife) is not Malaysian, what steps can be taken by them in order to preserve their native language? Will it be effective?</li> <li>• Do you think the younger generation, whose parents (either one) are not Malaysian, will the children be able to preserve their parents' native language?</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Furthermore, in collecting the data which involved foreigners, basically, people who are not Malaysians, it is suitable in locating a certain part in Malaysia where there are many foreigners to approach and encounter foreign students who are studying in Malaysian universities or through mutual contacts. When it comes to a study on language identity among foreigners, immigrants or simply minorities, the interview session is best to be conducted with the community who has been living in a country for more than 5 years or at least has 2 years of experience living in that country to ensure that they have the exposure towards the issue;

another requirement is their native language must not be the English language. This is because the English language is the commonly practised language either as the first or second language (Kubota, 2013).

Table 2: Simplified Data Collection Procedure

<b>Data Collection Procedure</b>	
<b>Purposive Sampling</b>	<b>Convenience Sampling</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the requirements (must be 5 years or at least 2 years of experience living in Malaysia, and the native language must not be English).</li> <li>2. Contacted relatives and friends to introduce any foreigners.</li> <li>3. Conducted interview sessions at their respective residents / nearby restaurants (8 interviewees).</li> <li>4. The audio was recorded for analysis purposes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the requirements (must be 5 years or at least 2 years of experience living in Malaysia, and the native language must not be English).</li> <li>2. Went to Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur.</li> <li>3. Approached foreigners who are working in restaurants, small shops, and apartment buildings.</li> <li>4. Conducted interview sessions at nearby restaurants.</li> <li>5. The audio was recorded for analysis purposes.</li> </ol>

For this study, two types of sampling were used in answering the research questions. The first one is purposive sampling where the researchers contacted relatives and friends in order to set up interview sessions with their foreign colleagues or friends and managed to conduct 8 interview sessions. The second one is convenience sampling, where the researchers went to Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur and interviewed the remaining 3 foreigners. A total of 10 foreigners participated in the interview session in order to get a better understanding on what are the issues and challenges for them to preserve and maintain their native languages, and the steps taken by the interviewees to overcome them. Obilor (2023) highlighted that purposive sampling is to ensure that the participants involved are introduced through mutual contact in order to avoid being restricted in sharing or providing information during an interview session. Obilor (2023) further elaborated that convenience sampling is to get relevant interview data from participants who are not planned in order to get more genuine and sudden answers to make it easier for researchers to find similarities and differences between the two sampling approaches. This study is done in order to find out the issues and challenges faced by foreigners in Malaysia to preserve and maintain their native language. Meanwhile, the questions asked during the interview session might be personal or sensitive towards them so purposive sampling is more appropriate to ensure that the interviewees know who the researchers (interviewers) are through a mutual connection in avoiding unnecessary uncomfortable moments when providing answers. Convenience sampling was also done to see the similarities and differences between interviewees who were introduced through a mutual connection, but it was difficult to do so as most foreigners tend to not participate in the interview process due to language barriers, in fear of that it might be a police investigation and not willing to participate, resulted in three interviewees only for this approach.

Next, an audio recording was used for the coding process in analysing the data by referring to the framework and research questions and whether there are any emerging themes in answering the research questions. In order to organise and properly validate the transcriptions, a computer software called NVivo was used. For a qualitative study to be accurate in its data collection, this kind of software assists in automatically coding the transcriptions of the audio recording. This can be supported as an audio recording to help researchers gain a better understanding and

avoid any misunderstanding during the interview session to avoid data collection errors (Rosenthal, 2016).

Table 3: Interviewees' Background

Interviewees	Details (Names will not be disclosed as per the interviewees' request)
Interviewee A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country of origin is Bangladesh</li> <li>5 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>Working as a cleaner</li> <li>Single</li> <li>Native language is Bengali</li> <li>Poor command of both Malay and English languages</li> </ul>
Interviewee B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country of origin is Pakistan</li> <li>6 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>Working at a laptop store repairing personal computer and laptop</li> <li>Single</li> <li>Native language is Urdu</li> <li>Good command of Malay language but poor command of the English language</li> </ul>
Interviewee C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country of origin is Cambodia</li> <li>7 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>Working at a mobile store repairing telephone</li> <li>Single</li> <li>Native language is Khmer</li> <li>Good command of Malay language but poor command of the English language</li> </ul>
Interviewee D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country of origin is India</li> <li>5 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>Working as a cleaner</li> <li>Single</li> <li>Native language is Hindi/Hindustani</li> <li>Poor command of both Malay and English languages</li> </ul>
Interviewee E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country of origin is South Korea</li> <li>8 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>Working as a customer service</li> <li>Married</li> <li>Native language is Korean</li> <li>Average command of Malay language but fluent in English language</li> </ul>
Interviewee F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country of origin is Bangladesh</li> <li>5 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>Working as a staff member at a refugee centre</li> <li>Single</li> <li>Native language is Rohingya</li> <li>Poor command of both Malay and English languages</li> </ul>
Interviewee G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country of origin is Myanmar</li> <li>7 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>Working as a content moderator</li> <li>Married</li> <li>Native language is Burmese</li> <li>Good command of both Malay and English languages</li> </ul>
Interviewee H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country of origin is Japan</li> <li>14 years living in Malaysia (from studying and now working in Malaysia)</li> <li>Working as a translator</li> <li>Married</li> <li>Native language is Japanese</li> <li>Fluent command of the English language and average command of Malay language</li> </ul>

Interviewee I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country of origin is Egypt</li> <li>• 10 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>• Working as a clerk</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Native language is Arabic (Masry dialect)</li> <li>• Fluent in both Malay and English languages</li> </ul>
Interviewee J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country of origin is Indonesia</li> <li>• 6 years living in Malaysia</li> <li>• Working as a waiter</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Native language is Indonesian</li> <li>• Good command of Malay language but poor command of the English language</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data collection procedure is divided into two parts. Firstly, through mutual contact by requesting permission from the foreigners to conduct an interview session as one of the requirements to complete this study. A semi-structured interview session was conducted where the questions were related to answering the two research questions. McIntosh and Morse (2015) posited that the objective of conducting a semi-structured interview is to allow the findings equivalent to the initial reasoning in answering research questions in a study. Thus, it justifies the reason for conducting a semi-structured interview session. The interview session was conducted using the guidelines from the framework used in this research. When listening to the audio recordings for data analysis, it was found that most of the respondents have poor to average control of the English language and only some are fluent. NVivo computer software was used during the transcription process to ease the transcription and organisation process of the audio recording. Some manual transcriptions had to be done by the researchers due to the fact that the interviewees tended to repeat certain points multiple times, fillers, and pauses, signifying the easiness of the transcription process. The data obtained from the audio recording was used for analysis purposes in order to answer both research questions in identifying the factors involved based on the Language Identity Theory (2011). Each factor from the framework (status factor, demographic factor, institutional support factor, linguistic factor and cultural factor) was tabulated before being explained and only selected answers during the interview sessions were tabulated.

## 4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Issues and Challenges Faced by Foreigners in Preserving and Maintaining Their Language Identity in Malaysia

Table 4: Factors and Responses – Issues and Challenges Faced by Foreigners in Preserving and Maintaining Language Identity in Malaysia

Factors	Answers given by the interviewees
Status factor	Interviewee A: <i>I need to learn and understand Bahasa and English language to communicate with most of the local, most local have basic English but fluent Bahasa that it affects my grammatical structure when communicate with my brother back home.</i>
Demographic factor	Interviewee B: <i>In my company, most workers are the Chinese and foreign workers are mostly have the English language as their native language.</i>
Institutional support factor	Interviewee H: <i>Not really, due to time constraint and distance, I never went to any temple here.</i>

Linguistic factor	Interviewee I: <i>The news here, for my understanding will be reading the English language, if I were to look for any news in my language it will be online and mostly the sources comes from my own country.</i>
Cultural factor	Interviewee E: <i>I have to participate in the local's celebration more than my own.</i>

The findings above indicate that all interviewees have their own issues and challenges in preserving and maintaining their native languages. It can be noted that most of the responses are similar. The foreigners in Malaysia are experiencing the same problems despite their background differences in terms of their origin country, language and year of staying in Malaysia. Status, demographic, linguistic and cultural factors are the common problems faced by foreigners but they differ on how each foreigner is facing it and they are usually related to one another. In order to summarise the findings based on the framework, most foreigners are facing difficulties because the majority of Malaysians understand the Malay language and some basic English principles. In the context of a workplace, it is not a problem for them to communicate because most workers have good English skills in both writing and speaking. However, due to their status as a minority, they are afraid that their surroundings will influence their native language. By communicating a lot in Malay or English, it can influence the way they use their native language with their friends back home to the point that even an interviewee who is from Indonesia mentioned that when she goes back to her country, she finds that there are interferences when she speaks the Indonesian language. Sometimes, she ends up using words from the Malay language that have different meanings and her ability to exercise native-like sentence structure has noticeably deteriorated. Hence, she needs time to adapt to communicating in her native language because it has been a long time since she stayed in Indonesia.

These findings are actually supported by other studies conducted by Tong and Cheung (2011) and Norton (2016), where they found that even foreigners who are staying in countries where their first language is English experience that interference to the point that people shift from their native languages when they come back because of the difficulties of maintaining their own language identity and they feel weird in using languages other than the English language. The same study was also conducted in China and Vietnam where most locals who went to other countries for education, work or married the locals there; when they came back, they had the desire to shift to the country's national language instead of using their own even when they are back in their own country (Blommaert, 2013; Kubota, 2013). Moreover, some of the interviewees also mentioned the fact that sometimes they have to Google the meanings of the words in their native language because they no longer understand or forget what they mean. In fact, sometimes they have a hard time pronouncing the words. In terms of the institutional support factor, most of the interviewees admitted that most institutions that can advocate the use of their native languages are publicly unknown or simply nonexistent.

#### 4.2 Steps Taken to Preserve and Maintain Their Language Identity

Table 5: Factors and Responses – Steps Taken to Preserve and Maintain Language Identity by Foreigners in Malaysia

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Answers given by the interviewees</b>
Status factor	Interviewee C: <i>I have the value of respecting my language so I often practice it with my girlfriend</i>
Demographic factor	Interviewee D: <i>I participate in an online chat on FB then meet up with people from my country.</i>
Institutional support factor	Interviewee F: <i>Sometimes I participated in volunteering works at any refugees schools and camps which they are from my country.</i>
Linguistic factor	Interviewee G: <i>Reading news from my country and communicate with my family helps me a lot</i>

Cultural factor	Interviewee J: <i>Meet up with a few friends and we create our own small celebration together or I'll go back to celebrate with my family.</i>
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For this finding, despite the fact in the previous sub-heading, all of the interviewees have their own struggle in preserving and maintaining their native languages. They will find ways to use their native languages either with their friends, partners or online platforms while they are in Malaysia where most interviewees admitted that they do not want to come to a point in life where they question their language identity. It is made visible that they shift a lot to the country's national language but steps have been taken to overcome and slowly practise their native languages. They struggled to locate institutional support through churches, NGOs, communities, embassies, or other agencies that supported their native languages. Thus, they decided to join volunteering programmes to ensure that the younger generations are able to meet with people who are working in Malaysia and encourage the children there to never lose their native languages when they grow up. Stapa et al. (2013) and Tran et al. (2021) have highlighted the fact that foreigners do admit they are facing problems but they will find ways to try to use their own language because they want to make sure that they will never forget their origins. For instance, in China, certain Malaysian foreigners chose to teach at a Malay language tuition centre, while in the United States, volunteers facilitated and taught at refugee camps.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has strongly justified the issues and challenges faced by foreigners in Malaysia in preserving and maintaining their native language and the steps taken by them to ensure that they will never forget their own identity when in a foreign country. Five factors have indeed influenced the advantages and challenges of foreigners' efforts to preserve and maintain their languages. It was found that they will make every effort to reconnect with their roots. The implication of this study will benefit the government and the Human Resources department (for workplace setting) in terms of helping foreigners preserve and maintain their native languages. The limitation inherent in this study is that only input from Asian foreigners was generated. Input from European foreigners with those conversing in Italian, Spanish, French and other languages was not catered in this study. The following are a few thoughts to be shared and considered for future studies of this topic where they can conduct activities or events to help foreigners to preserve and maintain their languages like what countries such as Australia, France, Scotland and New Zealand are doing according to Norton (2016).

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

AL and MH carried out the research by dividing the tasks accordingly. AL contributed to the completion of the introduction, the first part of the literature review, findings and discussion for the first research question, and the conclusion. MH contributed to the second part of the literature review, methodology, findings and discussions for the second research question, and proofread the paper. Moreover, both AL and MH also carried out the interview together in collecting the data as well as for the data analysis.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Amir Lukman Abd Rahman** is an English lecturer at Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam. He holds a Master in Professional Communication and his research interests are in the field of visual communication, applied linguistics, language and communication, and technology in English language learning. He participated in several innovation competitions as well as published research articles since 2020.

**Muhammad Haziq Bin Abd Rashid** graduated from Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam with a Master of Arts in Professional Communication. With affiliations to Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, he currently lectures courses on technology applications for language learning. He actively participates in various innovation and invention competitions with research areas specialising in ESL and visual communication.

# Enhancing Customers' Perceived Value in The Hotel Industry; Updated Reviews and Insights on Customer Satisfaction on Emotional and Functional Values from A Pandemic-Era Study

Irina Mohd Akhir<sup>1\*</sup>, Rabiatal Adawiyah Abd Rahman<sup>2</sup>, Nina Farisha Isa<sup>3</sup>, Mohamad Azli Razali<sup>4</sup>, Fairuz Hakim<sup>5</sup>, and Mohd Azreen Mohd Mazlan<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</sup> Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Univessiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

<sup>6</sup> Mandarin Oriental, Doha, Qatar

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>[irina.akhir@uitm.edu.my](mailto:irina.akhir@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*This research focused on the relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study investigated the association of emotional and functional values with customer satisfaction to review hotel guests' perspectives during the pandemic. It is imperative for hotel players to direct their attention towards key study areas, due to the swift alterations in the relationship between hotel guest perceived value and satisfaction. This study Aiming in assisting hotel players to effectively identify potential determinants and address unresolved issues pertaining to unmet needs. Data was collected at Grand Alora Hotel in Alor Setar Kedah during the pandemic, utilizing e-survey instrument through cross-sectional study, conducting applied research. Descriptive and correlation test was conducted to review and identify the associations. The finding offers important implications to study further the impact of Covid-19, where the unprecedented circumstances of pandemic may have significantly altered guest expectations and perceptions until present. The research emphasizes the importance of continuously addressing customers' increased concerns on health and safety during hotel stay. This research contributes to the insights into how hotels can improve their clients' perceived satisfaction in the future.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Modern tourism drives economic growth in many countries (Ahmad et al., 2023) as a vital service industry. This industry includes lodging, the food and beverage industry, and entertainment. Tourism has long been a major source of revenue and employment for hotels. It also helps diverse people understand each other through cultural exchange. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the service industry, requiring new customer service methods. Therefore, these changes have affected how customers value service offerings.

Service providers must understand customer perceived value in their offerings. Due to rapid changes in hotel guest perceived value and satisfaction, hotel players must focus on key study areas. They can identify potential determinants and resolve unresolved customer needs and wants issues. Due to the pandemic, service providers have had to adopt new delivery methods like online and contactless delivery. Thus, these adaptations have changed customer views of service value. The current study (Ghorbani et al., 2023) found that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the tourism and hospitality industry and emphasised the need to rethink customer perceived value. Previous research has shown that the pandemic raises guests' expectations for hotel safety and services (Bonfanti et al., 2021; Chia, 2023). Given the current situation, service providers must recognise the importance of perceived value in their offerings. Some hotels have struggled to meet demand, especially during this financial recovery. They must consider the changing needs and preferences of their esteemed customers and adjust their services accordingly. Comprehensive research has shown that providers who prioritise customer value during the pandemic are more likely to retain valued customers and improve customer satisfaction (Sahadev & Purani (2008), and Tronvoll (2021)).

This study examines how emotional and functional values affect customer behaviour and satisfaction to determine if they can improve customer value on hotels they've stayed in or experienced the service and attributes. Pandemic Era literature was reviewed and a survey was conducted simultaneously. This study seeks to improve hotel services by advancing the study of perceived value and customer behaviour. Targets include improving customer satisfaction, competitive advantages, revenue generation, customer loyalty, and adapting to the changing landscape.

The relationship of perceived value-customer satisfaction may be enhanced by understanding evolving hotel guest preferences and offering unique services, offerings, and experiences that align. The study's guest data analysis and research helped hotel service providers stand out from competitors. A competitive advantage in a highly competitive industry like hotels with many options may help you stand out.

Many hotels struggle to gain customers' trust and loyalty due to COVID-19. Malaysia's government has taken several steps to revive the hotel and tourism industries. Understanding visitor behaviour after COVID-19 transmission is a major hotel industry concern (Guevara, 2020). Prior to five years or five months, customer expectations and behaviours were different. Customer satisfaction is positively correlated with perceived price fairness (Susanti, 2019), but the pandemic may change that perspective. Hospitality businesses must understand the customer experience of tomorrow and the next decade to survive the epidemic and thrive (Chris Knothe, 2020). A hotel that loses a valued customer due to COVID-19 can be sure everyone will know. Researchers and hoteliers should be concerned about situations where they cannot afford to do otherwise. Losing customers is costly for this industry. Further research on changing value-added service preferences may reveal the financial issue. Justification of

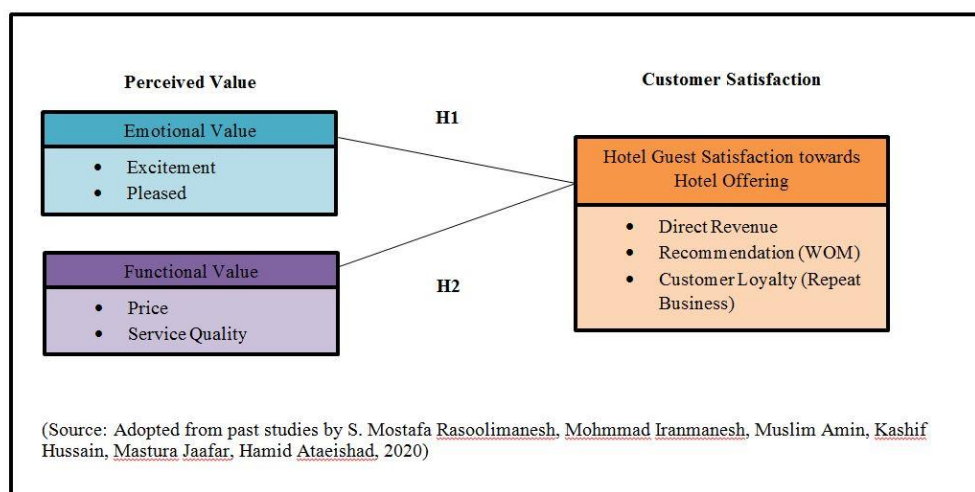
premium pricing that hotel guests perceive as value usually influences their willingness to pay for service offerings, which can generate revenue.

In addition to financial resources, product knowledge, and shop or service location, other factors can affect customer value (Javed & Cheema, 2017). To attract new users, build strong relationships with them, and foster customer loyalty, customer-value-providing tactics are essential. Offering high customer value to target customers increases trust, commitment, and loyalty, as is well known. Confidence in perceived value and adapting to changing preferences foster customer loyalty. Hotel service providers can build long-term relationships and benefit from repeat business by consistently meeting or exceeding customer expectations, which increases customer loyalty and positive hotel referrals.

## 2.1 Research Framework

The research framework, which has been designed to guide and facilitate the research processes. Figure 1.1, serves as a visual aid to further elucidate the framework of this study.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Hotel Industry and Covid-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the service industry, particularly in the way that services are delivered to customers, leading to changes in customer perceptions of value highlighting the importance of perceived value in service offerings. This literature review aims to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on customer perceived value in service offerings. The concept of perceived value enables marketers to estimate how consumers perceive the value of their products or services (McDougall & Leverque, 2000). Perceived value is operationalized and quantified differently across various fields of research, depending on the type of product or service being studied (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016). Sheth et al. (1991) identified functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values as aspects of perceived value that influence consumer behaviour. However, later research by Sweeney et al. (1996) excluded epistemic and conditional values as being too transitory. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) conducted an exploratory study, classifying values into quality, emotion, price, and social aspects. More recently, Gallarza et al. (2017, 2019) proposed a multi-dimensional

perspective on perceived value that includes efficiency, quality, prestige, esteem, entertainment, aesthetics, ethics, and escapism, specifically in the context of the hotel industry. Other researcher discussed the effects of COVID-19 on hotel marketing and management practices and outlines study on hygiene and cleanliness and health and health care (Jiang & Wen, 2020).

## ***2.2 Customer Perceived Value on Service Offerings***

The hotel industry places significant importance on customer perceived value when it comes to their service offerings. This is because customer satisfaction and loyalty are crucial for the success of any hotel. To enhance customer perceived value, hotels focus on providing a range of services that cater to the needs and preferences of their guests. These services often provided by well-trained staff who are knowledgeable, courteous, and attentive to ensure a positive guest experience. By offering these service offerings, hotels aim to exceed customer expectations and create a memorable stay for their guests.

Customer perceived value is an exceedingly significant factor in the realm of service offerings. It pertains to the benefits that customers perceive to receive from a service, in relation to the costs they incur (Zeithaml, 1988). Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive association between customer perceived value and both customer satisfaction and loyalty (Santos-Vijande et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2012). It is worth noting that customer satisfaction can be defined as the estimations or beliefs held by customers regarding what they will receive or consume from the products or services they acquire (Rasidah et al., 2021). The dynamic nature of perceived value necessitates continuous study, as it was previously considered to be one-dimensional. However, it has become evident that each individual possesses their own unique perception of value (Raza et al., 2012). Therefore, it is imperative to delve deeper into this subject matter in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of customer perceived value

## ***2.3 Impact of COVID-19 on Service Offerings***

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced service providers to adapt to new ways of delivering services to customers, such as through online channels or contactless delivery. This has led to changes in customer perceptions of value, as customers now place a greater concern on safety and convenience when choosing service providers. Li et. al, (2022) highlighted that contactless services thrived during the COVID-19 pandemic, still their consequences remained unclear. The exploration also identified that safety and perceived value are important determinants of service quality that customers expect in crisis situations. Addition to that, importance of inspiration by real-life examples from service design practice helps to highlight some of the challenges faced by actors when employing a traditional approach to service design decision (Vink et. al, 2021). Researcher further stress that pandemic has increased customer expectations for service quality and reliability (Sahadev & Purani, 2021). The pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, has had a significant impact on the hotel industry and the behaviour of its customers (Hoisington, 2020; Lekraj, 2020). While emotional value is defined as the perceived usefulness derived from an alternative's ability to elicit feelings or affective states, which can change based on consumer preferences, time, and culture (Sheth, et. al, 1991). Functional value, on the other hand, is defined as a perceived utility derived from an alternative's ability to perform a functional, utilitarian, or physical task (Ryu, et. al, 2008). It can be evaluated objectively using specific indicators such as price, service quality, and hotel image.

## ***2.4 Importance of Perceived Value in the COVID-19 Era***

In the COVID-19 era, perceived value has become even more critical in service offerings. Service providers must consider the changing needs and preferences of customers and adapt their offerings accordingly. Studies have shown that service providers who focus on creating value for customers during the pandemic are more likely to retain customers and improve customer satisfaction (Sahadev & Purani, 2021; Vink, et al., 2021). Electronic word-of-mouth has become increasingly important in the hotel industry, with online consumer reviews and ratings being among the most accessible and common forms of media used for this purpose (Chatterjee, 2001; Lenhart, 2006). These evaluations can easily be distributed online via travel advice websites, allowing customers to share their opinions with a wider audience. Previous research has shown that perceived value is a major determinant of customer satisfaction (Williams & Soutar, 2009; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016), with several tourism-related studies demonstrating a link between perceived value and satisfaction (Song et al., 2011; Sim et al., 2006). While some marketing studies have emphasized the relationship between functional and emotional value (Nkaabu et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2018), hotel research has tended to treat these concepts separately.

When the perceived value of an item increases, the business or firm can either increase the price or sell more units, resulting in greater profits. This suggests that marketing professionals want to expand by determining what their guests appreciate most. It is significant because marketing professionals can use it to predict how customers will perceive the property (McDougall & Leverque, 2000). How perceived value is operationalized and measured varies from one field of research to the next based on the type of product and service (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016). Sheth et al. (1991) identified functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values as components of perceived value that influence consumer behaviour. Sweeney et al. (1996) later removed epistemic and conditional values because they were too ephemeral. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) went on to do exploratory study, categorising values based on quality, emotion, price, and social factors. In the context of the hotel industry, Gallarza et al. (2019) and Gallarza et al. (2017) hypothesised that the concept of value is comprised of various components, including efficiency, quality, prestige, esteem, entertainment, aesthetics, ethics, and escapism. For example, consider client loyalty, word of mouth, and visitor recommendations. Coronavirus is a newly identified coronavirus that causes an infectious disease. The first known incident occurred in December 2019 in Wuhan, China (Hoisington, 2020). The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2) poses the greatest threat to world health, with far-reaching socioeconomic repercussions for nearly every country on earth (Lekraj, 2020).

Emotional value is the perceived utility gained from an option's capacity to evoke emotions or affective states (Sheth et. al, 1991). The emotional value is also defined as what varies depends on the consumer, the time period, and the society. Functional value is the perceived usefulness resulting from an alternate ability to carry out a functional, utilitarian, or physical job (Ryu et. al, 2008). Functional value is also characterised as something that can be objectively evaluated using predetermined indicators such as pricing, service quality, and hotel image.

Electronic word-of-mouth refers to a variety of media forms and website types, with online customer reviews and ratings being the most accessible and prevalent (Chatterjee, 2001). According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, over 30% of internet users have conducted online product evaluations (Lenhart, 2006). Due to the accessibility and availability of travel advice websites, consumers are able to share their ideas more easily. Consumers are

invited to provide both quantitative and qualitative evaluations of places, hotels, and other travel experiences they've had on the sites, which are then aggregated to generate a variety of ratings.

Prior research has demonstrated that perceived value is a significant predictor of customer happiness (Williams & Soutar, 2009; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016). Many tourism-related studies have identified a correlation between perceived value and satisfaction (Song et al., 2011; Sim et al., 2006). Although several marketing studies have successfully highlighted the connection between functional and emotional value (Nkaabu et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2018), hotel research has tended to see these concepts as different.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### ***3.1 Research Design***

This study uses a cross-sectional research design.. Quantitative surveys are used to test previous study theories. This study collected data from hotel guests during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kim et al. (2021) state that each participant was randomly selected as the unit of analysis.

First, a descriptive approach was used to examine the demographics and potential determinants of Grand Alora Hotel guests in Alor Setar Kedah. As suggested by Babbie and Mouton (2021), guests were given numerical likert scale questionnaires during check-out. Using a cross-sectional research design, this data collection method examined the variables' relationship at a specific time. With a well-structured questionnaire survey, the researcher collected a lot of useful data for this cross-sectional study. The survey used concise quantitative questions to measure customer perceived value and satisfaction. The instruments were made available online to comply with Covid-19 SOPs and meet study objectives.

The questionnaire was distributed during checkout to identify potential determinants and resolve unresolved customer needs and wants. This was done using a cross-sectional research design to collect data at one time. This method examined customer satisfaction and perceived value simultaneously. Applied research and hypothesis testing were used to determine if the theoretical framework is still applicable.

The researcher used validated scales or adapted measurement instruments to ensure data reliability and validity. The questionnaire had four sections that addressed research objectives and study framework features (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Previous research informed this study's survey questionnaire. To test the study conceptual framework and hypotheses, the four measures used to measure perceived functional value, perceived emotional value, and satisfaction were adapted from earlier research (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016; Sanchez et al., 2006). Four items measured each perceived functional and emotional value dimension, totaling eight (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). They used a likert-scale survey with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

#### ***3.2 Population & Respondents***

The applied research sampled Grand Alora Hotel guests during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their responses were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic season to gain insights into the ambiguity of the perceived value-satisfaction relationship at that time. This study included hotel guests who needed to follow SOPs (Kim et al., 2021).

For this aim, data was collected from individual, who serveds as the unit of analysis. The sampling technique applied was only simple random sampling where randomly selected subset

of population applied. Out of the hotels' expected departure list was randomly chosen, where 200 individuals successfully completed the questionnaire and provided responses for the study during the set time. In Alor Setar, Kedah, visitors of the Grand Alora Hotel was given an online questionnaires by the researcher during check-out time. This is to ensure an actual experience from the respondents. Link to a Google Form study questionnaires were advance emailed or WhatsApp to all respondents contact number that were required to completing the survey before they successfully depart the hotel.

The study's sample was designated only 200 where purposely for a smaller sample size allows for a more in-depth examination of a specific context or situation. By focusing on a smaller sample, researchers can obtain detailed information and explore the unique challenges and experiences of the respondents during that specific period. For this study the cross-sectional study was designated for the survey to be more practical and efficient, making a study suitable with limited resources such as small respondents able to generalized better. The respondent was decided to be ample enough to help identify patterns, associations, and potential areas for improvement, contributing to the applied research objectives.

### ***3.3 Data Analysis***

Data analysis is a partly descriptive study that characterises a population's values and preferences to gain current insights. Four primary questionnaire components met the study's objectives and research questions. Each component will generate questions about the research objective, study framework, and hypotheses.

This study used SPSS version 17 for data analysis, including descriptive statistics, correlation, and association tests. The study used descriptive statistics to summarise variables using mean score, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. Describing the sample characteristics of collected data, summarising variables to provide concise overviews, and identifying patterns, trends, and potential relationships between variables helped explore and communicate findings.

Along with other categorical variables like emotional and functional perceived values and customer satisfactions, a Chi-Square was used to examine the associations between hotel offerings and customer satisfaction.

## **4. FINDINGS**

### ***4.1 Research Findings***

From the Likert scales and mean scores to variances and standard deviation scores, the study found differences in answers. The mean scores for emotional and functional values in this study indicate high hotel offering satisfaction, with functional values outperforming emotional values. Despite COVID-19, most respondents enjoyed their stay at the Grand Alora Hotel and were satisfied with their experience. The result also shows that some hotel guests are concerned about their health and safety, highlighting the need to address these concerns to ensure guest satisfaction.

The correlation test found no associations between variables, so the study hypotheses were not supported even with high mean scores. Despite this study's findings not supporting the hypotheses, all data can be discussed differently, identifying patterns and potential areas for improvement, contributing to the applied research objectives.



### 4.1.1 Frequency Analysis

Out of 200 respondents randomly chosen, the sample consist 130 females (65%), while 70 males (35%). The largest age group falls between 18 to 24 years old, with 107 respondents (53.5%), followed by ages between 25 to 30 years old (32.5%). Most of them hold a bachelor degree with 99 respondents (49.5), while the rest do not. The variety of races is also reported in the demographic explorations; with most of them were Malay with 175 respondents (87.5%). Therefore it can be seen as most of the conclusion made in this study and the result reflecting and generalized by most of female, 18-24 years old, where most of them have mediocre academic qualification and Malay.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Demographic)

	Variables Predictor	Frequency N	Percentage
Gender	Male	130	65%
	Female	70	35%
	Total	200	100%
Age	18 – 24 years	107	53.5%
	25 – 30 years	65	32.5%
	31 – 35 years	18	9.0
	> 35 years	10	5.0%
	Total	200	100%

Note: N 200 guests who stayed at the Grand Alora Hotel during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 4.1.2 Reliability Analysis

The result of reliability test on the study dataset displayed good for the independent variable survey dataset while an acceptable result of Cronbach alpha for dependant variable dataset analysis (refer Table 4 -Reliability Analysis). The results in Table 4 reveal that all Cronbach's Alpha values are in the range of 0.72 to 0.878 and all exceed 0.70 indicating an eligible forms of construct reliability.

Table 4: Reliability Analysis (N=200)

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha	Description
Emotional Values	4	0.88	Good
Functional Values	4	0.85	Good
Dependant Variable	3	0.72	Acceptable
Cronbach Alpha		0.86	

Note: Cronbach Alpha Score of Dataset based on Cronbach Alpha Equations

### 4.1.3 Descriptive Analysis

#### 4.1.3.a. Emotional Value (Excitement & Pleased) and Customer Satisfaction

Independent value for this study is emotional value and functional value. The results produced by the descriptive analysis was to explore the majority of the pattern and the variances in scoring for each items or value components.

The descriptive statistic results displayed in Table 4.1 below, reflect that “Excitement”, the mean is 3.45, while for “Pleased”, the mean is 3.70. The Descriptive Statistic result that displayed in Table 4.1 below, indicating that, on average; participants reported a moderate level of enjoyment and excitement during their stay at the hotel during the Covid-19 endemic. The

mean result suggesting that, on average, participants reported a higher level of satisfaction and pleasure when their arrival was welcomed and they were treated well by the hotel.

While “Excitement” standard deviation is 1.198, indicating that there is some variation in the responses, with some participants reporting higher levels of excitement and others reporting lower levels for “Pleased”, the standard deviation is 1.166, suggesting a similar level of variation in participants' responses regarding their satisfaction and pleasure upon arrival at the hotel.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (Emotional Values)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I enjoyed and excited staying at the hotel during the Covid-19 pandemic.	200	3.45	1.198
I am satisfied with my choice to stay at hotel while Covid-19 pandemic	200	3.40	1.264
My arrival was welcomed by the hotel and was treated well	200	3.70	1.166
I was satisfied and comfortable staying at the hotel during Covid-19 pandemic.	200	3.58	1.175
Valid N	200		

*Note: The table shows the descriptive statistics for 'price' and 'service quality' construct.*

#### **4.1.3.b. Functional Value (Price & Service Quality) and Customer Satisfaction**

For “Price” Discount on room rates, food, and other services satisfy me, the mean is 4.23, indicating that, on average, and participants reported a relatively high level of satisfaction with the discounts provided by the hotel. Next item with mean score 3.74, suggesting that on average, participants were somewhat less likely to return to the hotel if there was a slight increase in price. For the sub-dimension of Service quality experienced meets my expectations, the mean is 3.88, indicating that, on average; participants reported that the service quality met their expectations. “Overall satisfaction”, the item mean is 3.99, suggesting that, on average, participants expressed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the overall services provided by the hotel.

While the Standard Deviation results shows that for Discount on room rates, food, and other services satisfy me, the standard deviation is 0.981, indicating that there is some variation in the responses, with some participants reporting higher levels of satisfaction with the discounts while others reporting lower levels. For in case of slightly increase in prices, I still would return to that hotel, the standard deviation is 1.087, suggesting a moderate level of variation in participants' responses regarding their willingness to return to the hotel in the face of a slight price increase. For the sub-dimension of Service quality experienced meets my expectations, the standard deviation is 0.982, indicating some variation in participants' experiences and perceptions of service quality. The standard deviation is 0.985, suggesting a similar level of variation in participants' satisfaction with the overall services provided by the hotel.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Functional Values)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Discount on room rates, food and other services during the Covid-19 pandemic satisfy me.	200	4.23	0981
In case of slightly increase of prices, I still would return to this hotel because of their good service.	200	3.74	1.087
The service quality I experienced, meets my expectations.	200	3.88	.982

Overall I am satisfied with the services provided by the hotel during the crisis of Covid-19 pandemic.	200	3.99	.985
Valid N	200		

*Note: The table shows the descriptive statistics for 'excitement' and 'pleased' construct.*

## 4.2 Association Analysis

### 4.2.1 Chi-Square Analysis

The hypothesized relationships were tested with Chi-Square Analysis to examine the associations between the study variables and the result reflecting below (Table 5).

Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis

	Value	df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.292	1	.589

*Note: a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .23  
b. Computed only for 2x2 table.*

Based on the provided Chi-Square test results, however they were found that there is no significant association or relationship between the variables being tested. The p-values for all the tests reflecting greater than .05 values, suggesting that any observed differences are likely only due to chances, where true relationship between the variables remain ambiguous. Based on the provided Chi-Square test results, the result reflecting result of  $df(1) = 0.292$ ,  $p = 0.589$ ,  $v = 0.206$ . The p-values is  $0.292 > 0.05$ , and the Fisher's Exact sig. = 1.00, is higher than  $0.05 < 1.00$ . Chi-Square test also calculated higher value ( $0.05 > 0.02$ ).

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Reliability & Association Discussion

The study dataset reliability test showed good and acceptable Cronbach alpha results, supporting survey instrument reliability and construct reliability. The hypothesised relationships tested with Chi-Square Analysis showed that (H1) "Excitement" and "Pleased" as emotional perceived values positively affect customer satisfaction and (H2) "Price" and "Service Quality" as functional perceived.

However, the Chi-Square test results showed no significant relationship between the variables. The p-values for all tests were greater than .05, suggesting that any observed differences are likely due to chance and that the variables' relationships are unclear. Based on the Chi-Square test results, the null hypothesis is rejected and the constructs have no significant relationship. The Chi-Square test violated the assumptions that show no association. Further variables associations testing with SPSS 24 or SMART-PLS is needed to test theory fit.

If a chi-square test of 200 hotel guests during the COVID-19 pandemic shows no relationship between emotional value and customer satisfaction, investigate. The researcher found no association, indicating that the new scope of study and population affected the results, which contradicted the study's hypotheses. Interestingly, the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic may have changed guest expectations and perceptions. Health and safety measures, restrictions, and hotel operations changes may have overshadowed customer satisfaction's emotional aspects. Thus, emotional value may not have driven satisfaction at this time. In similar ways, the driver

may be a shift in priorities, with pandemic concerns shifting towards hygiene, cleanliness, and health protocols. However, the data collection environment diverted attention from the study's determinants. Comparatively, emotional aspects like personalised experiences or enjoyment may have lost value. Thus, emotional value may not affect customer satisfaction during this period. Due to strict SOPs that elicit emotional responses, hotel guests may receive limited emotional services. Reduced emotional engagement may have weakened the link between emotional value and customer satisfaction. Lack of relationship association may also be due to moods and emotions. Events before the questionnaire survey affected sample diversity. The subjectivity of the relationship, where phase descriptive data analysis and discussion identified the similar concept of variety in decisions, may also explain the decrease in associations between variables.

Overall, all data were considered to interpret non-expected results and consider these potential reasons for the lack of association. Further research and analysis may illuminate the dynamics of emotional value and customer satisfaction in the near future. Pearson Chi-Square: The total dataset Pearson chi-square statistic is .292 with 1 df. The total chi-square test's asymptotic significance value (p-value) is .589 (two-sided). This suggests that the dataset variables are not significantly related. Therefore, the chi-square test showed no significant relationship between functional value (service and price) and customer satisfaction. The Pearson chi-square statistic for the entire dataset is .292 with 1 df, and the asymptotic significance value is .589 (two-sided). These findings indicate that functional value (service and price) did not significantly affect hotel guest satisfaction in the study.

This study contradicts previous research that found a strong correlation between perceived value, satisfaction, and revisit intent (Kim et al., 2019; Rasoolimanesh, 2016) using different samples and sets. However, researchers found possible reasons for the discrepancy between high descriptive analysis mean scores and no significant chi-square test associations. Descriptive findings showed limited variability and sample characteristic with most respondents being Malay and female. Other cross-sectional analysis limitations may have affected the results and interpretation. Thus, the descriptive analysis data showed interesting patterns and trends that support the variable relationships. The correlation test found no associations between variables, so the study hypotheses were not supported even with high mean scores. Despite this study's findings not supporting the hypotheses, all data can be discussed differently, identifying patterns and potential areas for improvement, contributing to the applied research objectives.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected hotel operations and survival worldwide. Thus, researchers and industry professionals must examine the effects of this crisis and rethink hospitality operations.

Analysis of COVID-19 hotel guest data shows a wide range of responses. Due to demographic differences in values, these differences exist. On average, participants reported moderate excitement and satisfaction during their COVID-19 hotel stays, according to descriptive statistics. However, standard deviations, which indicate response variability, are important. Individual experiences and perceptions of emotional value may vary. This study shows that value perception and emotional experience vary by individual and are influenced by events and circumstances. Functional Perceived Values based on descriptive statistics show that participants were generally satisfied with hotel discounts and services. However, responses vary, particularly in participants' willingness to return to the hotel after a slight price increase. This suggests that while participants were satisfied, functional value preferences and responses

may vary. The COVID-19 pandemic raised consumers' health concerns and fears about staying in hotels while infected. This factor may affect people's emotions, values, and satisfaction.

Kim and Cha (2017) found that hotel customer satisfaction is positively correlated with emotional value (e.g., enjoyment, excitement, relaxation). They found that hotels with positive emotional experiences have happier customers. Note that some studies found weak or insignificant associations between variables. Lee and Hsieh (2013) found no correlation between emotional value and customer satisfaction, unlike Kim and Cha (2017). It appears that emotional value alone may not predict customer satisfaction.

Given these varied research results, a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between emotional and perceived values and hotel customer satisfaction requires further study. Due to discrepancies between analysis results, this study did not fully address the gap. The discrepancy between descriptive analysis and the chi-square test provides ample interpretation of the findings based on the covid-19 phenomenon and possible shifting factors, offering insights for future research. Consider research design and data collection limitations that may have affected results. The sample size may have been too small to detect a significant relationship between emotional value, perceived value, and customer satisfaction. Analysis would be stronger with a larger, more diverse sample. Emotional value and customer satisfaction measures are also important and can affect test results. Researchers should carefully choose validated measurement tools to accurately capture constructs. This will strengthen and validate the results. Based on the discrepancies, using a longitudinal design to capture changes over time or more diverse and representative samples may yield more clear and complete perspectives. Add more variables to better understand the relationships between emotional values, functional values, and customer satisfaction.

Future research should include hotel category comparisons. This would include three- and four-star hotels, economy class hotels, and luxury hotels. Thus, a better understanding of hospitality industry segment-specific perceived value and satisfaction can be gained. Collaboration with hotels to collect data during less busy hours is also advised. This method takes advantage of guests' willingness to complete questionnaires during these times, when they are less rushed than during check-out. Researchers can improve data reliability and validity by strategically timing data collection to optimise response rates and minimise respondent bias.

Looking into different determinants of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the hotel industry is crucial. Future research should include convenience, time-saving, and price-orientation motivations, which were found to be important to the study (Ahmad et al., 2023). Academics and practitioners must continue research to understand the pandemic's long-term effects and develop industry reform strategies. These efforts are essential for the hotel industry's future survival in the face of unexpected challenges.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

IM Akhir and MAM Mazlan carried out the introduction and literature review sections. IM Akhir and RAA Rahman collected and refined the data and performed the data analysis using SPSS. NF Isa contributed on the refinement of the data methodology section. MA Razali and F

Hakim refine the discussion and implication sections. All authors contributed by reading and approved the final manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

“None declared”

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Irina Mohd Akhir** possesses a Master's degree in Hospitality Management (Hotel Management) from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia. She currently holds the position of senior lecturer in the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management at UiTM Penang, Malaysia. She holds one UiTM Patent, the Housekeeping Trolley and has experiences in supervising final year graduates. She has coauthored over several publication on her interest reseach topic including (1) Interactive Online Learning, (2) Hospitality Disability Act, (3) Food Delivery Apps, (4) Front Office Learning System, (5) Work Exhaustion, (6) Operating

Efficiency & Service Quality, (7) Green Hotel, and other hospitality-related areas. Presently, she is enthusiastically involved in the research topic of service technology, as well as future industry employability.

**Rabiatul Adawiyah Abd Rahman** hold a Master in Hospitality Management (Gastronomy) from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia. She is currently a senior lecturer in Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management UiTM Penang, Malaysia. Experienced in supervising final year graduates and a keen interest in gastronomy related area, she is enthusiastically engaged in the topic of food sustainability and culture.

**Dr. Nina Farisha Isa** is a Senior Lecturer of Hotel & Tourism Management, UiTM Selangor. She has coauthored over several publications including in Management information system, buying decision behavior, consumer behavior, Structural Equation Modelling, Hospitality & Tourism. She holds PhD from University of Malaya(UM). The current research interests in (1) Development of teaching and learning innovations; (2) Operational Excellence for decision making.

**Mohamad Azli bin Razali** hold a Master in Food Science from Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia. He is currently a senior lecturer in Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management UiTM Penang, Malaysia. Experienced in supervising final year graduates and a keen interest in gastronomy related area. He enthusiast engaged in the topic of Culinary and Gastronomy.

**Dr. Fairuz Hakim** is a Senior Lecturer of Hotel & Tourism Management, UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang. He has published over several publications including in Service Marketing, Hospitality & Tourism. He holds PhD from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University (RMIT). The current research interests in (1) Service Marketing; (2) Hospitality Marketing, (3) Employee engagement, (4) Value Co-creation, and (5) Psychological Contract.

**Mohd Azreen Mohd Mazlan** possesses a Degree (Bsc) in Hotel and Tourism Management from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia. He currently holds the position of Interim Director of Food and Beverage, of Mandarin Oriental Doha Qatar. He has vast experiences throughout the hotel industry delivering his expertise at Datai Langkawi, Sofitel Kuala Lumpur, Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur, Canouan and Doha. Currently active in the effort of biodiversity and sustainability act through food and beverage innovations. Presently, he is keen involving in supporting UiTM's research and academician efforts.



# Apology Unveiled: An Exploration of Iban Youth's Interactions with Elders and Peers

Kimberley Lau Yih Long<sup>1\*</sup>, Christine Jacqueline Runggol<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1, 2</sup> Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Sarawak, Kampus Samarahan, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: [kimberley@uitm.edu.my](mailto:kimberley@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*This study delved into the role of social identity and cultural factors in apologetic communication by examining the apology speech acts employed by Malaysian Iban undergraduates at UiTM Sarawak. Specifically, the research aimed to investigate the influence of social power and cultural factors on the use of Iban apologetic techniques among Malaysian Iban university students in six different apology situations. To gather data, the research utilised Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT), presenting participants with six distinct scenarios that required them to provide an apology in the Iban language. The collected data was then analysed to identify and categorise the apology strategies employed by the participants. By examining the impact of social power and cultural norms on the use of semantic formulas in Iban apologies, this study sheds light on how students' apologetic strategies are influenced by the social environment and cultural norms. The findings offer valuable insights into intercultural communication within multicultural academic settings. These insights hold significant implications for language teaching and intercultural communication training, emphasising the importance of recognizing and accommodating diverse apology strategies to foster effective communication and mutual understanding among individuals from various social and cultural backgrounds. By shedding light on the sociolinguistic behaviour of Malaysian Iban undergraduates, this study significantly contributes to the field of sociolinguistics and enriches our understanding of cross-cultural communication patterns in apology speech acts. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations of this study, including its specific focus on Malaysian Iban undergraduates at UiTM Sarawak, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Nonetheless, this study provides a foundation for future research in the area of apology speech acts and intercultural communication.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Effective intercultural communication requires a profound understanding of sociocultural norms and appropriate language use, which exhibit variations across diverse languages and cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Within this context, speech acts assume a pivotal role, as different languages embody distinct sets of linguistic regulations that align with their respective cultures (Wierzbicka, 2003). Among the myriad of speech acts, apologies hold particular significance as a fundamental communicative function, facilitating conflict resolution, maintaining social harmony, and expressing remorse and acceptance of responsibility (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983).

The study of apology speech acts has attracted considerable attention in sociolinguistics, as scholars seek to understand the intricate dynamics of how individuals express remorse, accept responsibility, and seek forgiveness across different sociocultural contexts (Searle, 1969). Recent studies have highlighted the significance of sociocultural factors in apology speech acts, emphasising the influence of social identity and context on communicative practices (Ogiermann, 2009, Pei et al., 2022). Although extensive research has explored strategies primarily in English-speaking contexts due to its global prominence as a lingua franca (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983), it is crucial to examine how speech acts, particularly apologies, are employed for intercultural communication in multicultural societies like Malaysia.

Malaysia, characterised by its diverse ethnic and linguistic landscape, provides a unique context for exploring the complexities of intercultural communication. While research has explored apology strategies in various languages (Aydin, 2013; Al-Zumor, 2011; Cohen & Olshtain, 1983; Jebahi, 2010; Kousar, 2015; Trosborg, 2010), there is a need to zoom in on specific regions and communities to understand their unique sociolinguistic dynamics. Within Malaysia, Sarawak is home to the Iban community, the largest ethnic group in the region and a sub-ethnic group of the indigenous Dayak people (Lim, 2022). The Malaysian Iban community in Sarawak holds a distinctive position within the country's multicultural landscape, with educated individuals proficient in multiple languages, including their native language, Iban, as well as English and Bahasa Malaysia (Ting et al., 2021). English serves as the medium of instruction in formal university classroom settings, while Iban holds significant importance as their mother tongue and plays a crucial role in their daily interactions (Ting et al., 2021). Therefore, investigating how apology strategies are utilised within this unique sociolinguistic context becomes imperative.

Apologizing is a crucial speech act that plays a pivotal role in both everyday interactions in formal as well as informal settings (Searle, 1969). However, there is a dearth of research on the apology strategies employed by the Iban community, particularly among the educated subgroup represented by undergraduate students attending higher learning institutions. Existing literature has mainly focused on Western cultures (Al-Khaza'leh, 2018; Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Kashkouli & Eslamirasekh, 2013), neglecting non-Western perspectives. Previous studies, such as the work of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), have emphasized the need for further investigations into apologies within non-Western cultures. This call for research is particularly pertinent within the context of educated Iban undergraduates who possess proficiency in both English and Iban languages. With their proficiency in both Iban, their mother tongue, and English, Malaysian Iban undergraduates in Sarawak engage in intercultural interactions and encounter situations that demand effective communication through apologies.

The limited research conducted on apology strategies employed by the Malaysian Iban community, particularly among educated undergraduate students, hinders our understanding of their sociolinguistic behaviour in intercultural communication. Furthermore, the use of both English and Iban languages by these students in different social contexts calls for an examination on how they navigate apology speech acts in both languages. As bilingual individuals proficient in English and Iban, these undergraduates navigate different linguistic contexts and social settings, making their apology strategies a fascinating area for exploration.

The present study aimed to address the research gap by examining the role of social identity and cultural norms in the utilisation of apology strategies among Malaysian Iban undergraduates in Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Sarawak. This study built upon existing research and extended its scope to Malaysian Iban undergraduates in Sarawak, a group that has received limited attention in previous studies. Exploring the apology strategies employed by this specific population can offer valuable insights into the sociolinguistic behaviour of this group and contribute to our understanding of cross-cultural communication patterns within multiple settings in Sarawak.

Based on the identified problem statement, this study aimed to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To identify the frequency and distribution of various semantic formulas used by the Iban undergraduates when apologising to elders and peers in the Iban language.
2. To compare how the use of various semantic formulas used by the Iban undergraduates when apologising to elders and peers in the Iban language vary in different situational contexts.
3. To gain insights into the sociolinguistic dynamics and cultural norms related to the way the Iban undergraduates apologise to the elders and peers.

By addressing these research objectives, this study aims to contribute to the field of sociolinguistics, enhance understanding of intercultural communication patterns, and provide practical insights for language teaching and intercultural communication training.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Studies on The Speech Act of Apologising***

Effective communication encompasses not only language usage but also an understanding and application of appropriate speech acts within specific sociocultural contexts. In this regard, Searle's (1969) Speech Acts Theory, provides a framework for analysing how language is used to perform various acts, including apologies. Apologies play a crucial role in speech acts because they are powerful communicative tools that go beyond mere linguistic expressions. Apologies are complex acts through which speakers convey remorse, accept responsibility, and seek forgiveness for their actions or words (Searle, 1969). By examining apologies as speech acts, insight into the underlying structure and intention behind these communicative acts can be gained.

Apologies serve multiple purposes, such as showing guilt, admitting one's mistakes, maintaining social relationships, repairing damaged bonds, and promoting interpersonal harmony within society (Leech, 1983; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Trosborg, 1994). Apologies are considered expressive acts under Searle's Speech Acts Theory as they allow speakers to communicate their sincere remorse and regret for their behaviour. For an apology to be effective, it must include a genuine sense of responsibility, sorrow, and a proposed solution

(Elsafar, et al, 2023). Individuals express their wish to apologise, accept responsibility for their actions, and acknowledge any pain they may have caused. Apologies serve as vehicles for empathy, understanding, and reconciliation, playing a vital role in resolving conflicts and restoring trust within interpersonal interactions.

In recent years, scholars have further explored the complexities of apology strategies within the framework of Speech Acts Theory. Initially introduced by the British philosopher J.L. Austin in the 1960s, this theory was later developed by philosopher John Searle (Thomas, 1995). It provides a framework for analysing the illocutionary power of apologies. Illocutionary force refers to achieving specific goals through utterances. When someone apologises, they aim to achieve illocutionary goals such as seeking forgiveness, demonstrating accountability, or expressing regret. Understanding the illocutionary force of apologies helps grasp the underlying intentions and motivations of speakers, enabling a more nuanced interpretation of their words (Thomas, 1995).

Numerous studies have focused on patterns of apology responses among non-native speakers of English. These studies explored cross-cultural differences between ESL learners and native speakers of the target language and investigated the function of apologies (Aydin, 2013; Al-Zumor, 2011; Jebahi, 2010; Kousar, 2015; Trosborg, 2010). These studies shed light on how cultural factors shape the expression and understanding of apologies.

One aspect that has been explored is the influence of social power on apology behaviour. For instance, a study by Al-Khaza'leh (2018) found that social power plays a role in the apology behaviour of Jordanian individuals. The level of responsibility accepted by the offender has also been shown to be influenced by their closeness to the offended party. This was observed in studies involving Thai and American English speakers conducted by Bergman and Kasper (1993). In contrast, studies with Armenian respondents revealed that the status and social distance of the offended party did not affect the apology patterns, similar to their Western counterparts (Kashkouli & Eslamirasekh, 2013).

Cultural factors play a significant role in shaping the way apologies are expressed and understood. Differences have been found between British and Jordanian individuals in terms of expressing regret versus offering direct apologies or requesting forgiveness (Al-Adaileh, 2007). These differences highlight the impact of cultural norms and values on apology strategies. For example, Hou (2006) identified similarities between Chinese and American individuals but noted that Chinese speakers found it more challenging to express apologies due to their cultural emphasis on politeness.

Cross-cultural variations in apology strategies have also been examined. Banikalef et al. (2015) found that acknowledging responsibility is the most frequently used apology strategy in Jordanian Arabic, often followed by a combination of acknowledging responsibility and swearing by God's name. Interestingly, non-apology strategies were also commonly employed. These findings underscore the significant influence of culture on the way apologies are expressed and understood. Additionally, the use of proverbs as an apology strategy was found to be unique to certain cultures and not commonly found in other societies. Proverbs are employed as a means to save face and may also imply a reluctance to accept responsibility.

Apology response types in Malaysian speakers have also been explored. A study among Malay university students in Malaysia found that expressing regret or apologising and providing excuses or explanations were the preferred strategies when refusing requests in an academic context (Abdul Sattar et al., 2011). This suggests the influence of Malay culture on how refusals

are realised in English. Malay culture highly values indirectness in speech to preserve other's face and foster positive relationships within society (Maros, 2006). Exhibiting cultural refinement is seen as a way for Malays to maintain face, which is crucial for establishing good relationships and upholding social harmony.

## ***2.2 The Iban Language (Cultural and Linguistic Significance)***

The Iban community, the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, holds significant cultural and linguistic prominence. With a population of 723,400 in 2020, the Ibans play a crucial role in the social fabric of Sarawak (Lim, 2022). They dominate regions such as Sri Aman, Betong, Sibu and Kapit (Metom, et al, 2021). Historically referred to as the 'Sea Dayaks', the Ibans have long-established ties with the sea, dating back to the era of James Brooke in the late 19th century (Sutlive & Sutlive, 1994).

The Iban language, which exhibits striking similarities with the Malay, the national language of Malaysia, serves as a common means of communication for diverse ethnic groups in regions such as Song and Kapit (Ting et al., 2021). Studies have revealed substantial lexical and structural parallels between Iban and Malay, with approximately 60 percent of words being cognates (Omar, 1981; Sutlive & Sutlive, 1994). This linguistic connection facilitates communication and interaction among different ethnic groups within these regions.

The Iban language displays a high degree of homogeneity, with limited dialectal variations observed (Omar, 1981). However, variations in accents, customs and rituals exist among Iban speakers, often influenced by their geographical location and settlement patterns (Osup, 2019). Settlements along the same river system tend to share common cultural practices, setting them apart from other Iban communities (McKeown, 1983 cited in Osup, 2019).

## ***2.3 Expression of Apology in The Iban Culture***

In English, the term "sorry" encompasses various meanings and functions, including expressions of remorse, sympathy, or polite requests for clarification (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2023). The versatility of the term reflects its multiple dimensions in English communication. However, within the Iban ethnic group, explicit words or expressions for apology are lacking (Howell, 1908). Metom (2013) suggests in the Iban culture, openly expressing emotions openly and offering direct apologies is not a common practice. When an Iban wrongs another person, direct apology becomes challenging for them. Instead, alternative strategies are employed, such as non-verbal gestures of kindness towards the offended party. Furthermore, they rely on indirect speech, using ambiguous language that does not explicitly acknowledge the emotions of the offended person (Metom, 2013).

Central to Iban society is the concept of "*adat*", encompassing both "rules of logic" and "customary laws" (Sandin, 1980: xi). Adhering to "*adat*" is seen as a mark of respectability and reflects positively on one's upbringing. Individuals who embody good "*adat*" are regarded as well-mannered, verbally polite, and courteous. In contrast, those who fail to honour *adat* may face fines as a consequence (Metom, 2001). Within the Iban community, the determination of an offender's fate relies on "*adat*", the customary laws and norms. The head of the longhouse, known as the "tuai rumah", plays a pivotal role as a mediator between conflicting parties, upholding the community's *adat* (Sandin, 1980; Jawan, 2001; Metom, 2023). "*Adat*" guides the community on how to navigate interpersonal relationships and resolve conflicts.

Over time, neighbouring languages have influenced the Iban language. The Iban have borrowed the term “*mintak ampun*” from Malay and “sorry” from English to convey a similar sentiment (Metom, 2023). These borrowed terms reflect the ongoing linguistic interactions and cultural exchanges between the Iban and their neighboring communities. As they interact with people from their own ethnic group and those from other ethnic groups, they see the need to express apologies using “words” as well, incorporating terms from both Malay and English.

## ***2.4 Age Differences and Power Dynamics in Iban Communication***

In Iban culture, the Dayak Ibans are educated to value and show deference to their elders, believing that disobeying them can result in a curse (*tulah*) and misfortune. While going against elders does not always lead to bad luck, the fear ingrained in younger individuals through this belief acts as a deterrent against engaging in heated conflicts or disagreements (Jawan, 1996). Consequently, age differences hold significance in shaping power dynamics and levels of politeness during conversations (Mahmud, 2013).

Drawing parallel with Japanese culture, where the age of speakers influences the formality and politeness displayed in their speech, older individuals in the Iban community tend to use familiar language when addressing younger people, while younger individuals adopt a polite manner when communicating with older individuals. Conversely, individuals of the same age often employ casual speech styles when conversing among themselves (Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987).

Moreover, the nature of the relationship between the speaker and the addressee in the Iban community also plays a role in communication dynamics. Runggol's (2019) study on Iban speakers of English found that the proximity to the speaker determines the level of directness in compliment strategies, with closer relationships resulting in more straightforward communication, such as among family members or friends. These observations highlight the complex interplay between age, power dynamics, and social relationships in Iban communication, offering insights into the cultural nuances that shape language use and interaction within the community.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### ***3.1 Research Design and Instrument***

In this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted, utilizing an open-ended Discourse Completion Test (DCT) as the research design. The researchers selected this data collection method for two reasons: its widespread usage in cross-cultural pragmatics and its ability to efficiently gather a substantial amount of data within a limited timeframe, as supported by previous studies (Wouk, 2006; Bergqvist, 2009; Al-Isa, 2003; Maros, 2006). The DCT consisted of six carefully designed situations which were adapted from Maros (2006). (see Appendix 1). The situations were accompanied by blank spaces, prompting participants to fill in the dialogues. This approach allowed participants the freedom to respond naturally, generating data that closely resembles real-life interactions. The situations in the DCTs were meticulously selected and designed so as to accurately reflect the familiarity of context. The relationship between the speaker and the interlocutors, including factors such as social distance and social status, were also considered to determine if there were any variations in the way apologies were expressed. For example, the interlocutors in Situations 1, 3 and 4 were those who are older and socially distant. The term 'socially distant' in this context pertains to the degree of familiarity (closeness and intimacy) or unfamiliarity (distance and dissimilarity) that

individuals feel towards those who belong to social, ethnic, occupational, or religious groups different from their own (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2014).

### ***3.2 Reliability and Validity***

The present study placed significant emphasis on ensuring content validity, which ensures the accurate measurement of the elements being studied. The six situations used in the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) were adapted from Maros (2006) to suit the specific research context. The translation of the English version of the (DCT) into Iban was conducted by a native Iban speaker who is also one of the researchers. To ensure the accuracy of the translation, a knowledgeable Iban language teacher was consulted to review and edit the content of each item before administering the DCT to the participants.

To enhance the clarity and comprehensibility of the DCT, a pilot test was conducted with 10 randomly selected Iban students. Their feedback and input were valuable in identifying any potential issues with the clarity of the items and instructions. Based on the pilot test feedback, minor adjustments were made to improve certain aspects, such as vocabulary and sentence structure. This ensured that the DCT items were linguistically and culturally appropriate for the target participants.

Inter-rater reliability was also taken into consideration in the analysis process to ensure consistency and agreement among the researchers. Both researchers independently read and analysed the participants' responses, identifying underlying themes and patterns. In cases where there were discrepancies in the analysis, the conceptual framework of the study (see Appendix 2) was consulted to reach a consensus. Moreover, if the meaning of any Iban vocabulary used in the responses was unclear, a knowledgeable Iban language teacher was consulted for clarification and interpretation.

### ***3.3 Sample and Sampling***

The sample for this study consisted of 28 fourth-semester Degree students from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Samarahan, Sarawak. The sample size of 28 in this study is justified based on the principle of data saturation. Data saturation refers to the point in qualitative research where collecting additional data no longer leads to new information or insights emerging from the analysis. According to Morse (2015), a sample size of 20-30 participants is often sufficient to achieve data saturation in qualitative studies. During the analysis of the collected data, it was found that the responses from the 28 participants yielded a total of 168 semantic formulas. This indicates that the data collected was comprehensive enough to address the research questions and phenomenon of interest. As a result, there was no need to increase the number of participants as the research questions were adequately addressed with the available data. Furthermore, the use of purposive sampling allowed for the selection of participants who met specific criteria. The criteria included being at an advanced level, having a parental background of Iban ethnicity, and possessing proficiency in reading, speaking and writing in the Iban language. Additionally, participants were chosen based on their similar level of English proficiency and understanding of the given scenarios to ensure consistency throughout the study.

### ***3.4 Research Procedures***

Participants in this study were provided with clear information about the survey, and their informed consent was obtained prior to their participation. They were informed about the

voluntary nature of their involvement and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any negative consequences. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, measures were taken to protect the privacy of the participants and their data.

Upon completion of the data collection phase, a rigorous analysis was conducted to derive meaningful insights from the qualitative data collected. The open-ended responses in the questionnaire underwent thematic analysis using NVivo, a powerful qualitative data analysis software. The responses were carefully examined to gain a deep understanding of the students' perspectives on the six situations related to apologies. The data was systematically coded to identify meaningful ideas or concepts related to apologies. NVivo assisted in organizing and managing the data by creating nodes, representing categories or themes derived from the responses. The coding process involved iterative reviews of the data, refining codes and themes to accurately capture the essence of the students' responses. NVivo's analytical features were utilized to explore relationships and patterns within the coded data, facilitating the identification of commonalities, divergences, and sub-themes. The themes derived from the analysis were then categorized into the semantic formulas outlined in the framework of the present study, as indicated in Appendix 3. The percentages of the semantic formulas were computed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents a comprehensive comparison of the percentage of semantic formulas used in Iban apology discourse during interaction with elders and peers across six different situational contexts. The study identified a total of 168 semantic formulas, which were categorized into 11 categories and 2 main types. Illustrative examples (see Appendix 3) enhance understanding of the semantic formulas and their contextual usage. It is important to note that the examples in Appendix 3 are for explanatory purposes and do not represent the actual responses from the respondents.

Table 1: Comparison of Iban Semantic Formula Used When Interacting with Elders and Peers in Different Situational Contexts (in percentage)

No	Type	Semantic Formula	Percentage (%)					
			Elder Interlocutor			Peer Interlocutor		
			S1	S3	S4	S2	S5	S6
1	Single formula	DA	28.6	25.0	0	3.6	21.4	28.6
2		DA + J	35.8	39.3	17.6	35.7	42.9	32.1
3	Combination of formulas	DA + J + OR	0	21.4	0	14.3	0	0
4		DA + AR	14.4	0	0	7.1	3.7	7.1
5		DA+AR+OR	0	0	0	17.9	7.1	0
6		DA + OR	3.6	14.3	0	21.4	0	0
7		DA + DR	17.6	0	0	0	7.1	14.3
8		DA+ H	0	0	0	0	10.7	0
9		DA + Q	0	0	0	0	0	17.9
10		AA + J	0	0	75.0	0	7.1	0
11		AA + J + C	0	0	7.4	0	0	0
		Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: DA-Direct Apology, J-Justification, OR-Offer of Repair, AR-Accepting Responsibility, DR-Denying Responsibility, H-Humour, Q-Question, AA-Avoiding Apology, C-Compliment, S1-Situation 1, S2-Situation 2, S3-Situation 3, S4-Situation 4, S5-Situation 5, S6-Situation 6



#### 4.1 Single Semantic Formula: Direct Apology

The "Direct Apology" formula emerged as a prevalent approach used by UiTM Sarawak's Iban undergraduates when apologizing to both older individuals and peers across different situational contexts. In interactions with older individuals, it was employed in 28.6% of the cases in Situation 1 (S1) and 25.0% in Situation 3 (S3) (see Table 1). Similarly, when apologizing to peers, it was used in 21.4% of the cases in S5, 28.6% in S6, and 3.6% in S2 (see Table 1). These findings indicate the importance of directly expressing remorse and taking responsibility for one's actions when interacting with both older individuals and peers. However, it is interesting to note that this formula was not used in S4 (with older individuals), suggesting potential differences in apology approaches in that specific context. Extract 1 demonstrates the application of this single semantic formula.

Table 2: Extract 1 (Situation 1)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Minta ampun, Prof. (DA)</i>	You: Sorry, Prof. (DA)	DA

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, DA-Direct Apology

Extract 1 showcases the application of the direct apology (DA) semantic formula in an interaction between a speaker and a professor. The speaker apologizes directly for being 15 minutes late by using the phrase, "Sorry, Prof.". This indicates that the speaker acknowledges his lateness and expresses remorse for his actions. The use of a direct apology demonstrates the speaker's sociolinguistic understanding of the importance of taking responsibility and showing respect towards the professor, who is an elder and holds a position of authority. It is noteworthy that the speaker's use of the honorific "Prof." further highlights his recognition of the professor's status and the necessity for a formal and respectful apology. By delivering a concise and straightforward apology, the speaker aims to convey his regret for the delay and uphold a positive rapport with the professor. This finding contrasts with Metom's (2013) assertion that openly expressing emotions and offering direct apologies is not common in Iban culture, suggesting a potential variation in apology practices within the undergraduates' Iban community in UiTM Sarawak.

#### 4.2 Combination of Semantic Formula: Direct Apology, Justification, Offer of Repair

The study's findings highlight that a "Direct Apology" alone is insufficient in the Iban apology discourse, which aligns with the results of Banikalef et al. (2015) where a combination of strategies was observed to be prevalent. In this study, the combination of a "Direct Apology" with a "Justification" emerged as the most commonly used strategy in interactions with both elders and peers. This combination was consistently utilized with both age groups across different situational contexts, indicating its significance in the apology process. The percentages ranging from 17.6% to 42.9% (see Table 1) suggest that individuals recognize the importance of providing justifications alongside their apologies, regardless of the age involved. These findings are similar to Abdul Sattar et al. (2011), whose study among Malay university students in Malaysia revealed that expressing regret or apologising and providing excuses or explanations were the preferred strategies when refusing requests in an academic context. An example of the semantic formula is shown in Extract 2.

Table 3: Extract 2 (Situation 3)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Aku minta ampun Ibuk (DA), aku enda sengaja (J)</i>	You: I am sorry aunty (DA), I didn't mean to (J)	DA + J
Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, DA-Direct Apology, J-Justification		

In this scenario, the speaker employs a combination of a direct apology (DA) and a justification (J) in response to accidentally spilling soup on an elderly lady's blouse (see Extract 2). This pattern of apology demonstrates the speaker's social awareness and sensitivity in handling the situation. It aligns with the Iban cultural belief mentioned by Jawan (1996) and Mahumud (2013) that younger individuals are discouraged from engaging in conflicts or disagreements with their elders. By apologizing directly, the speaker acknowledges his responsibility and expresses genuine remorse for the unintended spillage. The inclusion of a justification aims to provide context and clarify that the act is unintentional, minimising misunderstandings or negative perceptions. By saying "I am sorry Aunty" and explaining "I didn't mean to", the speaker shows empathy and respect towards the elderly lady, acknowledging his discomfort and expressing a sincere desire to rectify the situation. This skilled use of a direct apology with a justification demonstrates the speaker's understanding of sociolinguistic norms, the importance of maintaining social harmony, and the efforts to mitigate any negative impact caused by the accident.

Moreover, the occurrence of the combination of "Direct Apology + Justification + Offer of Repair" among both elders and peers further highlights the multifaceted nature of apologies in the Iban society. This strategy, observed in 21.4% of the cases with elders in S3 and 14.3% of the cases with peers in S2 (see Table 1), reflects a tendency to apologize while simultaneously offering justifications and proposing ways to rectify the situation or make amends. The absence of this combination in the other four situations indicates potential variations in the utilization of this particular strategy, which may be influenced by contextual factors or individual preferences. Extract 3 provides an illustrative instance of the semantic formula.

Table 4: Extract 3 (Situation 5)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Aku deka minta ampun laban laun datai ari jam ti udah ditetapka. (DA) Aku enda sengaja tetinduk sepengudahka ngereja pengawa sekula sebedau aku nurun tadi. (J) Legi aku melanja nuan makai bak McDonald's. (OR)</i>	You: I am sorry for being late. (DA) I accidentally slept right after doing my homework and was not aware of the time. (J) I'll give you a treat at McDonald's later. (OR)	DA+ J+ OR
Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, DA-Direct Apology, OR-Offer of Repair, J-Justification		

In Extract 3, the speaker combines a direct apology (DA) with a justification (J) and an offer of repair (OR) when addressing her friend after being 15 minutes late for their meeting in front of a cafe. By saying "I am sorry for being late", the speaker takes responsibility for her tardiness and expresses remorse. The justification, "I accidentally slept right after doing my homework and was not aware of the time," explains the delay and highlights that it was unintentional. Additionally, the speaker offers an act of repair by suggesting, "I'll give you a treat at McDonald's later", showing her willingness to make up for her lateness. This combination of apology strategies demonstrates the speaker's understanding of the importance of expressing remorse, providing context, and offering a tangible way to address the inconvenience caused. It reflects her desire to maintain a positive relationship with her friend and address the impact of her actions. These findings align with the study by Bergman and Kaper (1993) on Thai and American English speakers, where the level of responsibility accepted by the offender was

influenced by their closeness to the offended party. In contrast, the study with Armenian respondents by Kashkouli and Eslamirasekh (2013) showed that the status and social distance of the offended party did not affect the apology patterns, similar to their Western counterparts.

#### 4.3 Combination of Semantic Formula: Direct Apology, Accepting Responsibility, Offer of Repair

The combination of "Direct Apology + Accepting Responsibility" was consistently employed when apologizing to peers across all three situational contexts. This indicates the recognition among peers of the importance of not only offering a direct apology but also accepting responsibility for one's actions. However, with older interlocutors, this combination was only observed in Situation 1 (S1) at a usage rate of 14.4%. In the other situations (S2, S5 and S6), the usage percentages among peers were 7.1%, 3.7% and 7.1% respectively (see Table 1), suggesting potential variations in the utilization of this strategy between the two groups. These findings align with the study by Bergman and Kasper (1993) on Thai and American English speakers, which showed that the level of responsibility accepted by the offender was influenced by their closeness to the offended party. An example of the semantic formula is shown in Extract 4.

Table 5: Extract 4 (Situation 2)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Aku minta ampun. (DA) Sigi penyalah aku. (AR)</i>	<i>You: I am sorry. (DA) It is my fault. (AR)</i>	DA+ AR

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, DA-Direct Apology, AR-Accepting Responsibility

In Extract 4, the speaker uses the Direct Apology-Accepting Responsibility formula in response to a car accident for which he was at fault. By immediately apologising and accepting responsibility, the speaker acknowledges his role in the incident and demonstrates his willingness to take ownership of his actions. This straightforward admission of fault shows his understanding of the seriousness of the situation and his commitment to resolving it. The combination of these strategies effectively addresses the conflict and highlights the speaker's ability to navigate difficult situations and demonstrate accountability. By employing the DA-AR formula, the speaker showcases his sociolinguistic competence in handling conflicts and emphasises the importance of expressing remorse and accepting responsibility to maintain harmonious relationships and facilitate resolution.

The combination of "Direct Apology + Accepting Responsibility + Offer of Repair " was not observed in the interactions with elder interlocutors, while it appeared in a limited percentage of cases with peers (see Table 1). This suggests a potential difference in the usage and effectiveness of apology strategies with older individuals and peers. The absence of this combination with elders may indicate variations in their expectations or preferences regarding apology expressions, which aligns with the influence of age differences on power dynamics and levels of politeness in conversations, as mentioned by Mahmud (2013). To illustrate the semantic formula of "DA+ AR+ OR", consider Extract 5.

Table 6: Extract 5 (Situation 2)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Aku minta ampun. (DA) Sigi salah aku enda meda kereta nuan. (AR) Tu lumbur aku. Anjung ke bingkil dulu kerita nuan, legi aku mayar semua. (OR)</i>	You: I am sorry. (DA) It is my fault. I didn't see your car. (AR) This is my number. Send your car to a workshop and I will pay for it. (OR)	DA+ AR+ OR

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula. DA-Direct Apologu, AR-Accepting Responsibility, OR- Offer of Repair

In Extract 5, the speaker combines multiple apology strategies to address the situation. She begins with a direct apology, expressing remorse and acknowledging her fault in causing the accident. By accepting responsibility, she demonstrates accountability and shows awareness of her role in the collision. She also provides a justification, explaining the lack of awareness that led to the accident. Additionally, she offers to pay for the damages, providing an offer of repair as a means to compensate for the inconvenience caused. This comprehensive combination of “Direct Apology + Accepting Responsibility + Offer of Repair” reflects an understanding on the importance of expressing remorse, taking ownership of one’s actions, and offering a tangible solution to resolve the situation. Such a combination of strategies can help alleviate anger and contribute to a respectful resolution of the incident.

The findings of the study reveal notable differences in the usage of apology strategies between interactions with elders and peers. Specifically, the combination of “Direct Apology + Offer of Repair” (DA-OR) was predominantly used with elders, with percentages of 3.6% in S1 and 14.3% in S3 (see Table 1). However, among peers, it was only observed in Situation 2 with a percentage of 21.4% (see Table 1). These findings suggest that when apologizing to elders, individuals perceive a direct apology and an offer to repair the damage as sufficient, without explicitly acknowledging responsibility. In contrast, when apologizing to peers, individuals recognize the importance of not only offering repair but also explicitly accepting responsibility for their actions, as demonstrated by the "Direct Apology + Accepting Responsibility + Offer of Repair" (DA-AR-OR) combination. Extract 6 provides an illustrative example of the DA-OR semantic formula given by the respondents.

Table 7: Extract 6 (Situation 3)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Minta ampun Ibu. (DA) Legi aku ngambi ke nuan kain lap. (OR)</i>	You: Sorry Aunt. (DA) I'll get you a washcloth. (OR)	DA+ OR

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, DA-Direct Apology, OR-Offer of Repair

In Situation 3 which takes place at a buffet restaurant, an individual accidentally spills soup on an elderly lady’s blouse while walking between tables. The individual’s response consists of a direct apology (DA) and an offer of repair (OR) (see Extract 6). By saying, “Sorry Aunt”, the individual immediately acknowledges her mistake and expresses remorse for her actions. This direct apology conveys sincerity and respect towards the elderly lady, reflecting the speaker’s awareness of the importance of proper etiquette and consideration. Additionally, the individual’s offer to get a washcloth, exemplifies the offer of repair component in her response. This gesture demonstrates the individual’s willingness to take responsibility for her actions and make amends for the inconvenience caused. The combination of the direct apology and offer of repair aims to address the immediate needs of the elderly lady and alleviate any discomfort or distress caused by the soup spill. This response aligns with the social norms and cultural values of Iban society, emphasising the importance of politeness, empathy, and resolving unintended harm or inconvenience promptly. The findings of the study, similar to Runggol’s

(2019) study on Iban speakers of English, suggest that the nature of the relationship between the speaker and the addressee plays a role in communication dynamics. Apologizing to elders may involve a more deferential approach, emphasizing respect and repair, while apologizing to peers may involve a greater emphasis on accepting responsibility alongside repair. These variations in strategy usage reflect the complex social dynamics and norms surrounding interactions with elders and peers.

#### 4.4 Combination of Semantic Formula: Direct Apology, Denying Responsibility, Humour, Question

A distinct difference in the usage of the combination “Direct Apology + Denying Responsibility” in interactions with peers was observed. This particular semantic structure was exclusively observed in S5 (7.1%) and S6 (14.3%) (see Table 1). This finding suggests that there may be variations in cultural norms and practices related to apologies within this specific group. In contrast, when interacting with elder interlocutors, the utilization of the “Direct Apology + Denying Responsibility” was only observed in S1 (17.6%). It is important to clarify that “Denying Responsibility” and “Justification” are distinct concepts. While “Denying Responsibility” involves placing the blame on others or external factors, “Justification” (as mentioned in Section 4.2) entails providing reasons or explanations for one’s actions. Extract 7 is an illustrative example of the utilization of DA+DR semantic formula.

Table 8: Extract 7 (Situation 1)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Minta ampun Profesor. (DA) Aku laun laban palan endur engkah entukar udah penuh. (DR)</i>	You: Sorry Profesor. (DA) I was late because the parking place was full. (DR)	DA+DR

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, DA-Direct Apology, DR-Denying Responsibility

In Extract 7, the speaker apologizes to his professor for being late to their appointment. The semantic formula used in this instance is “Direct Apology + Denying Responsibility”. The speaker begins with a direct apology, acknowledging his lateness and expressing remorse for his actions. However, he follows it by providing a justification for his tardiness, attributing it to the unavailability of parking spaces (Denying Responsibility). The utilization of the DA+DR combination reflects an intriguing aspect of apology strategies within the culture of UiTM Sarawak’s Iban undergraduates. By denying responsibility, the speaker deflects blame and shifts it onto external circumstances, such as the lack of parking space. This strategy allows the speaker to acknowledge his lateness without fully accepting personal accountability for the situation.

The use of the DA+DR strategy raises sociolinguistic questions about accountability, interpersonal dynamics, and the negotiation of social relationships within the Iban community. Apologies involving the denial of responsibility may serve various functions, such as preserving face, maintaining harmony or mitigating potential conflicts. The findings of this study suggest that the influence of Malay culture on these Iban undergraduates is observed in their apology strategies, as their course mates are predominantly Malays. In Malay culture, expressing regret or apologising while providing excuses or explanations is preferred when refusing requests in an academic context (Abdul Sattar et al., 2011). This cultural influence may explain the utilisation of the DA + DR strategy among the Iban undergraduates. It is also worth noting that the use of proverbs as an apology strategy, observed in some cultures (Bainkalef et al., 2015), is not found in the findings of this study. Instead, the Iban undergraduates employ strategies of

denying responsibility to serve a similar purpose of preserving face and avoiding full acceptance of responsibility.

The presence of the semantic formula “Direct Apology + Humour” in interactions with peers, particularly in S5 (10.7%) (see Table 1), is another noteworthy finding. This indicates that Iban undergraduates utilize humour as a strategy to address apologies when interacting with their peers, potentially aiming to ease tension or discomfort in S5. This finding underscores the significance of interpersonal dynamics and the use of humour in the apology process within peer interactions. Extract 8 provides an illustrative example of the “Direct Apology + Humour” semantic formula.

Table 9: Extract 8 (Situation 5)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Minta ampun wai. (DA) Senyum mimit meh. Ndak te banggat lela nuan nganti aku deh. (H)</i>	You: I’m sorry, friend. (DA) Smile a little. It is not as if you melted while waiting for me. (H)	DA+ H

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, DA-Direct Apology, H-Humour

Extract 8 exemplifies the utilisation of the “Direct Apology + Humour” semantic formula. In this interaction, the speaker offers a direct apology to his friend, acknowledging his mistake or delay. However, what sets this apology apart is the incorporation of humour as a means of addressing the situation and potentially diffusing any tension or discomfort. By making a light-hearted comment about the friend not melting while waiting, the speaker employs humour as a strategy to lighten the mood and potentially alleviate any negative feelings caused by the delay. This finding highlights the significance of interpersonal dynamics and the role of humour in the apology process, particularly when interacting with peers. It suggests that individuals within this social group may utilise humour as a tool for apologising, emphasising the importance of maintaining a positive and friendly atmosphere during the reconciliation process. This finding is unique to the Iban culture and not explicitly accounted for in the existing Framework of Semantic Formulas adapted from Cohen & Olshtain (1983) and Trosborg (1987), which primarily focuses on apologies in Western contexts. Therefore, the inclusion of humour as a semantic formula in Iban apologies expands the framework’s applicability to different cultural contexts and reflects the unique communicative practices of the Iban community. This finding regarding the utilisation of humour in apologies aligns with Runggol’s (2019) study on Iban speakers, which found that their use of humour and light-hearted responses in certain interactions reflects their level of comfort and closeness with the person they are engaging with. It is important to note that their humorous responses are not intended to be mean-spirited, but rather reflect their jovial and cheerful demeanour. This highlights the cultural and social norms surrounding apologies within the Iban community, where humour is employed as a tool to maintain positive relationships and foster a friendly atmosphere even in the face of conflicts or mistakes.

In S6, the combination of “Direct apology + Question” was exclusively observed in peer interactions, highlighting the influence of situational context on the choice of Iban apology strategies. This semantic formula, which appeared in 17.9% of cases (see Table 1), suggests that Iban speakers may incorporate questions within their apologies as a means of seeking clarification or fostering further understanding during the apology process. Extract 9 illustrates an example of the situation.

Table 10: Extract 9 (Situation 6)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Minta ampun. (DA) Enda pedis nuan? (Q)</i>	<i>You: Sorry (DA) Are you hurt? (Q)</i>	DA+ Q

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, DA-Direct Apology, Q-Question

In Extract 9, the speaker combines a direct apology with the addition of a question to seek clarification and confirmation. By apologizing directly and asking if the peer is hurt, the speaker expresses remorse for his action and shows genuine concern for the well-being of the other person. This unique approach reflects the adaptability of Iban speakers in their apology strategies, as they integrate questions to foster understanding and address immediate concerns. This finding highlights the importance of considering situational context and the specific relationship between individuals when analyzing Iban apology strategies. It suggests that Iban speakers use questions within their direct apologies to promote dialogue, seek clarification, and demonstrate empathy. The incorporation of questions in the apology reflects the cultural norms and communication patterns within the Iban community of undergraduates in UiTM Sarawak. It is worth noting that this particular semantic formula, involving direct apology with a question, is not explicitly accounted for in the existing framework of semantic formula commonly used in the analysis of apologies, which predominantly focuses on Western contexts. Therefore, this finding added to the literature of such studies.

#### 4.5 Combination of Semantic Formula: Avoidance Strategies, Justification, Compliment

In Table 1, an interesting finding emerges regarding the utilization of avoidance strategies in the interactions of Iban undergraduates. These strategies involve the avoidance of direct apology expressions and instead rely on justifications or a combination of justifications and compliments. Notably, these avoidance strategies were more prevalent when interacting with elders compared to peers. The finding contrasts with the findings of Mizutani and Mizutani (1987), whereby individuals of the same age often employ casual speech styles when conversing among themselves. Specifically, the combination of "Avoiding Apology + Justification" was employed in 75.0% of the cases in S4 (elder interlocutor) (see Table 1), indicating instances where individuals chose to circumvent offering a direct apology while providing justifications to explain their behavior. In contrast, among interaction with peers, this strategy was observed in S5 with a lower percentage of 7.1% (see Table 1). Extract 10 presents the illustrative example of the semantic structure, showcasing the use of avoidance strategies.

Table 11: Extract 10 (Situation 4)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Ukai pia Ibuk. (AA) Aku rinduk makai kek digaga nuan nya tang aku kenyang. (J)</i>	<i>You: It's not like that Aunty. (AA) I like the cake you made but I'm full. (J)</i>	AA+ J

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, AA-Avoiding Apology, J-Justification

In Extract 10, the speaker utilises the semantic formula of "Avoiding Apology + Justification" (AV+J) during an interaction with an elder. Instead of offering a direct apology, the speaker chooses to avoid it and provides a justification for his behaviors. By saying, "It's not like that Aunty", the speaker indirectly addresses the situation without explicitly admitting fault or expressing remorse. The justification provided, "I like the cake you made, but I'm full.", serves as an explanation for not consuming the cake, deflecting the need for a direct apology. This combination of avoiding apology and providing a justification reflects the complexity of the

Iban apology discourse. It demonstrates how individuals navigate social interactions while respecting cultural norms and considering interpersonal dynamics. The use of avoidance strategies in interactions with elders aligns with the belief ingrained in younger individuals to avoid heated conflicts or disagreements, as going against elders is seen as potentially bringing bad luck (Jawan, 1996). Age differences also play a role in shaping power dynamics and levels of politeness during conversations (Mahmud, 2013). By employing the AV + J strategy, the speaker aims to maintain harmony and save face while acknowledging the efforts of the elder interlocutor in preparing the cake. This finding highlights the importance of understanding the cultural and sociolinguistic nuances within the Iban community and how individuals adapt their communication strategies to uphold respect and preserve relationships.

In S3, the combination of "Avoiding Apology + Justification + Compliment" was exclusively observed in interactions with elder interlocutors, accounting for 7.4% of the cases (see Table 1). This finding suggests that Iban undergraduates employ compliments as a strategy to avoid offering direct apologies while simultaneously justifying their actions. This aligns with the finding of Metom (2013), where alternative strategies, such as non-verbal gestures of kindness towards the offended party, were observed in Iban culture. Additionally, individuals tend to rely on indirect speech, using ambiguous language that does not explicitly acknowledge the emotions of the offended person (Metom, 2013). The semantic formula is exemplified through the example in Extract 11.

Table 12: Extract 11 (Situation 4)

OV(I)	TV(E)	SF
<i>Nuan: Uдах makai aku ba rumah tadi nya</i> (AA) <i>alai aku enda ulih ngabiska kek tu.</i> (J) <i>Amat landik nuan ngagak kek Ibuk.</i> (C)	You: I have eaten at home (AA) so that's why I couldn't finish off this slice. (J) You are so talented in baking Aunty. (C)	AA+ J + C

Note: OV-Original version, TV-Translated version, I-Iban Language, E-English, SF-Semantic Formula, AA-Avoiding Apology, J-Justification, C-Compliment

In Extract 11, the speaker utilises a combination of "Avoiding Apology + Justification + Compliment" during an interaction with an elder. By stating that they have already eaten at home, the speaker offers a justification for not finishing the slice of cake and avoids directly apologising. This strategy allows the speaker to shift responsibility while providing a valid reason for their actions. Additionally, the speaker adds a compliment by acknowledging the elder's baking, diverting attention from her lack of consumption. The use of the AV+J+C strategy in this context reflects the complexity of the Iban apology discourse. It showcases the speaker's ability to navigate social interactions by employing linguistic strategies that balance avoiding direct apologies, providing justifications, and offering compliments. This combination allows the speaker to indirectly address the situation while simultaneously acknowledging the elder's talents. The presence of avoidance strategies, combined with justifications and compliments, demonstrate the intricate sociolinguistic dynamics involved in managing apologies within the Iban cultural context.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research on understanding Iban apology strategies among UiTM Sarawak undergraduates provides valuable insights into the dynamics of apologizing within the Iban community. The findings reveal that Iban speakers predominantly utilize combinations of strategies rather than single strategy, highlighting the complexity and adaptability of their apology discourse. While the study's focus is limited to a specific group of Iban speakers, it underscores the importance of considering cultural and social factors in communication practices, particularly in multicultural academic environments. The inclusion of justifications,



offers of repair, humour, and questions as part of apology strategies reflects the nuanced nature of Iban apologies, shaped by cultural norms, age group dynamics and situational contexts. These findings contribute to the broader field of sociolinguistics, emphasizing the significance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in intercultural communication. To further enhance the validity and generalizability of the findings, future research should involve a wider range of Iban respondents and incorporate naturally spoken language data. By recognizing and appreciating the unique apology patterns within the Iban culture, effective intercultural communication and conflict resolution can be fostered, promoting understanding and respect among diverse communities.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

All authors contributed equally to the various sections of this manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared

## APPENDIX

### 1. Framework of Apology Instrument adapted from Maros (2006)

Situation Number	Situation (Iban version)	Situation (English translation)
1	<i>Nuan siku nembiak Universiti. Nuan udah besemaya enggau Profesor nuan deka betemu enggau iya ba opis. Taja pia, nuan laun 15 minit ari jam ti udah ditetapka laban palan endur engkah entukar udah penuh. Nuan ngetuk pintu opis Profesor lalu tama ke dalam opis iya, Nuan lalu madahka Professor nuan ....</i>	You are a college student. You made an appointment with your professor at his office. But you were 15 minutes late because the closest parking place was full. You knock on the door, go in, and say to the professor ...
2	<i>Lebuh maya pangsut ari palan endur engkah entukar, nuan ngelantak siti entukar sechara enda sengaja. Nya sigi penyalah ti datai ari nuan empu. Pintu entukar ke dilantak nuan tadi bisi balat bebekau. Orang ke beempu entukar nya pangsut ari entukar iya lalu bejalai nuju nuan enggau ati ti pedis. Umur orang nya serambau enggau nuan. Orang ke beempu entukar : Nama nuan enda meda jalai? Peda nuan nama utai udah digaga nuan!</i>	Backing out of a parking place, you run into the side of another car. It was clearly your fault. You dent the side door slightly. The driver gets out and comes over to you angrily. He is an adult, about your age: Driver: Can't you look where you're going? See what you've done!

3	<i>Nuan nemuai ngagai siti kedai makai "buffet". Sepengudah ngambi pemakai, maya nuan benung bejalai nuju mija endur nuan duduk, dia nuan tetepap lalu sup ti dibai nuan naya ba baju siku indai tuai.</i>	At a buffet restaurant: You are carrying your meal to your table. When you are walking between tables, you stumble and your soup spills over an elderly lady's blouse.
4	<i>Siku kaban nuan ngemai nuan nemuai ngagai rumah apai indai iya. Nuan sigi suah kia. Lebu ba rumah kaban nuan nya, indai iya bisi mantaika siti kek ti chukup manis. Nuan enda ulih ngabiska kek nya, lalu ninggalka setengah ari kek nya. Indai kaban nuan : Enda rindu makai kek nya nuan?</i>	A friend invited you to his parents' house. You always go there. While you were there, his mother served a very sweet cake. You cannot eat it and leave half of it. Mother: Don't you like the cake?
5	<i>Nuan udah besemaya deka betemu enggau kaban nuan ba depan siti kedai kupi tang nuan laun 15 minit ari jam ti udah ditetapka laban nuan tetinduk.</i>	You were supposed to meet your friend in front of a café but you were 15 minutes late because you had taken a nap.
6	<i>Lebu maya dalam lif ti sekut sereta mayuh orang, dia nuan teindikka kaki siku orang. Umur orang nya tadi serambau enggau nuan.</i>	In a crowded elevator, you step on somebody's (adult-your age) foot.

## 2. Framework of Semantic Formulas adapted from Cohen & Olshtain (1983) & Trosborg (1987)

No.	Apology Strategy	Definition	Examples
1.	Avoiding or postponing apology	Speaker neither offers an apology nor acknowledges the need to say sorry. No expressions of apology are used.	<i>The cake is very nice, but I am full / I didn't notice you there.</i>
2.	Direct apology	Speaker uses apology expressions.	<i>I'm sorry / Sorry / I apologise.</i>
3.	Use of intensifiers	Speaker employs the use of intensifiers to give force and emphasis.	<i>I'm very sorry / Terribly sorry / Sorry Sorry.</i>
4.	Providing justification	Speaker gives explanations why something happened.	<i>I missed the bus. / I overslept / I saved the wrong file.</i>
5.	Acknowledgement of responsibility	Speaker admits his mistakes	<i>My bad! / It is totally my fault.</i>
6.	Offer of repair	Speaker tries to make up for the unintentional mistake / damage he had caused.	<i>I will pay for the damages caused / Let me get you another bowl of soup.</i>
7.	Denying responsibility	Contrary to providing justification, the speaker avoids admitting his mistake. Instead, he shifts the blame onto others or circumstances	<i>They should have placed a signboard there / The closest parking lot was full.</i>
8.	Promise of non - recurrence	Speaker pledges not to commit the same mistake.	<i>It won't happen again, I promise. I will not be late the next time we meet.</i>

## 3. Examples of Semantic Formula used for reference.

No	Type	Examples
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		Semantic Formula	Iban version	English Translation
1	Single formula	DA	<i>Minta ampun.</i> (DA)	Sorry (DA)
2		DA + J	<i>Minta ampun.</i> (DA) <i>Aku tertinggal bas.</i> (J)	Sorry. (DA) I missed the bus. (J)
3		DA + J + OR	<i>Minta ampun.</i> (DA) <i>Laban ke begaut ka nurun gawa nyu enda ingat ngemai selipar nuan.</i> (J) <i>Aram tua nurun meli selipar baru.</i> (OR)	I'm sorry. (DA). I was in such a hurry to get to work that I forgot your slippers. (J). Let's go out and I'll buy you a new pair. (OR)
4		DA + AR	<i>Aku minta ampun.</i> (DA) <i>Sigi salah aku enda ninga jako ajar nuan.</i> (AR)	I'm sorry. (DA) It's my fault. I should have listened to the advice you gave me. (AR)
5		DA+AR+OR	<i>Minta ampun.</i> (DA) <i>Aku sepatut ia ngemai baju chelum nuan tadi.</i> (AR) <i>Aram tua kin meli baju ke nuan.</i> (OR)	Sorry. (DA) I should have brought your black shirt along. (AR) Let's go there and I'll get you a new shirt. (OR)
6	Combination of formulas	DA + OR	<i>Minta ampun Mak.</i> (DA) <i>Legi aku ngasuh urang ngechat dinding nyak baru.</i> (OR)	Sorry Mom. (DA) I will get someone to paint that wall again. (OR)
7		DA + DR	<i>Minta ampun tuan.</i> (DA) <i>aku laun nganjung proposal tok. Sandra ndak ti ngaga bahagian ia nyak lah aku terpaksa nganti ia.</i> (DR)	I'm sorry for the late submission of this proposal, Sir. (DA) Sandra didn't do her part so I had to wait for her to finish. (DR)
8		DA+ H	<i>Aku minta ampun.</i> (DA) <i>Umbas meh pedis ati ngai ka gamal kitai enda bajik.</i> (H)	I apologise. (DA) Quite sulking, otherwise you won't look beautiful. (H)
9		DA + Q	<i>Minta ampun wai.</i> (DA) <i>Nuan ka aku nyuchi kasut nyak baru?</i> (Q)	Sorry pal (DA). Shall I wash your shoes again? (Q)
10		AA + J	<i>Aku enda meda nuan duduk dia.</i> (AA + J)	I didn't see you sitting there. (AA+ J)
11		AA + J + C	<i>Aku nyu kelalu kenyang.</i> (AA + J) <i>Enda kala aku nyepi utai se-nyamai tok.</i> (C)	I am too full. (AA + J) I've never tasted anything as nice as this. (C)

Note: DA-Direct Apology, J-Justification, OR-Offer of Repair, AR-Accepting Responsibility, DR-Denying Responsibility, H-Humour, Q-Question, AA-Avoiding Apology, C- Compliment

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## **AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES**

**Kimberley Lau Yih Long** is a senior lecturer in Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak, Kampus Samarahan, specialises in English language teaching, Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics. With a keen interest in teaching and learning innovations, she actively explores strategies to enhance ESL classrooms. Her expertise contributes to the advancement of English language education and the understanding of sociolinguistic dynamics in diverse linguistic contexts.

**Christine Jacqueline Runggol** is a lecturer in Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak, Kampus Samarahan. She has vast experience in teaching students of diverse academic backgrounds. Her research interests include English language education and Sociolinguistics. Being an Iban herself, her extensive knowledge of the Iban language and culture greatly enhances the understanding of Iban language and sociolinguistic dynamics of this research.

# Students' Attitude of Flipped Classroom Model in Online Learning Classrooms

Nurul Hannan Mahmud<sup>1\*</sup>, Fatimah Azzahra Md Raus<sup>2</sup>, Nor Fadzilah Arom Karoman<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2 & 3</sup>Centre of Foundation Studies, University Teknologi MARA, Kampus Dengkil 43800  
Dengkil, Selangor, Malaysia.

\*corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>[nurulhannan@uitm.edu.my](mailto:nurulhannan@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*Flipped Classroom Model was introduced in 2016 and since then it has been adopted in many classrooms in most Malaysian institutions. It is described as an innovative strategy used in higher education, tremendously beneficial in a pandemic, demanding students to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This study was conducted in order to investigate students' attitude towards the implementation of Flipped Classroom and to examine students' engagement in a Flipped Online Classroom. 15 Foundation students from a local university in Sepang district were selected for a focus group interview and two classes were recorded and observed. A checklist on Components of Attitude was used. There were three components that were observed which are Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral. Through these instruments, the current study showed that the students' attitude towards Flipped Classroom Model in online learning classroom was positive. Not only that, students also showed positive engagement in terms of Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral. The students viewed Flipped Classroom as a useful, productive, interactive and entertaining learning approach. This study recommends the necessity of using Flipped Classroom Model in face-to-face, online or even hybrid teaching for other suitable subjects due to its flexibility and convenience, encouraging independent learning and enhancing learning interest.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Educators around the world are now adopting technology and education into their classrooms due to Covid-19. It has been mentioned that it brings a myriad of benefits to the educators and students, however, one must admit that not everyone will get the best out of the situation.

The use of technology in education becomes more valuable when time passes by, and some might say compulsory. Wang & Reeves (2006) received results from an interview conducted for students, stated that technology is one of the sources of motivation in learning. Hoffman (2022) also shared that the integration of student-centered technologies has not only resulted in heightened student motivation and improved academic performance, but the use of interactive technologies has also enabled differentiated instruction, leading to increased student motivation once again.

Seeing the importance of technology into the classroom, many research have introduced new techniques and innovations. The Flipped Classroom Approach was most credited to Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams who started using recorded lectures in 2006. The approach was a result of a number of experiments with the concept of blended learning and problem-based learning, introducing new teaching materials and active learning techniques to motivate and engage students (Arnold-Garza, 2014).

The Flipped Classroom Approach would create an opportunity for the students to use the time in class for discussions or practices, hence, increasing their engagement. Teachers' responsibilities are not only to deliver the lesson in class, but they should also be able to facilitate the students by constantly guiding them. According to Strayer (2012), students were able to obtain feedback immediately from the educators and as a result, they will not be demotivated to do their homework as they are confident with the attention they received in class.

These days, the main idea of teaching pedagogy is to improve students' attitude in class. In a classroom, students need to grasp the idea of the situation in the classroom in order to respond actively. This means that students' engagement in educationally effective practices, inside and outside the classroom will lead to a positive learning outcome (Trowler, 2010).

For many years, online learning has been conducted as another alternative to the physical classroom. Flipped classrooms in online learning can be conducted with the presence of two key essentials of it which are technology and task-based learning. According to Ngunyen & Hung (2022) the fundamental concept of online flipped learning is to minimize traditional direct teaching during the lesson so that collaborative group work and task-oriented learning through various activities could be done among students.

### ***1.1 Problem Statement***

Higher education, represented by universities and colleges around the world, seeks to reinforce the value of innovative thinking and the necessity of shifting from traditional classroom into new learning methods like Flipped Classroom. With the current pandemic and the implementation of open distance learning (ODL), it has been a challenge for lecturers to conduct lessons and ensure students will get the input as easily as in a traditional classroom setting. Besides that, it is also difficult to maintain or even improve students' engagement during online lectures.



In a traditional classroom setting, teachers present the contents during lectures and are responsible for transferring the knowledge. Once the knowledge has been transferred, students are expected to perform tasks or activities to strengthen the teacher's explanations (Touren & Santiago, 2015). Through this, students are able to practice problem-solving skills on their own without the help of a teacher or tutor. When this occurs on a continuous basis, the students become frustrated with the lack of guidance, which prevents the process of assimilation of the contents and the acquisition of the corresponding skills and abilities (Goodwill & Miller, 2013).

The changes that are taking place in the education field have jumped over the pandemic. It leads to a situation in which part of the knowledge and even the skills acquired by both teachers and students may become outdated in a short period of time. Sitting in online lectures for at least four hours a day can be overwhelming for a lot of students, especially when the lectures are conducted traditionally (teacher-centered learning). According to Bingimlas (2009), learners who are accustomed to face-to-face learning find online distance education to be challenging. Lack of participation, demotivation, low self-esteem are just some from many occurrences that can be seen in online lectures. Not only that, when the learning process takes place in a remote setting, there are certain constraints to consider when learning from home, including issues with internet connection, limited time availability, and inadequate device resources (Nur Hidayah et al., 2022). ESL learners, especially novice users of the language, require constant supervision and guidance in learning the grammatical rules, vocabulary and the four English skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing (Kamariah, 2015).

In order to solve this on-going issue, a new teaching style should be implemented so that the students are motivated to be behaviourally engaged in ESL classrooms. The researchers believe that students should be more positive in order to improve their performance. Learning through Flipped Classroom Approach is regarded as one of the best models since it incorporates technology, which hopefully, attracts students' interest.

### ***1.2 Research Objectives***

1. To investigate students' perceptions and attitude toward Flipped Classroom Model in Online Learning Classroom.
2. To examine students' engagement in a Flipped Online Learning Classroom.

### ***1.3 Research Questions***

1. What are students' perceptions and attitude toward Flipped Classroom Model in Online Learning Classroom?
2. How do students engage in a Flipped Online Learning Classroom?

### ***1.4 Significance of the study***

The significance of the study revolves around the importance of implementing Flipped Classroom Model. This study will help both educators and students, providing educators with different learning styles which can change how the content is taught and at the same time, motivating students to be more active in class during and after the pandemic. This may benefit both educators and students to discover their own perceptions, as well as allowing them to make improvements in the teaching and learning process to achieve their objectives in a conducive environment.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Flipped Classroom Model

A document analysis study by Ağırman & Ercoşkun to explore the history of Flipped Classroom found that the central pillar of the model is Alison King's Transmittal Method introduced in 1993 which was based on the idea of change of teacher's role from the centre of the class to the guide in the class. The idea then inspired the emergence of more 21st century learning models including Peer Instruction, Classroom Flip and Inverted Classroom. From these models, in 2007, Bergman & Sams invented Flipped Classroom for student-centered learning in classroom.

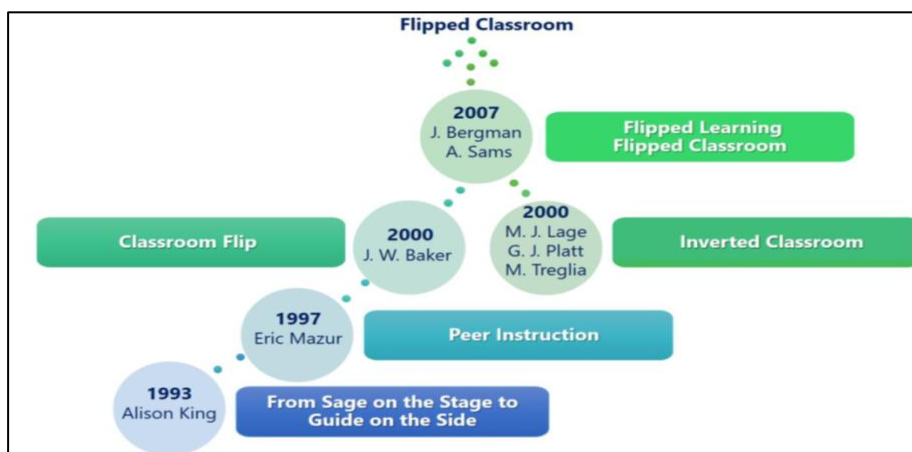


Figure 1: The Emergence Process of the Flipped Classroom Model

The Flipped Classroom Model, also referred to as inverted classroom, promotes the use of recorded lecture in the form of videos to replace live lecture (Milman, 2000). Opposite to “information delivery stage” in traditional class, the teacher can instruct the students to watch the lecture video or other relevant material to prepare themselves for the class (Kvashnina, Martynko, 2016). The main purpose of this is to replace the live lecture with more meaningful, engaging activities in classrooms (Milman, 2000). Flipped classroom is inverted in the sense that what has been normally done in traditional classroom, is now done out of the class and what has been done out of traditional classroom, is being done during the Flipped Classroom (Nouri, 2016).

Throughout 15 years after it was first invented, Flipped Classroom has become a topic of discussion in many studies and articles, discussing how it benefits education. Some of the numerous benefits of Flipped Classroom are allowing students to learn in their own pace, encouraging students' engagement, allowing the limited class time to be used for more meaningful activities, expanding teachers' opportunities to interact with the students and to promote control and responsibility of students' own learning (Gilboy, Heinerichs, & Pazzaglia, 2015; Betihavas et al., 2015, as cited in Nouri, 2016).

### 2.2 Students' Perceptions towards Flipped Classroom

In promoting student-centered learning, students' perception of the model is also worth discussing. A study by Nouri (2016) on students' perception of Flipped Classroom Model revealed that a great majority of the students showed positive attitude towards Flipped

Classroom, and that a positive attitude towards Flipped Classroom was strongly correlated to perceptions of increased motivation, engagement, increased learning, and effective learning.

A study conducted by Almanasef (2020) on Qualitative Investigation of the Flipped Classroom Teaching Approach as an Alternative to the Traditional Lecture discovered that this method was seen as a solution to address perceived drawbacks of traditional lectures, such as low student engagement and inadequate pacing of instruction. Additionally, it was recognized as a valuable tool for enhancing students' comprehension of the subject matter and preparing them for summative assessments. The objectives of the study were to assess students' perspectives on various teaching and learning methods they had previously encountered, including the traditional lecture format, and to examine their expectations and attitudes towards the flipped classroom teaching approach. Two separate focus group discussions were organized, involving a total of eleven undergraduate pharmacy students from two distinct pharmacy schools in the United Kingdom. These focus group sessions were recorded in audio format, transcribed verbatim and subsequently analyzed thematically using an inductive approach. Six key themes were identified; (1) Teacher characteristics and competence; (2) Having the right tools to learn; (3) Learning can be emotional; (4) Group work: what is in it for me?; (5) Scaffold the delivery of teaching; and (6) To prepare or not to prepare.

Another study by Salam Hoshang, Tariq Abu Hilal & Hasan Abu Hilal (2021) explored the perspectives of students and educators regarding the implementation of the Flipped Classroom concept. This qualitative research incorporates a range of methodologies including focus group interviews, observations, and mini-structured surveys, all designed to address the main research question concerning the views of students and educators on the Flipped Classroom approach. The research data was gathered from approximately three hundred students and around ten educators specializing in information systems and engineering disciplines. The findings showed that both students and educators possess awareness of the Flipped Classroom concept, but further training in the tools and principles of the Flipped Classroom is necessary. The research highlighted the significant benefits that can be derived from implementing Flipped Classrooms for students, institutions, and educators alike. Ultimately, the outcomes of this study demonstrate that both students and educators express a preference for the Flipped Classroom approach in certain aspects.

Based on a study conducted by Oki (2016), online learning materials in Flipped Classrooms are perceived as beneficial by students. The research suggests that students found online learning materials, such as videos, to be helpful in improving their learning experience within Flipped Classrooms. In addition, Flipped Classroom learning in an online setting is preferred over textbooks as the study indicates that the students preferred watching videos over referring to textbooks. This preference suggests that Flipped Classrooms can positively impact students' perceptions and interests. Oki (2016) also found that students reported changes in their perceptions of the topics and an increase in their interest in the topics. This implies that Flipped Classrooms in an online setting have the potential to enhance students' engagement and enthusiasm for learning.

Of all the benefits of Flipped Classroom Model, most of them seem to be more relatable in hybrid or blended learning (Milman, 2000). With the rise of COVID-19 cases, more research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of Flipped Classroom method in a fully online class.

### ***2.3 Students' Attitudes towards Flipped Classroom***

In the study conducted by Abuyarash (2021), a majority of the participants, comprising university students, demonstrated overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards the utilization of Flipped Classrooms. These favorable attitudes of the Flipped Classroom approach highlight its promising potential as a highly effective pedagogical method. The research also revealed a strong correlation between these positive attitudes and various key factors, including academic motivation, self-monitoring abilities, self-learning skills, and proficiency in self-learning writing skills.

A similar finding was revealed in a study conducted by Nja, Orim, Neji, Ukwetang, Uwe & Ideba (2022) where the Chemistry's students showed positive attitudes towards Flipped Classrooms. This positive attitude contributed to an improvement in their academic performance in the chemistry Redox reaction test where videos were used as mode of instruction. The positive impact of the Flipped Classroom on students' attitudes might also be attributed to their enjoyment of using their phones and laptops. Engaging with video content felt enjoyable, leading to a positive outlook in the Flipped Classroom. The interactive nature of classes involving smartphones brought them joy and reduced the stress associated with learning. In addition to that, it might also be attributed to the fact that students in the Flipped Classroom had already studied the learning materials at home and were prepared to apply what they had learned earlier.

### ***2.4 Engagement in Online Learning***

Many studies have been conducted to investigate students' engagement in a Flipped Classroom. A study conducted by Steen-Utheim & Foldnes (2017), a group of twelve students enrolled in a mathematics course at a higher institution in Norway underwent comprehensive interviews to explore and understand their learning experiences over a span of two semesters. The initial semester involved the implementation of a flipped classroom approach, while the subsequent semester utilized traditional lectures. In general, the students expressed a more favorable learning experience and demonstrated greater engagement in the flipped classroom setting. The findings revealed seven categories that the students specially emphasized as particularly beneficial for their learning which are commitment to peers, being recognized, feeling safe, instructor relationship, physical learning environment, learning with peers and using videos to learn new content. The study also revealed that the students' involvement in the learning process is especially noticeable when they engage in reflective activities within the flipped classroom setting.

Busebaia & John (2020) did a study to evaluate the engagement levels and academic performance of nursing students when exposed to a Flipped Classroom approach. A mixed-methods research design was employed, which also included gathering feedback and perceptions of the students regarding the flipped classroom in comparison to the existing teaching methodology. The study involved twenty-two females and four males and data collection involved a triangulation technique, utilizing checklists to observe and assess class engagement, quizzed to measure performance, and focus group interviews to gather qualitative insights. According to the findings, it was found that the participants experienced a deeper understanding of concepts, increased motivation, and enhanced confidence in learning the course material.

Online learning can take place in different formats, including fully synchronous, fully asynchronous, or blended (Fadde & Vu, 2014). Each of these formats offers different challenges

and opportunities for technological ease, time management, community, and pacing. As what has been experienced by online learners for the past two years, students may feel frustrated by the lack of physical guidance and immediate feedback that can happen in traditional classrooms. In online learning courses, especially fully asynchronous, students are responsible for their learning, which may halt their performance as they are struggling with their work pace. Besides, learning from home means there are more distractions than attending physical classes on campus.

Due to the nature of online learning, interaction between learners and educators is not the same as physical learning. Therefore, it is crucial to measure students' engagement in the classroom. According to (Hollister, Nair, Hill-Lindsay and Chukoski, (2022), students' engagement can be divided into three dimensions that have been widely acknowledged, which are behavioural, cognitive and affective. Behavioural dimension describes students' active responses in the classroom which can be seen based on their participation, persistence and positive conduct. Cognitive dimension on the other hand, indicates students' mental effort in the classroom which can be measured by their deep learning, self-regulation and understanding. Whereas affective engagement is emotional investment in the classroom which includes anything that triggers positive reaction such as peers, environment and sense of belonging (Hollister, Nair, Hill-Lindsay and Chukoski, 2022).

In order to understand factors affecting students' engagement in the classroom, there are three types of interaction in online classes that should be highlighted namely student-student interactions, student-instructor interactions and student-content interactions (Moore 1993, as cited in Hollister et.al, 2022). Student-student interactions is the most valuable interaction for students' engagement. It prevents students from being bored in the classroom and builds connection with one another. Classroom activities such as discussion boards, peer assessments promote this interaction. Next, student-instructor engagements encourages higher student engagement in online classes (Dixson, 2010; Gayton & McEwen, 2007 as cited in Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Therefore it is important for educators to always be connected with the students as it may affect students' learning outcome. Lastly student-content interactions is a learning process where content is being intellectually utilised as it will strengthen students' understanding and perspectives. Based on Abrami, Bernard, Bures, Borokhovski, and Tamim (2011), student-content interactions can be gained when students watch videos or search for information.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

This qualitative study was conducted to investigate students' attitude and to analyze students' engagement in a flipped online classroom. The main interest in qualitative approach was due to the greater emphasis on holistic description compared to other approaches. Participated in the study was a total of fifty students enrolled in the TESL Foundation Program in one of the public universities in Sepang district during the 2021/2022 academic year. Fifteen students were chosen to participate in semi-structured interviews and fifty students were observed to identify their engagement in a Flipped classroom.

To answer Research Question 1, semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate students' perception and feedback upon the implementation of Flipped Classroom Model. Firstly, the researchers called for volunteers to participate in the interview. The participants were divided into two sessions as the researcher wanted to ensure that each participant would have enough time to share their thoughts. The volunteers were then notified by Whatsapp on the time and date of the interview. Then, the researchers provided a Zoom Meeting link and

proceeded with the interview session. Each session took around 30-60 minutes. Upon completion, the responses were analyzed by the researchers. The instrument used was a set of open-ended questions constructed by the researchers which allowed participants to share information in their own words. The open-ended questions were, (1) How long did it take you to go through the slides? How did you prepare yourself before you join the zoom meeting?; (2) Did you feel pressured or anxious while waiting for your name to be called? Or did you feel relaxed because you have prepared and went through the slides by then?; (3) Did you notice any difference/s between traditional lectures and flipped lectures?; (4) Did it make you a better learner?; (5) Did you understand the content better?; (6) What do you like and dislike about this approach?; (7) Do you feel that this will increase students' motivation to learn Academic Writing? Or any other subjects?; (8) How did you feel after the class has ended? Did you feel the need to refer to your lecturer for further explanation?.

As for Research Question 2, a thorough observation was conducted by the researchers to identify students' engagement towards the Flipped Classroom Model. Three classroom recordings on Argumentative Essay were used, which was the final topic of the semester. This topic was chosen to ensure that the students will be able to differentiate the teaching methods between a traditional and flipped classroom setting. Videos, PowerPoint slides and other materials on Argumentative essay were given two weeks prior to the lesson. By the end of the lessons, student should be able to define Argumentative Essay, understand key terms used in an Argumentative Essay, understand and practice writing the introduction, thesis statement, developmental paragraphs and concluding paragraph using the Argumentative Essay Models and recognize the common fallacies within an argument. The flipped learning was implemented before and during the lesson where the students were required to study the materials before entering the online class. During the lesson, questions related to the topic were posed, and educators provided guidance to students throughout the activities.

A checklist was used to obtain results for Research Question 2. It was adapted from the Components of Attitude checklist, based on Wenden (1991) as cited in Samadani and Ibnian (2015) and Plato as cited in Khoir (2014). There were three components that were observed which are Cognitive (three criteria), Affective (five criteria) and Behavioural; Academic/Instructional Behaviours (three criteria) and Social Behaviours (three criteria). The data collected in this research was analysed using thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is an approach that entails examining data with the aim of identifying themes in the data. This process is characterized by active reflection, where the researcher's subjective perspective plays a central role in interpreting and making sense of the information. The primary objective of thematic analysis is to recognize and delineate themes, which are significant patterns within the data. These themes will then later be employed to explore research questions on a particular topic (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Table 1: Classroom Observation Checklist for Students's Behaviour in a Flipped Classroom

Components of Attitude	Criteria
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students like to give opinion in English during lesson.</li> <li>2. Students like to ask something in English during lesson.</li> <li>3. Students like to give comments and criticisms to the other friends' project</li> </ol>
<b>Affective</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students feel enthusiastic when the class is being taught.</li> <li>2. Students enjoy doing activities in class.</li> <li>3. Students do not get anxious when they have to answer questions in class.</li> <li>4. Students feel excited when they communicate with others in doing the projects.</li> <li>5. Students do not feel embarrassed to speak in front of other students</li> </ol>
<b>Behavioural</b>	<p><b>Academic / Instructional Behaviours</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students pay attention when the teacher is explaining the lesson.</li> <li>2. Students are cooperative and follow the teacher's instructions for each task.</li> <li>3. Students have organised work and work habits.</li> </ol> <p><b>Social Behaviours</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students interact appropriately with peers and the teacher in the classroom.</li> <li>2. Students are friendly and respectful toward peers and the teacher.</li> <li>3. Students engage with peers and the teacher in the classroom.</li> </ol>

## 4.0 FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

### *4.1 Result Related to the First Research Question: What Are Students' Perceptions of Flipped Classroom Model in ESL classroom?*

To answer the research question above, a focus group interview has been conducted in order to identify students' perceptions of Flipped Classroom Model. Two groups of students from two ESL classrooms were selected for the interview. A set of questions was designed by the researchers in order to seek their insights on Flipped Classroom. Not only that, the feedback also determines whether the model should be applied in traditional classrooms or vice versa.

From the feedback received through the interview, students' perceptions of Flipped Classroom Model have been identified and will be discussed based on the three major themes which are: flexibility and convenience; independent learning; and enhancement of learning interest.

#### *4.1.1 Flexibility and Convenience*

Based on the interview conducted, it can be concluded that the Flipped Classroom Model permits students to be flexible with their learning time, pace and materials. This method indirectly makes their learning process more convenient. The preparation of flipped classroom requires the students to go through the lesson or materials beforehand. As each individual has their own learning pace, this method helps the students to plan and schedule their learning time at their own convenience. For instance, some students may need longer time to understand a certain topic while some do not. Diffusively, this method saves students and educators' time as they get to proceed with their lesson accordingly. Not only that, feedback or response from the educators can be given directly if there is any misunderstanding. This statement is supported by the interview excerpts below;

*Student A : In flipped classroom, I get to control my own pace, we can feel the adrenaline to give the information correctly. There are a lot of perspectives from others, so it gets everyone to get involved in the discussion. The best thing is that it clears up confusion straight away rather than waiting to ask after the class.*

*Student B: We get to control the pace, we feel the adrenaline to give the information correctly. Shaped us to be a better student. There are a lot of other perspectives, get everyone to get involved in the discussion. Clears up confusion straight away rather than waiting to ask after the class.*

*Student C: I like the fact that I can take charge of the class. Because I can finish the class earlier. Especially online classes.*

*Student D: In general I like it because it is not a traditional classroom. And you're calling the shots.*

In addition to that, the learning materials provided are in variant formats and it could be accessed at any time. Some of the materials provided are videos, recorded lectures, lecture notes, slides and past year questions. Thus, the students are able to access any format that they prefer. For example, when watching a recorded lecture video, students can just fast forward the video and focus on the part that they are having difficulty understanding.

*Student E : Increased my focus in flipped classroom, so I understand better. I actually have to read the slides and study it myself. I actually study for myself and not for the examination. Usually I just listen and refer to the recording again.*

#### **4.1.2 Independent Learning**

Flipped classroom method has driven students to be independent learners. Since it requires students to be able to explain or understand the subject matter before the lesson, they have to make preparations such as going through the learning materials and trying to understand the content on their own. Eventually, it helps the students to be more confident, especially when it comes to sharing their own views and perspectives on the subject. This method is completely different from traditional classroom learning where most of the time, students will be taught and will be given time to comprehend the subject matter. Whereas in flipped classroom, content is intended to be understood without any guidance then only discussion will be held during the lesson. This is supported by the responses given below;

*Student A: For flipped, it will reinforce students' focus and dedication to talk about their perspective about one topic. In a traditional classroom, it is a bit different as they have to listen and talk less. You absorb content without knowing if you understand the topic or not. Traditional classroom, you listen and understand later. In flipped you understand and listen later.*

*Student B: The major difference I have noticed is that I gained more knowledge and confidence in certain topics because I prepared myself before the class.*

*Student C: More than just skimming and scanning, led me to try my best to understand the content so I can explain well in class and to my friends. Good thing that you don't depend 100% on your lecturer.*



*Student D: Increased my focus in flipped classroom, so I understand better. I actually have to read the slides and study it by myself. I actually study for myself, and not for the examination.*

*Student E: It has made me a better learner because I prepared myself with a little bit of understanding before the class started, and then I listened to my classmates' discussion about the topic (especially when they talked about it in their own words), and I also presented the topic myself. This method has made me a better learner because instead of just listening to the lectures and sometimes not focusing in class, I was actually more focused and gained more input than usual classes.*

Therefore, it can be concluded that students feel more confident when flipped classroom is applied as they know the subject matter before the lesson is being taught. They have also not depended too much on the educators as they get the chance to present their views first before it's being discussed or taught later in the classroom. In addition to that, the learning experience will become more meaningful as the students are able to reflect and do comparison on what they have understood with what has been taught.

#### **4.1.3 Enhancement of Learning Interest**

Based on the data collected, students' learning interest has been escalated when flipped learning is applied in the classroom. As aforementioned, flipped learning requires students to be readied with the subject matter before being taught. Thus, some students perceive it to be something challenging as it is not something customary in the teaching and learning process. However, this challenge is taken positively as it has helped the students to put more effort into comprehending the subject matter. Besides that, flipped learning has allowed students to share their views and thoughts with their classmates in a simplified way as they have to explain and help their classmates understand the lesson in the most effective way. Eventually, it prevails the creative side of learning as well.

*Student A: Traditional classes sometimes get boring because there is no interaction between lecturers and students, which makes the lecturers sad. In flipped classroom, it helped a lot in understanding the topic because my friends will have their own ways of explaining it which is different from the lecturer. For example, the usage of casual language makes it more like a conversation and is easier to understand.*

*Student B: I can remember all the do's and don'ts better because I'll remember my mistakes and don't want to repeat them due to embarrassment. I also managed to recall what my classmates have explained as it is simplified and corrected by my lecturer.*

*Student C: I like this approach because it is more challenging for myself especially when we have to present our ideas on the topic in front of the class and I also like it because I get a deeper understanding.*

#### **4.2 Result Related to the Second Research Question: How do Students Engage in a Flipped Online Classroom?**

The data was collected based on students' engagement and behaviour in a Flipped Online Learning Classroom. There are three components that were observed which are Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural. These components were adapted from the Components of Attitude checklist, based on Wenden (1991) as cited in Samadani and Ibnian (2015) and Plato as cited in Khoir (2014). The data of engagement were analyzed using Figure 2 below. Online Flipped

Classrooms were recorded and later analyzed using the Components of Attitude Checklist. The observations were divided into three components; Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural.

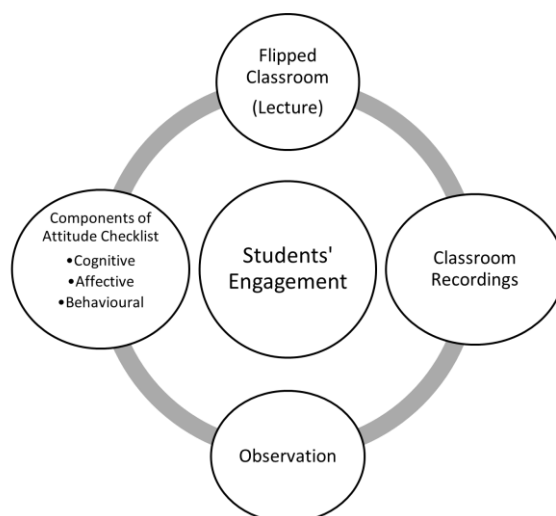


Figure 2: Data Analysis Cycle

#### 4.2.1 Cognitive

Table 2: Classroom Observation Checklist for Component of Attitude (Cognitive)

Components of Attitude	Criteria
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students like to give opinion in English during lesson.</li> <li>2. Students like to ask something in English during lesson.</li> <li>3. Students like to give comments and criticisms to the other friends' project</li> </ol>

Based on the class recordings, it can be observed that the students were very active in flipped classrooms. Students were not hesitant to ask questions and provide opinions on the subject matter. During the first 15 minutes of the lesson, the consistently active students were the ones who raised the questions first, and this encouraged the usually passive students to be more engaged in the lesson. One of the significant changes that can be seen was the students' effort to volunteer to share their answers, opinions and raise arguments to other students' input. To compare it with traditional classrooms, the students were passive, and the educator had to call out their names a couple of times to get feedback. It can be concluded that flipped classrooms create a different learning environment where the students are more comfortable to discuss class content with the educator's role as a tutor.

### 4.2.2 Affective

Table 3: Classroom Observation Checklist for Component of Attitude (Affective)

Components of Attitude	Criteria
<b>Affective</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students feel enthusiastic when the class is being taught.</li><li>2. Students enjoy doing activities in class.</li><li>3. Students do not get anxious when they have to answer questions in class.</li><li>4. Students feel excited when they communicate with others in doing the projects.</li><li>5. Students do not feel embarrassed to speak in front of other students</li></ol>

Based on the educator's observation, the students showed enthusiasm during the lesson as it was a different learning experience for them. The students started the semester with a Traditional Classroom Approach and were introduced to Flipped Classroom during Week 10 of the semester. This is to ensure that the students were able to differentiate the learning approaches. Not only that, the students showed eagerness to answer questions raised by the lecturer and responded with accurate and justified answers. However, there were a few who were hesitant when they were called by the lecturer to answer the question. This can be seen by how quickly the students unmute and mute themselves throughout the lesson conducted via Zoom. Aside from that, majority of the students did not feel embarrassed to express their thoughts about the topic discussed.

### 4.2.3 Behavioral

Table 4: Classroom Observation Checklist for Component of Attitude (Behavioral)

Components of Attitude	Criteria
<b>Behavioural</b>	<p><b>Academic / Instructional Behaviours</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students pay attention when the teacher is explaining the lesson.</li><li>2. Students are cooperative and follow the teacher's instructions for each task.</li><li>3. Students have organised work and work habits.</li></ol> <p><b>Social Behaviours</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students interact appropriately with peers and the teacher in the classroom.</li><li>2. Students are friendly and respectful toward peers and the teacher.</li><li>3. Students engage with peers and the teacher in the classroom.</li></ol>

There are two parts under this subtopic. The first part focuses on the students' academic or instructional behaviour in the online classroom. All of the students were paying attention to the lecturer's instructions and to their classmates' responses. The class was able to be conducted efficiently where there was no disruptive behaviour shown throughout the lesson. Everyone was being respectful by allowing their classmates to speak their mind and only interrupt after they were done. Not only that, the students showed impressive learning habits based on students' performance.

Another criteria focuses on the social behavior among the students in the classroom. The students showed appropriate interaction between their classmates and the lecturer. Besides that, the researcher observed that during a flipped classroom lesson, the students showed how friendly and respectful they are between each other, something that the researcher never seen in previous lessons. The students took turns while discussing without interrupting the lesson where it creates a two-way communication.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

Following the implementation of the Flipped Classroom Model in online learning, the results in terms of students' perception have been very positive. For students, the methodology used in this model is useful, productive, interactive and entertaining. Majority of the students agreed that this model should be implemented into other subjects as well. As it is a new and innovative approach in their learning experience, Flipped Classroom Model has engaged the students' interest in learning. Most importantly, this has consequently increased their motivation to learn in an online classroom. These results agree with the contributions made by Nouri (2016), where the writer discovered that students showed a positive attitude towards the Flipped Classroom Model and it was associated with perceptions of increased motivation, engagement, increased learning, and effective learning. This is also consistent with the findings from Salam Hoshang, Tariq Abu Hilal & Hasan Abu Hilal (2021) where they explored the perspectives of students and educators regarding the implementation of the Flipped Classroom concept in which both students and educators expressed a preference for the Flipped Classroom approach in certain aspects. Not only that, a study conducted by Abuyarash (2021) also highlighted positive attitude in the implementation of Flipped Classrooms.

Regarding students' engagement in lectures, the findings showed a positive result as the students in the class portrayed excellent behavior throughout the hours they spent learning in a Flipped Classroom. This is aligned with the findings from Steen-Utheim & Foldnes (2017) where the students expressed a more favorable learning experience and demonstrated greater engagement in the Flipped Classroom setting. Not only that, Busebaia & John (2020) discovered that students received a myriad of benefits in learning through the engagement levels experienced in Flipped Classrooms.

This study recommends that Flipped Classroom Model should be applied and adopted in the teaching process of students of higher education institutions. Future researchers may also adapt the flipped classroom approach and identify its effectiveness by analyzing students' academic performance. However, researchers should be mindful of certain limitations while conducting studies on the Flipped Classroom and Virtual Flipped Classroom approaches which may cover the issues on network connectivity, class duration and real-time feedback. It is recommended to implement the Flipped Classroom approach in smaller groups with support from both educators and students, and potentially incorporating hybrid classes as well.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

All authors took part in the process of completing and refining the manuscript. NHM carried out the introduction and NFAK wrote literature review. NHM also contributed in the literature review and methodology. NHM was in charge of heading the data collection process and FAMR and NFAK were in charge of analysing the data. NHM, FAMR and NFAK helped out in refining the overall manuscript and helped out in refining the overall manuscript including the content structure and language. All authors read and approved the manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Nurul Hannan Mahmud** has a Masters Degree in Education, Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). She is a TESL lecturer at Centre of Foundation Studies, Kampus Dengkil, Cawangan Selangor. She has 7 years of teaching experience in tertiary level. Her research interests are Flipped Learning, Academic Writing and TESL.

**Fatimah Azzahra Md Raus** has a Masters degree in Applied Linguistics. She is a TESL lecturer at Pusat Asasi UiTM, Kampus Dengkil, Cawangan Selangor. Her research interests are TESL, Academic Writing and Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

**Nor Fadzilah Arom Karoman** is a TESL lecturer at Universiti Teknologi Mara. Fadzilah holds a Master's Degree in English Language Education. Her research works include academic writing and technology in education.

# Sustainable HRM and Corporate Culture: Empirical Evidence from the Industrial Sector in Malaysia

<sup>1</sup>Kardina Kamaruddin\* and <sup>2</sup>Noor Malinjasari Ali

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah, 08400 Merbok Kedah, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Terengganu, 23000 Dungun Terengganu, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: [kardina@uitm.edu.my](mailto:kardina@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*This research investigates the link between sustainable human resource management (HRM) and corporate culture in the private sector, specifically focusing on the industrial sector in Perak, Malaysia. A quantitative methodology was employed, and data was gathered from 200 employees working in the private sector through a self-administered survey questionnaire. The dimensions of sustainable HRM, encompassing sociological, economic, environmental, and strategic aspects, were defined, and measured alongside corporate culture. The findings demonstrate a significant correlation between sustainable HRM and corporate culture, indicating that organizations that prioritize sustainability tend to cultivate a positive corporate culture. The results emphasize the importance of integrating sustainable HRM into organizational policies and operations to establish an environment that values collaboration, employee well-being, stakeholder satisfaction, and environmental consciousness. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge the limited generalizability of the findings to other industries and regions, as well as the reliance on self-reported data. Future research should explore additional factors like leadership and organizational climate, while also considering contextual elements that may influence the relationship between sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture. This study contributes to our understanding of how sustainable HRM practices impact corporate culture and offers insights for organizations striving to promote sustainability and positive cultural values. The findings align with previous research that recommends adopting green HRM strategies and embracing technological innovations to enhance sustainability and environmental performance. Moreover, prior studies have indicated that a green culture benefits employees, thereby influencing the link between green HRM and environmental change.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing business landscape, organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of sustainable HRM practices in achieving long-term success and addressing societal and environmental challenges (Stankevičiūtė et. al., 2018). Sustainable HRM practices involve integrating social, economic, and environmental considerations into HR initiatives to foster organizational sustainability and promote a positive impact on both individuals and the broader society (Shah et. al., 2021). Such practices emphasize the alignment of strategic goals with the promotion of a sustainable and equitable society.

While there is a growing body of literature on sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and their potential benefits, there is still a pressing need for deeper insights into how these practices shape organizational culture (Indiparambil, 2019). Corporate culture, as a linchpin in determining employee attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes, is pivotal in the successful integration of sustainability into HRM strategies, providing invaluable insights into the mechanisms through which organizations infuse their HRM strategies with principles of social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and ethical conduct (Huseynova et al., 2022). This research, framed within the theoretical framework of Institutional Theory, which highlights the influence of external pressures and societal norms on organizational behavior, seeks to delve into these intricate mechanisms. By applying Institutional Theory, this study will address the gap in our understanding of how sustainable HRM practices mold the corporate culture.

The study delves into three critical aspects: the impact of sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on organizational culture concerning social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and ethical conduct. It also examines the mechanisms through which these practices shape corporate culture. Furthermore, the research investigates the extent to which societal norms and external pressures influence the alignment of sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture. In this context, the study has also formulated three hypotheses. First, it hypothesizes that organizations implementing sustainable HRM practices will exhibit a corporate culture that is more oriented toward social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and ethical conduct. Second, it predicts that sustainable HRM practices influence corporate culture by promoting employee engagement, fostering values alignment, and encouraging responsible decision-making. Third, it anticipates that external pressures and societal norms will significantly impact the adoption of sustainable HRM practices and their alignment with corporate culture.

The alignment between sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture is a critical area of research. While the literature recognizes the significance of sustainable HRM practices in promoting organizational sustainability and addressing social and environmental concerns (Järlström et al., 2023), a comprehensive understanding of how these practices influence corporate culture remains elusive. By examining these relationships through the lens of Institutional Theory, this study aims to bridge this knowledge gap and contribute to a deeper understanding of how organizations integrate sustainability into their HRM practices, thereby fostering a culture that underscores their commitment to social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and ethical conduct.



## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Corporate Culture***

Corporate culture refers to how employees perceive and comprehend their work and the overall business (Tsai, 2011; Graham et. al., 2022; Cherian et. al., 2021). It encompasses the employees' identification with the organization and their understanding of its values and beliefs. Corporate culture influences the thoughts and behaviours of individuals within the organization, as it consists of shared beliefs, values, and standards. In addition, corporate culture represents the underlying values, assumptions, and beliefs that are commonly held by its members (Kenedi, et. al., 2022; Juliati, 2021). Consequently, corporate culture can either contribute to or hinder the organization's performance.

Corporate culture consists of established and refined patterns of fundamental assumptions, which are developed through both internal and external integration (El Baz et. al., 2022; Hanelt, et. al., 2021). These assumptions have proven to be effective and are passed on to new members as the correct way to think, perceive, and respond to challenges. Additionally, corporate culture encompasses the unique norms and behaviours that characterize employees in accomplishing tasks. It plays a crucial role in the success of an organization and fosters a positive work environment for its employees. Furthermore, corporate culture influences the employee's behaviour by providing guidelines for acceptable conduct and shaping their adherence to instructions and established norms (Pathiranage, 2019).

Corporate culture plays a crucial role in enhancing an organization's key capabilities and overall functioning (Harsch et. al., 2020; Qu, 2022). It determines the extent to which employees can seamlessly integrate into the organization without encountering significant challenges. The importance of a good fit between employees and the organization's culture cannot be overstated within the organizational context. Joseph et. al. (2019) asserts that corporate culture has a significant impact on the overall performance of an organization, including its financial performance. It enables employees to gain a comprehensive understanding of the organization itself. However, Wagstaff et. al. (2020) points out that corporate culture often leads to conceptual confusion and ambiguity in the literature. It is regarded as a balancing element that can be employed to address factors not adequately addressed by traditional business and organizational theory concepts.

Syakur et. al (2020) stated that corporate culture has been a significant focus in management and business research for several decades due to its potential to influence various aspects within organizations and individuals, such as commitment, loyalty, and employee satisfaction. It has the power to shape employees' emotions, interactions, and performance towards the organization. Furthermore, corporate culture represents a set of values, beliefs, and behaviors that guide employees in their conduct. In addition, Lubis et. al. (2020) describes corporate culture as a conventional or traditional way of thinking shared by members of an organization that is accepted by all. It serves as a framework for groups to solve problems, enabling employees to apply problem-solving methods that align with the organization's environment and context. This promotes the cultivation of effective problem-solving skills among employees. Ultimately, corporate culture comprises the beliefs, values, and behaviours of an organization and its employees, influencing how employees handle external business matters and interact with management.

Based on the insights from past research demonstrate the paramount importance of corporate culture in organizational success. Its influence on employee behaviour, commitment, and performance cannot be underestimated. By nurturing a strong and aligned corporate culture,

organizations can foster an environment where employees thrive and the organization flourishes. As organizations continue to navigate the complexities of the business landscape, understanding and harnessing the power of corporate culture becomes imperative for sustainable success. However, issues in corporate culture that impact sustainability include a lack of environmental consciousness (Severo et. al., 2021), a focus on short-term profits over long-term sustainability (Dyck et. al., 2019), resistance to change (Iershova et. al., 2022), a lack of collaboration and communication (Tura et. al., 2019), ethical lapses (Frye, 2020), poor employee engagement (Pham et. al., 2019), a lack of transparency and accountability (Alaali et. al., 2021), and inconsistent leadership support (Kiker et. al., 2019). Addressing these issues is vital for fostering a corporate culture that prioritizes sustainability, embracing environmental consciousness, long-term thinking, collaboration, innovation, ethics, employee engagement, transparency, and consistent leadership support. By doing so, organizations can enhance their sustainability efforts and promote positive environmental outcomes.

Sustainable corporate success can be attained by integrating sustainable HRM practices into corporate culture. This integration aligns HR strategies with sustainability goals, creating a culture that values sustainability and engages employees in sustainable initiatives. By prioritizing sustainability and employee involvement, organizations can achieve improved performance, attract top talent, and contribute to a more sustainable future.

## ***2.2 Sustainable Human Resource Management***

Sustainable HRM involves achieving and reproducing human resources for the long term (Lopez-Cabrales et. al, 2019). It requires organizations to balance stakeholder needs, embrace sustainable practices, and foster a supportive environment for employee growth and development. By integrating sustainability principles into human resource management, organizations can create lasting value, meet present and future needs, and contribute to a sustainable future. These are supported by researcher such as Westerman et. al. (2020) that revolves around meeting the needs of both direct and indirect stakeholders without compromising the organization's ability to fulfil those needs. It recognizes the interplay between dynamic economic systems and the impact on employees' lives and prospects. By embracing sustainable HRM, organizations acknowledge the relevance of sustainability to their operations and human resource practices. Researchers have defined sustainable HRM as a development approach that satisfies present needs while safeguarding the ability of future generations within the organization to meet their own needs and aspirations.

Further, Yong et. al. (2020) perceived sustainable HRM as long-term, durable, sound, and systematic practices within the organization. It adopts a forward-thinking approach that aligns with sustainable development principles. According to various studies, sustainable human resource management involves a long-term-oriented conceptual approach, encompassing socially responsible and economically appropriate activities. These activities span recruitment and selection, employee deployment, development, and even release. It is a cross-functional task, demanding flexibility, and adaptability from employees to navigate changing organizational situations (Navajas-Romero et. al., 2022; Järlström et. al., 2023).

On another note, He et.al. (2021) suggests that sustainable human resource management affects communities, companies, and governments, and its processes are explained through these lenses. Organizations must make strategic decisions with a long-term focus, rather than solely focusing on short-term payroll costs. This approach enables organizations to achieve their goals while fostering stable communities. Hamadamin et. al. (2019) defines sustainable human resource management as an approach that recognizes the positive impact individuals can have on the company over time. It emphasizes creating competitive advantages for both

organizations and employees. Sustainability is generally accepted as the integration of social, economic, and ecological values and how these values are interpreted and operationalized (D'amato et. al., 2021).

Chaudhary (2020) underscores the importance of sustainable human resource management in enhancing employee knowledge and competencies within the organization. It is a key factor in helping organizations achieve their mission and vision. Yong et. al. (2020) emphasizes the need for sustainable human resource management to meet human needs without harming global environmental systems. It recognizes the interdependence between human activity and natural systems, striving to maximize social interests within the boundaries set by the environment. However, Song et. al (2021) suggest that organizations manifest their concern for sustainability through legislation and increased attention to training managers in sustainable human resource management. The development of organizations supports sustainable managerial decision-making processes.

Drawing on these contributions and critiques, while the researchers agree on the importance of integrating sustainability into human resource management, there are variations in the specific focus and emphasis. However, they collectively highlight the need for a long-term approach, stakeholder balance, and the integration of social, economic, and ecological values in sustainable HRM practices.

### ***2.3 Sustainable HRM and Corporate Culture***

The relationship between sustainable (HRM) practices and corporate culture has been a relatively underexplored area of research. While there is a lack of study on the relationship between sustainable HRM and corporate culture, the literature recognizes the importance of sustainable HRM practices in promoting organizational sustainability and addressing social and environmental concerns. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture and to identify the mechanisms through which organizations integrate sustainability into their HRM strategies and foster a culture that embraces social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and ethical conduct. While most studies have focused on green HRM, which concentrates on environmental sustainability within the organization, sustainable HRM takes a broader perspective and integrates social, economic, environmental, and strategic dimensions. Sustainable HRM has a more strategic and holistic approach, considering a wider range of stakeholders and aiming to achieve overall sustainability rather than just environmental goals (Marriapandar, 2020).

Aust et al. (2020) proposed the concept of Common Good HRM as an alternative approach to traditional business models that aim to address sustainability challenges. Common Good HRM emphasizes the responsibility of businesses to contribute to resolving these challenges and prioritizes collective interests over individual desires. It involves embedding common good values in HR policies and practices, fostering an organizational culture that promotes these values, and redefining the outcomes of HRM to include societal fairness, workplace democracy, environmental protection, and human rights. Implementing Common Good HRM requires considering the global and local context, promoting equal and fair employment relationships, providing opportunities for stakeholder participation, and upholding the psychological contract by meeting human needs for employment security and meaningful work.

In addition, based on Aust et al. (2020) typology, four sustainable HRM dimensions were identified: Sociological, Economical, Environmental, and Strategic. These dimensions help to clarify the final purposes of different conceptual and empirical sustainable HRM components to corporate culture. The findings of a descriptive study by Järlström et al. (2023) highlighted

that HRM practices can be perceived as sustainable if they contribute to social well-being, environmental protection, and economic sustainability. The Common Good HRM that focuses on sustainability has been supported by other authors such as Honeyman, et. al. (2019), Sisodia et. al. (2014), and Felber, (2019).

Based on Aust et. al. (2020) typology, four sustainable HRM dimensions were identified: Sociological, Economical, Environment, and Strategic. In this article, instrumental, pro-financial, social/human, and ecocentric characteristics are proposed for each of the identified HRM practices for implementing corporate sustainability. These dimensions help to clarify the final purposes of different conceptual and empirical Sustainable HRM types for corporate culture as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: A Classification of Sustainable HRM Dimensions.

Dimensions	Sociological (social/human)	Economical (pro-financial)	Environment (ecocentric)	Strategic (instrumental)
Characteristics	Collective interests are above individual or organizational desires, aiming to contribute to societal progress and the common good.	Long-term organizational self-interest lies in sustaining collective livelihood and contributing to resolving sustainability challenges, which aligns with economic considerations.	Create a positive environmental impact by promoting sustainable HR practices and ecological development.	Aligning HR practices with social and ecological progress, this type supports the organization's strategic goals of contributing to a sustainable and equitable society.

(Source: Dimensions adapted and extended from Aust. et. al., 2020)

The sociological dimension highlights the importance of prioritizing collective interests and the common good over individual or organizational desires. This approach recognizes that the success and sustainability of an organization are closely linked to the well-being and progress of society. It encourages HR practices and decisions that consider the broader impact on stakeholders, communities, and the environment. In terms of corporate culture, embracing the concept of the common good can shape an organizational environment that values collaboration, social responsibility, and the pursuit of societal well-being. This mindset encourages employees to align their efforts with the larger societal context and make decisions that benefit multiple stakeholders. By promoting the common good, sustainable HRM fosters a culture that values ethical behaviour, social impact, and sustainable practices. It motivates employees to contribute to societal progress through their work and aligns organizational goals with the broader objective of creating a positive impact on society. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that there is a strong relationship between the sociological dimension of sustainable HRM and corporate culture.

The economic dimension recognizes that an organization's long-term success and sustainability are interconnected with the well-being and progress of society. It emphasizes the need to go beyond short-term profits and consider the wider societal and environmental effects of business activities. By embracing sustainable practices, organizations can contribute to both their own interests and the common good. This highlights the importance of balancing economic considerations with broader societal impacts in HRM practices. By aligning corporate culture with the economic dimension of sustainable HRM, organizations create an environment where sustainable practices and responsible economic behaviour are valued and promoted. This cultural alignment helps organizations prioritize sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical conduct in their day-to-day operations and strategic decision-making. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that there is a strong relationship between the economic dimension of sustainable HRM and corporate culture.

The environment dimension means integrating environmental considerations into HR management. It involves creating a corporate culture that values environmental responsibility, encourages eco-friendly behaviours, and supports sustainability initiatives. By doing so, organizations can make a positive environmental impact, enhance their reputation, and foster long-term business sustainability. Therefore, there is a relationship between the environmental dimension and corporate culture.

The strategic dimension focuses on aligning the organization's strategic goals with the promotion of a sustainable and equitable society. It emphasizes the integration of social and ecological progress into HR initiatives, aiming to create a positive impact on both individuals and the environment. By adopting sustainable HR practices and fostering ecological development, organizations can contribute to a more sustainable future while achieving their business objectives. This alignment between HR practices and social/ecological progress reflects a corporate culture that values sustainability, social responsibility, and the well-being of stakeholders and the environment. It encourages employees to engage in initiatives that have a positive environmental impact and reinforces the organization's commitment to sustainable development. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that there is a strong relationship between the economic dimension of sustainable HRM and corporate culture.

By incorporating the dimension, the literature review provides a clearer and more organized overview of the relationship between sustainable HRM dimensions and corporate culture. It also establishes the relevance of the Institutional Theory framework, allowing for further exploration of the impact of internal and external pressures on the adoption and integration of sustainable HRM practices.

### **3. INSTITUTIONAL THEORY**

The integration of Institutional Theory into this study enables an examination of the interplay between sustainable human resource management (HRM) practices, and corporate culture as portrayed in Figure 1. Institutional Theory posits that organizations adopt specific practices to conform to external expectations and societal norms (Najeeb, 2014; Holm, 2020). In this context, the study investigates how external pressures, encompassing stakeholder demands, regulatory frameworks, and societal expectations, shape the adoption and integration of sustainable HRM practices. These practices, spanning sociological, economic, environmental, and strategic dimensions, aim to foster sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical conduct within organizations (Björkman, 2007; Pauwee, 2014).

By embracing sustainable HRM practices, organizations signal their commitment to broader societal values and objectives, thereby influencing the prevailing corporate culture. The integration of Institutional Theory provides a framework to analyse the influence on the adoption and integration of sustainable HRM practices and their subsequent impact on the values, norms, and behaviours characterizing the corporate culture. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how organizations navigate institutional pressures and advance sustainable and equitable principles through their HRM practices and corporate culture.

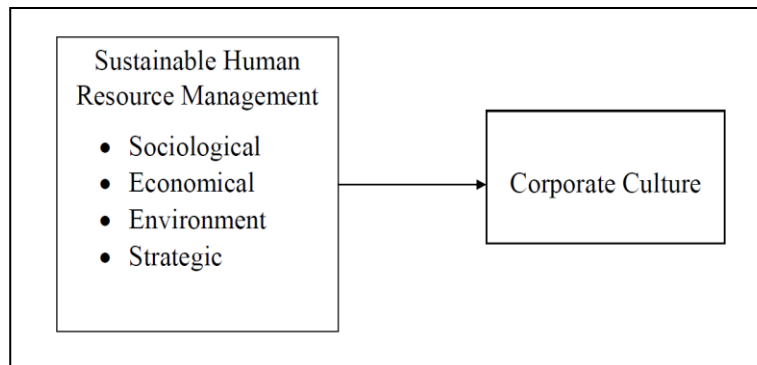


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

In this theoretical framework, sustainable HRM is defined as an organizational approach that incorporates social, economic, environmental, and strategic considerations into HR practices. To operationalize this concept, several dimensions are identified to capture the different aspects of Sustainable HRM.

The social dimension focuses on employee engagement, social impact initiatives, stakeholder satisfaction, collaboration and teamwork, diversity and inclusion, and employee well-being. These factors highlight the importance of creating a positive and inclusive work environment that fosters employee satisfaction and well-being, while also considering the interests of various stakeholders.

The economic dimension encompasses financial performance, socially responsible investments, sustainable procurement, employee compensation and benefits, stakeholder engagement, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting. This dimension emphasizes the integration of economic considerations with sustainable practices, ensuring that the organization's financial success is aligned with social and environmental responsibility.

The environmental dimension revolves around environmental awareness, environmental values, initiatives adoption, green behaviours, environmental training and education, and environmental performance indicators. This dimension underscores the significance of incorporating environmental considerations into HR practices, promoting environmentally conscious behaviours and initiatives, and monitoring environmental performance.

Lastly, the strategic dimension focuses on strategic alignment, sustainable HR practices, stakeholder engagement, CSR performance, sustainability innovation, and employee perceptions of strategic alignment. This dimension highlights the need for HR practices to be aligned with the organization's strategic goals and the pursuit of sustainability. It encompasses the integration of sustainable HR practices, stakeholder engagement, and the organization's performance in terms of CSR and sustainability.

By operationalizing Sustainable HRM through these multidimensional constructs, the framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the different aspects that organizations need to consider when integrating sustainability into their HR practices. These dimensions capture the key elements of sustainable HRM and can be used to assess the extent to which organizations align their HR practices with sustainable principles that foster a corporate culture.

#### 4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study explored the relationship between sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and corporate culture in the private sector, focusing on the industrial sector in

Perak, Malaysia. A quantitative research approach was employed to investigate how the adoption of sustainable HRM practices, including the promotion of social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and ethical conduct, influences corporate culture within organizations. The research design encompassed a cross-sectional approach, with the population of interest being private-sector employees within the industrial sector in Perak, Malaysia.

To ensure diversity and representation from various industries within the sector, a stratified random sampling technique was utilized, resulting in a sample size of 200 participants, determined through power analysis to ensure adequate statistical power. Data collection was conducted through a self-administered survey questionnaire, measuring sustainable HRM practices across sociological, economic, environmental, and strategic dimensions, along with corporate culture. This questionnaire was developed using existing validated scales and items, and its reliability and validity were assessed through pre-testing.

Data analysis was performed using the latest version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, specifically IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0, a recognized and robust tool for social research statistical analysis. Analytical techniques included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis to explore relationships, and multiple regression analysis to investigate the connection between sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture while controlling for relevant demographic variables. This choice of software ensured the use of the most up-to-date and sophisticated analytical methods. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. The study's findings contribute to understanding how sustainable HRM practices impact corporate culture and offer valuable insights for organizations aiming to promote sustainability and positive cultural values

## **5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***5.1 Data Analysis***

The ANOVA analysis in Table 2 examines the overall significance of the regression model in explaining the variance in the dependent variable (TDV). The regression section of the ANOVA table shows that the predictors (TST, TSC, TEC, TEV) collectively explain a significant amount of variation in the TDV. The F-value of 22.049 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant at the chosen significance level (Sig. = .000). This means that there is a significant relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. The residual section indicates the unexplained variation in the TDV that is not accounted for by the regression model. The total sum of squares is reported as 511.755, demonstrating the overall variability in the TDV.

In summary, the ANOVA analysis confirms that the regression model, including the predictors TST, TSC, TEC, and TEV, has a significant effect on explaining the variance in the TDV.

Table 2: ANOVA Analysis

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	159.379	4	39.845	22.049	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	352.376	195	1.807		
	Total	511.755	199			

a. Dependent Variable: TDV

b. Predictors: (Constant), TST, TSC, TEC, TEV

\*\*tst= strategic, tsc=sociological, tec=economical, tev=environment

The Model Summary in Table 3 helps assess the overall fit and predictive power of the regression model. The summary reveals that the dimensions of sustainable HRM (TST, TSC, TEC, TEV) collectively explain 31.1% of the variance in corporate culture. This indicates that these predictors have a significant impact on shaping the corporate culture within the organization. The adjusted R-square value of 0.297 suggests a slight reduction in generalizability. This means that there may be other factors influencing corporate culture that are not accounted for in the model. It is important to consider these limitations and further explore additional variables that may impact corporate culture. The standard error of the estimate reported as 1.34427, indicates the average deviation between the actual and predicted values. A lower standard error suggests higher precision in the predictions made by the model, indicating a better fit between the predictors and the dependent variable. The R-square change of 0.311 and the F change value of 22.049 confirm the statistical significance of the regression model. These values indicate that the predictors collectively contribute significantly to explaining the variance in corporate culture. The degrees of freedom (df1 = 4 and df2 = 195) and the significance value (Sig. F Change) of .000 further support the statistical significance of the model. The Durbin-Watson statistic, which does not indicate significant autocorrelation, suggests that the residuals in the model are independent and do not exhibit a systematic pattern.

These insights provide valuable information about the relationship between sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture, the predictive power of the regression model, and the statistical significance of the findings. They can guide organizations in understanding the impact of sustainable HRM practices on shaping their corporate culture and inform decision-making processes related to sustainability and positive cultural value.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.558 <sup>a</sup>	.311	.297	1.34427	.311	22.049	4	195	.000	1.576

a. Predictors: (Constant), TST, TSC, TEC, TEV

b. Dependent Variable: TDV

In Table 4 correlation Analysis was conducted to assess the relationships between the dimensions of sustainable HRM and corporate culture, correlation analysis was conducted. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the strength and direction of the associations. The significance of the correlations was determined using a two-tailed test. The results were considered statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Preliminary findings indicated a



positive correlation between sustainable HRM and corporate culture ( $r = 0.346$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that organizations with stronger sustainability practices tend to have a more favourable corporate culture.

Further, to explore the relationship between the dimensions of sustainable HRM and corporate culture while controlling for potential confounding variables, a multiple regression analysis was conducted in Table 5. The multiple regression analysis provides insights into the relationship between the dimensions of sustainable HRM (TST, TEC, TEV, TSC) and the dependent variable, TDV (Corporate culture). The analysis shows that the constant term has a coefficient of 15.530, indicating the expected average value of TDV when all predictor variables are zero. This coefficient is statistically significant ( $t = 6.527$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Correlations			
		TDV	TIV
Corporate culture	Pearson Correlation	1	.346**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	200	200
Sustainable human resource management	Pearson Correlation	.346**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200

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

Among the predictor variables, TST has a coefficient of 0.170 ( $p = .037$ ), indicating a positive relationship with TDV. TEC has a coefficient of 0.587 ( $p < .001$ ), indicating a stronger positive relationship with TDV. TEV has a coefficient of 0.351 ( $p = .008$ ), suggesting a positive relationship, although weaker compared to TEC. TSC has a coefficient of -0.482 ( $p = .001$ ), indicating a negative relationship with TDV. The standardized coefficients (Beta) provide insights into the relative importance of each predictor variable. TEC has the highest standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.516), followed by TEV (Beta = 0.282), TST (Beta = 0.132), and TSC (Beta = -0.353).

Table 5: Multiple Regression

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.530	2.379	6.527	.000
	TST	.170	.081	.132	.037
	TEC	.587	.075	.516	.000
	TEV	.351	.131	.282	.008
	TSC	-.482	.139	-.353	.001

**a.** Dependent Variable: TDV

## 5.2 Discussion

The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the relationship between sustainable human resource management (HRM) practices and corporate culture. The ANOVA analysis confirmed that the regression model, which included the predictors related to sustainable HRM dimensions (TST, TSC, TEC, TEV), had a significant effect on explaining the variance in the dependent variable (TDV), representing corporate culture.

The significant F-value (22.049) indicated that the regression model collectively explained a significant amount of variation in TDV. This implies that the dimensions of sustainable HRM have a meaningful impact on shaping corporate culture. The positive correlation between sustainable HRM and corporate culture further supports this relationship, suggesting that organizations with stronger sustainability practices tend to have a more favorable corporate culture (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021). According to a report by SHRM, strong sustainable HRM performance supports the achievement of broad sustainability business objectives and contributes to positive outcomes, including a favorable corporate culture (Cohen et. al et, 2010). Additionally, a hybrid literature review found that appropriate HRM is linked to organizational performance in terms of sustainable development (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021). While there are no specific citations that directly support the statement, research has shown that green organizational culture has a significant positive relationship with employees' green behavior and organizational environmental performance (Al-Swidi, 2021). Furthermore, companies are adopting the environmental management practice of Green HRM to implement green practices and develop employee awareness, which will increase economic performance and employee performance through energy consumption and water savings, which will increase consumer satisfaction (Xiao et. al, 2022).

The multiple regression analysis provided a deeper understanding of the specific relationships between each sustainable HRM dimension and corporate culture while controlling for potential confounding variables. Reflexively, different dimensions of sustainable HRM, including strategic, sociological, economic, and environmental dimensions, have been identified in the literature (Indiparambil, 2019; Mariappanadar, 2020). For instance, a descriptive study analyzed sustainable HRM and identified its key dimensions, including the economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Indiparambil, 2019). Another study revealed four dimensions of sustainable HRM, including justice and equality, transparent HR practices, economic, social, human, and ecological dimensions (Järlström et al., 2018). A report by SHRM suggests that HRM practitioners should understand sustainability in an organizational context and use it as a guide for the organization's sustainability initiatives (Cohen et. al., 2010). Furthermore, a study found that HRM practices can be perceived as sustainable if they contribute to social well-being, environmental protection, and economic development (Järlström et. al., 2023). Therefore, it can be inferred that sustainable HRM has different dimensions, including strategic, sociological, economic, and environmental dimensions, and that these dimensions are important for achieving sustainability goals and contributing to a positive corporate culture (Ren et al., 2023).

In this study, strategic dimensions showed a positive relationship with corporate culture, suggesting that organizations that prioritize employee engagement, social impact initiatives, stakeholder satisfaction, collaboration and teamwork, diversity and inclusion, and employee well-being tend to have a more favourable corporate culture. The economic ~~Economical~~ dimension exhibited the strongest positive relationship with corporate culture, indicating that organizations that focus on financial performance, socially responsible investments, sustainable procurement, employee compensation and benefits, stakeholder engagement, and corporate

social responsibility reporting tend to foster a positive corporate culture. The environmental dimension showed a weaker positive relationship with corporate culture compared to the economic dimension, suggesting that organizations that emphasize environmental awareness, environmental values, and sustainability initiatives adoption, as well as green behaviours and environmental performance indicators, contribute to a favourable corporate culture. On the other hand, the sociological dimension displayed a negative relationship with culture. This suggests that organizations that prioritize strategic alignment, sustainable HR practices, stakeholder engagement, corporate social responsibility performance, sustainability innovation, and employee perceptions of strategic alignment may face challenges in cultivating a positive corporate culture.

The standardized coefficients (Beta) provided insights into the relative importance of each predictor variable. The economic dimension had the highest standardized coefficient, indicating its strong influence on corporate culture. The environmental and strategic dimensions also had positive standardized coefficients, suggesting their contributions to corporate culture, although to a lesser extent to the former. The sociological dimension had a negative standardized coefficient, implying that it has a detrimental effect on corporate culture. These findings contribute to our understanding of how sustainable HRM practices can shape corporate culture within organizations. Organizations that prioritize employee engagement, social impact, financial performance, environmental awareness, and sustainability initiatives are more likely to have a positive corporate culture (David et. al., 2019; Pauwee, 2004). However, there is no specific research that directly supports this statement. Nonetheless, the concept of institutional theory suggests that organizations adopt specific practices to conform to external expectations and societal norms, which may include prioritizing employee engagement, social impact, financial performance, environmental awareness, and sustainability initiatives (David et. al., 2019; Pauwee, 2004). Additionally, research has shown that organizations that prioritize sustainability initiatives tend to have better financial performance and employee engagement (David et. al, 2019).

It is important to note that these findings are based on data collected from private sector employees in the industrial sector in Perak, Malaysia. Therefore, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results to other contexts. Future research could explore the relationship between sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture in different industries, sectors, and geographic locations to enhance the external validity of the findings.

Organizations can benefit from the findings of the study by understanding the importance of integrating sustainable HRM practices into their operations and policies to foster a positive corporate culture. By prioritizing employee engagement, social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and ethical conduct, organizations can create an environment that promotes collaboration, well-being, and stakeholder satisfaction, which can enhance organizational performance, reputation, and long-term sustainability. The following are some ways in which organizations can benefit from the findings:

- Adopt green human resource management strategies and increase technical innovations to improve sustainability and environmental performance (Shah et. al. (2021).
- Design sustainable HRM practices that include equity, well-being, and employee development dimensions (Stankevičiūtė et. al. 2018).
- Prioritize HRM practices that contribute to social well-being, environmental protection, and economic development (Piwovar-Sulej, 2021).

- Implement green HRM practices to develop employee awareness, increase economic performance, and improve consumer satisfaction (Shah et. al., 2021)

Therefore, organizations prioritising sustainable HRM practices that encompass strategic, sociological, economical, and environmental dimensions are more likely to have a positive corporate culture, enhancing organizational performance, reputation, and long-term sustainability (Indiparambil, 2019; Mariappanadar, 2020).

### ***5.3 Implications for Institutional Theory***

The deviation observed in the relationship between the sociological dimension of sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture has important implications for institutional theory. While the results generally align with the expectations of the institutional theory, the negative relationship of the sociological dimension with corporate culture suggests that there may be contextual factors at play that require further exploration and understanding. This highlights the need for future research to delve deeper into the sociological dimension's impact on corporate culture and to consider potential moderating variables that may influence this relationship.

These findings indicate that institutional theory, while valuable in understanding the influence of external pressures and societal norms on organizations, may need to be adapted to account for the specific nuances of each sustainable HRM dimension. The sociological dimension's negative relationship with corporate culture suggests that other contextual factors, such as industry-specific practices, cultural influences, or leadership styles, may play a significant role.

In summary, while the results generally align with the institutional theory, the deviation observed in the sociological dimension's impact on corporate culture highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of how sustainable HRM practices interact with external and internal factors. These findings offer a starting point for future research to explore the intricate relationship between sustainable HRM, corporate culture, and the specific contextual factors that influence this dynamic.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that sustainable HRM practices significantly influence corporate culture in the private sector, specifically focusing on the industrial sector in Perak, Malaysia. The dimensions of sustainable HRM, including employee engagement, social impact initiatives, financial performance, environmental awareness, and strategic alignment, were found to be related to corporate culture. The findings highlight the importance of integrating sustainable HRM practices into organizational policies and operations to foster a positive corporate culture.

To make the findings more significant, future research could explore the mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions that influence the relationship between sustainable HRM practices and corporate culture. Investigating the role of leadership, organizational climate, and employee perceptions can provide insights into the underlying processes through which sustainable HRM practices shape corporate culture. Additionally, studying the moderating effects of organizational size, industry characteristics, and national culture can help identify contextual factors that influence the strength and nature of the relationship. These findings can help organizations in different industries, sectors, and geographic locations understand the importance of sustainable HRM practices in shaping a positive corporate culture, ultimately contributing to organizational success and sustainability.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

KK and NMA carried out the introduction and literature review sections. KK also wrote the data methodology section. NMA wrote the discussion and implication sections. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Dr. Kardina Kamaruddin** is a senior lecturer at UITM Cawangan Kedah. Her research areas are 1) Training and development, 2) Human Resource Management, and 3) Intellectual Capital Management.

**Noor Malinjasari Ali** is a senior lecturer at UITM Cawangan Terengganu. Her research areas are 1) Transport, 2) Business Management, and 3) Service Quality.



# Encouraging Factor for ICT Usage in Agriculture from Supplier View: A Case Study in Southern Region, Malaysia

Nur Amalina Ismail<sup>1\*</sup>, Muhammad Aliuddin Bakar<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Izzul Hilmi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Faculty of Plantation and Agrotechnology, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Melaka.

\*Corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>[amalina1520@uitm.edu.my](mailto:amalina1520@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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Malaysia is leading the way in agriculture's information and communication technology (ICT) revolution, bringing innovation and efficiency. However, farmers may encounter several issues when using ICT due to higher costs, limited infrastructure, lack of technical scalability, literacy difficulties, compatibility issues, and change resistance. This study applied the technology acceptance model (TAM) to identify the development of ICT in Malaysia's agriculture industry and to examine the encouraging factors for farmers to adopt ICT from the suppliers' perspective so that ICT suppliers can develop solutions that match farmers' practical realities and constraints in their daily operations. Interviews were conducted with ten (10) ICT supplier companies and analysed using the Thematic Analysis model. There are four sub-themes revealed for ICT development in the agriculture industry: technology awareness, varieties of technologies, adoption of farmers' ICT usage, and product effectiveness. The next three sub-themes for ICT adoption factors among farmers are safety products, quality preference, and job opportunities. The study found that farmers with a high level of perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) of ICT will have a higher level of ICT usage. It is recommended that every new technology a supplier produces must undergo research and development, as it depends on farmers' demands and requirements.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) revolution has significantly changed Malaysia's agriculture industry. The government has been promoting using digital technologies to modernise and transform the sector, which is a crucial contributor to the country's economy. In each Malaysian plan, the ICT development programmes were significantly highlighted. In the Malaysia Budget 2021, the government allocated RM 1.2 billion for agriculture, including promoting technology and digital solutions. According to the 12th Malaysian Development Plan, the agriculture sector is expected to grow at 3.8% per year, contributing 7.0% to GDP (Dardak, 2022). The use of technology will accelerate the development and growth of this industry. The emphasis is on accelerating this industry's transformation into a contemporary, dynamic, and competitive sector backed by research, development, commercialisation, and innovation (Department of Prime Minister, 2021).

In Malaysia, (ICT) is used as an application for suppliers that can benefit their marketing of agricultural products. Also, ICT plays an essential role in this era of Industry 4.0 because the advancement of ICT, especially in mobile devices and internet connectivity, can help knowledge management in the agriculture sector (Ibrahim, Daud, & Hassan, 2020). The device will help market agricultural products by accessing updated and exact information to improve decision-making quality. Besides that, ICT can link suppliers to the market and provide them with current marketing information (Okello et al., 2020). After getting the report, the supplier can effectively decide on production and marketing. Due to ICT assistance in internal communication and information sharing with their business stakeholders, most suppliers have started to realise the utilisation of ICT in their everyday operations. ICT applications enhance a company's access to information, expertise, and capacity to grow its market and manage its operations better (Rozmi et al., 2020). Reducing manufacturing and labour costs may produce competitive products and improve business operations (Jaganathan et al., 2018).

ICT serves a significant role in the decision-support system for farmers. Farmers may stay informed about the latest developments in agriculture, weather, new crop types, and production and quality control techniques (Saidu et al., 2017; Pandey & Kumari, 2018). The government is promoting efforts to increase the use of ICT in agriculture. For example, in Malaysia Budget 2021, the government allocated 10 million ringgit in the form of matching grants up to 30 thousand ringgit to Pertubuhan Peladang Kawasan to implement the e-Satellite Farm Programme that can benefit more than 300 PPKs with a partnership of nearly 1 million farmers and planters (Bernama, 2020). In addition, Malaysia's Department of Agriculture created AgriMaths as part of its e-Agriculture Extension initiative to provide instantaneous access to government-run agricultural extension programmes from any location and at any time. MARDI also has developed several agriculture applications such as E-Ladang, MyPalmOil, SmartFarm, e-Fert, and AgroEcoSys that aimed at helping farmers improve their productivity and income. As a result, farmers could access pertinent information via ICT at any time, allowing them to work with development organisations and other farmers to increase agricultural productivity (Ramli et al., 2018; Abdullah and Samah, 2013). These claims that ICT offers timely information on what, when, where, why, and how to produce and sell agricultural products were supported by Kale et al. (2015).

Despite the efforts for ICT development and the availability of these ICT services, the adoption and uptake of ICT in accessing the technical, market and financial information in Malaysia's agriculture sector remain moderate. According to Krone et al. (2016), ICT usage may require many costs. Most ICT tools like computers and drones involve a high value of money the farmers should invest in. Emeana et al. (2020) also found high illiteracy rates, inadequate

technological infrastructure, and a need for smartphone-based technologies cause only a tiny percentage of smallholder farmers in the developing world to take advantage of them. Poor internet and network coverage to support innovative technologies can limit these benefits and create barriers to success for farmers. For example, they may struggle to access information or connect with buyers and suppliers, limiting their ability to make informed decisions and improve their farms' profitability (Ayaz et al., 2019).

In addition, the mean age of a Malaysian agricultural worker is 50 years, posing challenges in the implementation and assimilation of innovative farming technologies, mainly due to the migration of rural youth to urban areas in pursuit of job opportunities and a contemporary way of life (Alam et al., 2010; Sharon, 2019). The agriculture community also prefers traditional farming methods over information and communication technology (ICT) in agricultural practices (Jose and Lokeswari, 2018). Recent statistics presented in the Department of Statistics Malaysia 2020 supported this fact where the agriculture sector employed approximately 1.25 million workers, of which around 70% were categorised as low-skilled workers. Additionally, many farmers are unfamiliar with the latest technologies and are not confident in their ability to use them effectively. Therefore, this study aims to identify the development of ICT in Malaysia's agriculture industry and examine the encouraging factors for adopting ICT among farmers from the supplier perspective. This explanation is vital to provide valuable insights to ICT suppliers into how ICT can be designed and implemented to meet the specific needs of farmers.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Encouraging Factors of ICT Usage***

The Internet of Things (IoT) is an Internet-based dynamic global architecture that can rapidly grow worldwide and improve crop production to feed the growing population in the world. IoT technology is helping farmers monitor the agriculture process to enhance productivity in the agriculture industry. IoT can also inform suppliers about crops and soil health, crop storage conditions, and energy consumption. The suppliers can also use the IoT sensor in their transportation to provide data on crop health, which can be accessed using mobile phones or tablets as it is stored wirelessly on cloud-based systems or servers. Based on research, IoT can help avoid losses, increase productivity, and radically change agriculture management (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020).

Age, education, IoT knowledge level, the area under cultivation, and farming experience are the elements that significantly impact. Several high-priority challenges, including poor supplier understanding of IoT usage, farmer ignorance of IoT advantages, and a lack of an extensive information system, impact farmers' adoption of IoT. IoT enables farmers to increase agricultural revenue and be well-based with business partners. In addition, IoT may allow farmers to employ current transport, storage, packaging, and processing methods more effectively. For sustainable development of agriculture and the national economy, emphasis on ICT and its use in agriculture is significant (Tonny, Palash, & Moniruzzaman, 2019).

Agriculture will benefit more from IoT monitoring and automation since it can replace humans and be done anywhere globally. By 2050, it is expected that IoT-enabled agriculture will improve food output by 70% and feed up to 9.6 billion people, with 525 million farms utilising 2 billion sensors. This forecast has increased interest in IoT-based agriculture and farming, which promises to provide real-time visibility of crop and soil health, utilised equipment, storage conditions, fertiliser usage, energy use, and animal behaviour. As a result, IoT is gaining

popularity as it provides information about the health of crops and soil, crop storage conditions, energy consumption, animal behaviour, fertilisers, and machinery utilised (Ahmed & De, 2018).

A computer-based information system called the Agriculture Information System (AIS) incorporates all the associated data that might be extremely helpful to farmers in managing information and making strategic decisions. The ICT tools facilitating farming activities include software and hardware for satellite systems, radio, television, mobile phones, computers, tablets, and networking. In addition, the internet and web-based applications are widely utilised for selling goods and services and sharing and distributing agricultural information (Ele et al., 2021).

## ***2.2 The factor for the adoption of ICT***

ICT adoption may organise data between clients and providers and improve decision-making. Additionally, it could make it easier for farmers and business owners to share information on supply and demand. ICT may also aid in timely decision-making, finding the best solutions, and developing adequate irrigation and water management systems to provide the highest possible yields. Its ability to deliver current management information as an ERP system enables quick corrective and preventative measures. In addition, ICT may provide a worldwide network of the agricultural sector, bringing together farmers, scientists/researchers, and administrators to work toward a shared objective and bolstering the growth of agricultural activity (Gatautis et al. 2015).

Through credit and other financial services, information and communication technology may significantly improve the effect and performance of agricultural output. As farmers, they can expand production, reach out to more prospective customers, and improve sales management efficiency. Additionally, it reduces direct and indirect costs, notably those associated with advertising, while enhancing corporate operations (Tonny, Palash, & Moniruzzaman, 2019). This might be accomplished by employing websites, which are more affordable than telephone operations, to provide farmers with the capacity to exchange information with other farmers and extension officials. Furthermore, farmers now have much time to access pertinent information through ICT, allowing them to collaborate with other farmers and development organisations to increase agricultural output. That timely knowledge on producing and marketing agricultural goods is available via ICT (Jaganathan, Ahmad, & Ishak, 2018). Additionally, market information systems based on ICT have a track record of enhancing rural livelihoods in emerging nations with middle-class populations.

Using ICT, entrepreneurs may get current and pertinent business information, allowing newer agricultural entrepreneurs to create networks and websites from anywhere. Similar problems are resolved by ICT, including traceability, process control, market information transparency, lower transaction costs, and identification and monitoring of customer demands. ICT has become a rising problem regarding traceability and trustworthiness concerning agricultural products like chicken flu and other connected illnesses. In addition, new ventures in agriculture and rural areas are being started, including e-commerce, real estate for satellite offices, rural tourism, and virtual collaboration of small farms (Ahmed & De, 2018). ICT may also aid in capacity building, gaining access to financing and markets, restructuring extension, and expanding interlinkages across development efforts. Furthermore, it was discovered that ERP serves various corporate operations, including order management, financial administration, warehouse management, production planning, sales, purchasing, and service delivery (Kamarudin et al., 2019).

### ***2.3 Development of ICT***

Tools for information and communication technology might be used in the agricultural sector to speed up development, which would likely result in a rise in the country's GDP. Through e-governance, knowledge management portals, e-kiosks, and common service centres at the local level, e-agriculture improves the lives of farmers and end users in sustainable development. The worldwide community may use it as a foundation to oversee the creation and validation of conceptual models and approaches and package and share them when tested. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), ICT educates farmers and craftspeople about correctly planning and managing natural resources. It is generally known that information technology (IT) plays a vital role in the advancement of e-agriculture and rural living. Through IT, farmers might obtain relevant information on agricultural inputs, crop production methods, agricultural processing, market assistance, agricultural financing, and management of farm businesses (Chibsa, 2020).

ICT plays a significant part in the farmers' decision-support system. Thanks to ICT, farmers may stay informed about the latest agricultural developments, weather, new crop types, and production and quality control techniques. The major difficulty facing policymakers in India is the lack of appropriate, effective, and targeted technology connected to the agro-climatic zone, farm size, soil type, and other factors for the farmers. For farmers to use and benefit from, information and communication technology may disseminate precise, accurate, and timely information. Farmers may better plan the crops they will grow and cultivate, harvest, post-harvest, and sell their produce using proper agricultural practices through a decision support system. Agriculture requires information based on factors such as agroclimatic areas, land holdings, crop types, technology used, market orientation, weather, etc. According to several investigations, most farmers considered the "question and answer service" the finest resource for receiving individualised answers to their unique agricultural difficulties (Singh et al., 2017).

### ***2.4 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Theory***

This study was based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). From a conceptual standpoint, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an ideal tool for comprehending how technology functions. Perceived Usefulness (PU), perceived ease-of-use (PEOU), and attitudes toward using the system (ATU) are used to gauge user acceptability, which, according to Davis (1989), can reveal how well a system operates. Previous studies used the TAM model to investigate the adoption of ICT in agriculture among farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs (Zaremozhzabieh et al., 2015; Jain, 2023; Hendrawan et al., 2023). However, the adoption of ICT relies heavily on the owner's acceptance. If the owner does not recognise the utility of the technology or has a limited understanding of its potential, the owner will be hesitant to adopt it (Saariko et al., 2020). This study employs two TAM model variables: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). PU will refer to how farmers are more inclined to accept ICT if they believe it would help them run their businesses more efficiently. ICT suppliers may educate farmers on the advantages of ICT by showing them how these tools can increase their output, effectiveness, and profitability. PEOU will focus on how farmers are more inclined to use ICT if they believe it is simple. In addition, ICT suppliers may increase technology accessibility by offering user-friendly interfaces, clear instructions, and technical help.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative approach was chosen as the research method for this study. The study area considers ICT suppliers in the southern region of Peninsular Malaysia only, namely the states

of Melaka, Selangor, Johor and Negeri Sembilan, because most ICT suppliers are located in the south part of Malaysia, particularly in Johor and Selangor (Ken Research Analysis, 2018). The researcher used purposive sampling to select the sample of participants. This type of sampling is primarily strategic and demands trying to align sampling objectives with research questions (Bryman, 2004). Interviews were conducted with ten (10) ICT supplier companies that supplied ICT goods to the farmers, such as software, drones, and precision farming, based on the participants for the inclusion criteria. The respondents that have been interviewed are ten (10) respondents because the minimum number of respondents is four (4) to get a clear picture of the issues faced (Maree, 2015). The data was collected between October 2022 and January 2023. The researcher conducted the interviews and provided written queries in advance to the participants. Within this context, interviews are conducted through direct personal interaction and various electronic media platforms, for example, telephone, email, social messaging apps and video conferencing. The interview data was analysed using thematic analysis in Microsoft Excel. Braun and Clarke (2006) propose that thematic analysis should encompass coding, categorisation, and identification of patterns to establish connections between variables and factors, ultimately yielding a robust and coherent chain of evidence (Creswell 2009; Braun and Clarke 2006; Miles and Huberman 1994). Thematic analysis enhances the effectiveness and accuracy of data presentation, ensuring a more realistic reflection of data collection. This is achieved through the utilisation of diverse instruments (such as observation, questionnaires, and interviews) in a single study involving participants in multiple environments (Miles and Huberman 1994; Creswell 2009; Hayes 1997). The process begins with codes utilised as keywords employed for categorising and organising content, and they are considered a fundamental component of qualitative research. The data was subsequently assessed, categorised, and organised into overarching and subordinate concepts from the coding procedure. The notions that arose were assigned a code. Later, the data was subjected to analysis through the identification of repeating patterns and the highlighting of similarities and contrasts. In the last stage, data verification was conducted to assess comprehension accuracy by reviewing the transcripts and codes. This process enabled the researcher to validate or modify previously formulated assumptions.

#### **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The data were extracted and analysed according to the study's main objectives: 1) To research ICT development in agriculture. 2) To identify encouraging factors for farmers to use ICT. According to the participants, ICT has reportedly been employed extensively in agriculture because farmers are essential to applying ICT in agriculture. Crop yields in the nation will be boosted to their most significant potential due to the favourable impact on agricultural productivity and efficiency. However, participants also discussed the barriers preventing others from utilising ICT in this industry. These constraints were found because of the awareness problem. According to the research, formal education, such as that provided in colleges and universities, is essential for disseminating agricultural information and motivating students to pursue professions.

Table 1: Codes, categories, and theme

Codes, Categories and Themes		
Codes	Category	Theme
Technologies Awareness, Varieties of technologies	Operation	Development of the ICT agriculture industry
Adoption of ICT usage to farmers, effectiveness of products	Planning	
Safety Products	Safety	Encouraging factors for the adoption of ICT among farmers
Job Opportunities, Quality Preference	Opportunity	

Two broad topics were created to manage the subject of the study. The first topic developed was in response to the research question: What ICT device kinds positively influence the agriculture sector? How might applying technologies-based ICT in the agriculture industry affect the future? The researcher developed all goals after carefully reviewing the participant's interviews.

#### ***4.1 Theme 1: Development of the ICT agriculture industry***

From Table 2, participants were unanimous that technology has made farmers spend less on their energy and time, especially by using drones and ICT improving production. Below is the selected narrative :

"Drones are used to save farmers from spending energy and time." - Respondent 1,8,9

"Digitalise the data to improve the efficiency of production." Respondent 1,7

According to Ayaz et al. (2019), Fixed-wing drones are recommended when a significant region must be covered because of their long-range flying capability and, most importantly, because they are accident-tolerant. In addition, multi-rotor drones are increasingly popular since they are more straightforward to set up, take off faster, and land vertically. Compared to fixed wings, multi-rotors offer several benefits since they are simpler to operate, don't need to anticipate the wind ahead of time and fly more precisely. Besides that, in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the result is under the category of Perceived use (PEOU) because by using drones, the farmers can save energy and time. Also, it can help farmers prevent the risk of chemical spraying.

Three (3) respondents quoted similar reasons for the code of various technologies. For example, sensors may measure the soil's pH level and verify the earth's maturity. Below is the selected narrative:

"Integrated with Sensor, validation of soil matured sensor, use to collect data."- Respondent 2,

"Smart crop system to evaluate pH level on the soil." - Respondent 4

"Use drones to spray pesticides" – Respondent 7

Electrochemical sensors measure important soil parameters, such as pH (Ali et al., 2020). These sensors may readily replace traditional chemical soil analyses, which are typically expensive and time-consuming. Therefore, the result under the TAM model can be categorised as

perceived of use (PEOU) because using a variety of technologies, such as sensors, can allow the farmers to be used to get information on crop conditions.

For the subtheme of adopting ICT usage to farmers, six (6) respondents acknowledge that farmers are frequently wary of new technology, especially if they are unsure of how it operates or the advantages it may offer. The narrative is as follows.

"Distributed the benefit of the drone"- Respondents 1, 4, 8

"Introduce to the farmer, let the farmer understand the benefit of technology." - Respondent 10

"Giving a new mindset to the new generation that agriculture can improvise career growth skill." Respondent 5,6

Therefore, providing practical demonstrations and training sessions may be an excellent method to assist farmers in comprehending the benefits of technology. Furthermore, Onwude et al. (2020) assert that farmers may utilise ICT to use better the current transport, storage, packaging, and processing methods. Therefore, it is essential to emphasise the role that technology and innovation play in contemporary agriculture and the chances for development and progress that this generates to change how the next generation thinks about the possibility of professional advancement. The result of the TAM model for adopting ICT usage to the farmers is user acceptance because the farmers should accept that ICT can benefit them and improve crop quality.

Three (3) participants referred to the effectiveness of product factors influencing ICT development in the agriculture industry. The narratives are as follows:

"Drone can cover three times more effectively than using manpower." – Respondent 3

"More than 50% of management improved."-Respondent 4

"Using manpower for spraying can get more time use if using the drones can make the time spend less"- Respondent 9

Drones may occasionally be more advantageous than manual labour in some circumstances. According to Ayaz et al. (2019), fast, low-cost, real-time, and large-scale surveillance supported with an accurate data acquisition and transmission facility is crucial for agriculture production. The product's effectiveness can be perceived as usefulness in the TAM model because the farmers believe using drones would increase their productivity and can cover multiple times the workforce's productivity.

Table 2: Respondent's Answer for Objective 1

Respondent	Interview Transcript	Category	Code	TAM Model
R1, R8, R9, R10	<p>"Drones are used to save farmer spend energy and time."</p> <p>"Drones made farmers away from spraying risk which at paddy crop, the farmer less wearing PPE for their safety."</p>	Operation	Technology Awareness	Perceived of Use (PEOU)



R1, R7	"Digitalise the data to improve the efficiency of production."	Operation	Technology Awareness	Perceived of Use (PEOU)
R2, R4, R7	"Integrated with Sensor, validation of soil matured sensor, use to collect data." "Smart crop system to evaluate pH level on soil." "Use the drones to spray pesticides."	Operation	Varieties of technologies	Perceived of Use (PEOU)
R1, R4, R8, R10	"Distributed the benefit of the drone." "Introduce to the farmer, let the farmer understand the benefit of technology." "Giving a new mindset to the new generation that agriculture can improvise career growth skill."	Planning	Adoption of ICT usage to the farmer	User Acceptance
R3, R4, R9	"Drone can cover three times more effectively than using manpower." "More than 50% of Management improved." "Using Manpower for spraying can get more time use if using the drones can make the time spend less."	Planning	Effectiveness of product	Perceived Usefulness

#### ***4.2 Theme 2: Encouraging factors for the adoption of ICT among farmers***

Table 3.3 uses the thematic analysis method to identify the themes. For the subtheme of safety products, three (3) respondents agreed that the technology could significantly enhance food safety by offering creative solutions to identify and increase food items' safety. The narrative is as follows:

"Using drones is safer because farmers wear less PPE during spraying."- Respondent 1

"Technology also can make improvise food safety."- Respondent 2,3,8

The technology could significantly enhance food safety by offering creative solutions that can identify and increase the safety of food items (Suhaila et al., 2020). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ICT traceability in livestock helps guarantee that animal diseases are better monitored and managed, easing regional and global commerce. For example, the internet-based electronic service TraceNet makes obtaining certification to export organic goods from India easier. It gathers, saves, reports, and tracks quality assurance data forwards and backwards (Forster et al., 2013). The result of the TAM model for safety products is perceived as ease of use because, with the help of technologies, the farmers can enhance the quality of life, such as human health, safety, and welfare.

Three (3) respondents quoted the factor of ICT adoption among farmers as a quality preference for the code of quality preference. The narrative is as follows:

"Farmers using estimation to estimate the plant need but using AI technology can give the accurate solution." – Respondent 4, 6

"With technology, the farmer can focus on improving quality rather than increasing production quantity." – Respondent 10

Because Artificial Intelligence (AI) has developed predictive models that can forecast future outcomes based on previous data, AI technology can offer precise answers. In addition, these models may be trained to see trends and produce accurate predictions, giving businesses helpful information to guide decision-making. For example, ICT-based decision support systems assist farmers in choosing suitable crops to plant and grow, harvest, post-harvest, and sell their food to improve yields (USAID, 2013). Quality preference is perceived useful under the result of the TAM model because the farmers believe that using technologies such as decision support system can improve their decision-making on enhancing the quality and giving accurate solutions.

Three (3) respondents agree that job opportunities among farmers are the following factor of ICT adoption. Below is the selected narrative:

"With technology also can open job opportunities for all generations of age."- Respondent 7,9,10

Provide young people with the opportunity to gain practical agricultural experience through internships, job shadowing, and other initiatives. By doing so, one may develop their talents, gain valuable experience, and better grasp the opportunities available in agriculture. For example, automation, a technology product, can replace certain occupations while opening new career options for those with technical training and experience in data analysis, programming, and robotics. The result under the TAM model of job opportunity is user acceptance because the farmers should accept that adapting the technologies used in the agriculture sector can bring new job opportunities to programming, data analysis, and engineering.

Table 3: Respondent's Answer for Objective 2

Respondent	Interview Transcript	Category	Code	TAM Model
C1	"Using drones is safer because farmers wear less PPE during spraying."	Safety	Safety Product	Perceived of Use (PEOU)
C2, C3, C8	"Technology also improves food safety."			
C4, C6, C10	"Farmers using estimation to estimate the plant need, but AI technology can give the accurate solution." "With technology, the farmer can focus on improving quality rather than increasing production quantity."	Opportunity	Quality Preference	Perceived Usefulness (U)
C7, C9, C10	"Technology also can open job opportunities for all generations of age."	Opportunity	Job Opportunity	User Acceptance

This can further be enhanced by using an IoT web host application that allows the users to connect to the proposed system remotely if there is internet connectivity. This shows the great potential of the IoT-based platform to control the proposed approach over the internet regardless of any range limitations.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In summary, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) should be utilised in all sectors of the economy, particularly in agriculture. Even if the study's findings and analysis show that farmers in the agriculture sector use ICT to a limited extent, the government is crucial in boosting agricultural output in keeping with the goal of economic growth as food consumption rises yearly. Although Malaysia's ICT development is not very advanced, ICT suppliers may use the available technology to produce a strong Return On Investment (ROI). Any new technology must first undergo research and development since it depends on the demands and needs of farmers. Governments can allot funds for research and development in agricultural technology, which can aid in the creation of more individualised and cost-effective ICT solutions for farmers. Governments can also facilitate partnerships between public and private institutions, promoting cooperation between ICT providers and agricultural organisations to create tailored solutions for farmers. Farmers also should be made aware of the many ways in which ICT can improve their livelihoods through awareness campaigns. These initiatives need to be made publically accessible and feature tangible achievements. All farmers will employ these technologies if they think they are essential for their crops. ICT is necessary for farmers' products since it has cost and efficiency advantages. ICT-based crop monitoring will considerably aid farmers' ability to labour less. They will refer to the system and sensor to take any action and render the appropriate decision depending on crop circumstances. In future studies, a quantitative methodology may be employed to investigate prevailing patterns of success among farmers using ICT tools specially designed for them. The findings of this study have practical implications for ICT suppliers, as they can utilise the results to develop ICT tools specifically tailored to meet the distinct needs of farmers. ICT suppliers are expected to create these tools within the agricultural sector.

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## **AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION**

NAI is responsible for the preparation of the article and the supervision of the entire research process. MAB plays a significant role in academic research literature review and methodology sections. MIH is responsible for overseeing the data collection process and conducting data analysis. MAB and MIH collaboratively brainstormed the discussion section with the assistance of NAI.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Nur Amalina Ismail** is a lecturer of agricultural economics at UiTM Melaka Branch Jasin Campus. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) in Business Economics from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and a Master in Economics from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). She started her career at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka Branch, Jasin Campus, in 2016 until the present. Her interest is in agriculture economics and econometrics.

**Muhammad Aliuddin Bakar** is a lecturer of agricultural engineering at UiTM Melaka Branch Jasin Campus. He holds. He started his career at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) from 2011 to 2014 and later joined Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Melaka Branch, Jasin Campus, from 2014 until now. His interest is in mechanisation and IoT in agriculture.

**Muhammad Izzul Hilmi** is pursuing a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agribusiness within the Faculty of Plantation and Agrotechnology. In 2020, he obtained his Diploma in Plantation Industry Management from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM).

# The Analysis of Interlingual and Intralingual Grammatical Errors due to First Language Interference among Diploma Students

Nasiha Nasrudin<sup>1</sup>, Nurhafa Mohd Akhir<sup>2\*</sup>, Muhammad Nasiruddin Aziz<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>2</sup>[nurhafa@uitm.edu.my](mailto:nurhafa@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*This study seeks to identify the errors in writing made by Malay ESL students that can be attributed to mother tongue interference. The content analysis of 29 academic compositions in the form of expository essays written by UiTM Puncak Perdana diploma students was conducted. Students were required to produce 250-300 word essays on the effects of procrastination on students within an hour and a half without using any outside resources, such as dictionaries or class notes. The mean word count of the 29 compositions was 305. Based on the findings, it can be said that the reason why the students made the errors was due to inter and intra-lingual mistakes. This paper presents and discusses a descriptive analysis of the results with respect to three main types of interference: the use of singular and plural nouns, subject-verb agreement, and the copula 'be'.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has undergone substantial transformations in numerous fields ever since attaining its independence in 1957. Multiple languages are spoken in Malaysia, which is a multilingual country. Bahasa Malaysia (Malay) is the official language, which is the language used in government, education, and media. As a second language, English is widely spoken and used in Malaysia, particularly in urban areas and in business and academic contexts. Many Malaysians are fluent in both Bahasa Malaysia and English, and use both languages in their daily lives. The diversity of languages in Malaysia reflects the country's rich cultural heritage, as well as its history of colonialism and migration. Consequently, language is a significant aspect of Malaysian identity, and the ability to speak multiple languages is frequently regarded as a valuable skill.

Despite English's status as a second language (L2) in the Malaysian education system's primary and secondary schools, there are a variety of English proficiency levels because students originate from diverse backgrounds. Students who are regularly exposed to English at home or in their community may have a higher level of proficiency in the language than those who are less exposed. Essentially, a student's natural aptitude for acquiring languages can also influence their English proficiency. Some students may have a natural aptitude for language acquisition, making it easier for them to acquire and effectively use English.

According to Brown (2000), learners have to be fairly exposed to all of the four basic skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order to master the English language. However, Malaysian students are still considerably weak in English, as errors are still made by the students as exhibited in their written work. For second language learners, a big problem in writing appears in the grammar of English, since writing strategies and methods have been influenced by the native language learning (Fengjie, Jia, & Hongyi, 2016). The word order of a sentence in some languages is different from English, so learners may transfer this word order to their English writing, resulting in sentences that are grammatically incorrect. Additionally, some languages have different verb tenses or aspects that may not exist in English, so learners may have difficulty understanding or using these English verb forms.

Overgeneralisation is also a common error that second language learners may make when learning English. The learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language (Richards, 1971). For example, a learner who has learned that English plurals are often formed by adding "s" to the end of a word may overgeneralise this rule and mistakenly write "childs" instead of "children" or "mans" instead of "men". Several types of errors are bound to be encountered in the learners' written performance, as making mistakes is a natural process of learning and must be considered as part of cognition (Darus, 2009). Due to this factor, errors must be viewed positively. Richards (1971) also proposed that rather than reflecting the learner's inability to separate two languages, intralingual and developmental errors reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage, and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition.

Error analysis is essential to teaching methodology because it enables the identification and explanation of learners' learning difficulties. Through error analysis, educators can identify the most common categories of errors made by students as well as their underlying causes. This can help educators develop appropriate corrective techniques to resolve these errors and enhance the English comprehension and usage of their students. Educators can also use Error Analysis (EA) to evaluate the efficacy of their teaching methods and materials, and to adapt their lessons based on their students' requirements and progress. The application of EA and



appropriate corrective techniques can facilitate effective English learning and instruction (Darus, 2009). This leads to the following objective of the research:

- To investigate the types of errors made by Malaysian university students in their written work

This study will contribute to the comprehension of how interference from the native language influences second language (L2) acquisition. It intends to highlight the specific grammatical errors that learners are likely to commit due to interference from their native language. Understanding these errors made by the students can lead to the development of instructional materials and exercises designed to address these difficulties. Language is a fundamental aspect of culture, and addressing language barriers can improve intercultural comprehension and communication. This may have broader social implications, such as increased cultural sensitivity and community cooperation.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Errors versus Mistakes***

Learning a language entails being fluent in the four language skills, and mistakes are an unavoidable part of the process. Neither the educator nor the student should become overly concerned with them. However, it is beneficial for both to understand the various types of common errors in written English, as these are the most easily corrected. In EA, the concept of error has a distinct connotation that differs from that of "mistake." Corder (1981) distinguishes clearly between 'errors' and 'mistakes'. Errors, he claims, are "failures of incompetence," whereas mistakes are "failures in performance." Errors are systematic, unlike mistakes, because they represent language learners' underlying linguistic understanding. Competence errors typically result from a lack of knowledge, while performance errors are errors associated with performance issues, such as negligence and fatigue (Chomsky, 1969). On the basis of the previously mentioned data, it appears possible to assert that mistakes do not occur systematically and are the result of physical, emotional, or psychological factors, whereas errors occur systematically and are the result of a lack of knowledge, not from other external factors. Learners' slips of the tongue or pen are considered 'mistakes' rather than 'errors' if they are self-corrected, i.e. without external assistance, but 'errors' if they are not. Regardless of what has been discussed regarding the distinctions between errors and mistakes, Ellis (1997) observes that it may not always be possible to make a clear distinction between them.

### ***2.2 Error Analysis***

In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), EA was first established by Stephen Pit Corder and his colleagues in the late 1970s and became a very popular approach for describing L2 errors (Al-Khresheh, 2016). This approach makes no assumptions about the reasons for the types of errors; rather, it prescribes collecting data from the actual conversations of language learners and then classifying the categories of errors based on the collected data (Burt, 1975). Error analysis can be described as observing students' errors, categorising them in accordance with a particular system, and analysing them accordingly (Bölükbaş, 2011). As shown in Figure 1 below, many definitions of the methodology were also provided by second language researchers in accordance with the expansion of EA-based research.

<b>Linguist</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Corder (1981, p. 35)	An experimental technique for validating the theory of transfer aims at telling us something about the psycholinguistic processes of language learning.
Ellis, (1985, p. 296)	A procedure used by both researchers and teachers. It involves collecting samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their hypothesized causes, and evaluating their seriousness.
Selinker and Gass (2008, p. 517)	A procedure for analysing second language data that begins with the errors learners make and then attempts to explain them.
Crystal, (2008, p. 173)	A technique for identifying, classifying and interpreting systematically the unacceptable forms produced by someone in learning a second language, using the principles and procedures provided by linguistics.
VanPatten and Benati (2010, p. 82)	A research tool characterized by a set of procedures for identifying, describing, and explaining L2 learners' errors.
James, (2013, p. 1)	A process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language.

Figure 1: Definitions of the methodology

There are numerous classifications in the literature that explain and evaluate errors according to their categories and sources. Corder (1973, 1975) divides errors into four groups: lacking a basic unit (1), adding an irrelevant or unnecessary unit (2), selecting the incorrect unit (3), and misordering the units (4). He adds that it is preferable to classify errors according to different categories, such as spelling, phonologic, morphologic, and syntactic categories. In order to analyse surface structure errors, Dulay et al. (1982) suggest categorising them as "misinformation, omission, addition, and misordering."

Richards and Schmidt (2010) classify errors as intralingual and interlingual in their most fundamental sense. While interlingual errors result from transference from the learner's native language, intralingual errors are influenced by various linguistic factors.

### ***2. 3 Interlingual versus Intralingual Errors***

Interlingual and intralingual errors are the two most common categories of errors made by L2 learners. Early phases of second-language acquisition are characterised by a substantial amount of interlingual transfer from the native language. According to Brown (1980), before the learner becomes familiar with the system of the second language, the only linguistic system from which the learner can draw is the native language.

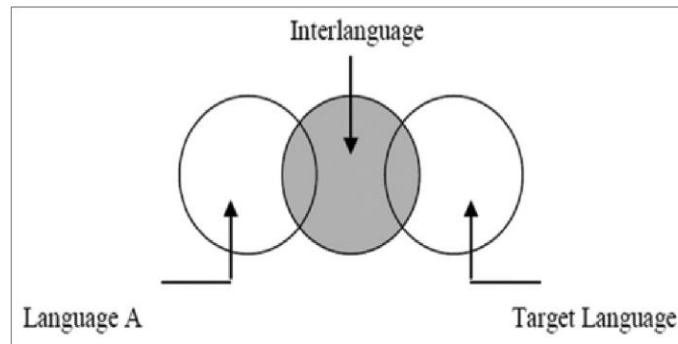


Figure 2: Diagram of Interlanguage (Source: Corder, 1981,p.17)

Contrarily, intralingual error or intralingual transfer refers to the negative transfer of language items within the target language and typically occurs during the rule learning stages of language acquisition, such as the overgeneralization of grammar rules within the target language and the failure to apply rules of the target language in appropriate situations. Richards (1971) suggests four categories of intralingual errors: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and the building of false systems. Firstly, overgeneralization occurs when a learner extends the use of a grammatical rule beyond its accepted usage. The second instance of the learner's ignorance of rule restriction is when he fails to comprehend that the existing rule is limited to a particular context and should therefore not be applied in other contexts. For example, he writes “*They didn't can come early*” rather than “*They couldn't come early*” after a modal verb. In this instance, the rule is incorrectly applied because the learner believes that the modal verb *can* is similar to action verbs such as *didn't eat*, *didn't sleep*, *didn't run*, etc. The third intralingual error - incomplete application of rules - occurs when learners fail to learn the more complex types of structures because they can easily use basic forms to communicate, for example, “*You speak English?*” instead of “*Do you speak English?*”. The fourth category is the construction of false systems, which occurs when language learners do not comprehend the system of the target language.

Various researchers have conducted studies on L1 interference in the writing of second-language English learners. Tse (2014) conducted a study to identify the grammatical errors made by university students and to suggest methods to prevent them. Six significant errors were discovered, which were singular/plural, articles, prepositions, adjective/noun, subject-verb agreement, and tenses. Sadiyah and Royani (2019) analysed students' grammatical errors in their writing, particularly in descriptive text. In the research findings, 41% of the errors in verb agreement were attributed to the incorrect use of simple present tense, followed by errors in pronoun usage (18%), usage (15%), sentence pattern (12%), orthography (9%), and capitalisation (5%). Darus and Subramaniam (2009) examined errors in 72 essays written by secondary school students in Malaysia. This study sheds light on how students internalise the norms of the target language, in this case, English.

In a study conducted by Puspita (2021), morphological errors and syntactical errors were found to be the most troublesome areas of language that students encountered when writing in English. It was also stated that students tend to employ grammar rules from their first language (L1), Indonesian. Zhang (2023) conducted a case study to investigate the influences of L1 on the aspect of writing in L2; it is a qualitative case study that reveals how the Chinese language as L1 influences writing in English (L2) in the context of IELTS writing exercises as part of practice exams. His findings disclosed a wide variety of errors or misuses in L2 writing, all of which demonstrated a connection to the interference or transfer of L1 to L2 writing in terms of

grammar, semantics, and syntax. Despite the fact that the focus of these studies varies, they all reach the conclusion that L1 interference is one of the challenges learners encounter, which consequently contributed to their writing errors.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### ***3.1 Research Design***

To examine grammatical errors in academic compositions, the present study took a qualitative approach by analysing contents of the said document. This agrees with Creswell's (2009) assertion that social or human problems can be explored and understood through this research approach. One research method that qualitative research can take according to Creswell (2009) is text analysis- this was the method that the study employed. In the context of the study, the qualitative approach has enabled students' ungrammatical usage of the features (discussed at length in the findings and discussion section) to be scholarly studied and examined.

#### ***3.2 Materials***

To observe the grammatical errors committed by students, 29 academic compositions in the form of expository essays, written by diploma students, were examined via content analysis. With a focus on a topical issue, the students were tasked with producing in-class essays between 250 and 300 words, on the consequences of procrastination on students, within the duration of one hour and a half without referring to any sources including dictionary or class notes. The mean length of the 29 compositions was 305 words. The number of compositions collected was deemed sufficient for an in-depth analysis of the grammatical errors committed by the students.

#### ***3.3 Sampling Technique***

The study employed convenience sampling technique by analysing Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Puncak Perdana students' expository essays, who were undertaking the Diploma in Animation at the institution. The essays were produced as part of the assessments for a university course, ELC231 Integrated Language Skills. The students were selected on the bases of (i) convenient availability and (ii) close proximity of the researchers to the students. Offered to semester 2 students, the syllabus item equips students with necessary writing skills including higher-level grammatical construction and vocabulary expansion, to discuss topical issues effectively.

The selection of the animation students was due to the undeniable importance of writing skills in producing an animation or film, particularly when telling a story to realise one's creative designs. This includes plot and theme development, which essentially requires considerable writing skills.

#### ***3.4 Data Collection and Analysis***

In order to examine the grammatical errors committed, the researchers began by collecting the 29 academic compositions submitted by the diploma students in PDF files. The compositions were then converted into Microsoft Office word documents in order to identify the total word count and the mean or average length of the essays. The documents were then examined by two (2) English lecturers from the same institution. Through content analysis, grammatical errors were identified and classified into dissimilar categories including the use of nouns, subject-verb agreement (SVA), and copula 'be'. The classification of these errors was based on their apparent recurrence in all 29 compositions analysed.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The researchers observed that when writing a descriptive text, most of the students regularly made singular and plural errors. Most students either added, removed, or used incorrect forms of singular and plural. The researchers discovered most mistakes were related with errors on singular and plural nouns, errors on subject-verb agreement (SVA), and errors on the use of plural and singular form in copula 'be'. Where this study is concerned, based on the students' essays, there were a total of 30 incorrect use of singular and plural nouns, 20 instances of incorrect usage of SVA, and 25 wrong productions of copula 'be'.

Table 1: Errors in Singular and Plural Nouns

Type of Errors	Frequency of Errors	Example of Errors	Example of Corrections
Singular and plural nouns	30	...there are two <u>reason</u> students postpone...	...There are two <u>reasons</u> students postpone...
		...they have stress <u>problem</u> ...	... they have stress <u>problems</u> ...
		...There are many <u>reason</u> ...	...There are many <u>reasons</u> ...
		...There are two <u>consequence</u> ...	...There are two <u>consequences</u> ...
		...students do this to <u>all subject</u> ...	...students do this to all <u>subjects</u> ...
		... <u>student</u> have to avoid themselves...	... <u>students</u> have to avoid themselves...
		...he would get <u>a bad grades</u> ...	...he would get <u>a bad grade</u> ...
		... It was stated in <u>a studies</u> ...	...It was stated in <u>a study</u> ...
		... do a given task with <u>a negative vibes</u> ...	...do a given task with <u>a negative vibe</u> ...
		... As <u>a students</u> , he should manage...	...As <u>a student</u> , he should manage...
		...In conclusion, as <u>a students</u> ...	...In conclusion, as <u>a student</u> ...

Table 1 shows the examples of students' errors in nouns. Most students made errors when indicating singular nouns or plural nouns. To illustrate, the errors found in their academic compositions include *two reason*, *many reason*, *two consequence*, and *all subject*. *Two*, *many*, and *all* precede plural nouns. Therefore, the phrases should be *two reasons*, *many reasons*, *two consequences*, and *all subjects* since *reason*, *consequence*, and *subject* belong to singular nouns.

Not to mention, another error is related to singular nouns. For example, *a bad grades*, *a studies*, *a negative vibes*, and *a students*. *A* is an article which precedes a singular noun. Therefore, the phrases should be *a bad grade*, *a study*, *a negative vibe*, and *a student* since *grades*, *studies*, *negative vibes*, and *students* belong to plural nouns.

Table 2: Errors in Subject-verb Agreement (SVA)

Type of Errors	Frequency of Errors	Example of Errors	Example of Corrections
Errors in subject-verb agreement (SVA)	20	... physical health issues that leads...	... physical health issues that lead...
		...Many people suffers...	...Many people suffer...
		... procrastination lead to consequence...	... procrastination leads to consequence...

Table 2 reveals the examples of students' errors in the Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA). Most students made errors by adding *-s* or *-es* at the end of the verb in present tense form when the subject or the entity performing the action is a plural subject. For instance, some of the errors observed in the students' writing were *physical health issues that leads* and *many people suffers*. *Leads* and *suffers* are singular verbs. Therefore, the phrases should be *physical health issues that lead* and *many people suffer* since *leads* and *suffers* belong to singular verbs. Another error is omitting *-s* or *-es* at the end of a verb in present tense form when the subject or the entity performing the action is a singular subject. One example of this error is *procrastination lead*. *Lead* is a plural verb. Therefore, the phrase should be *procrastination leads* since *leads* belongs to the singular verb. As there is a difference in the SVA rule in English and Malay (verbs in Malay do not need to agree with the number or status of the subject), the omission and addition of *-s* in sentences above therefore may be due to the interference from the learners' first language.

Table 3: Errors in the Use of Plural and Singular Form in Copula 'be'

Type of Errors	Frequency of Errors	Example of Errors	Example of Corrections
Errors in the use of plural and singular form in copula 'be'	25	...If the students <u>is</u> not doing...	...If the students <u>are</u> not doing...
		...Some students <u>is</u> having...	...Some students <u>are</u> having...
		... there <u>is</u> tons of consequences...	... there <u>are</u> ton of consequences...
		... the student <u>are</u> having overcrowded assignments...	... the student <u>is</u> having overcrowded assignments...
		... Procrastinations <u>is</u> one of those...	... Procrastinations <u>are</u> one of those...
		... Student's workflow <u>are</u> dictated	... Student's workflow <u>is</u> dictated
		... Fear of failure <u>are</u> ...	... Fear of failure <u>is</u> ...

Table 3 indicates the examples of students' errors in the use of plural and singular form in copula 'be'. The verb 'be' has three distinct present tense and two past tense forms. Most students used the wrong forms of the verb 'be'. The examples of incorrect forms of verb 'be' in the students' writing are *students is*, *procrastinations is*, and *there is tons of consequences*. *Students*, *procrastinations*, and *tons of consequences* are considered as plural subjects. Therefore, the phrases should be *students are*, *procrastinations are*, and *there are tons of*

*consequences* since *students*, *procrastinations*, and *tons of consequences* belong to plural subjects. Other examples of students' errors in copula 'be' are the *student are having*, *student's workflow are*, and *fear of failure are*. *The student*, *student's workflow* and *fear of failure* are considered as singular subjects. Therefore, the phrases should be the *student is*, *student's workflow is*, and *fear of failure is* since *the student*, *student's workflow*, and *fear of failure* belong to singular subjects.

## 5. DISCUSSIONS

According to Krashen (2013), inter and intra lingual errors cause the omission, insertion, and misinformation problems to occur. Based on the findings, it can be said that the reason why the students made the errors is due to inter and intra lingual mistakes. Not to mention, Richard (2014) argued that a mistake happens when grammatical or stylistic components from the first language are introduced into the target language. This can be seen when the majority of the students still use their mother tongue (Malay) while speaking and writing, which leads to usage errors with the singular and plural nouns and verbs. According to Hamzah and Sharifudin (2017), native language interference was the major source of preposition errors in the students' essays with 55.9% of errors.

For example, English grammar requires the subject and verb to agree in a number in which both must be singular or both must be plural. Problems occur in the present tense because one must add an -s or -es at the end of the verb when the subjects or the entity performing the action is a singular third person (*he*, *she*, *it*, or words for which these pronouns could substitute). The examples *He likes ice cream* and *She likes ice cream* exemplify this. On the other hand, in Malay grammar, there is no such thing as a subject-verb agreement rule that is based on the number of the subjects. According to Nik Safiah Karim et al. (2004), the basic sentence structures in Malay show that the number or status of the subject does not affect the verb structures in the predicates such as *Dia suka ais krim* (*He/She likes ice cream*) and *Mereka suka ais krim* (*They like ice cream*). It can be seen that the suffixes that accompany the 3rd person pronoun in English sentences are not of a concern in Malay sentences.

Another example is the existence of the varied forms of the copula 'be' in English which have multiple parallel forms in Malay: this could have contributed to the errors. The forms of copula 'be' in Malay and English are the main reason whereby one form in Malay appears in many forms in English. In Malay, the closest words which describe the relationship between the subject and the predicate are *ialah* and *adalah*. However, in English, the verb 'be' has three distinct present tense and two past tense forms (*am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, and *were*). Due to the difficulty in the forms that the copula 'be' can appear in English, learners sometimes tend to use the incorrect forms in place of the correct ones. This study also shows that omission and wrong forms used are the two most common types. It is not surprising that this phenomenon happens because the presence of the copula 'be' is, most of the time, not essential in a Malay sentence (Nik Safiah, 1995).

## 6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be said that the sources of errors found by the researchers were the negative interference from the native language. This result is in accordance with Hamzah and Sharifudin's (2017) findings that indicated that students' sources of errors were negative interference from their native language and inherent difficulty of preposition use. Although not all errors are due to mother tongue interference, a large number of errors identified in the use of singular and plural nouns, subject verb agreement, and copula 'be' reflected the interference of the Malay grammar. This provides compelling evidence that interlanguage plays a crucial

role in investigating the causes of learners' errors, as well as providing researchers with an appropriate understanding of the nature of the learner's internal linguistic system and how it functions. In light of these findings, it is suggested that ESL instructors devote more classroom time to error-prone areas. Further research should also be conducted to compare the writing errors made by English language learners in Malaysia and other countries, as this will contribute to the literature by revealing the impact of the language learning environment on the type of error.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

NN wrote the introduction and literature review. NMA performed data collection and data analysis. MNA wrote the methodology and refinement. NN and MNA wrote the discussion and conclusion sections and language editing. NMA proofread and formatted the paper.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We certify that the article is the researcher's original work. The article has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This study has not been submitted for publication nor has it been published in whole or in part elsewhere. We testify to the fact that all authors have contributed significantly to the work for submission to the journal of creative practices in language learning and teaching (cplt).

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Nasiha Binti Nasrudin** (B.Ed. TESL, M.A.) is an English language lecturer at Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Shah Alam. She holds a Master's in Arts (Linguistics) from Universiti Malaya. She has published a few articles on language and second language learners rooted in her research interests in language teaching and learning.

**Nurhafeza Binti Mohd Alkir** (B.A. English for Professionals, M.A. Applied Linguistics) is an English language lecturer at Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Shah Alam. She is currently doing her PhD in Teaching English as a Second Language at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris. She has published several articles on languages second language learners rooted in her research interests in language teaching and learning.

**Muhammad Nasiruddin Bin Aziz** (B. Applied Linguistics, M.A. Applied Linguistics) is an English language lecturer at Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Shah Alam. He holds a Master's in Applied Linguistics from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). He has published several articles on languages second language learners rooted in his research interests in language teaching and learning.

# An Analysis of Code-Switching in the Lyrics of Selected Malaysian Hip-Hop Songs

Mukhlis Azman<sup>1</sup>, Nor Eleyana Abdullah<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

\*corresponding author: <sup>2</sup>[eleyanaabdullah@uitm.edu.my](mailto:eleyanaabdullah@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*As one of the biggest music genres in the world, the widespread popularity of hip-hop has prompted many hip-hop artists from around the world to apply code-switching in their songs (Smet, 2019). Despite the popularity of hip-hop songs in Malaysia, the research on code-switching in the lyrics of Malaysian hip-hop songs, specifically on Malay-English code-switching is still underexplored. Hence, this study aimed to analyse the types of code-switching, and the functions of code-switching used in Malaysian hip-hop songs. To ensure that the objectives of the research were met, three Malaysian hip-hop songs were selected and analyzed based on the theoretical frameworks by Poplack's (1980) types of code-switching and Appel's and Muysken's (2006) six (6) functions of code-switching: referential, directive, expressive, phatic, metalinguistics and poetic. The findings revealed all three (3) types of code-switching, namely Intersentential, Intrasentential, and Tag-Switching were used in the selected songs, with Intrasentential recorded the most occurrence of all three. Meanwhile, only four (4) functions of code-switching were found throughout all three songs, with Poetic being the most popular function of all four. Therefore, it is demonstrated that code-switching in Malaysian hip-hop songs is prevalent and more than just a random switch, as each of them conveys its own function. The present study only focuses on selected Hip-Hop songs with Malay-English code-switching, therefore bigger scope and other languages are recommended for future studies.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The mixes of different languages used in daily life has led to the phenomenon called code-switching. Code-switching is defined as the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent (Poplack, 1980). Moreover, Hoffmann (1991) defined code-switching as the act of alternating two languages or linguistics varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation. As a phenomenon that commonly occurs in multilingual societies, linguists study code-switching in order to / to understand when people do it, such as when bilingual speakers transition from one language or dialect to the other, while sociologists study code-switching to understand why people do it. In a multilingual nation like Malaysia, code-switching is a common phenomenon of when and why it happens. This is due to the amalgamation of Malaysia's diverse, multicultural citizens that indirectly has affected the application of language and communication strategies among its people (Wan Ainaa Atiqah et al., 2020). Hence, it could be said that code-switching is a common phenomenon that occurs extensively in multilingual societies such as in Malaysia.

The existence of code-switching in many discourse including spoken and written, as well as genres are prevalent to achieve diverse purposes. Genres refer to the form and type of delivery of discourse (Salsabila et al., 2021). Code-switching appears in various genres, including in music in a multicultural setting. Music from English-speaking countries often shows a reflection of the multilingual communities that existed and thrived in the said countries. Smet (2019) posited that code-switching between the native language and English in music occurs to express emotions and represent the native culture as well as a means to gain acknowledgement globally. On the other hand, Wan Nur Syaza Sahira et al. (2018) stated that code-switching in music serves certain social purposes that emphasise the development of people's intimacy, solidarity, and local identity, rather than just being a random switch from one code to another. Daoh (2016) meanwhile suggested that code-switching in songs is to serve a quotation, an interjection, quality or clarify a message, and to reiterate. Therefore, it can be concluded that code-switching in music is prevalent and has its own effects and purposes.

This study aims to fill the current gap of code-switching in music, particularly in Malay-English hip-hop songs as the research in this area is still understudied. Balakrishnan (2020) focused on the code-switching between Tamil-Malay-English hip-hop songs, while Wan Nur Syaza Sahira et al. (2018) conducted an analysis of code-switching in modern Malay songs, from their analysis of 25 modern songs of various genres, most of the genre analysed (14 songs) was hip-hop. They also added that thus far, no empirical study has been done to reveal why the occurrence of code-switching is high in hip-hop songs. Hence, by pitching an angle from this although not empirically, it is significant to explore codes-switching focusing on the hip-hop genre as there have been limited studies being done specifically in Malaysia. On the global scale, more studies are found on the code-switching between native languages or dialects with English in hip-hop songs. In Africa, Smet (2019) has conducted a study on the code-switching in contemporary Ghanaian hip-hop lyrics. Another example of other musical genres is the study conducted by Ria (2016) on the code-switching phenomenon in the lyrics of songs by Indonesian pop singer, Bondan Prakoso. Hence, this study is intended to fill the gap for code-switching in Malaysian hip-hop songs, specifically on Malay-English code-switching based on these two research questions:

1. What are the types of code-switching used in the selected Malaysian hip-hop songs?
2. What are the functions of code-switching in the lyrics of the selected Malaysian hip-hop songs?

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### ***2.1 Types of Code-switching***

According to Poplack (1980), code-switching is the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent. In line with Poplack's definition, Hoffmann (1991) defined code-switching as the act of alternating two languages or linguistics varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation. Poplack (1980) has classified code-switching into three (3) types:

- a) Intersentential code-switching – Occurs at clause or sentence level, where each clause or sentence is conveyed in one or another language. This switching is commonly used by fluent bilingual speakers.
- b) Intrasentential code-switching – Occurs within the sentence, where the switch happens within the clause or sentence boundary but also may include mixing within word boundaries. Usually, the speakers are unaware of this switching.
- c) Tag switching – Occurs when the speaker inserts a tag in one language into a sentence that happens in another language. The location of the tag inserted can be anywhere and this tag is commonly used by speakers who lack the necessary vocabulary in one language.

### ***2.2 Functions of Code-switching***

Apart from having different types, code-switching also comes with different functions that cater to its users' requirements. This is especially true in songs, as code-switching in music serves certain social purposes rather than just being a mere switch from one code to another (Wan Nur Syaza Sahira et al., 2018). With these functions, code-switching became a more potent communication strategy that can be utilised by multilingual speakers in expressing their emotions, while also helping them to represent their native culture to the broader global audience (Smet, 2019). Appel and Muysken (2006) classified six (6) functions of code-switching:

- a) Referential - Code-switching functions as referential when the user lacks the vocabulary of the target language.
- b) Directive - Speakers utilise the directive function of code-switching in order to build or maintain solidarity.
- c) Expressive - Used by speakers in order to express their feelings or demonstrate their self-identity.
- d) Phatic - Involves a change in intonation, speakers use phatic when they want to emphasise the important parts of their speech or conversation.
- e) Metalinguistic - Speakers apply this function when they want to insert a quotation, phrase, or metaphor.
- f) Poetic - Used for entertainment purposes, involving the insertion of words or phrases of different language from the conversation or speech.

### ***2.3 Code-switching in Hip-Hop Songs***

Hip-hop is one of the biggest music genres in the world. Originating in The Bronx, New York, hip-hop music has taken the world by storm. The widespread popularity of hip-hop across the world has prompted many hip-hop artists from around the world to apply code-switching in hip-hop songs. In a study of code-switching in Ghanaian contemporary hip-hop lyrics, Smet

(2019) has analysed lyrics of songs from three (3) Ghanaian contemporary hip-hop artists in order to determine the functions of code-switching that exists in Ghanaian contemporary hip-hop lyrics. The result of the study showed that the code-switching in Ghanaian contemporary hip-hop lyrics functions to identify with the African-American hip-hop culture as well as to make the topics of their native culture globally acknowledged. On the other hand, Sarah & Oladayo (2021) has conducted a comparative analysis on the code-switching and code-mixing phenomenon in the Nigerian music industry. In this study, the lyrics of two selected Nigerian hip-hop artists, Flavour and 9ice songs are transcribed and studied. The study concludes that code-switching in Nigerian hip-hop songs becomes a depiction of the Nigerian state due to the nation's diverse languages and unique identity created by code-switching and code-mixing. This phenomenon in the Nigerian music industry has garnered a positive influence on music fans and enthusiasts, helping artists to achieve wide patronage while at the same time reflecting the ethnolinguistic diversity of the Nigerian nation (Sarah & Oladayo, 2021). Hence, code-switching in hip-hop songs and lyrics has become a common phenomenon that helps hip-hop artists to express their feelings and thoughts.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### ***3.1 Research Design***

This research employed the qualitative research method using discourse analysis to identify and analyse the data that contain code-switching in the lyrics of selected Malaysian hip-hop songs. According to Hjelm (2021), discourse analysis is “the study of how to do things with words and it examines how identities, relationships, beliefs, and knowledge systems are constructed in language use” (p. 229). Hence, discourse analysis is employed in this study to analyse the Malay-English code-switching in the lyrics of selected Malaysian hip-hop songs.

#### ***3.2 Sample and Sampling Technique***

The samples for this study involved three (3) hip-hop songs that contain Malay-English code-switching. The selected hip-hop songs were *Runcit* by Aman RA ft. DATO' MAW and Kudoshi, *CIAO* by Joe Flizzow ft. MK K-Clique and Jay Park, and *Satu Malam di Temasek* by Joe Flizzow ft. SonaOne. After a review of the related studies such as by Daoh (2016), Smet (2019), and Sarah and Oladayo (2021), the researcher determined that the most appropriate number of songs in answering the research question is three (3). Next, the samples were selected using purposive sampling since it is a helpful non-probability sampling technique that enables the researchers to swiftly achieve a specific sample since it is chosen based on demographic characteristics and the study's purpose (Crossman, 2020). The purposive sampling method was employed in the data collection as it was intended to discover information-rich situations in order to draw answers to the research questions (Nor Hairunnisa and Nor Syamimi Iliani, 2022; Patton, 2015). In this case, the songs were chosen based on the criteria set before the selection began to meet the objectives of the study for instance, based on the review of related studies, the lyrics that only contain Malay-English code-switching, their top-charted and most-streamed record, and were released between 2021 to 2022. The selection of hip-hop songs containing only Malay-English code-switching was also due to the need to address the limitations from previous research and contribute further insights into this field of study.

#### ***3.3 Data Collection***

The data collection for this study started by identifying three (3) Malaysian hip-hop songs that contain Malay-English code-switching in their lyrics based on the criteria outlined. After that,

the lyrics from the selected songs were tabulated into a Microsoft Word document based on the classification of Poplack's (1980) three (3) code-switching types and later coded into Appel's and Muysken's (2006) six (6) functions of code-switching using thematic analysis. Next, the lyrics were arranged and tabulated according to the research questions and objectives. Both researchers participated in the coding process, which was mostly used to determine the types and functions of the code-switching found using the theoretical frameworks adopted.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data from the selected hip-hop songs was done descriptively whereby the occurrences of Malay-English code-switching was firstly counted and distinguished based on Poplack (1980) three types of code-switching which are intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching. Secondly, their occurrences were classified based on Appel's and Muysken's (2006) six (6) functions of code-switching which are referential, directive, expressive, phatic, metalinguistic, and poetic. Next, using Microsoft Excel, the frequency of the data's occurrences was analysed and displayed in descriptive statistics. This study employed inter-rater reliability, in which assessments were conducted among raters to ascertain the extent to which different raters can reliably get the same score of categories for the research subject (Harvey, 2021). The data was examined, contrasted, and discussed by the researchers to arrive at a consensus for each particular category and to confirm the study's result in an effort to increase reliability.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Types of Code-Switching Used in the Selected Malaysian hip-hop songs

According to Poplack (1980), there are three classifications of code-switching which are intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching.

Table 4.1.1: Types of Code-Switching used in the selected Malaysian hip-hop songs

Type of Code-Switching	Occurrences	Percentage (%)
Intersentential	4	8.2
Intrasentential	40	81.6
Tag-Switching	5	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.1.1 demonstrates all three classifications of code-switching laid out by Poplack (1980) were found in the lyrics of the selected songs. The data above shows that there are a total of 49 code-switching occurred in all three songs, with intrasentential code-switching as the most common type of code-switching at 40 occurrences, followed by tag-switching at five (5) occurrence and intersentential at four (4) occurrence. Intrasentential code-switching alone makes up about 81.6 percent of the total code-switching found in all three songs. This type of code-switching is usually used by its user unconsciously, where it occurs within the clause or sentence boundary but also may include mixing within word boundaries. This is followed by tag-switching (10.2%) and lastly intersentential (8.2%). Overall, the findings proved that code-switching despite the types, is heavily used in hip-hop music. The findings resonate with Sarah and Oladayo (2021), as well as Smet (2019) whereby code-switching or code-mixing is a

prominent feature in hip-hop songs as the music has been vastly domesticated in a multilingual community.

In terms of specific types used, the findings from this study contradict Daoh's (2016) who focuses on code-switching found in the lyrics of Thai pop star Bird Thongchai McIntyre's songs. According to Daoh (2016), intersentential was the most common type of code-switching used in the lyrics of the songs, followed by intrasentential and tag-switching. Aside from that, the finding also conflicts with another study by Ria (2016) whereby his study concluded that intersentential code-switching was more commonly used in Bondan Prakoso's songs than intrasentential code-switching. The justification for the abundant use of intrasentential code-switching in Malaysian hip-hop songs compared to Thai and Indonesian pop songs in Daoh (2016) and Ria (2016) is that code-switching in song lyrics often happens to provide continuity rather than interfering with the speech (Wan Nur Syaza Sahira et al., 2018), which is a prevalent feature in many hip-hop songs. Hip-hop songwriters or rappers use intrasentential code-switching in order to maintain the continuity or the flow of their rapping because it can occur at any part of the sentence, thus providing more flexibility for them. Therefore, intrasentential is the most effective type of code-switching, which reflect its broad use in all three of the selected Malaysian hip-hop songs.

#### ***4.2 Functions of Code-Switching in the Lyrics of Selected Malaysian hip-hop songs***

According to Appel and Muysken (2006), there are six (6) functions of code-switching, namely referential, directive, expressive, phatic, metalinguistics, and poetic. The table below shows each of the code-switching functions laid out by Appel and Muysken (2006) and their occurrence in the three selected Malaysian hip-hop songs.

Table 4.2.1: Functions of Code-Switching in the lyrics of selected Malaysian hip-hop songs

<b>Function of Code-Switching</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Referential	11	23.0
Directive	-	-
Expressive	5	10.4
Phatic	-	-
Metalinguistic	5	10.4
Poetic	27	56.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.2.1 shows only four out of the six functions were found in all three songs except for directive and phatic code-switching functions. The data above shows that the Poetic function, by far, is the most common code-switching function used in these songs at 27 occurrences or 56.2 percent, followed by the Referential function at 11 occurrences (23%). Additionally, both Expressive and Metalinguistic functions are tallied at 5 occurrences, making about 10.4 percent of the total occurrences each. Evidently, four types of code-switching functions laid by Appel and Muysken (2006) can be found in all three songs with differing levels of occurrences. The four functions have distinct differences between them that will be further elaborated below.

This finding contradicts Wan Nur Syaza Sahira et al. (2018) whereby all six of the code-switching functions fronted by Appel and Muysken (2006) were present in contemporary Malay songs, with the expressive function being the most common function of code-switching used in contemporary Malay songs (138 occurrences), while metalinguistic function has the lowest at 10 occurrences. Since the present study only focused on one music genre compared to the previous study, the functions were also expressed differently. The use of poetic function was more frequent in all three Malaysian hip-hop songs because code-switching activity can be a linguistic strategy that brings out the poetic aspect of a text, especially if the words of multiple languages rhyme with each other (Chan, 2009). Thus, it can be concluded that Poetic is the most prevalent code-switching function found in all three selected Malaysian hip-hop songs because it provides rappers with an avenue to play around with words from other languages in order to rhyme out their lines for better flow and continuity.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study aimed to fill the gap for code-switching in Malaysian hip-hop songs, specifically on Malay-English code-switching. This area is seldom explored in the specific Malaysian and hip-hop contexts due to past research that focused more on other languages, textual and spoken genres, as well as other music genres. Specifically, this study aims to benefit the students and instructors in the sociolinguistics field to further develop an understanding of sociolinguistic elements such as code-switching in music to contribute to the pedagogical implication of this field. Moreover, this study also aims to benefit other researchers as a source of reference for future research, especially those who are interested in expanding or replicating the study. For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope since this study was conducted on three Malaysian hip-hop songs. A larger sample size would be ideal for better representation and generalisation of the genre. Apart from that, the sample analysed for this study was only Malaysian hip-hop songs with Malay to English code-switching. Thus, it is also recommended for future studies to focus on other codes such as English to Malay, Mandarin to English, and many more. Such studies will provide diverse findings and may also contribute to comparative analysis between different types and functions of different languages. Finally, future studies should also consider choosing different music genres for code-switching in songs, which can make a great indicator of the unique sociolinguistic diversity in Malaysia.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

MA and NEA both worked on the introduction, literature review, and methodology. MA collected the data, and wrote the analysis, discussion, and implication of the study. NEA reviewed and refined the analysis and discussion. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None declared



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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Nor Eleyana Abdullah** is an English lecturer from the Academy of Language Studies (APB) Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam. Her research interests include computer-assisted language learning (CALL), sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and genre analysis. She is actively involved in FYP supervision, and curriculum development of the faculty.

**Mukhlis Azman** completed his bachelor's degree in English for Professional Communication from the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam. His area of interests include sociolinguistics, communication, as well as journalism. An avid music lover, he often blogs about music and is a strong advocate to the local music scene through his writings.

# Examining the Behavioural Intention to Use Hand Sanitiser Among Malaysian Consumers During COVID-19 Pandemic

Mohamed Syazwan Osman<sup>1</sup>, Nur Hidayah Che Ahmat<sup>2\*</sup>, Azila Azmi<sup>3</sup> and Zamri Ahmad<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>EMZI Nanoparticles Colloids & Interface Industrial Research Laboratory (EMZI NANO-CORE), Chemical Engineering Studies, College of Engineering, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang, 13500 Permatang Pauh, Penang, Malaysia

<sup>2, 3, 4</sup> Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang, 13500 Permatang Pauh, Penang, Malaysia

\*Corresponding author: <sup>2</sup>hidayah.ca@uitm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

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The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped consumer behaviour in Malaysia, with a pronounced emphasis on health and safety. A substantial surge in the demand for hand sanitisers exemplifies this shift. Nevertheless, comprehensive studies investigating the behavioural intentions of Malaysian consumers concerning hand sanitiser use during the pandemic remain still need to be explored. This research addresses the gaps by studying Malaysian consumers' behavioural intentions concerning hand sanitiser utilisation during the pandemic. Guided by the theory of planned behaviour, we conducted a robust descriptive cross-sectional quantitative study. We developed the self-administered online survey and disseminated the survey link via diverse social media platforms, garnering 271 complete responses. Our analysis yields notable findings. Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control emerge as influential factors, positively shaping the behavioural intentions of Malaysian consumers regarding hand sanitiser use during the pandemic. Notably, the attitude of Malaysian consumers stands out as a potent predictor of their behavioural intentions. These insights substantially contribute to consumer behaviour, specifically within the Malaysian pandemic context. Beyond their academic implications, our findings hold practical significance. Hand sanitiser producers can use the findings to effectively diversify their product offerings to meet heightened demand. Furthermore, the study's insights can assist the Malaysian government in gauging consumer adherence to standard operating procedures and their role in virus containment through hand sanitiser use. However, a geographical limitation exists, as a significant proportion of respondents' hail from Malaysia's northern region, potentially limiting the generalizability of our results to the broader population. Overall, this study advances our understanding of consumer behaviour while offering actionable insights for industry stakeholders and policymakers. Study limitations and future research directions are also included.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) first emerged in China in December 2019 in Wuhan, China (WHO, 2020). Alarming, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected most world countries and is a major health threat worldwide, with 697,318,367 reported cases and 6,934,066 deaths as of early November 2023 (Worldometers, n.d.). Multiple contagious coronavirus variants have spread rapidly across different continents, with various countries and territories reporting COVID-19-infected cases (Cable News Network, 2021). The first COVID-19 case in Malaysia was detected in January 2020, and at present, there are 5,129,800 confirmed cases recorded, with 37,181 deaths (as of early November 2023) (Worldometers, n.d.). The Malaysian government has implemented various strategies and preventive measures, including closing off all non-essential businesses, such as tourist attractions and educational institutions, during the first movement control order in March 2020. Since then, a series of movement control orders have been implemented according to the COVID-19 active cases per state, such as recovery movement control order, conditional movement control order, and enhanced movement control order. In addition to the restriction orders, the Malaysian government has implemented a variety of non-pharmaceutical intervention measures to mitigate the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, including social distancing, mandatory use of face-covering in public places, and quarantine (Salman et al., 2021; Tang, 2020; Elengoe, 2020). Proper standard operating procedures and health protocols were established by the National Security Council and the Ministry of Health to assist employers and business operators (e.g., MySejahtera application system as COVID-19 tracing, body temperature check, one-meter minimum physical distances and tables with two meters distances between one another). Employers should remind employees to practice hand hygiene regularly and provide temperature scanners and sanitiser to use in the workplace. Additionally, like the shopping complexes, business operators should provide hand sanitiser at their entrances and exits for people to use.

Generally, Malaysians are advised to frequently wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization (CDC, 2011; Challenge, 2004; Larson, 1994), simple handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent spreading infectious diseases. Nevertheless, using hand sanitiser and carrying a small bottle of hand sanitiser in our bag or pocket would be more convenient because we do not have to search for the nearest hand basin or restroom to wash our hands. The literature shows a strong and consistent link between personal hand hygiene and lower gastrointestinal disease and respiratory illness (Sandora et al., 2005; Kolavic et al., 2002). The COVID-19 virus is transmitted through the hands, particularly when touching viral-contaminated surfaces or humans (Alyzood, 2020). Thus, proper hand hygiene via hand sanitiser is a tried-and-true method of infection control to curb the spread of this pandemic (Singh et al., 2020). The influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer behaviour has been affected by various variables. There is no doubt that the fear and uncertainty that have emerged from the unforeseen event of COVID-19 have psychologically changed consumer buying behaviour (Duan & Zhu, 2020). Consumers start to stock up on goods to avoid the shortage of supplies. Hand sanitiser is among the most common goods consumers purchase during the pandemic (Prajapati et al., 2022). Terlep (2021) reports an upsurge in demand for hand sanitisers in the United States, which aligns with the global hand sanitiser report on the positive growth of hand sanitiser sales worldwide (Fortune Business Insights, 2020). Similarly, the demand for hand sanitisers is increasing in Malaysia, and many companies are scaling up and venturing into the hand sanitiser business (Lim, 2020; Unilever, 2020). Several researchers have documented the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on hand sanitiser purchased, but the actual psychological factors of Malaysian consumer behaviour have yet to be understood.

Amidst the evolving landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to recognise the limited research addressing the behavioural intention to use hand sanitiser among Malaysian consumers. This study was conceived to bridge this notable gap in the existing literature and investigate the multifaceted dimensions of behavioural intention during a critical public health crisis. Specifically, this study investigated the behavioural intention, attitude with behavioural beliefs, subjective norms with normative beliefs, and perceived behavioural control with control beliefs toward hand sanitiser use among Malaysian consumers during the pandemic. Since COVID-19, many studies have been found on COVID-19, focusing on multiple perspectives, mainly on the scientific evidence. Also, several studies have used the theory of planned behaviour to study consumer behaviours within the pandemic period (Kim et al., 2021; Xia et al., 2021). Nonetheless, few studies have found on consumer behaviour toward hand sanitiser usage intention. The COVID-19 outbreak has changed the behaviour of Malaysian consumers; hence, this study attempts to uncover the behavioural intention of Malaysian consumers in using hand sanitisers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study is unique as the researchers utilise the theory of planned behaviour as a robust framework to dissect and understand consumers' behavioural intentions regarding hand sanitiser usage during the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. By applying the theory, the study aims to provide nuanced insights into the factors shaping consumer intentions and, in doing so, contribute valuable knowledge that can inform public health initiatives, marketing strategies, and government policies. This research holds immense significance as it fills a critical gap in the literature and offers a unique perspective on consumer behaviour during a global health crisis. The findings of this study have the potential to inform decision-makers, health authorities, and businesses, helping them tailor their responses to effectively meet the needs and expectations of Malaysian consumers during these challenging times.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The theory of planned behaviour develops the theory of reasoned action, which holds that human decisions are voluntary (Ajzen, 1985). According to Ajzen (1980), most human behaviour is predictable because their decisions are based on logical reasoning. People make decisions based on their evaluation of available options. The theory proposes two variables influencing intention: attitude and subjective norms (Ajzen, 1980). Attitude is derived from an individual's belief that specific actions will positively affect (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norms, on the other hand, emerge from normative beliefs (Ajzen, 2002). The theory of planned behaviour assumes that human social behaviour is reasoned or planned in the sense that people consider the likely consequences (behavioural beliefs), normative expectations of important referents (normative beliefs), and whatever facilitates or hinders behaviour performance (control beliefs) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Behavioural beliefs are thought to be the dominant determinants of a person's intentions and actions, influencing attitudes toward behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Individuals from different cultures and social categories have different social expectations because of normative beliefs, which establish the underlying determinants of subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Finally, control beliefs are based on perceptions of behavioural coherence (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

The main distinction between the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behaviour is that the latter considers the influence of non-volitional factors (Ajzen, 2002, 2012). In addition to the theory of reasoned action model, the theory of planned behaviour model includes a new set of dimensions: control beliefs and perceived behavioural control pair (Yeh et al., 2021). The additional factor considers how people's choices may be influenced by circumstances rather than their own free will (Yeh et al., 2021). For example, one may wish to travel without the necessary time (Yeh et al., 2021). As a result, removing obstacles or the presence of facilitators may increase behavioural intention (Ajzen, 2012). The theory of planned

behaviour framework by Ajzen (1991) is a well-known framework used for consumer behaviour research (Lin & Robert, 2016; Xia et al., 2021; Yeh et al., 2021). Xia et al. (2021) examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the intention to use traditional Chinese medicine in China. They found that all three factors (i.e., attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control) significantly influenced their behavioural intention, and attitude was the significant predictor in predicting the behavioural intention of the Chinese citizens. Meanwhile, Kim et al. (2021) found that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control significantly and positively influenced the behavioural intention of South Koreans toward contactless food delivery services. While many studies use the theory of planned behaviour as their foundation to study consumer behaviours from various countries, more studies should focus on Malaysian consumers. Therefore, this study used the theory of planned behaviour to examine the factors influencing Malaysian consumer intention to use hand sanitiser during the COVID-19 pandemic.

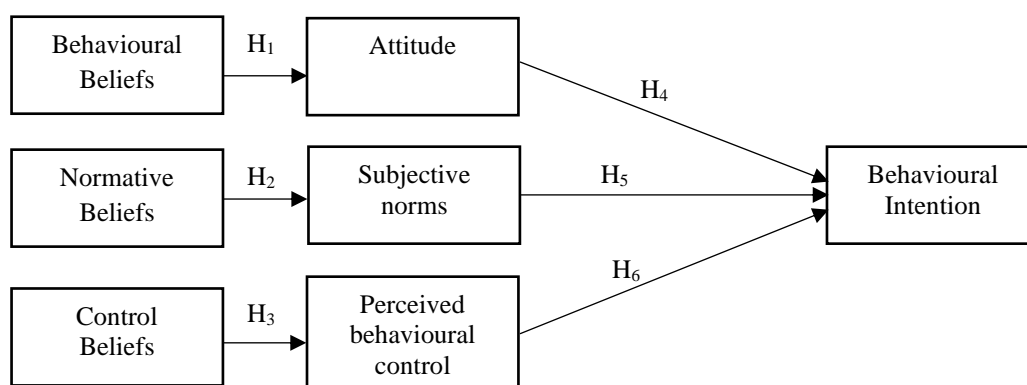


Figure 1: Study Framework

Hypothesis 1: Behavioural beliefs are significantly associated with attitude.

Hypothesis 2: Normative beliefs are significantly associated with subjective norms.

Hypothesis 3: Control beliefs are significantly associated with perceived behavioural control.

Hypothesis 4: Consumer attitude significantly influences their behavioural intention to use hand sanitiser.

Hypothesis 5: Consumer subjective norms significantly influence their behavioural intention to use hand sanitiser.

Hypothesis 6: Consumer-perceived behavioural control significantly influences their behavioural intention to use hand sanitiser.

### 3. METHOD

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted using a quantitative online self-reported questionnaire approach. A non-probability convenience sampling was used, where all Malaysian consumers 18 or older were invited to participate. An electronic survey was developed using Google Forms and distributed via various social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter) from June to December 2021. The respondents were requested to participate in this study and later were asked to roll out the online questionnaire to their acquaintances and relatives. No compensation was given, and participation was entirely voluntary. The researchers included digital informed consent regarding privacy and information management policies in the questionnaire.

The survey instruments are based on pre-established scales from previous studies by Lin (2015) and Lin and Roberts (2017). The questionnaire consisted of 46 questions and was divided into five sections measuring the variables and the socio-demographic questions such as gender, age group, monthly income, and current sector. This study utilised a seven-point Likert-type scale to collect the responses (from 1: strongly disagree to 7: strongly agree). Given that the current study has 38 questions, a minimum sample of 190 consumers is expected based on the ratio of the number of cases (N) to the number of model parameters that require statistical estimates (q) ( $N:q = 5:1$ ) (Jackson, 2003). Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 27), preliminary analyses and descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages, frequencies) have been measured. Additionally, the researchers conducted correlation and regression analyses to justify the proposed hypotheses.

#### 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 271 useable data are used in the analysis. More females ( $n = 153$ , 56.5%) participated in this study than males ( $n = 118$ , 43.5%). Of these, the highest age group of respondents was 18 to 44 years old ( $n = 237$ , 87.4%). Most respondents were within the B40 income category, earning less than RM2,500 to RM4,850 (or approximately less than USD526 to USD1,020) (47.5%). Many respondents came from the Northern region of Malaysia ( $n = 155$ , 57.2%). Most Malaysians preferred to use either a combination of two or more types of hand sanitisers (39.5%) or gel-based hand sanitisers (36.5%). Malaysian consumers regularly sanitize their hands between one to five times daily (27.9%) and use hand sanitisers when they enter public premises (26.4%) and when they go off from their workplace (25.2%), as suggested by the government. Table 1 summarises the socio-demographic profiles of the respondents.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N =271)

Item		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	118	43.5
	Female	153	56.5
Age group	18-24	84	31.0
	25-34	76	28.0
	35-44	77	28.4
	45-54	26	9.6
	55-64	8	3.0
Marital status	Single and never married	134	49.4
	Married	132	48.7
	Widow/Widower	3	1.1
	Divorced	2	0.7
Sector	Public	89	32.8
	Private	71	26.2
	self-employed	9	3.3
	Retiree	7	2.6
	Student	83	30.6
	Unemployed	12	4.4
State	Northern (Perlis, Perak, Pulau Pinang, Kedah, Perak)	155	57.2
	Central (Selangor, Wilayah KL, Putrajaya)	66	24.4
	Southern (Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor)	30	11
	Eastern (Pahang, Kelantan, Terengganu)	12	4.4
	Sabah and Sarawak	8	2.9
Monthly income	B40: Less than RM2,500 – RM4,850	129	47.5
	M40: RM4,851 – RM10,970	94	34.7

	T20: RM10,971 – RM15,041 and above	48	17.7
Type of hand sanitiser	Alcohol only	29	10.7
	Gel-based alcohol	99	36.5
	Non-alcohol	34	12.5
	A combination of two or more types	107	39.5
	Others	2	0.7
Usage frequency	One to five times daily	72	27.9
	More than five times daily	19	7.4
	Only when I enter public premises	68	26.4
	Only when I go out from home	65	25.2
	Only when I go out of the workplace	5	1.9
	None	29	11.2

Means and standard deviations for direct and indirect measurement scales are listed in Table 2 and Table 3. Most respondents agreed that their overall experience using hand sanitiser is good and would recommend using hand sanitiser every day ( $M = 6.00$ ,  $SD = 1.066$ ). They wanted to use hand sanitiser after meeting people ( $M = 6.27$ ,  $SD = 1.013$ ), while in the public space ( $M = 6.36$ ,  $SD = 0.916$ ), and when entering a shop or coming back from work ( $M = 6.39$ ,  $SD = 0.959$ ). Such findings showed that Malaysian consumers know the government's safety guidelines and health protocols regarding the importance of sanitising hands regularly. In addition to that, the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for all study variables are presented in Table 4. A very strong correlation was found between attitude and behavioural intention ( $r = 0.850$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). A strong correlation was found: (a) between attitude and behavioural beliefs ( $r = 0.663$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), (b) between attitude and normative beliefs ( $r = 0.700$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), (c) between subjective norms and normative beliefs ( $r = 0.717$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), (d) between behavioural intention and behavioural beliefs ( $r = 0.631$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and (e) between behavioural intention and normative beliefs ( $r = 0.719$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 2. Summary of direct measurement scales (N=271)

Direct Measurement Items	<i>M (SD)</i>
<b>Attitude (<math>\alpha = 0.865</math>)</b>	
My overall experience using hand sanitiser is good, and I recommend using hand sanitiser every day.	6.00 (1.066)
Overall, I think using hand sanitiser is the right thing to do.	6.29 (1.011)
Using a hand sanitiser is a good idea	6.29 (0.980)
I like using hand sanitisers	5.85 (1.255)
<b>Subjective norms (<math>\alpha = 0.573</math>)</b>	
People who are important to me think that I should use hand sanitiser frequently	5.91 (1.245)
I feel social pressure to use hand sanitiser daily	4.10 (2.090)
It is expected that I will use hand sanitiser every day	5.59 (1.395)
<b>Perceived behavioural control (<math>\alpha = 0.469</math>)</b>	
I am confident that I can use hand sanitiser whenever I want to	6.07 (1.167)
Whether I use hand sanitiser or not is entirely up to me	5.21 (1.851)
Using hand sanitiser is easy	6.49 (0.825)
<b>Behavioural intention (<math>\alpha = 0.865</math>)</b>	
I intend to use hand sanitiser every day	5.58 (1.356)
I want to use hand sanitiser every day	5.72 (1.320)
I want to use hand sanitiser after I meet people	6.27 (1.013)
I want to use hand sanitiser in public places	6.36 (0.916)
I want to sanitise my hand when I enter a shop or come back from work	6.39 (0.959)

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree.

Table 3. Summary of indirect measurement scales (N=271)



Indirect Measurement Items	<i>M (SD)</i>
<b>Behavioural beliefs (<math>\alpha = 0.545</math>)</b>	
If I use hand sanitiser, I will feel that I am doing something positive	6.06 (1.132)
It causes a lot of worry and concern for me to use hand sanitiser	4.05 (2.101)
If I use hand sanitiser every day, I will be less likely to become ill	5.40 (1.507)
Practising hand sanitation is very important to avoid illnesses (e.g., COVID-19)	6.21 (1.015)
<b>Normative beliefs (<math>\alpha = 0.884</math>)</b>	
Others think that I should use hand sanitiser	5.76 (1.309)
Medical practitioners encourage me to use hand sanitiser	6.00 (1.278)
The leader of my workplace thinks I should use hand sanitiser	6.04 (1.229)
My family and friends encourage me to use hand sanitiser	5.95 (1.297)
Following what other Malaysians do is important to me	5.42 (1.374)
Following what medical practitioners think I should do is important to me	6.24 (0.943)
Following what my workplace leader thinks I should do is important to me	5.98 (1.073)
My friend's approval of using hand sanitiser is important to me	5.03 (1.918)
<b>Control beliefs (<math>\alpha = 0.840</math>)</b>	
I am more likely to use hand sanitiser if it is easily available	5.20 (1.754)
I'm more likely to use hand sanitiser if it is cheap	5.00 (1.866)
I'm more likely to use hand sanitiser if it does not cause any discomfort	5.56 (1.692)
I'm more likely to use hand sanitiser if my hand feels good	5.45 (1.670)
I'm less likely to use hand sanitiser if other people think I am ill	3.60 (2.036)
Hand sanitiser is difficult to find	2.54 (1.668)
Hand sanitiser price is high (expensive)	3.80 (1.793)
The smell of hand sanitiser that I used is disgusting	2.98 (1.758)
The hand sanitiser brand which I preferred is not available in stock	3.14 (1.777)
The use of hand sanitiser makes my skin itch and sore	3.02 (1.843)
Hand sanitiser is only for people who are ill	2.02 (1.594)

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree.

Table 4: Simple bivariate correlation matrix (N = 271)

	<i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attitude	6.105 (0.914)		0.551**	0.443**	0.850**	0.663**	0.700**	-0.003
Subjective Norms	5.197 (1.189)			0.228**	0.560**	0.580**	0.717**	0.204**
Perceived Behavioural Control	5.925 (0.940)				0.489**	0.376**	0.323**	0.173**
Behavioural Intention	6.064 (0.909)					0.631**	0.719**	0.035
Behavioural Beliefs	5.428 (0.975)						0.576**	0.240**
Normative Beliefs	5.804 (0.988)							0.064
Control Beliefs	3.846 (1.099)							

\*\* $p < 0.01$  (all 2-tailed).

#### 4.1 Hypotheses Testing

Simple linear regression was used to test the first three hypotheses for significance. The analyses supported all the hypotheses. The correlation coefficients of behavioural beliefs on attitude (hypothesis 1:  $r = 0.663$ ;  $F = 210.94$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The correlation coefficients of normative beliefs on the subjective norm (hypothesis 2:  $r = 0.717$ ;  $F = 283.940$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), whereas correlation coefficients of control beliefs on perceived behavioural control (hypothesis 3;  $r = 0.173$ ;  $F = 8.314$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Multiple linear regression was used to test hypotheses 4 to 6, as displayed in Table 5. The multiple regressions of attitude (hypothesis 4;  $\beta = 0.713$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), subjective norms (hypothesis 5;  $\beta = 0.134$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and perceived behavioural control (hypothesis 6;  $\beta = 0.143$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) on behavioural intention were significant, with the overall regression model explaining 75.1% of the total variance within behavioural intention ( $F = 268.344$ ,  $R^2 = 0.751$ ). The analysis results supported hypotheses 4, 5, and 6. Moreover, attitude was found to be the strongest predictor of behavioural intention ( $\beta = 0.713$ ), followed by perceived behavioural control ( $\beta = 0.143$ ) and subjective norms ( $\beta = 0.134$ ). The finding regarding attitude as the strongest predictor in predicting behavioural intention is aligned with a study by Lin and Roberts (2017) and Xia et al. (2021).

Table 5: Multiple regression model for predicting behavioural intention based on direct measures.

Model	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Regression	167.391	3	55.797	268.344	0.000
Residual	55.517	267	0.208		
Total	222.908	270			
Standardised Coefficients					
Model	$\beta$	<i>t</i>			<i>p</i> -value
Constant		1.788			0.075
Attitude	0.713	17.933			0.000
Subjective Norm	0.134	3.657			0.000
Perceived behavioural control	0.143	4.194			0.000

Note: Dependent variable, behavioural intention.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study utilised the theory of planned behaviour to examine the Malaysian consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on their intention to use hand sanitiser during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results from the analyses supported all proposed hypotheses. Malaysian consumer behavioural beliefs are significantly associated with their attitude, normative beliefs are significantly associated with their subjective norms, and control beliefs are significantly associated with their perceived behavioural control. Most importantly, this study found that Malaysian consumer attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control significantly influenced their intention to use hand sanitiser during the outbreak. Such findings contributed to the body of literature on the theory of planned behaviour, particularly during an outbreak like COVID-19. Additionally, the Malaysian consumer attitude strongly predicted their behavioural intention toward using hand sanitiser during the pandemic. Such finding aligns with previous studies by Xia et al. (2021), who found attitude to be the strongest predictor of behavioural intention to use traditional Chinese medicine during COVID-19. Our theoretical framework to understand the Malaysian consumer's intention to use hand sanitiser during the pandemic was evident when taken together.

Hand sanitisers are frequently used as a quick preventive measure to protect themselves from the virus (Prajapati et al., 2022). Regularly sanitising hands is part of the requirements highlighted in the standard operating guidelines by the Malaysian government; hence, Malaysian consumers should be aware and practice using hand sanitisers mainly when visiting public places such as shopping complexes. Hand sanitisers are placed at the entrance of most business establishments and workplaces, so whenever people enter a building, they must scan their body temperature and sanitise their hands. This study found that most Malaysian consumers use hand sanitiser at least five times daily, mainly when entering public premises and outside their homes. Nevertheless, some consumers prefer to bring and use their sanitiser instead of the one provided at the entrance. A few types of hand sanitisers are available in the market, and findings from this study reported that some Malaysian consumers preferred a gel-

based alcohol hand sanitiser. In contrast, some other consumers do not have specific preferences, as long as the hand sanitiser has enough alcohol content to prevent the virus from spreading. Additionally, many brands offer hand sanitisers, but most respondents in this study preferred the Dettol brand, followed by Lifebuoy and Antabax. Some might argue that washing hands using soap and water is more effective in preventing infectious diseases. However, a hand sanitiser is more convenient; not only can it save us time to find the nearest restroom or hand basin, but a small bottle of hand sanitiser is also easy to carry wherever we go.

Knowing that the pandemic is still ongoing and the requirement to use hand sanitisers might be long-term, findings from this study significantly contributed to academic and practical. Many researchers have utilised the theory of planned behaviour model in consumer behaviour studies, but to the authors' knowledge, none is found on using hand sanitiser during the COVID-19 pandemic. New findings gathered from this study will extend the literature on consumer behaviour. Also, results contributed to the theory of planned behaviour regarding attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on the Malaysian consumer's behavioural intention to use hand sanitiser. This study identified that the attitude of Malaysian consumers strongly predicted their intention to use hand sanitiser, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Policymakers can effectively tailor their communication strategies and initiatives by understanding consumer behaviour factors, especially regarding health-related products like hand sanitisers. Such a strategy will increase consumer compliance with standard operating procedures and health protocols, ultimately contributing to public safety and the nation's overall health. Additionally, our research carries practical implications for the private sector, such as the hand sanitiser producers and pharma companies, who can leverage these findings to refine their product offerings and marketing strategies better to meet the demands and preferences of Malaysian consumers. Hopefully, Malaysians can maintain this positive attitude as their personal prevention tactic until the post-pandemic. Moreover, findings from this study could benefit the hand sanitiser producers in knowing that there are constant demands for hand sanitiser products; thus, offering different types of hand sanitiser might be helpful for consumers with sensitive skin or those who are more on the smell than the price. Also, hand sanitiser producers should do more marketing campaigns locally and globally to promote their hand sanitisers and ensure their products are readily available in the market because some consumers prefer certain brands. Hand sanitiser producers could use celebrities to represent their brands and promote hand sanitisers using online advertisements. Celebrities or influencers are often used as a marketing strategy that can influence consumer buying decisions (Ramli et al., 2023).

Although findings related to the behavioural intention of Malaysian consumers toward hand sanitiser usage during the pandemic were found, limitations in the current study exist. The present study used a convenience sampling method, and most respondents came from the northern region (i.e., Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perak); hence, the researchers could not generalise the findings throughout the country. Gathering more data on hand sanitiser usage throughout the country would be beneficial. The next step in this research is to confirm the goodness of fits of the framework proposed in this study using structural equation modelling analysis. Also, future studies could analyse the mediating and moderating effects, such as demographic characteristics in influencing attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention. A mediating and moderating effect could yield more findings to increase our understanding of Malaysian consumer behaviour. Further, future researchers must explore changes in consumer perception and behaviour since COVID-19 hit the country. The pandemic phenomenon has changed consumer behaviour, and the overall standard operating procedures, including the use of hand sanitiser, could influence consumer behaviour in post-pandemic COVID-19.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

MSO completed most of the project, including collecting the data and writing the introduction section. AA and ZA wrote and refined the literature review sections. NHC is responsible for writing the methods, analysing the data, and reporting the results and analysis. NHC and MSO also wrote the discussion and implication sections. All authors read and approved the final manuscript, including the revised version.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Ir. Ts. Mohamed Syazwan Osman** is a senior lecturer of Chemical Engineering at Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang. He has co-authored over 45 publications in SCOPUS indexed to date. He holds one Malaysian patent. The current research interests in Syazwan's group include (1) Bioproduct development, (2) Nanomaterial synthesis and colloids, (3) Herbal extraction, and (4) Environmental Engineering waste treatment processes and modelling.

**Dr. Nur Hidayah Che Ahmat** is a certified hospitality educator and a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Permatang Pauh Campus, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. She has published in various peer-reviewed international journals. Her research area is focused on hospitality education, human resources management, strategic management, and consumer behaviours.

**Dr Azila Azmi** is an Associate Professor of Tourism Management at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang. Azila has worked on numerous research projects and consultancy related to tourism, all funded by major grant-awarding bodies. She has widely written and reviewed articles in tourism and hospitality studies. Her research interests include tourism destination management, shopping tourism, consumer behaviour, and ubiquitous learning and teaching.

**Zamri Ahmad** is a senior lecturer of the Hotel Department in the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Permatang Pauh Campus, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. He has co-authored several publications, and his area of interest includes branding, training, events, and food and beverage management. He is the Head of the Corporate Communication Unit at Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang.

# Bibliometric Analysis Using R Package on Sustainable Entrepreneurship Studies

**Mohd Amli Abdullah<sup>1,\*</sup>, Mohd Ali Bahari Abdul Kadir<sup>2</sup> and Badli Esham Ahmad<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pahang, 24600 Jengka, Pahang, MALAYSIA*

<sup>2</sup>*Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor 42300 Selangor Darul Ehsan MALAYSIA*

<sup>3</sup>*Institute of Biodiversity and Sustainable Development, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor 42300 Selangor Darul Ehsan MALAYSIA*

\*Correspondence: <sup>1</sup>[amli\\_baharum@uitm.edu.my](mailto:amli_baharum@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

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*Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a driver of long-term development and prosperity. Entrepreneurship research has made major contributions in a variety of fields. It has investigated the determinants of entrepreneurship from the individual to the national level. In this study, a quantitative approach is used to provide valuable insights into citation patterns, co-citation analysis, and the intellectual structure of a research domain to gain an understanding of the existing literature, aiding in furthering knowledge and identifying gaps for future research. Scopus is the database used, and the bibliometric application used is Biblioshiny, a bibliometrics analysis R package. The search was restricted to items published in English between 1997 and 2023. The program detected 501 documents from 237 sources, with an annual growth rate of 11.99 percent, an average of 4.67 publications per year, 778 keywords-plus (ID), 1248 author keywords (DE), and 1190 authors. Furthermore, there are 82 authors of single-authored documents, 2.8 co-authors per document, and a 26.35 rate of international collaboration. In addition, the topic growth rate was 11.99, the highest scientific output was 2022, the top publication is a Sustainability publication, the most relevant author is Zhang Y, and the highest cited country is Germany. With this information, future studies can be used to identify which perspective of sustainable entrepreneurship will be explored.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is critical to economic growth and employment creation in both developed and emerging economies (Remund et al., 2017). This is supported also by Diallo (2023); entrepreneurship has been a significant contributor to economic development and sustainable growth in recent years. Entrepreneurship is a gendered phenomenon, and there is an increasing number of studies on gender and entrepreneurship (Dohse et al., 2018). Longitudinal data from 2010 to 2014 show an increase in entrepreneurship, reflecting the global economy's recovery from the recession (Kim, 2022). Entrepreneurship is often seen as a driver of long-term development and progress (OECD and European Commission, 2019 Preface). In economics and management, Ph.D. entrepreneurship is a largely unstudied phenomenon (Muscio & Ramaciotti, 2018). Individual predictors of entrepreneurship were examined using the most recent microdata available (Fairlie, 2013).

In recent years, entrepreneurship research has made substantial contributions as well. Social entrepreneurship has also been important in both social and economic growth (Engüllendi, 2022). A recent study has demonstrated the value of entrepreneurial education programs in supporting economic growth and development (Liguori et al., 2019; Jaafar, R., 2017). Furthermore, entrepreneurship has been found to boost the national economy (Gartanti et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship in the Islamic context is dedicated to, or founded on divine principles and Qur'anic ideals (Muslimin et al., 2022). There is a connection between social capital, innovation, and entrepreneurship, according to studies (Gejam, 2023). The importance of historical antecedents in the contemporary growth of entrepreneurship has been studied (Chepurenko, 2019). There has also been an emphasis on entrepreneurship in emerging nations, which has made significant contributions to theory development (Lin & Lasserre, 2015). Digital entrepreneurship has recently sparked interest, with studies examining the eras of digital entrepreneurship and the evolution of digital entrepreneurship (Kollmann et al., 2021). The contribution of entrepreneurial studies to the economy cannot be emphasized. Immigrant entrepreneurship has been identified as a key contribution to the global economy, resulting in increased study interest in this field (Brzozowski, 2015).

Growing interest in sustainability across various fields, bibliometric analysis has been used in many studies such as tourism Niñerola et al. (2019), ecology (Belz & Binder, 2015), Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) (Choongo et al., 2016), strategy (Machado et al., 2021), family business (Bağış et al., 2022), digital entrepreneurship (Fernandes et al., 2022) (Zhai et al., 2022), innovation management (Shams et al., 2020), and international new ventures (Rodríguez-Ruiz et al., 2019). The existing literature on sustainable entrepreneurship remains fragmented and lacks a comprehensive analysis; and there is a crucial gap in understanding the broader trends, influential authors, leading journals, and emerging research areas within this domain.

Therefore, to address this gap, this study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis using R, to analyze and assess scientific publications statistically. It entails using statistical and analytical tools to analyze the bibliographic content of articles, such as citation patterns, co-citation analysis, and intellectual structure mapping. The primary goal of bibliometric analysis is to give a systematic and thorough examination of literature, which is necessary for understanding the current state of research on a specific topic.



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Schaltegger and Wagner (2011) define sustainable entrepreneurship as a business approach that attempts to produce long-term value by taking into consideration environmental, social, and economic aspects. It entails the creation of novel products and services that address environmental and social issues while simultaneously creating economic benefits. A focus on sustainability, innovation, and social responsibility characterizes sustainable entrepreneurship (Muoz & Cohen, 2017). It is a company model that tries to strike a balance between profit and social and environmental responsibility. Sustainable entrepreneurship can result in a variety of advantages, including increased competitiveness, improved reputation, and increased employee engagement (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). Sustainable entrepreneurship, as defined by (Rosário et al., 2022), is defined as sustainable company practices that align social, economic, and environmental objectives. Entrepreneurship is critical in transitioning to a more sustainable future, and ecological entrepreneurs have a role in connecting social, economic, and ecological objectives (Rosário et al., 2022). (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011) developed a framework for situating sustainable entrepreneurship within the context of sustainability innovation. The framework is based on a typology of sustainable entrepreneurship, expands it by integrating social and institutional entrepreneurship, and connects it to sustainability innovation. Managers can use the framework as a guide to introduce sustainability. In essence, sustainable entrepreneurship is a business approach that tries to produce long-term value by balancing economic, social, and environmental issues. It entails the creation of creative products and services that address environmental and social issues while simultaneously creating economic benefits. Sustainable entrepreneurship is distinguished by a focus on sustainability, innovation, and social responsibility, and it can result in a variety of benefits for organizations that take this strategy (Rosário et al., 2022; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

Sustainable entrepreneurship is a company strategy that aims to create long-term value by balancing economic, social, and environmental factors. This technique is critical for several reasons. To begin, sustainable entrepreneurship can aid in the resolution of environmental and social issues by developing innovative products and services that provide economic value while limiting the negative effects of company activities on the environment and society. According to one study (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011), sustainable entrepreneurship can lead to the development of environmentally and socially responsible products and services. Second, sustainable entrepreneurship strives for a "triple bottom line" that benefits people, the environment, and profit. This means that corporations can generate profits while also promoting social and environmental sustainability. Sustainable entrepreneurship, according to (Muoz & Cohen, 2017), can lead to the generation of economic, social, and environmental value. Third, by appealing to consumers who are increasingly concerned about environmental and social issues, sustainable businesses can improve competitiveness. According to (Thananusak, 2019), businesses that practice sustainable entrepreneurship can boost their competitiveness. Fourth, by demonstrating a commitment to sustainability, sustainable entrepreneurship can increase a company's brand image. According to (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011), sustainable entrepreneurship can lead to a better reputation and enhanced consumer loyalty. Finally, sustainable entrepreneurship can help to promote sustainable development and prevent environmental degradation by supporting societal transformation in favour of more sustainable products and services. According to (Apostu, 2023), sustainable entrepreneurship can help social transformation by promoting sustainable development and preventing environmental damage. In conclusion, sustainable entrepreneurship is a significant business method that can assist in addressing environmental and social concerns, achieving the triple bottom line, increasing competitiveness, improving reputation, and encouraging social transformation. According to research, sustainable entrepreneurship can result in the development of

sustainable products and services, the creation of economic, social, and environmental value, greater competitiveness, improved reputation, and societal transformation. These findings emphasize the need for sustainable entrepreneurship for businesses seeking to reconcile economic, social, and environmental factors.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method used to analyze and evaluate scientific literature. Bibliometric analysis is a reliable tool for assessing scientific output, focusing on the number of papers and citations published on a particular subject, presenting trend analyses, and identifying productive countries. The method is frequently used in exploring and analyzing large-scale scientific research data, evaluating the scientific research trend of a specific subject or concept, examining the impact values of publications, or mapping bibliometric networks in various ways (Kocyigit, 2023; METN, 2023; Sreylak et al., 2022). Researchers can use bibliometric analysis to highlight the theoretical foundations of a specific research subject, identify the important findings of prior studies, and predict future research ideas (Ellili, 2022). Overall, bibliometric analysis is a valuable method for understanding the current state of research in a particular field, identifying research gaps, and informing policy and practice.

The process of bibliometric analysis was guided by a search strategy diagram (Figure 1). This study analyzes all articles published and indexed in the Scopus where it uniquely combines a comprehensive, expertly curated abstract and citation database with enriched data and linked scholarly literature across a wide variety of disciplines. An advanced search in Scopus was performed in the search field of the topic, referring to the title, abstract, or keywords of the documents.

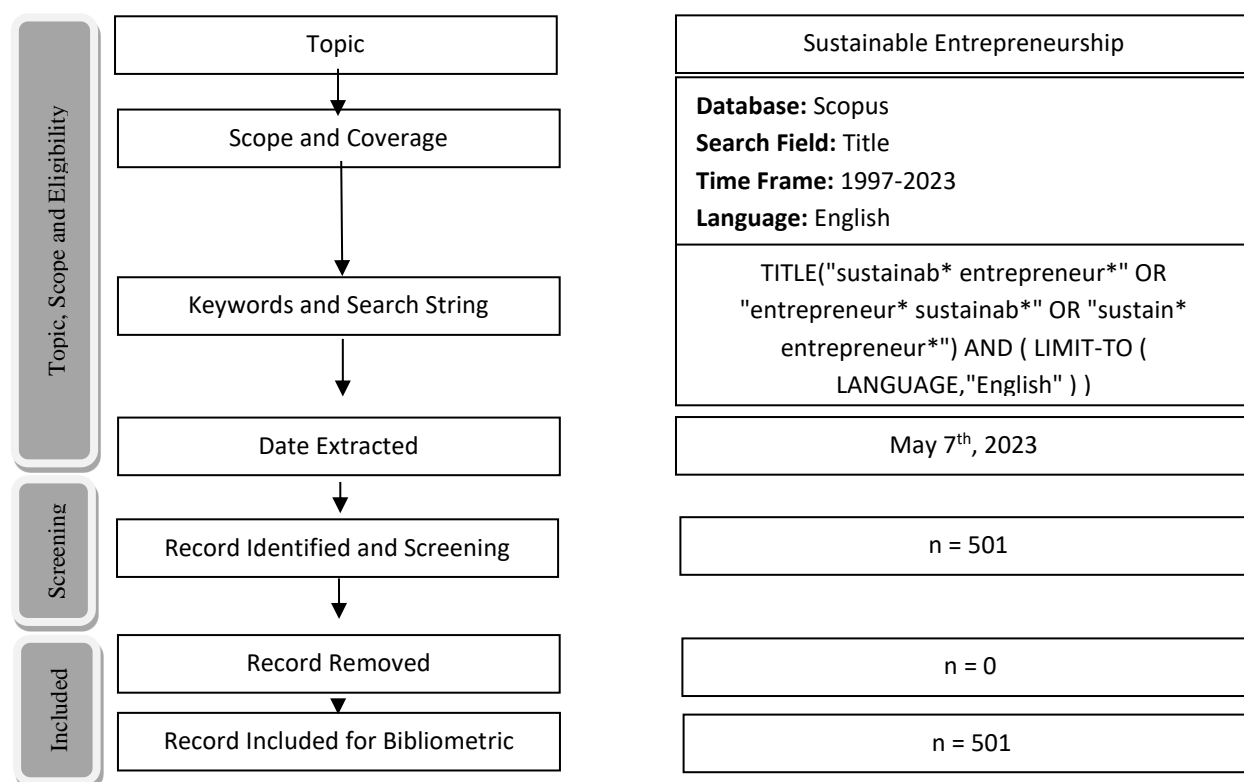


Figure 1: Flow Diagram of the Search Strategy

Sustainable Entrepreneurship was queried on the Scopus database using Biblioshiny, a bibliometrics analysis R package. The query was limited to articles published in English from 1997 to 2023. Figure 1 shows the results of the search string TITLE TITLE("sustainab\* entrepreneur\*" OR "entrepreneur\* sustainab\*" OR "sustain\* entrepreneur\*") AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE,"English" ) ). The Boolean operator 'OR' was used to find the best document that matched both topics. The authors only focused on Sustainable Entrepreneurship to achieve the objective of this paper. Thus, only these two words were used as the search query. The search on the Scopus database returned 501 publications related to Sustainable Entrepreneurship in various contexts. The following section then delved deeper into specific data on both keywords. Following that, bibliometric analysis was performed using Biblioshiny, a web-based software (Aria & Cuccu-rullo, 2017). It is part of the Bibliometrix-R package, which is statistical software for analyzing bibliographic data. Biblioshiny is used for descriptive analysis, citation analysis, co-citation analysis, thematic analysis, network analysis, and data visualization (Sawhney et al., 2022).

#### 4. RESULTS

Table 1 presents critical information such as data, document type, document content, author, and author combination. The data extracted from the Scopus database included timespan information, sources from journals, documents, annual growth rate (%), document average age, average citations per doc, and references. The table displays important information on the selected articles that were analyzed using the Biblioshiny web interface. The authors included documents published between 1997 and May 7th, 2023. The application discovered 501 documents from 237 sources. The annual growth rate of publication is 11.99 percent, on average, there are 4.67 publications per year.

Table 1: Main Information about Data in SCOPUS Database

Description	Results
<b>Main Information About Data</b>	
Timespan	1997:2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	237
Documents	501
Annual Growth Rate %	11.99
Document Average Age	4.67
Average citations per doc	25.93
References	29257
<b>Document Contents</b>	
Keywords Plus (ID)	778
Author's Keywords (DE)	1248

From the collected and exported data, Biblioshiny recognize 778 keywords-plus (ID) and 1248 author keywords (DE). There are 1190 authors in the category. This bibliometric analysis also yielded 82 authors of single-authored documents. In terms of author collaboration, there were 87 single-authored documents. Biblioshiny also shows that the number of co-authors per document was 2.8. The international collaboration percentage was computed to be 26.35.

Figure 1 depicts the trend of annual scientific production for documents on Sustainable Entrepreneurship. The annual growth rate was 11.99. The highest scientific output was in 2022 with 100 articles, while the lowest was in 1999, 2001, 2002, and 2003 with no article produced.

Then, average citations per year ranged from the lowest (0) in 1999, 2001, 2002, and 2003 to the highest (21.64) in 2007 as displayed in Figure 3 based on data filtered from the Biblioshiny web interface.

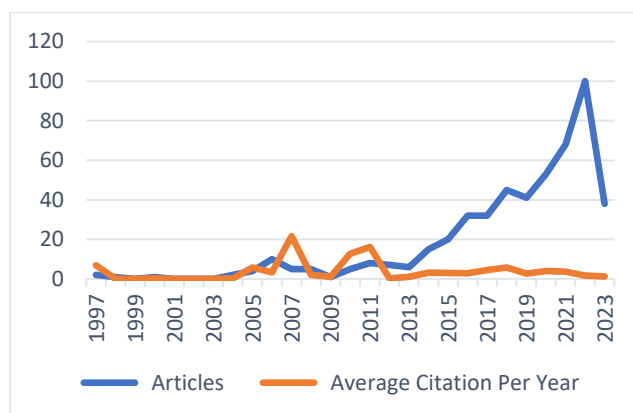


Figure 1: Total Publication and Average Citations per Year

Figure 2 shows a list of the top ten most relevant sources in the SCOPUS database. The first top journal in the list, Sustainability Journal is relevant to this analysis which specializes in Sustainable Entrepreneurship with 92 sources. The second highest is Science of the Total Environment Journal with 42 sources and the third highest is Marine Policy Journal with 22 sources.

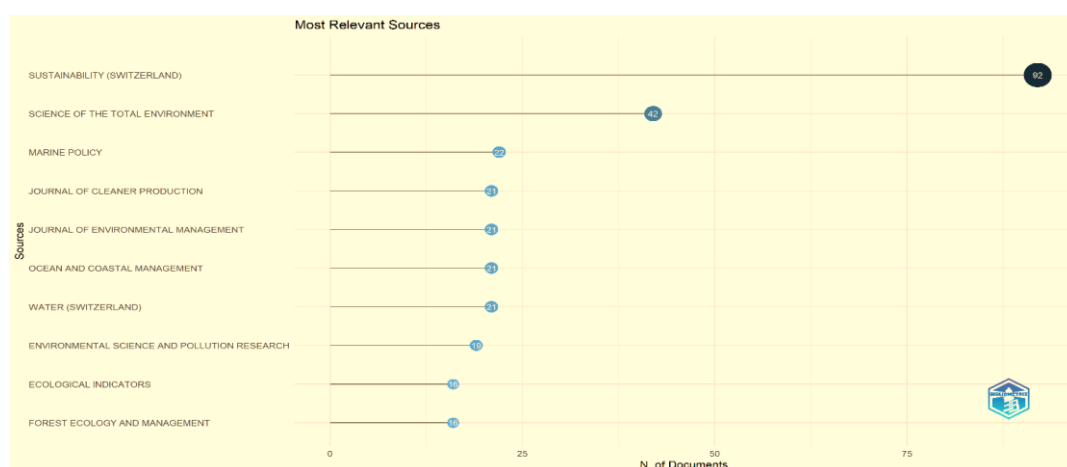


Figure 2: Most Relevant Sources

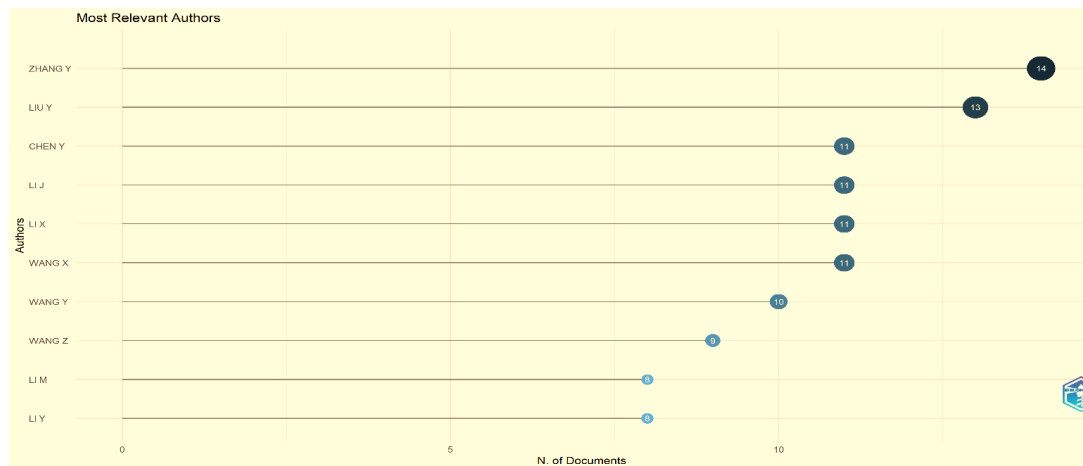


Figure 3: Most Relevant Authors

From Figure 3 above, the most relevant authors from this SCOPUS database are Zhang Y (14), Liu Y (13), Chen Y, Li J, Li X, and Wang X with 2 each on discussed topics. Further on, the most frequent words used in 501 documents on Sustainable Entrepreneurship are as follows: sustainable development (103), entrepreneur (96), sustainability (80), sustainable entrepreneurship (53), innovation (22), entrepreneurship (21), student (17), business development (16), business (14) and economic development (13). On the most cited countries, Germany (2222), United States of America (2049), United Kingdom (1166), and Canada (972) were reported to be the most cited countries in the articles according to Figure 4.

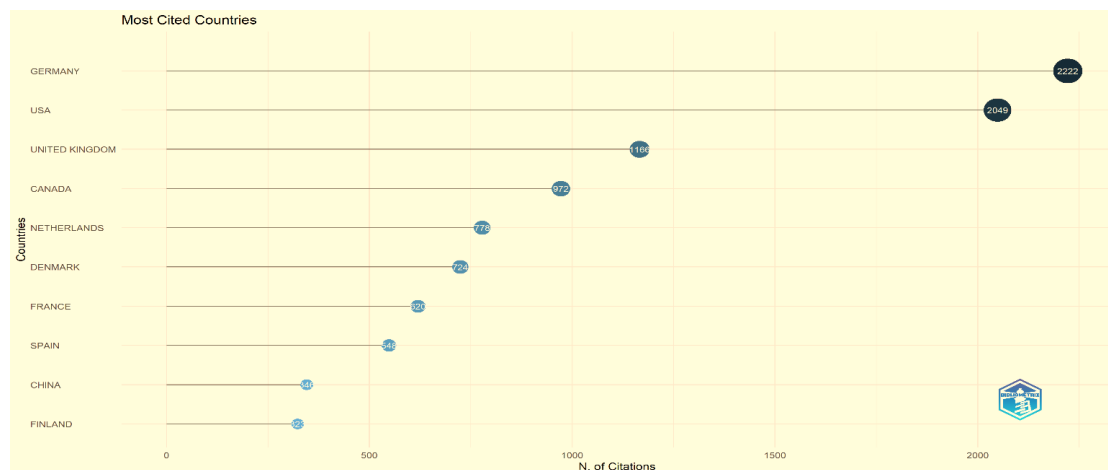


Figure 3: Most Cited Countries

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the bibliometric analysis, it is evident that research on sustainable entrepreneurship has been steadily increasing over the years. The annual growth rate of publication indicates a growing interest in the field. The analysis also shows the top journal in the Scopus database contributing to the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship. These journals have published a significant number of articles, indicating their relevance and specialization in this field. A

perspective can be drawn when most of the top authors are mostly from Asia. This shows that the issue of sustainable entrepreneurship becomes their main interest as it is related to their environment. Their frequent publication suggests their expertise and influence in shaping the research landscape in this area. Examining the most frequent words used in the documents reveals key themes and concepts associated with sustainable entrepreneurship, important keywords include innovation, student, business development, and economic development, indicating the multidimensional nature of sustainable entrepreneurship and its impact on various aspects of society and the economy. On the other side, most countries that are most cited from are from the Europe region and the United States. This suggests their active involvement and leadership in the research on sustainable entrepreneurship.

This analysis seeks to provide valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, aiding in the comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge, identification of research gaps, and guidance for future research directions in the field of sustainable entrepreneurship.

Future research in sustainable entrepreneurship could explore emerging trends and challenges, such as the role of technology and digital entrepreneurship in achieving sustainability goals, the impact of social entrepreneurship on addressing environmental issues, and the examination of policy frameworks and initiatives that promote sustainable entrepreneurial practices. Additionally, interdisciplinary studies that integrate concepts from environmental science, economics, and social sciences could provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of sustainable entrepreneurship and its implications for global sustainable development.

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## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

MAA carried out the bibliometric analysis using R, MABAK has done the introduction and literature review and BEA carried out the conclusion and proofread. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None declared.

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## BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

**Mohd Amli Abdullah** is a senior lecturer from the Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Pahang Branch. He has over fifteen years of teaching experience and has



been involved in numerous research work. His current focus is on sustainable entrepreneurship among the Orang Asli. He can be contacted at email: [amli\\_baharum@uitm.edu.my](mailto:amli_baharum@uitm.edu.my).

**Mohd Ali Bahari Abdul Kadir** Associate Professor at the Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA. His research interests are in the areas of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, social innovation, and community development. He can be contacted at email: [mohda419@uitm.edu.my](mailto:mohda419@uitm.edu.my)

**Badli Esham Ahmad** is a senior lecturer in the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Pahang Branch. He received his doctoral degree from Universiti Teknologi MARA and has twenty years of teaching experience. He is currently an Associate Fellow at the Institute of Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (IBSD) Universiti Teknologi MARA. His research interests and publications are in education, adult learning, self-directed learning, and Orang Asli studies. He can be contacted at email: [badli@uitm.edu.my](mailto:badli@uitm.edu.my).