

Pertanika Journal of  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES  
& HUMANITIES**

**JSSH**

**VOL. 24 (4) DEC. 2016**



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

### About the Journal

#### Overview

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

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

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

The Journal is available world-wide.

#### Aims and scope

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

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

#### History

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

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

#### Goal of *Pertanika*

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

#### Quality

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

#### Abstracting and indexing of *Pertanika*

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

### Future vision

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

### Citing journal articles

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

### Publication policy

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

### Code of Ethics

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

### International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)

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

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

### Lag time

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

### Authorship

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

### Manuscript preparation

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

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

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

### Editorial process

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

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

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

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

### **The Journal's peer-review**

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

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

### **Operating and review process**

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

1. The Journal's chief executive editor and the editorial board examine the paper to determine whether it is appropriate for the journal and should be reviewed. If not appropriate, the manuscript is rejected outright and the author is informed.
2. The chief executive editor sends the article-identifying information having been removed, to three reviewers. Typically, one of these is from the Journal's editorial board. Others are specialists in the subject matter represented by the article. The chief executive editor asks them to complete the review in three weeks.

Comments to authors are about the appropriateness and adequacy of the theoretical or conceptual framework, literature review, method, results and discussion, and conclusions. Reviewers often include suggestions for strengthening of the manuscript. Comments to the editor are in the nature of the significance of the work and its potential contribution to the literature.

3. The chief executive editor, in consultation with the editor-in-chief, examines the reviews and decides whether to reject the manuscript, invite the author(s) to revise and resubmit the manuscript, or seek additional reviews. Final acceptance or rejection rests with the Editor-in-Chief, who reserves the right to refuse any material for publication. In rare instances, the manuscript is accepted with almost no revision. Almost without exception, reviewers' comments (to the author) are forwarded to the author. If a revision is indicated, the editor provides guidelines for attending to the reviewers' suggestions and perhaps additional advice about revising the manuscript.
4. The authors decide whether and how to address the reviewers' comments and criticisms and the editor's concerns. The authors return a revised version of the paper to the chief executive editor along with specific information describing how they have answered the concerns of the reviewers and the editor, usually in a tabular form. The author(s) may also submit a rebuttal if there is a need especially when the author disagrees with certain comments provided by reviewer(s).

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

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



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## Foreword

Welcome to the Fourth Issue of the Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (JSSH)!

The JSSH is an open-access journal for the Social Sciences and Humanities published by Universiti Putra Malaysia Press. It is independently owned and managed by the university and runs on a non-profit basis to contribute to the field of social sciences.

This issue contains **35 articles**, a review article and **29** regular research articles. This issue also features five selected papers from the International Conference on Innovations, Shifts and Challenges in Learning and Teaching 2015 (ICISC, 2015). The authors of these articles come from different countries, namely **Malaysia, Iran, India, Thailand, Qatar, Indonesia and Nigeria**.

The review article discusses the two sides of earnings management, when is it considered healthy (efficient) or unhealthy (opportunistic). This review provides insights into earnings management for business and academic players and recognising the good side and bad side of earnings management through firm performance that impacts on agency cost and continuous survival of firms (*Chandren, S.*).

The regular research articles cover a wide range of topics. The first article is on delivering Islamic education through Islamic morality in some Malaysian schools (*Sofiah Mohamed, Kamarul Azmi Jasmi and Muhammad Azhar Zailaini*). This issue also contains a study on socially constructed mechanism in EFL writing; a case study of scaffold planning in a remote area (*Zangoei, A. and Davoudi, M.*); a fostering learner autonomy through language labs to students of engineering; Potentials and parameters – a study with special reference to India (*Meenakshi, K.*); the effects of computer self-efficacy on pre-service art teachers' achievement in graphic design (*Onwuagboke, B. B. C. and Singh, T. K. R.*); a study on learning style approaches for Generation Y: an assessment of a Malaysian technical university (*Fesol, S. F. A., Salam, S., Osman, M., Bakar, N. and Salim, F.*); examining psychometric properties of Malay version Children Depression Inventory (CDI) and prevalence of depression among secondary school students (*Teh, J. and Lim, H. L.*); a study on integrating rhythmic syllable with tonguing drills in elementary brass instruments instruction (*Khor, A. K., Chan, C. J. and Roslan, S.*); an empirical study on emerging issues and challenges faced by middle level human resource practitioners in IT companies, Karnataka, India (*Saravanan, P. and A. Vasumathi*); a study on domestication and foreignisation strategies in restaurant menu translation (*Ghafarian, M., Kafipour, R. and Soori, A.*); a study of the villainous *Pontianak* by examining gender, culture and power in Malaysian horror films (*Lee, Y. B.*); a qualitative study of the source of homosexuality, whether it is influenced by with nature or nurture (*Felix, M. S.*); comparing parenting style with parents' education in positive youth development of adolescents (*Kiadarbandsari, A., Madon, Z., Hamsan, H. H. and Mehdinezhad Nouri, K.*); developing and examining a model of perceived quality, perceived value and perceived risk affecting customer loyalty of environmentally-friendly electronic products (*Lalinthorn Marakanon and Vinai Panjakajornsak*); the impact of message units as 'chunks' on EFL production (*Mahvash*

*Rahimkhani and Fatemeh Hemmati*); a study on the effect of personal-situational locus of control on betting in a private university (*Ramasamy, S., Calvin, C. S. K., Sii, H. E., Chan, H. S. and Tan, Y. S.*); a study on the impact of globalisation on society and culture in Qatar (*Al-Ammari, B. and Romanowski, M. H.*); a discussion on the leadership styles and organisational citizenship behaviour: role ambiguity as a mediating construct (*Lee, K. L. and Low, G. T.*); a study on the academic listening practices among international graduate students in the English language, the difficulties and corrective measures (*Manjet, K.*); the effects of a single bout of moderate cycling exercise during Ramadhan on mood states, short-term memory, sustained attention and perceived exertion among sedentary university students (*E. A. Kaarud, H. A. Hashim and S. Saha*); Wh-Movement in Sudanese Arabic, in a minimalist approach (*Taha, M., Sultan, F. M. and Yasin, S. M.*); problematizing femininity in slimming advertisements (*Lau, K. L.*); a discussion on the effectiveness of using vocabulary exercises to teach vocabulary to ESL/EFL learners (*Mohd Tahir, M. H. and Tunku Mohtar, T. M.*); paradigm shifts for community health development by medical professions: a case study of the devolution of health services to the local government in Thailand (*Silawan, P. and Sringemyuang, L.*); fake emotions, an impediment to bigger Thomas's ontological transcendence in Richard Wright's *Native Son* (*Behin, B., Mehrvand, A. and Keramatfar, N.*); a discussion on the place of memory in John Burnside's *The Locust Room* (*Hilalah Aldhafeeri and Arbaayah Ali Termizi*); a study on parental attachment as the predictor of emerging adulthood experiences (*Wider, W., Mustapha, M., Bahari, F. B. and Halik, M. H.*); a study on the potential threats to social harmony in Johor, Malaysia (*Bagong Suyanto*); determinants of information technology adoption among Malaysian farm-based enterprises (*Adamkolo, M. I., Hassan, M. S. and Yusuf, S.*); and an examination of new evidence on natural resources curse for OIC and non-OIC countries (*Kunchu, J. A. B., Sarmidi, T., Md Nor, A. H. S. and Yussof, I.*).

This issue concludes with 5 articles from the ICISC 2015 international conference: civilian to officer, threshold concepts in military officers education (*Ahmad Thamrini Fadzlin Syed Mohamed*); peer assisted learning in higher education, roles, perceptions and efficacy (*Chan, N. N., Phan, C. W., Aniyah Salihan, N. H. and Dipolog-Ubanan, G. F.*); beliefs of candidates' parents towards teaching as a profession (*Chua, L. C.*); a case study on L1 influence on writing in L2 among UCSI Chinese students (*Dipolog-Ubanan, G. F.*); and the impact of the role of teacher and balance of power in transforming conventional teaching to learner-centred teaching in Malaysian institution of higher education (*Yap, W. L., Neo, M. and Neo, T. K.*).

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

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

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*Review Article*

**Review on the Double Side of Earnings Management**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper informs on the double side of earnings management, that is, when earnings management is considered healthy (efficient) or unhealthy (opportunistic). Earnings management is part of the contract cost that either increases or decreases agency cost. Earnings management also provides a positive or negative impact to firm value and shareholders' wealth. Efficient earnings management is said to maximise firm value and shareholders' wealth. Opportunistic earnings management is known to maximise managers' private benefits at the expense of shareholders, and this eventually affects firm value. Firm performance measurement, either accounting or market-based measurement, can be applied to determine the type of earnings management (efficient or opportunistic). This paper provides valuable information for business and academic players on insights into earnings management and the recognition of the double side of earnings management through firm performance that possibly gives impact on agency cost and continuous survival of firms.

*Keywords:* Earnings management, accrual manipulations, real activity manipulation, share buyback, firm performance

**INTRODUCTION**

Earnings management is a common word in today's business world. Earnings management is an accounting treatment

used by managers in their discretion to manage or smooth earnings in financial reports as a kind of 'language' of business reports. Generally, involvement in earnings management is done deliberately to achieve a specific objective or goal; this objective is either to maximise shareholders' wealth or managers' benefits. Prejudging earnings management as healthy or unhealthy for firms and shareholders merely considers

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one aspect of earnings management. This paper provides an outlook on earnings management, considering it is efficient or opportunistic for firms. No doubt earnings management is a 'money game' between managers and investors that does not reflect the true economic performance of the firm. The managers attempt to smooth earnings as a strategy to build market credibility and for positive growth in a firm's share price (Graham et al., 2005). This money game is used prudently to complement rewards for the firm from investors or shareholders in terms of share prices, which can provide a bright prospect for the firm for good management of shareholders' wealth. This documents that earnings management benefits the firm. However, earnings management is also reflected as a short-term strategy that benefits the managers and the not the firm in the long run. Earnings management is perceived as an opportunistic action at the expense of shareholders. This shows that earnings management can be healthy (efficient) or unhealthy (inefficient) to firms and shareholders or opportunistic to managers. Thus, the management action to engage in earnings management can be efficient or opportunistic earnings management. Some articles have consistently reported that earnings management is unhealthy to the firm while other articles have documented that earnings management is not detrimental to the firm (Roychowdhury, 2006; Rezaei & Roshani, 2012). This reflects on the existence of a double side to earnings management, that is, that it could be either healthy or unhealthy to the firm and shareholders.

The impact of earnings management on firms and shareholders is essential for the firms' going concern. The continuous survival of the firms also explains the aligned interest between the managers and the shareholders that keeps agency cost at the minimal. Healthy earnings management is classified as efficient earnings management as it benefits the firm (Jiraporn et al., 2008; Rezaei & Roshani, 2012). Earnings management that only benefits the managers or affects the firm's performance is classified as opportunistic earnings management, which increases agency cost to the firm (Jiraporn et al., 2008). Despite categorising earnings management as healthy or unhealthy in total, this paper emphasises on the classification point on earnings management, that is, whether it is efficient or opportunistic. When is earnings management said to be efficient or opportunistic? The objective of this paper is to convey a clear perspective on earnings management in determining whether it is opportunistic earnings management or efficient earnings management. The measurement metric to determine efficient earnings management or opportunistic earnings management is highlighted in this paper. As earnings management can be healthy or unhealthy for firms, it is inappropriate to define earnings management as unhealthy or healthy generally without first considering if it is efficient or opportunistic earnings management.

This paper presents background information on earnings management, the relationship of the type of earnings management to agency cost, how earnings

management can be a part of firm's business contract cost, classification of the double side of earnings management, that is, whether it is efficient earnings management or opportunistic earnings management and finally, the metrics to determine the double side of the earnings management. The significant contribution of this paper is to avoid prejudgement on whether earnings management is healthy or unhealthy without first investigating the firm's performance. The firm's performance is the indicator that determines the effect of earnings management. Generally, previous review papers on earnings management provided a general overview of earnings management and detecting the earnings management model. This paper aims to add to the existing literature, with emphasis on firm performance as the key factor in determining the double side of earnings management.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Earnings Management

Earnings management is the action of corporate officers that affects a firm's short-term earnings results (Sevin & Schroeder, 2005). Schipper (1989, p. 92) defined earnings management as "a purposeful intervention in the external financial reporting process, with the intent of obtaining some private gain (as opposed to say, merely facilitating the neutral operation of the process)." In addition, Healy and Wahlen (1999, p. 368) documented that "Earnings management occurs when managers use judgement in financial reporting and in structuring transactions to

alter the financial reports to either mislead some stakeholders about the underlying economic performance of the firm or to influence contractual outcomes that depend on the reported accounting numbers." The judgement exercised by the managers through earnings management to alter the firms' financial reports mislead stakeholders on the firms' financial performance. Thus, shareholders make inaccurate judgements about the firm's performance (Gulzar & Wang, 2011). However, Arya et al. (2003) describe earnings management as a smooth car ride, in which the passengers (assumed: stakeholders) are overwhelmed with the drivers' (assumed: managers) expertise. This interprets that earnings management has the capability to deliver positive earnings results to stakeholders or investors of a firm. Most firms do not engage in managing short-term earnings (Jooste, 2013). Income-increasing earnings management is more widespread than income-decreasing earnings management (Beneish, 2001). Earnings management is a monetary gain from the managers' ability to exercise accounting manipulation for positive earnings performance results (Nan et al., 2015). This reflects that earnings management is an action that gives impact to earnings results. Earnings management is perceived as functional and rational by firm managers (Noronha et al., 2008). Thus, earnings management is one of the essential activities used by managers of firms to adjust earnings results whether for the benefit of the shareholders and firm or as opportunistic activity.

Earnings are a most important metric to internal or external parties of the firms (Degeorge et al., 1999) and earnings information reveals the position of firm values (Graham et al., 2005). This reflects that positive earnings play an important role in attaining positive firm performance that increases firm value. Essentially, the increase in firm value signals the strong business position of the firm, and this builds credibility among the stakeholders and increases the shareholders' wealth. The alteration of the earnings in the financial reports through the earnings management actions to conceal the true economic position reflects on the importance of earnings. Thus, earnings are managed or smoothed through earnings management with the intention to achieve the objectives aligning to shareholders interest or for managers' self-interest, which gives impact to the firm performance. Ebaid (2012) stated that listed firms in Egypt used earnings management to prevent earnings decreases and losses in their financial reports.

Firms use earnings management either to alter the positive (forward) or negative (back – earnings delay) direction of earnings figures (Degeorge et al., 1999). This could be the reason why it is called 'earnings management'; it adjusts earnings either upwards or downwards. Moreover, it is common to manage earnings upwards through earnings management in order to meet or beat the earnings per share forecast (Burgstahler & Eames, 2006). This is because earnings management alters the earnings per share (EPS) calculations

( $EPS = ER/OS$ ) of firms either through EPS numerator calculation by adjusting the earnings results (ER) or through EPS denominator calculation by adjusting the outstanding shares (OS). The known EPS denominator adjustment is through share buyback as the earnings management device or accretive share buyback (Hribar et al., 2006).

Habbash and Alghamdi (2015) conducted a study on motivation of earnings management in Saudi Arabia under developed-economy listed firms and identified several motivating factors for managers to engage in earnings management. Among the factors that cause managers to engage in earnings management are "to increase the amount of remuneration; to report a reasonable profit and avoid loss; to obtain a bank loan; to increase share price" (p. 137). This shows that earnings management action is for a purposeful reason, either for the benefit of the firm and shareholders or the managers.

According to Gunny (2010), earnings management is categorised into accruals manipulation and real activity manipulation. Consistently, managers exercise earnings management through accounting choices (accruals manipulation) or cash flow choices (real activity manipulation) to alter the earnings figure as part of the firms' transaction involving internal or external parties. Ebaid (2012) reported that accruals accounting creates opportunity for managers to engage in earnings management. For example, earnings management through accounting choices transaction such as

accrual manipulations is done among internal parties. Earnings management through cash flow choices such as accretive share buyback (Hribar et al., 2006) involves internal parties i.e. the managers and external parties i.e. the stock exchange when the share buyback activity is through the open-market buyback programme. Thus, earnings management is a contract that builds up the accounting numbers in the firm as it involves internal and external parties through the accounting treatments. This contract that builds up the firms accounting numbers can be either efficient or opportunistic for firms and shareholders. If the firm makes a residual profit through the earnings management contracts it is classified as being efficient for the firm and shareholders. Firms that make a residual loss through the earnings management contracts can be considered opportunistic for the managers at the expense of shareholders.

Dechow and Skinner (2000) have clearly drawn the line between earnings management and fraudulent accounting. The managers' intention of undertaking actions or choices to mask the true economic position or performance can be either accounting choices or cash flow choices. This paper classifies accounting choices mainly through accruals manipulation and cash flow through real activities manipulation as accounting treatments as these choices affect the accounting numbers, specifically the EPS. These accounting treatments are classified as earnings management if the managers' discretion is within the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). These

earnings management actions are considered to have a 'screw driver' effect i.e. to make the system work better; thus, these actions are not considered to be violating the GAAP but for the smooth running of the business (Graham et al., 2005). In sum, earnings management is a contract undertaken by managers at the managers' discretion through accounting treatment transactions to manage accounting numbers. Essentially, the discretion of the accounting treatment exercised by managers is an earnings management practice. According to Watts and Zimmerman (1990), the discretion of accounting exercised by managers can either benefit the firm's value or the wealth transfers to the managers. This reflects that when wealth transfers from shareholders to managers through earnings management outcomes it has a negative impact on firm value, ultimately reducing shareholders' wealth. Does alteration of accounting numbers through earnings management provide a bright prospect for the future of firms? Do these firms have a positive firm performance that increases shareholders' wealth from the managers' discretion in engaging in earnings management? Do these managers perform the right tasks to increase the firm and the shareholders' value or do their actions affect the firms and shareholders' wealth, which leads to agency problems?

**Agency problems.** According to Fama and Jensen (1983), agency problems arise from separation between decision and control between the principal (owner) and the agent (manager). This separation causes

conflicting interest between the owners and managers, which leads to agency problems. It is impossible for the agent to make an optimal decision for the benefit of the principal at zero cost. The cost that is incurred due to the existence of agency problems is known as agency cost. Jensen and Meckling (1976) defined agency cost as principal monitoring cost, bonding cost and residual loss. The bonding and principal monitoring costs are able to reduce agency problems through effective corporate governance mechanisms. The residual loss is that the cost outweighs the output value of the firm (Fama & Jensen, 1983). In sum, a residual loss where the cost outweighs the revenue leads to negative firm performance that conveys negative financial information to shareholders.

Firm performance holds a pivotal role in a firm's success and shareholders' wealth. As matter of fact, firm performance is generally measured through financial performance as accounting is the language of business. This firm performance reflects how well the resources of the firm are being used to generate profit in a specific period of time. In a nutshell, positive firm performance is from residual profit, and residual loss leads to negative firm performance. This residual loss is known as distorted earnings report; it occurs when the managers' interest fails to align with shareholders' interest, ultimately increasing agency cost. Distorted earnings reports affect the firms' value (Degeorge et al., 1999); in addition, residual loss is an expense for shareholders. However, the agency problems reduce when the firm

generates residual profits where the output value is greater than the cost of the input. This shows that the agents are making effective decisions that optimise principals' (shareholders) wealth through positive firm performance.

The common assumption regarding the reason agents are appointed is that they can act on behalf of the principal to maximise the firm value, ultimately increasing the principal's wealth. If the agents make an unimpaired decision that enhances the firm growth, naturally they are acting in line with the principal's goals and objective in having set up the firm. In sum, the wealth of the firm is the wealth of the principal through the agent's achievements. The agents' (managers) achievements are accounted to the managers' decision as to whether to work in line with the principal's (shareholders) viewpoint that maximise firm value in the short or long term or the managers' personal growth or as a gimmick in the short term to gain advantage for the firm, increasing the conflict of interest between the two parties (shareholders and managers), leading to agency issues or problems.

Does managers' (agents) involvement in earnings management benefit firms and shareholders (principals)? Will managers' decisions involving earnings management benefit the owners (shareholders) of the firm, or will it cause agency problems? According to Jiraporn et al. (2008), for firms with less agency cost, managers' involvement in earnings management is beneficial to firms and shareholders. On the other hand, for firms with severe

agency cost, managers are opportunistically involved in earnings management for their own private benefits, and this affects the firms' performance negatively. As matter of fact, efficient earnings management is practised by firms with less serious agency problems. The managers of these firms are working towards increasing the wealth of the firms and shareholders. Thus, for firms with minimal conflict of interest between shareholders and managers, the management of the respective firms are involved in healthy earnings management for positive growth of the firm and shareholders' wealth. In general, the discretion or judgement of managers in earnings management involvement determines the shareholders' value growth and the survival of the firms. The opportunistic decision making of the managers at the expense of the shareholders that increases agency cost through residual loss leads to opportunistic earnings management.

**Contracts opportunistic or efficient.** Firms are a nexus of contracts between the internal and external parties (Fama & Jensen, 1983). These contracts are the rights of the managers (agents), and their rewards are based on the evaluation of performance of these contracts (Fama & Jensen, 1983). According to Fama and Jensen (1983), survival firms are firms that deliver the desired output to their customers at the lowest price covering the cost. Generally, the firms' accounting numbers are built up from transaction or contracting cost from these contracts.

Basically, contracts are classified healthy when firms make residual profits by selling

for a price above the cost. If the managers undertake contracts that lead to residual loss, they create agency problems that increase the agency cost. The agency cost is part of the contracting cost (Watts & Zimmerman, 1990). In sum, the contracting cost can be healthy to the firm when the agency cost is reduced or otherwise. As a matter of fact, agency cost is an expense to firms and shareholders, and leads to negative firm performance. Residual loss is the agency cost (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) from the contracts; this contract cost is unhealthy to the firms because it affects firm performance and shareholders' wealth. These contracts lead to untoward directions against the shareholders' viewpoint on maximising firms or shareholders' value. The decision making of the managers involved in these contracts is either for firm survival growth that enhances the shareholders' wealth or for managers' personal growth. The residual loss to shareholders is assumed to be residual profit to managers for their personal growth. Are these managers known as the agents of the firm making opportunistic decisions for their personal growth at the expense of shareholders?

**Efficient or opportunistic earnings management.** Firms that engage in income increasing earnings management provide opportunity for the investors to earn abnormal stock return in short position compared to long position for firms that use earnings management for income decreasing purpose (Kwag & Stephens, 2009). Is this earnings management activity efficient or opportunistic? Siregar and Utama (2008) reported that firms with a

higher proportion of family ownership and non-business groups engage more in efficient earnings management. Essentially, managers do possess a sufficient degree of freedom to operate a firm effectively and efficiently on behalf of shareholders. This degree of freedom gives rights to managers to exercise discretion over the accounting numbers through contracts. Thus, accounting numbers are the outcome of these contracts. As for the accounting treatment, the managers undertaking the contracts have an impact on shareholders' wealth. If the outcomes of these contracts redistribute the wealth to managers, the managers acted opportunistically (Watts & Zimmerman, 1976). The managers enhance their personal wealth through contracts at the expense of the shareholders. Thus, the managers' opportunistic action of engaging in these contracts at the expense of shareholders leads to residual loss as part of the agency cost, increasing the contracting cost. Arya et al. (2003) divided managers into two categories: selfless manager and managers with personal goals (e.g. compensation). Generally, selfless managers act in accordance with the agency theory to maximise the firms and shareholders' wealth through positive contracts not at the expense of the shareholders. Selfless managers' earnings management activities will not be detrimental to firm performance; this is in contrast with the actions of managers with personal goals.

If managers exercise discretion in accounting numbers through earnings management contracts that lead to residual

loss or negative firm performance, that earnings management is known as opportunistic earnings management. This opportunistic earnings management is either for the managers to achieve personal goals at the expense of shareholders or to position the firm to underperform in the short or long term. Opportunistic earnings management delivers negative information to stakeholders on the future direction of the firms. Yang, Hsu and Yang (2013) found that firms that issue seasoned equity offerings engage in aggressive earnings management to be in better condition in the short run to attain benefits such as allowing the insiders to dispose of shares at higher prices by putting the shareholders in a worse condition in the long term. The authors' finding reveals that the opportunistic action of the managers to attain benefits in the short term gives a negative impact to firm performance and shareholder wealth in the long run. In addition, He et al. (2010) studied private placement issuance firms in Japan and reported that firms involved in earnings management to manipulate earnings as a strategy to attract more investors suffered underperformance of shares in the post-issue period. The behaviour of the managers in using earnings management for short-term gain did not benefit the firm in the long run. In sum, this kind of earnings management activity is unhealthy to the firm. These opportunistic earnings management actions, which increase agency cost, bring no benefit to the firm and shareholders. This opportunistic earnings management is a discouraging signal for the firm's



future growth and decreases shareholders' wealth for managers in the short term. Thus, opportunistic earnings management decreases the firm's value and shareholders' wealth, suggesting an unhealthy future for the firm and the shareholders.

Bhojraj et al. (2009) reported that firms that engage in earnings management gained short-run stock price advantage but underperformed in the long run. In a nutshell, these firms engaged in opportunistic earnings management that affects the firms' value and shareholders' wealth. Jiraporn et al. (2008) pointed out that opportunistic earnings management is harmful to the firm and gives negative impact to firm value. Bhojraj et al. (2009) reported that managers who were involved in earnings management are classified as indulging in "myopic behaviors", or behavior that does not provide for the future. This shows that opportunistic earnings management does not benefit the firm in the long run. Opportunistic earnings management re-distributes wealth to managers at the expense of the shareholders. Opportunistic earnings management determined through negative firm performance results manifests to increase agency cost due to conflict of interest between the managers and the shareholders. Therefore, opportunistic earnings management is regarded as unhealthy to the firm and affects shareholders' wealth as a whole. Habib (2004) identified a negative relationship between the value relevance of accounting information and earnings management. The author reported that the investors

discounted the firm's accounting numbers if the firm practised opportunistic earnings management. This clearly indicates that the investors did not encourage opportunistic earnings management as it did not benefit the shareholders.

On the other hand, if the outcome of the contracts through accounting treatment enhances shareholders' wealth with residual profits or positive firm performance, these managers' accounting treatment through earnings management is known as efficient earnings management. The efficient earnings management benefits the firm and increases the firm's value. Thus, a contract that leads to residual loss is an opportunistic contract that benefits the managers, ultimately affecting the survival of the firms and shareholders' wealth. In contrast, contracts attributable to residual profit known as efficient contracts provide a foreseeable positive direction for the firms and maximise shareholders' wealth. Collectively, efficient earnings management exhibits positive firm performance, which ultimately increases firm value and shareholders' wealth. In sum, efficient earnings management reflects on the existence of aligned interest between the managers and the shareholders of the firms. An efficient earnings management delivers good news through positive firm performance to shareholders and stakeholders of the firm (Rezaei & Roshani, 2012). The efficient earnings management is informational to shareholders and the market. Essentially, efficient earnings management is associated with positive firm value.

Jiraporn et al. (2008) measured current financial performance with earnings management to determine whether earnings management is opportunistic or efficient. Bhojraj et al. (2009) and Rezaei and Roshani (2012) used earnings management to measure future financial performance. Jiraporn et al. (2008) and Rezaei and Roshani (2012) documented that earnings management that gives a positive effect to firm financial performance is classified as an efficient earnings management. On the contrary, negative firm financial performance is the effect of opportunistic earnings management. Thus, firm performance is used as a metric to gauge whether earnings management is efficient or opportunistic. This validates that firm performance is the metric to determine the type of earnings management used by managers. Earnings management is known to manage the earnings figure; the ideal measurement metric is accounting-based firm performance measurement such as Return on Asset (ROA) or Return on Equity (ROE) or market-based firm performance measurement such as TobinQ.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used content analysis to review articles or journals on earnings management from reputable databases such as Elsevier/ Science Direct, Emerald and Ebscohost from 1976 to 2015. However, there are limited articles on the double side of earnings management, leading to the author's decision to explore when earnings management is efficient and opportunistic.

## **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

In sum, healthy firms with less agency cost are involved in healthy earnings management for long-term survival of the firms. Rahman et al. (2013) reported that earnings management is informational when the relationship between earnings management and information asymmetry is negative whereas earnings management is opportunistic when the relationship between earnings management and information asymmetry is positive. Generally, the existence of information asymmetry indicates that managers have more information compared to shareholders such that shareholders are in doubt about the aligned interest between the shareholders and managers. The close link between information asymmetry and agency cost to earnings management predicts that firms with less information asymmetry between the managers and shareholders portray aligned interest between the two parties' practices, leading to healthy earnings management, which is efficient or informational for shareholders and the market.

Thus, healthy earnings management is efficient earnings management that aims for the well-being of the firm and shareholders. The management of these firms provides a bright long-term direction for the firm by gaining confidence from the stakeholders and shareholders through transparent positive firm performance. The decision to be involved in efficient or opportunistic earnings management is at management's discretion. Managers who consent to long-

term direction of the firms will take the wiser decision to be involved in efficient earnings management for a promising future for the firm and the managers. Opportunistic earnings management is narrowly focussed to managers' private benefits, delivering negative financial information to shareholders. Opportunistic earnings management benefits managers, not the firms; this is why opportunistic earnings management is branded as short-term focussed earnings management, which does not benefit the firm in the long run.

The firm's performance results are the yardstick to measure whether the earnings management is opportunistic or efficient. This clearly implies that the managers' discretion on engaging in either type of earnings management should acknowledge their concern for continuous survival of the firms with positive firm value and aligned interest with shareholders with the strategy to reduce agency cost. Even though earnings management is not a fraudulent activity, wrong earnings management increases agency cost; thus, opting for opportunistic earnings management raises issues of ethical consideration of the managers, which also reflects negatively on the firm and is subjected to penalties from the shareholders. The firms' future is the responsibility of managers today. Thus, managers have to make the right choice in selecting the type of earnings management. This discussion is important for helping the market, firm players and academics to draw a clear line between the double side of earnings management and its impact on

firms and shareholders' wealth. The firms' performance is the measurement tool to decide whether it is engaged in efficient or opportunistic earnings management.

## CONCLUSION

This review clearly explains the double side of earnings management, showing whether it is efficient or opportunistic. It adds further insight into earnings management as a business strategy. In addition, this review also elaborates on how earnings management is determined and the post effect of earnings management adds valuable information to business and academics players. The positive firm performance results reveal the engagement of efficient earnings management by the managers. The practice of opportunistic earnings management by managers results in negative firm performance results that possibly decreases the firms' value (short run or long run) and their shareholders' wealth. Essentially, earnings management is an action taken by managers to mislead shareholders; it is healthy for the firm and shareholders if the managers undertake efficient earnings management. Firms that adopt efficient earnings management as the contract or transaction to alter financial results posit minimal agency cost. Efficient earnings management clearly reflects on the aligned interest between managers and shareholders that ultimately strengthens the relationship between the two parties and the firm sustainably. Thus, it is important for managers with entrepreneur skills to profoundly nurture the needs of firms and

shareholders when engaging in earnings management practices. This study on the double side of earnings management avoids prejudgment on earnings management by business players and academics. The recognition of the double side of earnings management possibly can limit the number of managers who choose to engage in opportunistic earnings management as it depicts the disharmony in the position of managers and shareholders. Limited studies use real manipulation activities in earnings management studies besides the common accruals manipulation proxy. Thus, future research should investigate this area using real manipulation activity as the earnings management proxy to determine whether earnings management with real activity manipulation is efficient or opportunistic.

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## **Elements of Delivering Islamic Education through Islamic Morality in Several Malaysian Schools**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to explore the elements of delivering Islamic education through Islamic morality. Three candidates were chosen based on purposeful sampling. The qualitative case study was used and the methods were observation, semi-structured interview and document analysis. This research, which was based on theoretical study adapted from the writings of *Al-Ghazali's Ihya' Ulumuddin* (first edition), found that there were six elements of delivering Islamic education through Islamic morality, namely, feeling love and sympathy; being sincere; contributing advice; handling error correction wisely; becoming a great role model (*qudwah hasanah*); and teaching by steps. The research findings showed that the Islamic education teachers involved in this study had learnt the elements of delivering Islamic education through Islamic morality from various sources. In addition, the research found that every respondent had implemented these six elements in their classrooms during the teaching and learning process. Thus, it is hoped that these findings will contribute towards basic knowledge regarding the teaching and learning process in Islamic education, especially the implementation of the six elements during teaching and learning in Islamic education.

*Keywords:* Islamic morality, Islamic education, qualitative study case, teaching and learning

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Good behaviour, or good *akhlaq*, is an essential characteristic required in the life of a Muslim. Teachers, in addition to parents, are responsible for developing good *akhlaq* in children. The term *akhlaq* is the plural of *khuluq*. According to Ibnu Miskawayh (1398) *akhlaq* refers to the

action performed as a result of intuition, with no thinking behaviour involved that comes into existence through habit or through exercise and repetitive practice. Meanwhile, according to al-Ghazali (n. d.), *akhlaq* can be divided into good *akhlaq*, the behaviour of the prophets and other courteous people, and bad *akhlaq*, the behaviour of the impertinent (Abdul Rauf Yusof, 1991; Abdul Salam Yusof, 2010; Asmau Imam Abdul Kabir, 2013; Manan et al., 2013).

According to the literature, researchers believed that there is a pressing need to carry out this study because previous researchers have stumbled upon a significant deficiency in the teaching and learning process of Islamic education. In addition, Ab. Halim Tamuri and Zarin Ismail (2002) found that students' perception of the leadership of Islamic education teachers, in terms of exemplary personality, guidance and cultivating love, remained average. This finding does not support the finding of a study carried out by Noor Ruziana Ismail (2004), who discovered that interesting teaching approach employed by teachers led to high internalisation of lessons taught and helped students to comprehend lessons better and to further internalise what they had learnt. Approximately 84.6% of respondents concluded that the variety of techniques applied by Islamic education teachers made lessons more interesting and effective.

Furthermore, when Ab. Halim Tamuri et al. (2004) interviewed students pertaining to the teaching of Islamic education teachers, they identified that students did

not understand the content of lessons because the explanation provided by the teachers was imprecise, they were unable to correlate the lessons with their daily experience, the subject matter was tedious and made them sleepy and bored, and the teachers failed to show exemplary character while teaching. Moreover, according to Syed Najmuddin Syed Hassan et al. (2009), students' perception of teachers' professionalism as far as Islamic education was concerned was that the teachers were unable to use appropriate words when they taught, and they failed to draw both attention and emotion from the students. Therefore, Sarimah Mokhtar et al. (2011), in her research about students' perception of the internalisation of good *akhlaq*, suggested that teachers should improve their teaching techniques, become more aware about students' drawbacks and portray an ideal character for the students to role model.

On top of that, previous researchers on this topic believed that there was a need to conduct more study into the elements of delivering Islamic education with the aim of improving the existing teacher training courses especially since the teaching and learning process has been considered a yardstick for the progress and the achievement of the nation as a whole (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2002). They felt that there was a dire need for short- and long-term courses to be included in teacher training to develop professionalism among teachers, particularly the teachers of Islamic education. Hence, this qualitative research explored the elements of delivering



Islamic education through Islamic morality among teachers of Islamic education through the internalisation of noble character traits throughout the teaching and learning process. The sample was drawn from Form Four students.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research was carried out based on the writings of al-Ghazali (n. d.) in *Ihya' Ulumuddin* about the elements of delivering Islamic education through Islamic morality among teachers during the teaching and learning process. According to al-Ghazali, the soul of children can be moulded either to yield either good or bad; this depends on the way they are educated (al-Ghazali, n. d.). Parents and teachers have the opportunity to educate young souls to yield good through the finest education and upbringing. Teachers are suitable role models for children, and can help them survive in an ever challenging world.

According to al-Ghazali (n. d.) in the *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, a teacher must:

- a.) love and understand the feeling of her students, caring for them like her own children
- b.) be sincere to teach and bear in mind that teachers will be blessed by Allah SWT and that teaching is an act of submission to Allah SWT
- c.) always advise students using relevant and appropriate words
- d.) guide students to correct their mistakes wisely so that they will be able to understand and comprehend what they are learning
- e.) observe students' ability to perceive knowledge and teach them step by step because students possess different ability and come from different backgrounds
- f.) display her knowledge and understanding about Islamic values through speech, such as greeting students in the Islamic manner and with a smile upon entering the class, and through appropriate action, such as observing the Islamic code of dressing.

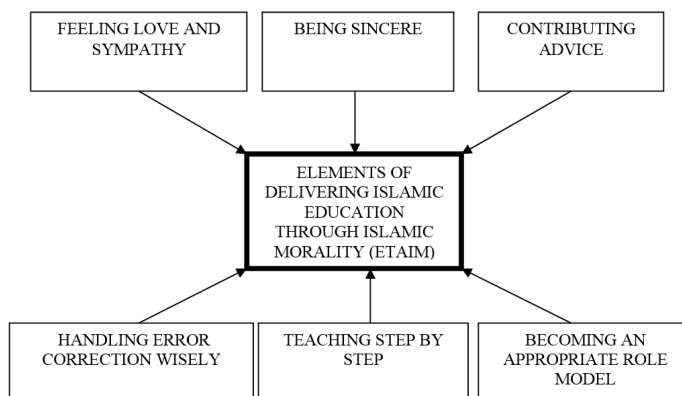


Figure 1. The theoretical framework showing the elements of delivering Islamic education through Islamic morality, drawn by al-Ghazali (n. d.) and adapted for this research.

The theoretical framework given as Figure 1 is based on al-Ghazali's writings.

### THE CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC MORALITY ACCORDING TO AL-GHAZALI

The element of being a teacher as outlined by al-Ghazali (n. d.) encompasses the character traits of showing love and sympathy. Al-Ghazali believed that the right of a teacher is greater than the right of parents because children gain more knowledge from teachers about eternal happiness than from their parents. Therefore, teachers need to cultivate love and sympathy towards students and treat them like their own children; this is mentioned by the Prophet *pbuh* himself when he said, "I am to you like a father to his son." al-Ghazali (n. d.) explained further that when the teacher has the intention to bring students closer to Allah SWT through teaching and learning, the teacher will be able to unite their hearts with compassion and love as a father towards his children.

The next element is sincerity; teachers should carry out the task of educating children for the purpose of serving Allah SWT and of getting closer to Him, and not merely for the sake of appraisal and reward. This is because the task of teaching is noble and respected. Teachers educate people to bind their hearts to Allah SWT; according to al-Ghazali (n. d.), while teachers are given remuneration, a salary or an income, these are not the main goals of teaching. Abdul Salam Yussof (2003) also added that teachers should emulate the achievement of Prophet Mohammad *pbuh* in the discharge of his duties and responsibilities as he was

the best role model for Muslims.

Humans are prone to making mistakes, especially when they are in the process of learning. Hence, al-Ghazali provided guidance for teachers to handle error correction with compassion, love and wisdom and not through violence or admonishing (al-Ghazali, n. D.). As Allah says in Surah al-Nahl (16:125):

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ  
وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن  
ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (١٢٥)

*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from his way, and He is most knowing of who is (rightly) guided.* (al-Nahl 16:125)

According to Mohd Yusof Ahmad (2002), this verse calls on people to enjoin good and avoid evil. The act of preaching must be conducted with wisdom and prudence and the preacher must observe manners and conduct appropriate to a preacher.

Next, al-Ghazali (n. d.) also suggested that teachers must always remind their students to stay focussed while on the journey of learning and they should not stray from the actual intention to learn. Learning should bring people closer to Allah SWT, and this intention should be always nurtured and developed so that the knowledge gained will blossom and be blessed by Allah SWT. al-Ghazali believed that the triumph of learning is not to be boasted about, nor

is it for the purpose of pursuing a higher position; it is merely to seek His pleasure (al-Ghazali, n. d.).

Teachers should teach their students in step by step, beginning with the student's level and proceeding to the next lesson only after the first has been completely understood (al-Ghazali, n. d.). This element is in line with guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education (MOE), which requires that teaching be conducted by level. Every student has a different level of reasoning ability, and teachers need to tailor each lesson according to students' reasoning ability. According to Atan Long (1980), teachers need to repeat lessons when teaching average students. Teachers should avoid showing feelings of anger and disappointment, either in action or speech.

The next element for teachers in Islamic education is becoming a great role model to the students (*qudwah hasanah*). al-Ghazali (n. d.) pointed out that a teacher should not be called *mursyid*, one who shows the right path, if she is unable to practise the knowledge they possess. Atan Long (1980) stated that civilised ways can be shown through good action and language. An attractive appearance coupled with a good voice is an added value for a teacher. Mohamad Shatar Shabran et.al. (2006) suggested that teachers should instil good behaviour throughout the teaching and learning process by employing correct behavior themselves such as greeting the class in the accepted Islamic manner upon entering the classroom and recapping what they have already taught.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This research employed the qualitative case study research design. Data were collected through observation, interview and document analysis (Yin, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The case study allows an investigation to retain holistic and meaningful characteristic of real-life teaching and learning (Yin, 1994). These methods were used to capture the elements of delivering Islamic education through Islamic morality for the purpose of teaching and learning the Islamic education curriculum among Form Four students. Furthermore, according to Merriam (1998) and Yin (1994), the qualitative case study research design is suitable for use when a study involves an individual or a unit, a programme event, group, community or a culture. This study involved the teachers and the teaching and learning in the classroom. Creswell (2008) has also stated that "for qualitative research, the problems need to be explored to obtain a deep understanding."

### Sample and Sampling

In this study, the selection of participants was based on purposeful sampling in order to gather 'rich' data (Creswell, 2008). Creswell (2008) clarified that "maximal variation sampling is a purposeful sampling strategy, in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristics or traits. This procedure requires the researcher to identify the characteristics, and then, find sites or

individuals that display different dimensions of those characteristics.” These participants were also selected based on the suggestion that in-depth qualitative research can be achieved through suitable and easily attained participants and research location (Creswell, 2008).

Therefore, the researcher selected three teachers from three different secondary schools, with the purpose of accumulating rich and in-depth information (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 2008). To ensure the **validity and reliability of the data**, the participants were limited to three Islamic education teachers (IET) who fulfilled the following criteria:

1. Experienced in teaching KBSM Islamic education for more than five years
2. Had the minimum qualification of a Bachelor’s degree in Islamic education or Islamic studies and a Diploma in Teaching
3. Participated voluntarily and agreed to be observed, interviewed and recorded
4. Was teaching Islamic education to Form Four students

### **Research Location**

The schools involved in this study consisted of a regular secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan*), a technical secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Teknik*) and a boarding school (*Sekolah Menengah Berasrama Penuh*). All three types of secondary school were located on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. Each of the Islamic education teachers taught in one

type of secondary school. The study was conducted in three classrooms that consisted of Form Four male and female students. There was no particular criteria in choosing the students except for the level of study, Form Four. The students were involved in this study as their teacher had preferred to be observed in their class.

According to Jorgensen (1989) and Creswell (2008), qualitative studies take a long time to conduct; therefore, the study provides more freedom to the researcher to make decisions on research location based on the research questions. The phenomenon also needs to be studied because there is no perfect or ideal location. They also argued that the study area depended on the problem statement. In this study, the researchers wanted to explore Islamic education being as it was being delivered through Islamic morality, so different schools were selected for wider information and variety.

### **Data Collection**

This study focussed only on the approach of Islamic morality practised by Islamic education teachers during Islamic education teaching and learning. Therefore, all methods of data collection were related to teaching and learning sessions inside the classroom. The data were collected through observation, interview and document analysis. These methods were used to document the practice of Islamic education teachers in applying ETAIM for the purpose of teaching and learning Islamic education curriculum among Form Four students.

The non-participant observations were

conducted five times for every teacher who was teaching two periods of 40-minute classroom sessions, which worked up to 80 minutes of classroom observation for every teacher. All the teachers were observed for a total of 6 hours and 30 minutes. The teachers were also interviewed. Formal interviews were completed before and after the observation, while informal interviews were carried out when the teachers were on their way to the classroom or during recess time. Semi-structured interviews took place with the purpose of answering the following questions:

1. What are the features of *akhlaq* applied by the teachers in the Form Four classroom based on ETAIM?
2. What are the sources of reference that the teacher chose to help her/him in implementing ETAIM in the Form Four class?

Finally, document analysis was done for data triangulation. The researcher reviewed documents from the Chairman of the Islamic Education Committee, Assistant Principal of Academic Affairs, teachers of Islamic education and the Form Four students involved in the study by perusing the Description of Curriculum, textbooks, teachers' lesson plans, notebooks, students' exercise books and circulars.

### Data Analysis

All sound recordings in this study were manually transcribed. Creswell (2008) asserted that "the organization of data is critical in qualitative research because of the

large amount of information gathered during a study." Therefore, all transcribed data were systematically arranged and categorised.

In qualitative research, coding is a systematic way to expand and refine the interpretation of data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). According to Othman Lebar (2005), "through the repeated readings and monitored of the transcription, researcher can identify as many data units that give meaning and then marked it with a specific code."

Although data filtering is done during data collection, a final review should be done. In the early stages screening involves selecting important points, while encoding takes place in the final process (Faredah Mahadi, 1998). Creswell (2008) stated that "the further process of analysing text (or image) in qualitative research begins when you code the data". Encoding is a process that seeks to divide and mark text in the form of elaboration and specifying themes. In this study data were coded based on the purposes of the study. Data that were encoded are presented below.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study answered two research questions.

*Research Question 1: What are the features of akhlaq applied by the teachers in the Form Four classroom based on ETAIM?*

The findings from the observations, interviews and document analysis revealed that all six elements of ETAIM, as outlined

by al- Ghazali, were practised by all the participants in this study. They showed love towards students by employing emotive words such as ‘*sayang*’ (dear) to illustrate affection. They always smiled and did not show negative emotions such as anger or frustration. All three teachers always said ‘Thank you’ whenever students obeyed their instructions, as when they read from their textbook in front of the class or when writing answers on the whiteboard. They praised students with positive comments such as ‘*Bagus!*’ (Excellent!) when students answered questions correctly. In addition, they kept the class cheerful by using humour throughout the teaching and learning process.

According to Sulaiman Md. Yassin et al. (2002) the Islamic education teachers need to resort to humour to keep the class engaged. Shaffe Mohd Daud et al. (2011) found that humor entertains students during teaching and learning and develops close interaction between the teacher and students. Moreover, Abdul Rasid Jamian and Hasmah Ismail (2013) found that some entertainment during study encourages the development of creative and innovative ideas.

Furthermore, sincerity was observed before teaching and learning took place when all the participants were seen to quicken their steps to get to class as soon as the bell rang or when they noticed that the next class was about to begin. In the classroom, they were seen to be committed to ensuring that the students understood the lesson. They were also fair in their treatment

of the students. Sincerity among teachers, according to Abdullah Ishak (1995), can be developed through religious practice, and gradually produces outstanding teachers.

As for advising students, the researchers found that all the participants always advised their students. They infused the element of giving advice in the teaching and learning process, as well as motivated the students to progress in their studies. Maimun Aqsa Lubis and Roslan Aspar (2005) found that the method of giving advice is an effective method in teaching and learning.

The teachers were also observed to wisely guide their students in correcting mistakes. In addition, the teachers also taught their students step by step, based on their level, proceeding to the next lesson only after the first was completely understood. For example, Islamic education teacher 1 (IET 1) would ask his students, “Okay, do you have questions? Do you understand?” On top of that, these teachers demonstrated knowledge of Islamic requirements in their dressing, behaviour and speech. All were smartly dressed in accordance with the Islamic dress code. The male teacher wore a shirt and slacks, while the female teachers wore *baju kurung*, long scarves that covered their chest and socks.

*Research Question 2: What are the sources of reference that the teacher chose to help him/her in implementing ETAIM Form Four class?*

Observation of the three Islamic education teachers during class showed that all three successfully conducted the

teaching and learning of Islamic education. They understood ETAIM based on the requirements of the national secondary school curriculum (KBSM) as outlined in the Islamic education curriculum. From the interviews, it was found that all the participants used the Description of Curriculum, textbooks and teacher's manual provided by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) as reference and guideline, as well as source of knowledge to conduct teaching and learning in the classroom.

However, the participants also used the *al-Quran*, *as-Sunnah*, *Ijma'*, the stories of Prophet Muhammad *pbuh* and other prophets and Islamic education books as references to implement ETAIM in the classroom. In fact, one participant had taken the extra step of enrolling in a course organised by the State Education Department (SED) entitled 'The Jibril Approach' to enhance personal professionalism. The course, which was on effective teaching, emphasised the Love approach in teaching as introduced by al-Ghazali in his *Ihya' Ulumuddin*. Unfortunately, this course has been discontinued.

## CONCLUSION

Observation, interview and document analysis found that all three Islamic education teachers had understood the implementation of ETAIM in the classroom as outlined in the KBSM Islamic Education curriculum, but they had limited understanding of the essence and values embedded in the Description of

the Curriculum (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2002). The teachers used the Description of Curriculum, textbooks and teacher's manual as their main source of reference to carry out the Islamic education as required by the Ministry of Education as well as other sources. They also used the *al-Quran*, the *as-Sunnah* of the Prophet, which outlines correct Islamic behaviour, and the principles of *ijma'* (agreeing upon or consensus) and *qias* (judgment of an act or belief by application of established principles governing some analogous act or belief) as important references to implement ETAIM. They also referred to the life stories of Prophet Muhammad *pbuh* and other prophets and books on educating children in their teaching. In short, all three participants practised ETAIM in the teaching and learning process and they consulted relevant sources for reference.

It is hoped that this study will encourage all Islamic education teachers to practise ETAIM in the classroom. The Islamic education national integrated curriculum (KBSM) does not only emphasise the cognitive aspect, but also instils affective values in order to produce an excellent generation for this world and the hereafter. When educators realise the importance of ETAIM, not only will they be able to produce students who respect authority, but also most importantly, students who adhere to the commands of Allah SWT, Prophet Muhammad *pbuh* and their parents.

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## **Socially Constructed Mechanism in EFL Writing: A Case Study of Scaffold Planning in a Remote Area**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Scaffolding is help provided by a teacher to a student to achieve a desired goal. It is viewed as an effective technique that enhances both collaborative skills and writing ability among EFL learners. The present study sought to explore the possible effects of two kinds of scaffolding, that is, teacher and student scaffolding, on EFL students' writing ability. To this end, 45 lower-intermediate and 15 upper-intermediate EFL participants from Gonabad, Iran were selected based on a Quick Placement Test (QPT). The participants formed two experimental groups (peer scaffolding, teacher scaffolding) and one control group. Participants in the experimental groups underwent scaffolding techniques, which required lower-intermediate EFL students to be assisted by more proficient EFL students in one experimental group while in the other experimental group, assistance was provided by the teacher. A series of *t*-tests was run, and the results indicated the effectiveness of the two kinds of treatment implemented in the two experimental groups. Also, no significant difference was found between the two experimental groups in the post-test regarding the effectiveness of teacher scaffolding and peer scaffolding. These findings provide pedagogical implications for employing scaffolding techniques in EFL contexts by both teachers and high-level students.

*Keywords:* Teacher scaffolding, student scaffolding, writing ability, lower-intermediate EFL learners, upper-intermediate EFL learners

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### **INTRODUCTION**

With the advent of computer-based technology and the development of virtual contexts, people can communicate with each other through writing. Mastery of writing skill appears to be of great significance

for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Chastain (1988) viewed writing as a fundamental communication skill and a unique asset in the second-language learning process. As argued by Zacharias (2007, cited in Rouhi & Samiei, 2010), writing in second-language learning (L2) is a big challenge for learners. Several attempts have been made to facilitate the writing quality of second-language learners and to raise their motivation to begin and complete writing tasks. EFL students need to be provided with assistance from EFL teachers, classmates who have a higher level of language proficiency as well as relevant books. Along the same lines, Ellis (1994) cited that the process of language learning, especially the productive aspect of language use, is not absolutely an individual-focussed process, but an interactive sociological construct.

#### **FRAMEWORK OF SCAFFOLDING**

Scaffolding is one type of assistance that learners can receive as they learn to write. Scaffolding is the process of providing assistance from person to person to enable an interlocutor to do something she or he might not have been able to do otherwise (Ohta, 2000). Ellis (1994) defined scaffolding in the field of second-language acquisition as the dialogic process by which one speaker assists another speaker in performing special functions that he or she cannot perform without the help of others. Referring to the original notion of scaffolding, which presupposes a relationship between an expert and a novice, some educators

(Donato, 1994; Swain, 2000) believed that this conceptualisation of scaffolding may not exceed the limits of teacher-orientated instruction (Khodamoradi, Iravani, & Jafarigohar, 2013). According to Al Hussain (2012), scaffolding is a teaching method through which the instructor models the desired learning technique or task, then gradually shifts responsibility towards learners.

As Lantolf (2000) has stated, scaffolding as a strategy stems from the socio-cultural theory that presumes that knowledge is internalised by learners when they learn through socialising with others. Therefore, it allows learners to build new knowledge from their experiences with others (Rafik-Galea & Nair, 2008).

#### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCAFFOLDING AND THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT (ZPD)**

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to ‘‘the distance between what children can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance’’ (Raymond, 2000, p.176). It is a level of development obtained when learners participate in a social activity. Vygotsky (1978) showed that the emphasis upon potential development among learners seems crucial in the learning process because it allows learners to transfer their knowledge to new contexts and develops critical thinking. This results in the development of new knowledge that sheds new light on the process of meaning making (Rafik-Galea & Nair, 2008).

According to Al Hussain (2012), scaffolding has direct links to the zone of proximal development (ZDP). It comes about through social interaction in the classroom and works through the process of learners helping others figure out language and concepts that may be above their proximity level of competence and proficiency. According to Bruner (1983), scaffolding is defined as “a process of setting up the situation to make the child’s entry easy as well as successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as skilled enough to manage it” (p. 60).

### THE PURPOSES OF SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding has some pedagogical purposes that support EFL learners in the following stages (Walqui, 2003, as cited in Al Hussain, 2012):

#### **Stage 1:**

The first stage comprises a planned curriculum over time that is implemented through a series of ritualistic tasks.

#### **Stage 2:**

The second stage incorporates the procedures employed in an activity that is set forth in stage 1.

#### **Stage 3:**

The third stage is the collaborative process of interacting, which is the actual achievement of stage 2.

Pearson (1985, as cited in Kim, 2010) viewed “gradual release of responsibility” as the key element of scaffolding in a

classroom context (p. 732). Effective teachers, according to Kim (2010), assist English language learners (ELLs) to attain ownership of their language learning. They arrange instructional goals, design instructional activities accordingly and involve ELLs meaningfully in the process of learning. Effective teachers employ classroom discourse strategies in everyday interactions with ELLs with their instructional goals in mind, and assist them to learn the content and develop disposition for language learning (Laura Roehler, personal communications, 1998, as cited in Kim, 2010). As ELLs’ proficiency in English language is improved, effective teachers change discourse strategies in a manner that mirrors their understanding of student’s achievement and promotes the students’ language and cognitive development (Kim, 2010). In pedagogical contexts, scaffolding refers to both dimensions of the construction site: the supportive structure (which is relatively stable, though easy to assemble and reassemble) and the collaborative construction work that is accomplished (Walqui, 2006).

Scaffolding, as argued by Walqui (2006), is helpful in providing academically challenging instruction for ELLs in secondary schools. Some practical strategies and tasks can be employed in order to provide accurate, deep, challenging and responsible education to students who must develop conceptually, academically and linguistically. ELLs engaged by their teachers in high-challenge academic tasks in English may initially complain. As they

realise, however, that their teachers also provide them with high levels of support, and become increasingly aware of their achievement and the instruments required for attaining it, they will become self-confident (Walqui, 2006).

### **SCAFFOLDING AND OUTPUT**

The concepts of ZPD and scaffolding are in line with Swain's output hypothesis (1995). She mentioned three functions of output: 1) producing output helps learners notice that there is something that they cannot say/produce precisely. 2) Learners use output to try out new language forms (hypothesis) and this hypothesis is contingent on feedback. 3) Metalinguistic or "reflective" function of output, which is often noticeable in peer or small group activities in classes, where "a student's talk about language crystallises ideas and makes inconsistencies clear" (Swain, 2005, p.479). Investigating social aspects of language learning in peer and small group activities via scaffold planning seems interesting. As a kind of action research that aims both to develop the quality of students' education and the professional growth of teachers through actually reflecting what happens in the classrooms, the present study sought to explore the effects of scaffolding on Iranian EFL students' writing ability.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To achieve the objectives of the present quasi-experimental study, the following research questions were posed:

1. Does the technique of peer scaffolding have any significant effect on Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability?
2. Does the technique of teacher scaffolding have any significant effect on Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability?
3. Is there any significant difference between the peer- and teacher-scaffolding techniques in improving Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability?

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

The research questions of the study were transformed into the following null hypotheses:

1. The peer-scaffolding technique does not have any significant effect on Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability.
2. The teacher-scaffolding technique does not have any significant effect on Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability.
3. There is no significant difference between the peer- and teacher-scaffolding technique in improving Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

According to the concept of scaffolding a knowledgeable participant can create, through speech, supportive conditions in

which the novice can take part, and extend current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). As stated by Wood et al. (1976), scaffolding assistance is characterised by the following six characteristics: recruiting interest in the task; simplifying the task; maintaining pursuit of the goal; marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution; controlling frustration during problem solving; and demonstrating an idealised version of the act to be performed.

Rafik-Galea and Nair (2008) scrutinised the types and characteristics of scaffolding strategies used by L2 teacher trainees of different proficiency levels. Three prominent types of scaffolding were identified in the analysis including code switching, retelling and questioning. Code switching was one form of positive scaffolding employed by the pairs to ensure comprehension was occurring. Retelling was used as a form of scaffolding help for low-proficiency pairs in their attempt to understand the story. Finally, questioning was one form of negative scaffolding recognised among the low-proficiency pairs. On the other hand, pairs from the high- and mixed-proficiency groups tried to use higher-order questioning as a form of scaffolding help (Rafik-Galea & Nair, 2008). Findings obtained by Rafik-Galea and Nair (2008) indicated that scaffolding strategies seemed to be advantageous for the learners to understand literary texts. It was found that peers of equal proficiency are also capable of helping each other understand

the texts. However, the types of scaffolding employed by these peers are different, based on their proficiency level. Also, it was found that scaffolding strategies helped learners restructure information in their own way so that they could make sense of the information. Through assistance from peers, learners gradually became independent problem solvers. Therefore, scaffolding involves learners becoming active in the process of building up shared knowledge and comprehension to improve their learning process (Rafik-Galea & Nair, 2008).

According to Bradley and Bradley (2004), there are three types of scaffolding identified as being particularly effective for second-language learners:

1. Simplifying the language: The language can be simplified by the teacher through shortening selections, speaking in the present tense and avoiding idioms.
2. Asking for completion, not generation: The teacher can have students select responses from a list or complete a partially finished outline or paragraph.
3. Using visuals: The teacher can present information and ask for students to respond through utilising graphic organisers, tables, charts, outlines and graphs.

Riazi and Rezaii (2011) found that both the teacher and the students were successful in using different scaffolding behaviours in order to help writers reach higher levels of independence even though such behaviours were not very different. Teachers generally

are more effective in terms of the type and frequency of scaffolding behaviours as well as in helping learners' writing improve. For students, the major issue was to keep the interactions and solve the immediate problem of student writers. It seems that peer scaffolding should be practised when peers encounter difficulties in problem-solving situations given their lack of knowledge and defective skills (Riazi & Rezaii, 2011).

Ahangari et al. (2014) studied the impact of scaffolding on content retention of Iranian post-elementary EFL learners' summary writing. They concluded that the students who received scaffolding performed better than the learners in the control group in their writing as they remembered more details from the story. According to Ahangari et al. (2014), scaffolding writing provides instructors with means of assessing learners' learning of literacy skills and helps students with lower proficiency in writing to develop their language skills. Scaffolding writing allows a shift in students' language development to ZPD when the lower level is calculated by the learners' isolated learning.

The results of a study conducted by Veerappan et al. (2011), which investigated the effect of the scaffolding technique in journal writing among second-language learners, indicated that the scaffolding technique used in the classroom helped students improve solutions to problems other participants encountered by further developing their effectiveness in journal writing. The impact of teacher, class and peer scaffolding on the writing development of EFL learners was studied by Amerian,

Ahmadian and Mehri (2014), who concluded that using scaffolding strategies did not improve their participants' performance in the experimental group in comparison to the performance of the control group, who performed their tasks individually.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

The participants of the present study were 60 Iranian EFL students who came from a language institution in Gonabad, Iran. Both upper- and lower-intermediate EFL students were selected based on a Quick Placement Test developed by Oxford University Press and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (2001). Fifteen upper-intermediate and 15 lower-intermediate EFL learners formed the first experimental group, which was the peer-scaffolding group. Another 15 lower-intermediate EFL learners who received teacher-scaffolding formed the second experimental group. Finally, 15 lower-intermediate EFL students without any scaffolding formed the control group. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 27. None of them had the experience of living or studying in an English-speaking country. Due to gender segregation rules in Gonabad language institutes, only males took part in the study.

### **Research Instruments**

**Oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT).** To ensure homogeneity among the participants, a Quick Placement Test developed by



Oxford University Press and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (60 multiple-choice items consisting of grammar and vocabulary questions and a cloze test), adapted from Geranpayeh (2003), was administered to the study population of 110 EFL learners. The test was marked out of 60 using a simple overlay that is summarised in Table 1.

Participants who scored 30-39 out of 60 (lower intermediate) as shown in Table 1 were selected (N=45) and randomly assigned to three groups. In addition, 15 higher-intermediate students (scoring 40-47 out of 60) were also selected to help a group of their lower-intermediate counterparts.

**Pre-test.** In order to assess the participants' writing ability at the start of the study, a writing-based pre-test was administered to the lower-intermediate EFL students in the three groups. They were to write a description about their families within 30 minutes. The rating scale and the writing assessment criteria were employed to assess their writing. A rating scale adopted from Jahin and Idrees (2012) was used by the researcher to assess

the participants' performances in the six categories including mechanics, content, organisation, vocabulary, grammar and cohesion. Also, a four-point scale (1, 2, 3 & 4) was used by the researcher for each of the six categories. To obtain reliable scores, like the pre-test, three trained experienced EFL experts in Gonabad language institutes rated the participants' writing tasks. The authors, by analysing the data, concluded that three raters were fairly consistent in their overall ratings (Cronbach's Alpha, which is a common measure of inter-rater reliability was used; the correlation was 0.78 with a significance level of 0.05).

**Post-test.** Finally, at the end of the course, the lower-intermediate EFL students sat a post-test. The topic selected for the post-test was 'Description of your summer holiday;'. They were asked to write their descriptions in 30 minutes. The aforementioned rating scale (Jahin & Idrees, 2012) was employed by the researcher to measure the students' written work. Also, three trained experienced EFL experts in Gonabad language institutes scored the participants' writing tasks. These three

Table 1  
*Look-Up Table for Computer-based and Paper and Pen Scores*

Alte level	Paper and pen test Score		Council of Europe Level
	Part 1 score out of 40	Part 1 & 2 score out of 60	
0 Beginner	0-15	0-17	A1
1 Elementary	16-23	18-29	A2
2 Lower intermediate	24-30	30-39	B1
3 Upper intermediate	31-40	40-47	B2
4 Advanced		48-54	C1
5 Very advanced		54-60	C2

experts were the same teachers who had rated the pre-test scripts.

## PROCEDURE

After the selection of the participants of the study (lower-intermediate and upper-intermediate EFL learners), a pre-test was administered to the participants. This was to ensure the homogeneity of the lower-intermediate and high-intermediate participants. Then, the participants in both experimental groups underwent a treatment (teacher scaffolding and peer scaffolding) in a course comprising 12 sessions of teaching EFL writing. First, the participants in the three groups were instructed on the strategies and techniques used in descriptive writing. Throughout the course, the participants in the teacher-scaffolding group received their teacher's assistance while writing their descriptions. Teacher assistance in this class took two different forms: individual assistance and support given to the class. In the first kind of assistance, the teacher assisted every individual student when they were faced with problems of various kinds while writing. In the second form of assistance, the teacher provided the class with some key words to use in their descriptive writings, and sometimes, a simple structure was proposed to them to use in their writing.

Participants of the peer-scaffolding group (15 lower- and 15 upper-intermediate EFL students) were divided into 15 dyads in which one upper-intermediate EFL student was responsible for providing a lower-intermediate one with assistance required

for writing. This kind of treatment was more like cooperative and collaborative work in which every pair of students was engaged in the process of writing.

Participants in the control group did not receive any kind of scaffolding. At every session, they were given a topic to write. Their written products were assessed and their errors were explicitly corrected by the teacher. Some comments and additional information were also added to their written texts by the teacher. Finally, the participants sat the post-test to determine if the treatments were effective and to compare the effects of the two treatments (teacher vs. peer scaffolding vs. control).

## RESULTS

The data elicited from the participants of the study was analysed using SPSS (19.0) to address the research questions.

### Pre-test

To assess the lower-intermediate EFL students' performance at the outset of the study, a one-way ANOVA test was employed. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2  
*Results of Homogeneity of Variances*

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.654	2	42	0.082

To ensure the homogeneity of the three groups with respect to writing ability, the following procedure was used. As Table 2 shows, the p-value was more than 0.05 (sig=0.082), which means that the null

hypothesis, that is, that the peer-scaffolding technique does not have any significant effect on Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability, is accepted.

As Table 3 shows, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F=0.204$ ,  $\text{sig} = 0.816 > 0.05$ ) among the three groups with respect to writing ability at the time of the pre-test.

### Post-test

To test the first null hypothesis, an independent sample *t*-test was employed. Table 4 shows the results.

As Table 4 shows, the participants of the experimental group (peer scaffolding) ( $N=15$ ,  $M=68.93$ ,  $SD=10.46$ ) significantly ( $df=28$ ,  $t= 2.44$ ,  $p=0.021<.0$ ) outperformed those in the control group ( $N=15$ ,  $M=61.00$ ,  $SD=6.94$ ). Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected. It can be concluded that scaffolding provided by upper-intermediate EFL students for lower-intermediate ones was an effective technique in EFL writing classrooms. The finding supports Riazi

and Rezaii's claim (2011), indicating peer scaffolding is an effective way to help writers reach higher levels of independence. According to Riazi and Rezaii, (2011) peer scaffolding should be used when peers encounter difficulties in problem-solving situations given their lack of knowledge and defective skills. However, it should be mentioned that the effect size is 0.418, which is  $0.2 < 0.418 < 0.5$ . Thus, it has only a moderate effect.

To test the second null hypothesis that teacher scaffolding technique does not have any significant effect on Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability, an independent sample *t*-test was used (Table 5).

As Table 5 displays, there was a statistically significant difference ( $df=28$ ,  $t=2.39$ ,  $p=.024<.05$ ) between the control ( $N=15$ ,  $M=61.00$ ,  $SD=6.94$ ) and teacher-scaffolding ( $N=15$ ,  $M=68.60$ ,  $SD=10.13$ ) groups. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was rejected. It can be concluded that the assistance provided by the EFL teacher had

Table 3  
*Results of One-Way ANOVA for Pre-test*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	36.044	2	18.022	.204	.816
Within Groups	3708.933	42	88.308		
Total	3744.978	44			

Table 4  
*Results of Independent Sample t-test for Post-Test Between Peer Scaffolding and Control Groups*

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Control	15	61.00	6.94	28	2.44	0.021
Peer scaffolding	15	68.93	10.46			
R= 0.418						

a significant effect on improving lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability. Based on what is observed in Table 5, it can be concluded that the assistance provided by the EFL teacher also had a moderate effect on improving lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability ( $0.2 < 0.411 < 0.5$ ). The finding was in agreement with what Ahangari et al. (2014) found in their study. Ahangari et al. (2014) concluded that an experimental group provided with constant help from the teacher at the beginning that was gradually removed along the course performed better in their writing than those in a control group.

Concerning the third null hypothesis, which claimed that there was no significant difference between the peer- and teacher-scaffolding techniques in improving Iranian lower-intermediate EFL students' writing ability, another independent sample t-test was employed (Table 6).

According to Table 6, there was no statistically significant difference ( $df=28$ ,  $t=0.089$ ,  $p=0.93 > 0.05$ ) between the peer-

scaffolding ( $N=15$ ,  $M=68.93$ ,  $SD=10.46$ ) and teacher-scaffolding ( $N=15$ ,  $M=68.60$ ,  $SD=10.13$ ) groups, supporting the third null hypothesis  $0 < 0.033 < 0.2$ . The finding is in agreement with the study of Khodamoradi et al. (2013), which indicated that high achievers and the teacher provide equal contribution to low achievers' acquisition of the subskill of grammar, in particular, and writing, in general.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study was carried out to explore the effect of two kinds of scaffolding, teacher scaffolding and peer scaffolding, on improving writing ability among lower-intermediate EFL learners. Three research questions were posed and investigated in the study. The data obtained in the study confirmed the effectiveness of these types of scaffolding in improving lower-intermediate EFL learners' writing ability. Also, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the two experimental groups in

Table 5  
*Results of Independent Sample t-test for Post-Test Between Teacher Scaffolding and Control Groups*

Group	N	M	SD	df	T	P
Control	15	61.00	6.94	28	2.39	0.024
Teacher scaffolding	15	68.60	10.13			

R=0.411

Table 6  
*Results of Independent Samples t-test for Post-Test Between Teacher- and Peer-Scaffolding Groups*

Group	N	M	SD	df	T	P
Peer scaffolding	15	68.93	10.46	28	0.089	0.93
Teacher scaffolding	15	68.60	10.13			

R= 0.033

terms of the effectiveness of scaffolding in writing improvement. Participants in the two experimental groups who received the assistance from the teacher and their higher-level counterparts were allowed to learn in pairs. They could collaborate in discussions with highly proficient sources to improve their writing ability during the study. Moreover, they were provided with feedback from the source.

Regarding heterogeneous dyadic collaboration, the present findings are in partial agreement with those of Pishghadam and Ghadiri (2011), indicating that better results can be achieved if unequal partners instead of equal partners are paired up. In this study, only heterogeneous pairs (upper-intermediate and lower-intermediate ones) were included. Also, providing assistance from higher proficiency students to lower-level ones can enhance EFL students' collaborative skills that appear to be essential in developing their responsibility in social contexts. The present findings offer pedagogical implications for utilising scaffolding as an effective technique in order to enhance EFL learners' writing ability. The results obtained from Schwieter's study (2010) supports a notion that scaffolding writing techniques within the ZPD improves second-language writing skills. The finding is in disagreement with Amerian et al. (2014), who indicated that the control group outperformed the experimental group practising the techniques of teacher, class and peer scaffolding in three consecutive sessions, respectively.

EFL teachers can implement the scaffolding technique in order to enhance their students' cooperation in peer scaffolding as well as to facilitate their learning by providing them with appropriate assistance. Moreover, higher-level students can provide their lower-level counterparts with assistance using methods that are less challenging for them. Sharing their learning experiences with lower-level students, higher-level students can enhance the process of learning.

Since limitations in the study have raised doubts to the external validity of the findings, further research with a qualitative-orientated approach to enhance the quality of the study is strongly suggested. Nevertheless, probing various techniques and alternatives to illuminate how profound language teaching and learning takes place even in an experimental perspective seems necessary.

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## **Fostering Learner Autonomy through Language Labs to Students of Engineering: Potentials and Parameters – A Study with Special Reference to the Indian Context**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of learning English in India in recent decades has entered a different phase, with a shift in focus from enrichment to survival in the real-world environment. This paper aims at discussing the existing practices of using technology in the curriculum for learners who learn English as a Second Language (ESL) at university level. It also focusses on the future prospects of effective integration of technology into the regular curriculum for learning English, especially in the Indian context. It further strengthens the idea that a comprehensive and structural curriculum using innovative teaching methodologies will certainly cultivate and augment the learners' talents for their future career. Though technology has rich and advanced resources, the paper confines itself to the use of cost-effective and frequently-used Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools, especially computers, which offer maximum benefits to learners.

*Keywords:* Technology tools, language lab, learner autonomy, blended learning

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is a key component for communication. The general aspect of learning a language denotes a quantitative increase of knowledge by constant practice whereas in the educational scenario, it accounts not only for a continuum from

content-based approach to real life situations but also for more prospects beyond the curriculum. Today, there is a marked difference in learning a language. Currently, language learning demands a good knowledge of grammar concepts, communicative aspects and social interaction in general and vocabulary for various disciplines in particular. It is also viewed as a gateway for cultural exchange and better understanding of people. For instance, English is the first choice for innumerable

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learners in India who learn English as a second language because of its vital role in educational, administrative and socio-cultural contexts. As language learning has assumed this new role in today's world, it is essential for learners to know the purpose and utility of their learning before moving to methodologies and applications.

### Stages of Language Acquisition

The intention of learning or mastering a language today seems to be mostly needs-based. This can be expressed in four stages as shown in Figure 1.

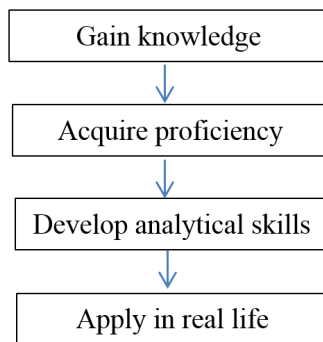


Figure 1. Stages of language acquisition.

The above stages imply that learners gradually need to take control of learning, according to their needs before finally accomplishing the desired target. It is also apparent that all language learners do not have a common methodology to achieve their goal; each is focussed on improving communication skills and experiential learning. They have different targets, views and strategies for accomplishing this, as revealed in a survey done in colleges and universities in and around Tamil Nadu. As

Haddad and Draxler (2002) have discussed, the education model has evolved from education for the few to education for many; from education for limited objectives to education for expanded objectives; from the environment as the classroom to the classroom as the learning environment; from elitist endeavours to national education systems. So the important element required in learning a language is a learner-centred approach, that is, a friendly, stress-free learning environment where learners can focus on developing the required skill and apply the same in real-life situations.

### The Purpose

The nature of language and language learning, according to research, has constantly been controversial. From its very early stages to the 21st century, learning theories have reshaped and evolved according to the needs of learners. Therefore, one cannot label any one theory as the most appropriate for learning a language. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four essential skills for learning a language. Conventional teachers often focus more on reading and writing so that learners can clear their exams and get a degree or certificate whereas the time spent on speaking and listening is much less, with teachers attributing this to lack of time. But John Haycraft, a fervent internationalist who strove to promote international understanding through language learning and teacher training says, "To be able to use the language to convey thoughts, intentions, wishes, information etc., a person needs a

mastery of various skills of language.” This indicates that a person who wants to learn a language has to be good in both receptive and productive skills. Conventionally, when teachers teach any new language, they either explain the meaning or translate the text into the regional language. This methodology helps the learner in comprehending the text but in reality, he/she is incapable of distancing themselves from his/her mother tongue for long enough to pick up the new language. The situation is worse when it comes to productive skills, that is, speaking and writing. The same scenario prevails when it comes to learning English in the Indian context.

### **Issues Related to Learning English as a Second Language**

India has occupied a leading position in the arena of technical education for a couple of decades. It is today one of the largest producers of professionals in the technical field and it is predicted that this status will continue. In spite of this achievement, India is not able to meet the demands of the recruiters because of the lacuna in the national curriculum for English. Kappan, in his “English for Techies” in *The Hindu*, dated 17 September 2007, pointed to the fact that despite there being engineering graduates in the thousands, hiring firms were finding it difficult getting the right people with theoretical expertise, practical orientation, soft skills and language proficiency. This challenge continues to exist in spite of various changes observed in the curriculum. Surveys done

by various organisations have proved that such a pathetic situation still exists in India. The Industry Readiness Index (IRIX) Survey conducted in 2012 by PurpleLeap revealed that one third of the graduates, apart from those from reputed universities/colleges were not employable even after special training. It further reported that the majority of students lacked communication skills and problem-solving abilities. As Bagchi (2002) has pointed out, proficiency in English has never been a criterion for admission to engineering programmes in India. TeamLease, a private staffing company, in its report for the year 2012 stated that unemployability was a bigger issue than unemployment.

### **The Existing Scenario**

At present, the role and status of English in India is that it is not just the language of social context, education, media and business but also a crucial element for higher education and well-paid jobs in India and abroad. The ubiquitous presence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools has increased the significance and growth of English in India. However, the majority of learners are not proficient in using the language. Mallikarjun (2001) conducted a survey on the specific requirements and demands of Indians with regards to educational issues in the country. According to his survey, parents from the upper and middle class wanted their children to get the best education and they believed that it was possible only through English as the medium of instruction. The

lower classes tried to emulate this policy, which led to the establishment of umpteen private English-medium schools. Schools patronised by the elite group give utmost importance to English whereas schools in rural areas cannot compete with them as their students are not from affluent sections of the society and most of them are first-generation learners; hence, the use of the mother tongue in the classroom has gained dominance. Moreover, the examination system focusses only on testing memory and so, analytical and creative skills go untapped. This prevents learners from attaining a high level of proficiency because they are unable to use the target language appropriately in the context of the target culture. When these students enter university for undergraduate courses, they have to compete with others who are from metropolitan cities and who have had good exposure to the language. The heterogeneous group, time constraint, examination system and the prescribed syllabus prevent teachers from giving special care to students lacking in communication skills. Students who are not proficient in the use of English do not get offers from good companies. The traditional classrooms to some extent satisfy the need for enhancing language skills but that alone will not suffice the existing demand; hence, the use of technology seems to be the only solution at this juncture.

### **The Global Demand**

Evidence from educators, recruiters and multinational companies indicates that there is a wide gap between the needs

of the employers and the skills acquired by Indian engineers. The global world demands every engineer to master multiple skills, communicate effectively and think creatively. Blair and Robinson (1995) have expressed the necessity for engineers to acquire basic transferable skills. As pointed out by Fisher et al. (2003), many engineering companies regard communication skills as central to success and advancement in engineering firms. Huckin and Olsen (1991) have stated that engineers need to have good academic knowledge as well as excellent communication skills. Gregor (2000) has put forth the idea that universities should directly meet the needs of the industry and produce engineering graduates who are competent practitioners with both technical and commercial skills. Riemer (2002) has expressed a similar view on the aspects to be focussed on English for engineers. He claimed that technical expertise and good communication skills should go hand in hand for an engineer. Najar (2002) added technical writing skills and oral presentation skills for success in their academic and professional career. If technical people cannot communicate to others what they do and why it is done, then it is superfluous to have such abundant skills.

### **Instructionism to Constructivism**

The global shift in education demands a move from instructionism (confine learners to prescribed texts with course materials as disconnected bits of knowledge) to constructivism (actively construct their knowledge by learning to learn). Zimring

(1999) has discussed in his 'Principles of Learning' that useful learning needs to be learning-to-learn and much significant learning is acquired through doing. This aspect of learning is emphasised in the Confucian principles of teaching: What I hear I forget, What I see I remember, What I do I know. Hence, it is necessary to shift the focus from acquiring knowledge to achieving things by using the knowledge. Brendan (1980) has put forth a similar view that the use of language is the objective and usage of the language is the means to achieve this objective. Morrison (2003) has also expressed a similar view that teaching and learning should be shifted from the push model to the pull model. The push model aims at imparting knowledge through the chalk-and-talk method, irrespective of the level of students, whereas in the pull model, students have access to gaining knowledge not only from the classroom but also from various other sources, including the Internet. Malavika and Swayamprabha (2014) have recommended that all students should be provided with the opportunity and a learning ambience for sufficient exposure to the language.

### **Use of ICT Tools**

Technology has been used in a myriad of ways to create opportunities for language learners to communicate in the target language (Muyskens, 1998; Warschauer & Kern, 2000). Foulger and Jimenez-Silva (2007) have proved in their study that technology increased motivation among English-language learners. Technological

tools can be used to motivate and engage learners in the development of literacy and language skills (Ware, 2008; Traore & Blankson, 2011). Computer technologies provide more venues for all students to be equally and actively engaged in language-learning activities (Erben et al., 2009). Softa (2011) has also acknowledged that technology can be used as motivation for language learning. Bremner (2010) and Arnó-Macià (2012) have expressed that if learning activities resemble the students' real-life situation, they would be motivated to learn, and the learning would also be more relevant. Visual scaffolding, according to Patnoudes (2012) makes input much more understandable and eliminates the affective filter that results from the fear of understanding very little in class.

In spite of various research carried out in this field, the use of ICT tools in the educational field in India is not very remarkable. Apart from the cost involved, it is believed that the attitude of teachers in India to integrating technology into the curriculum is not encouraging. Their unwillingness to change to a new set-up (Ertmer et al., 1999) or their reluctance to leave their comfort zone (Titterington, 2000) may be one of the barriers in the proliferation of the use of ICT tools in education. When discussing the limitation in implementing an audio-visual based educational system, Jyothirmayee et al. (2014) have opined that teachers feel it as an undue psychological burden because it may require more preparation time.

Haddad and Jurich (2002) have discussed the use of technology in education, the existing trends and the possible ways to overcome the identified barriers such as access to technology, acceptance and availability. As far as India is concerned, access to technology and affordability are the major threats hindering the pace of technology-enhanced learning.

### **Technology in Language Learning – An Overview**

Today, the word 'technology' is equated to computers and the Internet but researchers have identified six major waves in technological innovation. They are:

1. Writing – A documentation of anytime use
2. Printing – Mechanised writing, for synchronous and asynchronous learning
3. Broadcast media – Film, radio, television and satellite transmission
4. Mass media storage – Audio cassette, video tapes and compact discs
5. Personal computers – For high level interactivity
6. Internet – An international computer network, a web-based learning revolution

Warschauer and Meskill (2000) have given a vivid account of the use of technology in language learning. Any method of language teaching has specific technologies to support it. Language teachers who once used the grammar-translation method depended on one of the

most common technologies, the blackboard, which was and still is a perfect vehicle for the teacher-centred classroom. The blackboard was later supplemented by the overhead projector, another excellent medium for the teacher-dominated classroom, followed by early computer software programmes that were labelled 'drill-and-practice'. The audiolingual method that emphasised learning through repetition was supported by audio tapes; it lost its popularity because of the poor results despite expensive installation charges. The communicative language teaching method that helped student engagement in authentic situations paved the way for integrating technology into the curriculum.

The use of each technology falls over a varied scale, ranging from the simplest to the most sophisticated. Hence, it is necessary to identify the most suitable and cost-effective technology that suits different educational objectives. In the Indian context, term examinations play a vital role in assessing the student's proficiency; hence, reading and writing skills from prescribed books are given utmost importance. The activities performed during class hours and the tasks assigned to learners focus only on this aspect, leaving very little option for creativity or enthusiasm to use the language. This will never give the desired output because resorting to insufficient curriculum-related content ware, according to Haddad and Draxler (2002), is like buying a CD player for a home that has no CDs. They strongly believed that technology has the full potential to meet the challenges of the

21st century but if educational strategies are not specific, and if the requirement for using technology is not fulfilled, this potential will not be realised.

In Western universities technology is ubiquitous whereas in a developing country like India, it is neither pervasive nor scarce. There are many private institutions that offer graduate courses and they do use advanced technology tools in classrooms, making a huge financial investment for infrastructure, equipment and support staff. In spite of the widespread growth of technology in education, it is essential to observe how effectively it is being used to improve the learning experiences of students (Cuban, 2001; Zemsky & Massy, 2004; Kirkwood & Price, 2005; Guri-Rosenblit, 2009). The technology used might be the same but depending on the environment, the teacher, the instructional methods and the evaluation process, the learning outcomes may differ. Many private colleges in India have language laboratories with basic infrastructure. Wilson and Thayalan (2007) have identified such labs as conventional labs that have a tape recorder and a few audio cassettes of the target language to teach the learners. This set-up was followed by the linguaphone laboratory, where listeners were provided with a headset to listen to the audio cassettes being played. However, what is more frequently adopted is the use of technology to repeat or supplement traditional activities (Roberts, 2003; Blin & Munro, 2008). Hampel and Hauck (2006) stressed that technology tools should not be used as replicas or replication of conventional face-to-face settings.

Due to globalisation the situation in India has gradually changed and many institutions now have language labs with computers and purchased software. Despite the government spending an exorbitant amount in equipping educational institutions with appropriate infrastructure, utilisation of this infrastructure is not satisfactory. As Nunan (2005) has pointed out, many teachers are not sure of what technology is because they do not have technological literacy. Rivers (1970) in her book 'Teaching Foreign Language Skills' has made it clear that the language laboratory is neither a method nor a teacher but it must be an integral part of the language programme. Pim (2013) has rightly pointed out that teachers have a unique opportunity to ensure their curricula and teaching styles meet the needs of their 21st-century learners. However, Schwartz and Pollishuke (2013) felt that all the resources that technology offers should be used in the best and safest way and this should be one of the main concerns of teachers and parents. Egbert (2005) states that teachers must use different methods and create a whole new learning environment so that learners gain access to the curriculum within the stipulated time frame.

Technology also provides learners with powerful tools that have the potential to contribute to different facets of educational development, namely, expanding access and life-long learning. It is also true that the new modes of communication technology dominate everyday life in all aspects, and communication has shifted from print to phone and now to screen. Though it

proves to be a genuine medium of language learning, there are certain practical problems in using technology in the curriculum, especially in India. Technology promotes ample opportunities for collaboration and interaction but it is not automatic. Students and teachers have to be appropriately trained to use technology tools so that they attain maximum benefit.

Moving on from the challenges to the technical side and attitudes of teachers in using technology, this paper proceeds to discussing existing conditions and the crucial changes that need to be made in the education system.

#### **Access to Technology and Affordability**

Access to Technology Enhanced Language Learning encompasses the installation of the required infrastructure and the time schedules for different classes so that they get maximum benefit. In India, many educational institutions have only recently established lab facilities with the required software. The disadvantage is that technology-enhanced learning is considered an add-on and not an essential method for promoting learner autonomy. The key issues relating to how best ESL teachers can integrate Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) materials into the curriculum need to be clearly outlined and analysed. This could be achieved only if ICT tools are properly implemented and the materials are pedagogically sound and proper technical support is available.

The second major threat that needs to be focussed on is affordability, which

deals with the setting up of a language lab with computers and required accessories, trained teachers for handling the classes and a lab technician to deal with hardware problems. The maintenance and installation of language software involve quite a huge amount of money and institutions need to be self-supportive for meeting expenses and updating information. With unprecedented growth in the digital industry, technicians are rare in academic institutions because they cannot compete with the software industry at their salary.

When technology is integrated into the curriculum, it can be three-fold:

1. Purely online
2. Partially online, with the use of technology tools as an add-on
3. Partially online, with the use of technology tools as mandatory

The first perspective of having fully online courses for ESL is not possible in India, at least for now because the use of technology has not advanced much as it has in Western countries and affordability is also a main constraint in the initial stages. The second perspective of using technology as an add-on is not adopted in many of the institutions in India and there are many drawbacks to doing so. Haddad and Draxler (2002) have listed out the following parameters:

- If teaching is demonstrating and telling and if learning is memorising and reciting, using learning technologies and multimedia programmes for this purpose will not have the desired impact



- Technology is just a tool; it cannot bring any magnificent change on its own
- 'Putting on screen what can be found on the page of a book' will not in any way enhance the learning skill
- Identifying the most appropriate, cost-effective and sustainable technology and level of application for different educational objectives adopted
- Updating of computers is very essential, which is not possible with limited financial resources
- Non-availability of sufficient related curriculum for the use of technology

The above-mentioned parameters nearly encompass much of the research done on this perspective. Similar opinions have been expressed that computers or any technology tool should not be used as a time filler. The third perspective, that is, making the use of technology tools mandatory is somewhat feasible and it can be done in many of the institutions, provided the teachers prepare appropriate modules for practical sessions. This actually obstructs the process because in developing countries like India, not many institutions prefer to purchase software, which is quite expensive. Moreover, the teachers hesitate to design and develop modules because of the time constraint and lack of technical knowledge.

In order to have authentic information, questionnaires were prepared and sent to engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu. Based on the information received from the questionnaires sent to experienced teachers

and undergraduate learners, it was found that technology-supplemented learning was best preferred, both by teachers and students. Though this seemed to be the best option for bringing effective change to the Indian education system at tertiary level, it has certain limitations. It is not possible for all the institutions to go for Internet connection and the language lab because the management of the institutions should first be willing to make a huge investment. As the feedback from the questionnaires clearly states that technology-supplemented learning was the choice of the learners and the teachers, this paper aims at providing the utmost use of prescribed curriculum for engineering students with the minimum use of technology and making it feasible for the majority of the institutions in India. It also attempts to strengthen the fact that blended learning, a combination of face-to-face learning and the use of technology, would be the best option for language learners in India. Moreover, it is to be noticed that there is a serious gap in the teaching-learning process adopted in Indian schools and colleges. In spite of having a very good syllabus focussing on all four skills, it is not possible for the learners to develop their communicative competence because of the restricted schedule and rote learning. In vernacular medium schools, English is taught as a subject like Maths, without giving any exposure to using the language. Consequently, students are unable to express their ideas in English and comprehending lectures also becomes a problem. Hence, it is mandatory to make

students feel comfortable and to create a conducive atmosphere for the teaching learning process to happen. The language lab serves as a panacea at this stage. When classroom lectures go together with regular lab hours, it certainly brings a change in the attitude of learning English. The students in the engineering colleges learn English only in their first year; hence, it is not feasible for the teachers to use advanced technology in the initial stage because some of the students would not have had access to technology at their school level and it is not possible for all the colleges to have advanced technology. It is moreover necessary to segregate the positive and negative aspects based on its contextualised use (Smith et al., 2003). The factors to be discussed are as follows:

1. Are computers used as add-on or as effective tools for language learning?
2. Is technology used in the curriculum for enrichment or is it made credit-based?
3. The role of teachers in the above scenario.

The majority of the teachers in India at the tertiary level are either reluctant or hesitant to integrate technology into the curriculum for varied reasons. They have the fear that preparing different syllabi catering to the needs of the learners may be time consuming and that technology might sideline the potential of a teacher. This attitude has to change and teachers have to realise that the use of technology tools is not an intruding factor but an inevitable element for enriching and widening the scope of language learning. However, the situation

is gradually improving and the teachers have started analysing the matter from every perspective – the learners, the recruiters and the available technology.

Dockstader (1999) has articulated that technology and instruction should work together to make a programme successful because technology cannot work in isolation; moving from isolated skills instruction to an integrated approach is an important step that takes a great deal of planning and effort. Warschauer and Meskill (2000) have also stressed the fact that technology should not be used as an added tool for enhancing learning but it has to be utilised towards the goal of achieving learner autonomy and lifelong learning. The effective integration of technology is achieved when students are able to select technology tools to help them obtain information in a timely manner, analyse and synthesise the information and present it professionally (Edutopia, 2014).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was done with a diverse group of students from engineering streams in VIT University, India. Though this university is situated in Tamil Nadu, it admits students from all over India based on their performance in the entrance tests. There is still a difference in the level of students and this is identified through administering a proficiency test in English. Universities in India do not have English as a paper for the engineering entrance examination. Students may have good subject knowledge but their language is poor. The economic background also varies; hence, at the entry level, it is

not certain whether all the students have had access to computers earlier. Taking the above aspects into consideration, the use of technology was confined to the use of the language lab, computers and purchased software. The other technology tools were not included in this study because the author wanted to prove the fact that minimal use of technology can bring in maximum benefits to learners of English as a second language. The lab classes actually gave them the space they wanted in correcting their mistakes and they could explore their thoughts practically, which was not possible in the classroom.

Lab hours not only increased the student engagement and motivation but also accelerated the learning process. This methodology of learning was entirely based on fostering the qualities of independence, autonomy and responsibility through the learning process. Based on the syllabus prescribed, the lab hours were utilised to strengthen those skills that they really needed to improve.

### Participants

Students who joined the Bachelor of Technology course were given a proficiency test to evaluate their level of English. They were tested on all the four skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing and were streamed as basic, intermediate and advanced level. With the classification made on their entry level performance, a total of 60 students of English as a second language were selected and categorised as shown in Table 1. This minimum strength was preferred because the facilitator wanted

to devote individual attention to each learner. Moreover, learners who were regular and who volunteered were given preference because the motivation to learn a language has a great impact on learning. Initially, a questionnaire was given to elicit basic information as to whether the student belonged to the State Board or Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or Indian School Certificate Examination (ISC), his/her level of exposure to the language, whether he/she was from metropolitan cities or rural areas and his/her access to technology. Generally, the students of CBSE and ISC had good exposure to the language compared to State Board students. First, the learners were briefed about the available software, the schedule they had to follow and the scheme of evaluation. As the number was limited to 60, it was convenient for the teacher to identify their strengths and weaknesses and keep track of their lab schedule, their performance and their improvements.

Table 1  
*Classification of Batches*

Level	No. of students
Advanced	24
Mediocre	20
Below Average	16

The study was done to identify improvement in language learning skills with the use of technology and also to find out which level of learners actually benefited to the maximum.

The students worked regularly for 10 hours a week, at their convenience for about

a month in the language lab after their class hours. The choice of software was left to their discretion so as to promote learner autonomy but they were informed that after 40 hours of lab schedule, they would be evaluated on their grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

The description of the software and the sample screen shots of the different software are given below.

### Description of Software

‘English in Mind’ provides a solid basis for effective language learning through a strong focus on grammar and vocabulary. Projects and writing tasks let students enhance their own language portfolios, developing learner independence and giving students a practical use for the language. Moreover, topics like ‘Culture in Mind’ give students an insight into different aspects of culture from around the English-speaking world. Imaginative and appealing topics such as ‘Wonders of the World’, ‘Reality TV’ and ‘Global Issues’ engage teenagers’ interest and motivate them to learn. Students who were not that competent in using the language can opt for ‘Study Help’ and ‘Skills Tips’ sections in the Workbook, which gives extra support and guidance. The Teacher’s Resource Pack with additional activities and tests gives teachers lots of support and flexibility.

‘English Master’ provides interactive exercises that contribute to better understanding and learning in mixed-ability classes. The exercises on grammar and spelling and the quiz motivate students to

enhance their learner autonomy.

‘Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary’ provides study pages and exercises that help learners improve their grammar and vocabulary. There are many avenues available for learners who are not native English speakers and this includes recording their own pronunciation and practising. Tertiary-level learners prefer to work on this software because of its simple interface and extensive definitions.

‘Sky Pronunciation Suite’ helps learners get an insight into the phonemic alphabet, similar sounds, phrasal stress and rhythms and to check their progress.

### ENGLISH IN MIND

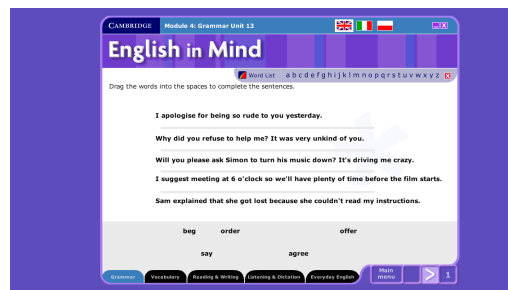


Figure 2. Grammar.

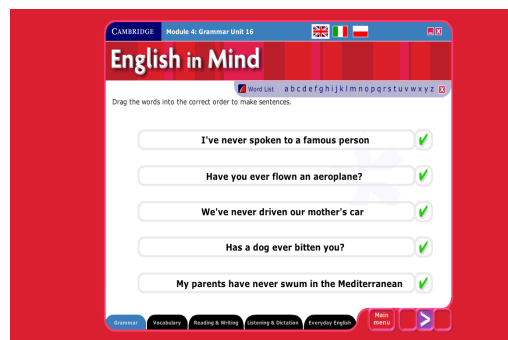


Figure 3. Sentence structure.



Figure 4. Vocabulary.



Figure 7. Quiz on grammar.



Figure 5. Listening and writing.

## CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY

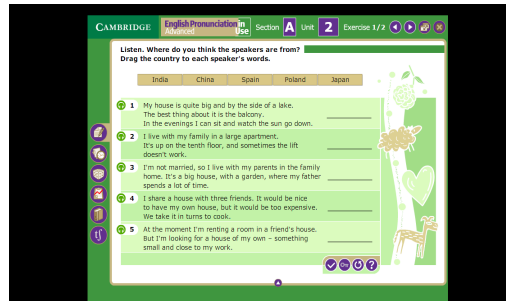


Figure 8. Vocabulary.

## ENGLISH MASTER

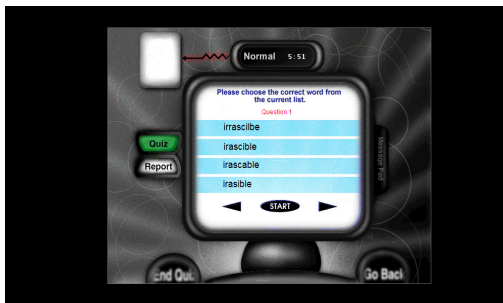


Figure 6. Vocabulary.



Figure 9. Quiz on vocabulary.

## FEEDBACK

All the participants were asked to give their feedback about the software they used. The students who were from different mediums of instruction, apart from English, preferred to work on 'Sky Pronunciation Suite' as they strongly felt their accent needed improvement. Their next choice was spelling and vocabulary followed by 'English Master', which focussed on grammar and writing. The learners who were good at English opted to work on 'Network Language Learning' and the TOEFL practice tests.

### Advanced Level

These students felt that the TOEFL tests provided a solid foundation for all the components needed to pass the TOEFL examination. According to them, 'English Master' and 'English in Mind' were easy and interesting but the exercises were repetitive. The advanced-level learners had a good command of the language at entry level and the conversation practice and other activities in the software, after a point, appeared to be boring. Although the software used comprised vocabulary, grammar spelling and pronunciation, the advanced-level learners felt that the exercises were quite repetitive. They wanted to have more challenging, creative and problem-solving activities.

### Mediocre and the Below-Average Level

For learners with lower proficiency, the lab modules provided the opportunity to build ample confidence to comprehend

the words and use them appropriately in communication. These students felt that learning pronunciation and recording their voice was fun and motivating.

## FINDINGS

The results of the study were as follows:

- ✓ Learners, especially from regional medium schools in rural areas were strongly motivated to use the lab because they could develop their self-confidence through constant practice.
- ✓ Students labelled as passive listeners in the regular class showed great interest in the lab sessions and started participating in classroom activities.
- ✓ As most of the learning components were in the form of visualisation activities and games, they had a strong impact on learners, something which cannot be obtained easily through classroom lectures.
- ✓ The High Class software installed in the lab helped the facilitator to monitor the work of the students and to help them when necessary.

### Analysis

After the stipulated hours of practice, the students were given an online test on the following components – Listening

Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, Phonetics and Writing Skills. The level of improvement was moderate in the advanced level but there was a dramatic change in the other levels, especially in the students' writing and spoken skills. The marks that the students scored before and after the use of technology are given in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2  
*Batch I – Advanced Level*

S. No	Before the use of technology	After the use of technology
1	39	37
2	37	40
3	38	37
4	36	40
5	35	33
6	38	41
7	39	37
8	32	35
9	35	37
10	35	34
11	36	37
12	35	39
13	38	41
14	37	36
15	39	39
16	38	39
17	37	38
18	34	37
19	34	34
20	34	36
21	37	40
22	34	36
23	36	38
24	38	40
Average	36.29167	37.54167

Table 3  
*Batch II – Mediocre*

S. No	Before the use of technology	After the use of technology
1	24	32
2	24	29
3	27	33
4	28	34
5	28	35
6	25	35
7	24	30
8	27	27
9	28	29
10	26	28
11	25	30
12	28	32
13	24	30
14	28	32
15	28	33
16	26	30
17	28	32
18	25	30
19	27	34
20	26	31
Average	26.3	31.3

Table 4  
*Batch III – Below Average*

S. No	Before the use of technology	After the use of technology
1	17	22
2	17	23
3	14	23
4	18	26
5	16	22
6	19	27
7	15	22
8	13	20
9	19	24
10	18	26
11	16	21
12	17	26

13	15	23
14	18	26
15	19	25
16	16	23
Average	16.6875	23.6875

### Inference

The results of the paired sample t-tests are shown in Table 5.

1. The mean value for the advanced-level learners (N=24) before and after use of technology was 36.29 and 37.54, with a deviation of 1.92 and 2.24, respectively. The paired sample t-test result showed that the p value was 0.04, which was less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ).
2. The mean value for the mediocre learners (N=20) before and after use of technology was 26.30 and 31.30, with a deviation of 1.59 and 2.27, respectively. The paired sample t-test result showed that the p value was 0.00, which was less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ).
3. The mean value for the below-average learners (N=16) before and after use of technology was 16.68 and 23.68,

respectively with a deviation of 1.81 and 2.08, respectively. The paired sample t-test result showed that the p value was 0.00, which was less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that the mean difference for the below-average learners was 7, which is higher than the mediocre (5) and advanced-level (1.25) learners. Hence, the use of technology was more effective for the below-average learners than for the mediocre and the advanced-level learners.

The performance of the students at all levels before and after integrating technology into the curriculum is represented in the line charts given in Figure 10, 11 and 12.

At the school level, conventional teaching and the evaluation system do not give room to assess speaking and listening skills, which play a key role in future professional life. Learners are used to rote learning and they are tested only for memory. Proficiency in English has never been a criterion for admission to engineering programmes in India. But English is a compulsory subject in India for all first-year

Table 5  
*Paired Sample t-Test*

Use of technology		Advanced level N = 24	Mediocre N = 20	Below average N = 16
Mean	Before the use of technology	36.29	26.30	16.68
	After the use of technology	37.54	31.30	23.68
Standard Deviation	Before the use of technology	1.92	1.59	1.81
	After the use of technology	2.24	2.27	2.08
Std. error mean		.395	.512	.341
t		-3.15	-9.74	-20.49
Significance (p)		0.04	0.00	0.00



Learner Autonomy and use of Technology

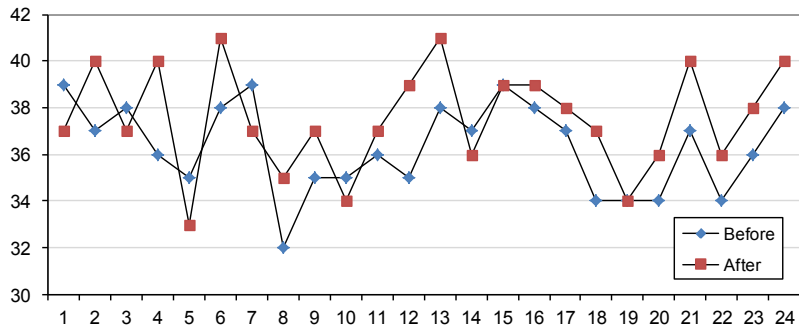


Figure 10. Advanced level.

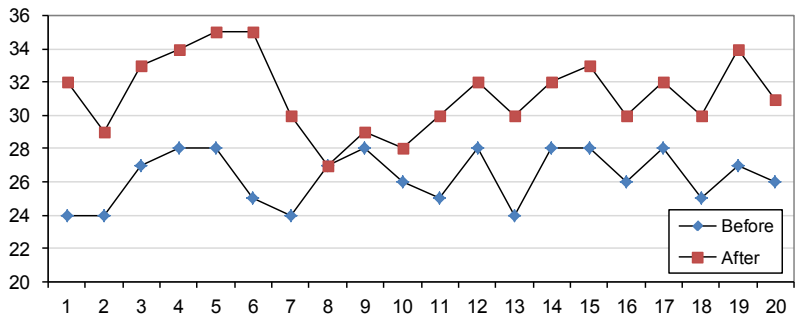


Figure 11. Mediocre level.

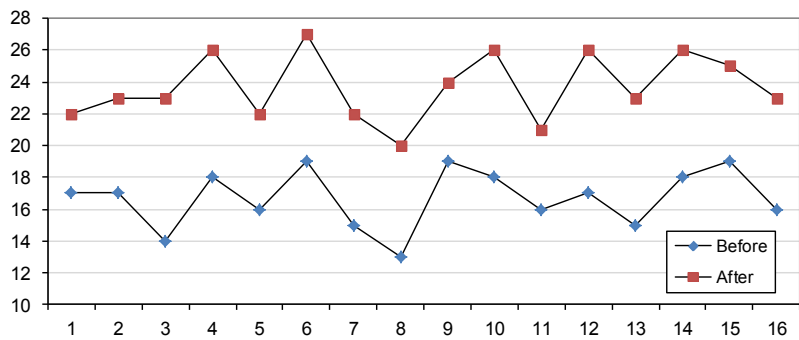


Figure 12. Below-average level.

Before – Marks obtained before the use of technology tools  
 After – Marks obtained after the use of technology tools

students of engineering and technology. It is also at this level that students start using English as the medium of instruction and learning for all engineering subjects. For most of the students, this is a transition from a regional language to English as the medium of instruction. Consequently, command of the English language and proficiency in communication skills are an issue at graduation. If English proficiency is made part of the entrance requirement for undergraduate studies, there would not be much of a burden on the mediocre and the below-average students. Be it lectures or projects or placements, these students can comprehend and answer questions with the same confidence as the advanced learners. As the focus of teaching English at tertiary level in recent years has moved on to developing the employability skills of undergraduates, the objectives have narrowed down to application of the language by the students in their day-to-day conversation, thus enhancing the student's proficiency in the use of the language.

Large classes prove to be a hindrance for achieving the desired goal of improving the language skills of the learners. In India, class enrolment is usually 60 students, and this comprises students from all levels – advanced, mediocre and below average. Whether it is a traditional classroom or the language lab, it is a challenge for an English teacher to meet the requirements of the learners. If he/she focusses on the communication aspects for the average learners, the advanced-level learners would find the class less challenging. Due to the

restricted time schedule and the prescribed syllabus, the teachers cannot accommodate their desire for challenging activities in class.

Frequent maintenance of language labs is mandatory and the software used has to be updated regularly. Connection problems, downloading issues, policing software and other difficulties can cause road blocks when implementing a lesson in the technology-based classroom. This is quite expensive and institutions have to allot adequate funds for the maintenance of language labs, which is not possible in many of the institutions in India due to financial constraints.

The use of technology in learning English is inevitable for moulding students to fit the demands of employers but it has to be remembered that technology is just a tool; it cannot bring any magnificent change on its own. In the Indian context, it is essential to have technology integrated into the curriculum. The teacher has the huge task of drawing from a repertoire of the prescribed curriculum, learners' knowledge and requirements and feasible technology resources in deciding on the integration of technology into any given lesson.

## CONCLUSION

The survey and the study revealed that the use of technology in the curriculum will accelerate the learning capacity of slow learners and provide wider options for proficient learners to improve their language skills. The challenges of the 21st century keep on expanding, and to meet the varied global needs of English language learners,

it is necessary that the classroom curriculum be supplemented with technology tools. The teachers' perspective clearly indicated that knowledge of English is a decisive factor for success in any discipline. Moreover, they felt that the use of technology serves as one of the quickest solutions for satisfying a heterogeneous group of learners who aspire to gain proficiency in their respective area of study within a short span of time. The study also indicates that if cost-effective technologies are used for specific modules, it can procure amazing results especially for a heterogeneous group. The authentic texts and the real-life situations that are essential for aspiring language learners are abundantly available in the modules that are used in language labs. Furthermore, such an approach, moving from instructionism to constructivism, will definitely help learners in developing all the four skills and will better prepare them better for their future career.

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## **Effects of Computer Self-Efficacy on Pre-Service Art Teachers' Achievement in Graphic Design**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates the effects of computer self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service teachers on their achievement in graphic design theory and practical design. The study adopted a quantitative research approach using non-equivalent groups' pre-test-post-test quasi-experimental research design. A sample of 81 participants was purposively drawn from second-year pre-service art teachers in colleges of education in Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The research instruments used were computer self-efficacy scale adopted from the literature, teacher-made graphic design achievement tests and a graphic design assessment rubric developed by the researchers. Data collected from the study were analysed using inferential statistics and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The findings showed that computer self-efficacy beliefs of the pre-service teachers had a positive effect on their achievements as those with high computer self-efficacy beliefs performed better than those with low computer self-efficacy beliefs in all the groups in overall graphic design and practical graphic design achievement. However, their self-efficacy beliefs were found to have no significant effect on their theory achievements. It was concluded that teacher educators should endeavour to help pre-service teachers develop high computer self-efficacy beliefs to enable them to benefit maximally from ICT-integrated curricula.

*Keywords:* Computer self-efficacy, pre-service teachers' achievement, graphic design

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The use of computers in the learning environment and indeed by present-day society is a reality that has come to stay. The world we live in is so fast-paced that it requires the daily transfer of information at the same pace (Magliaro & Ezeife,

2007). Consequent upon this, the use of computer application in the routine activities of teacher educators and pre-service teachers in teacher-education institutions all over the world has been on the increase. To keep abreast with the demands of technology integration in the curriculum, Magliaro and Ezeife (2007) maintained that teachers should not only be responsible for delivering content to learners, but must also develop new ways of teaching and learning. Integration of computer use in the curriculum is a teaching innovation brought about by technological development in the 21st century, and both serving teachers and pre-service teachers are expected to have efficacy of computer use.

The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) is the minimum certificate required for teaching in Nigeria. Colleges of education are responsible for training NCE teachers for the education sector. Over the years, there have been continuous remarks from government quarters and the public on the declining standards of education. Most of the NCE teachers in the school system lack basic ICT competencies to integrate ICT in their subject areas. For this reason, the federal government of Nigeria started restructuring the NCE curriculum to enable the graduating students to meet the challenges of teaching in the 21st century classroom (Akande & Olorundare, 2011).

In art teaching, especially at the teacher education level, there is need for integration of information and communication technology (ICT) both as a teaching and learning tool. The federal republic of Nigeria

in its minimum standards for Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) teachers stipulates that computers and computer laboratories should be provided and used in teaching (FGN, 2009). This is most especially required in the field of teaching and learning graphic design, a subject that has virtually become impossible to teach and learn effectively in this digital age without computers (Yeoh, 2002). A major challenge to the integration of ICT into the curriculum of teacher education institutions in Nigeria is the inadequacy of available computers for instructional purposes coupled with lack of skills and competencies required for implementing the same in the instructional process. In effect, ICT is not properly integrated in teaching teachers, making it difficult for them to use ICT in their own teaching practice. This has led to the predominance of teaching graphic design in theory without proper hands-on activities (Aladejana, 2006; Ogunduyile, 2008; Ametordzi, Osei-Poku, & Eshun, 2012).

The result of this challenging situation is that even if computers are sufficiently available for instruction in teacher-education institutions, pre-service teachers may not use them in their learning and internship as their teachers rarely use them. The majority of them have the belief that they are not adequately trained in the use of technology in the classroom; in addition, available technological tools seem inappropriate (Hardy, 2003; Kalu & Ekwueme, 2010). There is the need to integrate ICT in their learning environment to enable them to increase their computer self-efficacy beliefs.



Thus, if opportunities to learn and teach with ICT are lacking, they may develop computer phobia, which would culminate in these pre-service teachers having low computer self-efficacy belief. Low computer self-efficacy belief has been found to affect academic achievement negatively by scholars (Tsai & Tsai, 2003; Agbatogun & Banjo, 2010).

### Self-Efficacy

Social cognitive theory is the underpinning theory for this study. Self-efficacy is a concept that stemmed from social cognitive theory and expresses one's belief in being able to perform a particular task to achieve a certain outcome (Bandura, 1997). The theory explains that one of the most powerful ways through which students learn is through observation of behaviours modelled by those around them. Social cognitive learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences. Self-efficacy is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391).

This belief about one's capacity to succeed in a task is influenced by four major factors, which are:

- i. past performance
- ii. modelling
- iii. verbal persuasion
- iv. psychological state (Bandura, 1986).

Of these four factors, a person's successful past performance on a task similar to the task at hand is the most influential factor in self-efficacy (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007). Modelling follows in that hierarchy, as an individual's self-efficacy increases as he/she observes another individual performing the expected task successfully. This is followed in that order by verbal persuasion, which has the tendency to encourage individuals to do tasks. At the bottom of the influence ladder is psychological states like hunger, stress, fatigue and anxiety. They have the capacity to influence the self-efficacy beliefs of a person, giving the feeling of incapability in handling a task (Albion, 1999; Scholz et al., 2002).

It is a motivational factor that greatly impacts students' choice of learning activities and the amount of effort they attribute to learning in the classroom (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2004; Mikropoulos & Natsis, 2011) and while pursuing individualised learning outside the classroom. Thus, self-efficacious students are more likely to undertake more challenging learning tasks and to persevere in difficult situations than their peers. Self-efficacy is central to promoting students' engagement and learning (Sun & Rueda, 2012) as a student's self-efficacious beliefs motivate him to try harder in order to succeed in any given learning task.

Self-efficacy has been identified as a key factor in developing competence in any human endeavour (Bandura, 1993). It plays a mediatory role between beliefs and behaviours. Scholars have stated that

learners with a high sense of self-efficacy show strong achievement, whereas the opposite is the case for learners with a low sense of self-efficacy (Schunk, 1981; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2006). The result of this is that the higher the self-efficacy belief of a student, the longer they tend to persevere on a task (Pajares, 2003). Individuals who see themselves as capable of doing certain activities are classified as being high in self-efficacy and are more likely to attempt and accomplish such activities whereas those who see themselves as less capable are less likely to attempt and do such activities and are accordingly classified as lower in self-efficacy (Bandura et al., 1977; Barling & Beattie, 1983).

Scholars have investigated and found academic self-efficacy to be one of the most important predictors of students' academic achievement (Jinks & Lorschach, 2003; McPherson & McCormick, 2006; Nelson & Ketelhut, 2008). Learners who are self-efficacious feel confident about solving problems as they have developed an approach to problem solving that worked in the past (Wahab & Hj, 2012). Self-efficacy was found to have influenced academic achievement directly as well as indirectly by raising students' grade goals (Zimmerman et al., 1992).

### **Computer Self-Efficacy**

Computer self-efficacy has been seen as an individual's self-judgment about his/her ability to use the computer to accomplish given tasks based on computer-related experiences of the individual (Oliver &

Shapiro, 1993; Faseyitan et al., 1996; Smith, 2001; Doyle et al., 2005). It is an off-shoot of Bandura's self-efficacy construct that forms the theoretical basis for understanding technology integration into teaching and learning (Antonacci, 2002). The impact of computer self-efficacy in learning has been highlighted and investigated by scholars who developed and validated the computer self-efficacy scale (Murphey et al., 1989; Torkzadeh & Koufteros, 1994; Compeau & Higgins, 1995), most especially within computer competency investigations. To the best of the knowledge of researchers, not much has been done on this in the Nigerian context with regards to teacher preparation institutions and how it affects academic performance. Therefore, this study examined its effect in making learners benefit from instructions in which computers and computer applications are used both as a medium as well as a tool to construct learning.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers set out to determine if there was any difference in the mean post-test scores in overall graphic design achievement scores between a perceived high computer self-efficacy group and a perceived low computer self-efficacy group in their response to teaching with ICT Integrated Studio Teaching Model (IISTM). The researchers also wanted to ascertain if there was any difference in the mean post-test scores in graphic design theory achievement scores between the perceived high computer self-efficacy group and the perceived low computer self-

efficacy group in their response to teaching with IISTM. The final objective was to find if any differences existed in the mean post-test scores in practical graphic design achievement scores between the perceived high computer self-efficacy group and the perceived low computer self-efficacy group in their response to teaching with IISTM.

In the same vein, the following corresponding alternative hypotheses were postulated.

Ha<sub>1</sub> There is significant difference in overall graphic design achievement means scores between the high computer self-efficacy and the low computer self-efficacy groups of pre-service art teachers taught using the ICT integrated studio teaching model.

Ha<sub>2</sub> There is significant difference in graphic design theory achievement means scores between the high computer self-efficacy and the low computer self-efficacy groups of pre-service art teachers taught using the ICT integrated studio teaching model.

Ha<sub>3</sub> There is significant difference in graphic design practical achievement means scores between high and low computer self-efficacy groups in the three intervention groups of pre-service art teachers taught using the ICT integrated studio teaching model.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a quantitative research paradigm to find answers to the research problem and to test the research hypotheses. The study was designed as a quasi-experimental study using non-equivalent comparison-groups' pre-test-post-test design. A sample of 81 second-year pre-service art teachers from three intact classes was purposively drawn from Fine and Applied Arts departments in colleges of education in Nigeria. Three colleges of education were selected from the 67 government-owned colleges based on the fact that they have well established Fine and Applied Arts departments, ICT laboratories with internet connection and a second-year student enrolment of not less than 25 students. Balloting was used to select three colleges from the six colleges that met the criteria. College 1 had 28 students, College 2 had 27 students while College 3 had 26 students, giving a total of 81 participants.

Graphic design is a course in fine and applied arts curricula in colleges of education in Nigeria that involves the use of a combination of texts and visuals with skills and technological knowledge to communicate ideas and messages from a designer to an audience. Graphic design is made up of theory and practice (Arslan, 2012). Graphic design theory is seen as the body of knowledge and a set of general principles and rules that govern, explain and direct graphic design practice as well as account for effective graphic communication. On the other hand, graphic design practically embraces all follow-

up hands-on activities that involve the application of graphic design theories and principles towards solving specific design problems in the classroom.

Three research instruments were employed in the study to collect data. They were:

1. A computer self-efficacy scale (CSES) adopted from Sam et al. (2005) and developed by Murphey, Coover and Owen in 1989. The pilot testing of the instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.893 on Cronbach's Alpha;
2. The researchers made a Graphic Design Achievement Test (GDAT), which was found reliable with a reliability coefficient of 0.884 using Kuder Richardson's KR-20 run at the parallel model. The GDAT is a 32-item multiple-choice achievement test that covered the topics taught during the experiment;
3. The Graphic Design Assessment Rubric (GDAR) developed by Onwuagboke and Singh (2016) was also employed in assessing practical achievement. The rubric is an analytical rubric which had the following criteria for assessing finished designs produced by the pre-service art teachers: (a) Overall appearance of finished work; (b) Creativity (c) Compositional elements (d) Use of media/technology. The levels of possible quality of products were described without vagueness on a 4-point Likert scale. The rubric was validated using the Intraclass

correlation coefficient (ICC). Inter-rater and intra-rater reliability were thus calculated. The inter-rater reliability of the rubric was 0.829 while the intra-rater reliability was computed at 0.924 on Cronbach's Alpha.

The sample was pre-tested using the research instruments and later exposed to three different instructional intervention using the ICT-integrated studio teaching model (IISTM) developed by Onwuagboke, Singh and Fook (2015). The IISTM is a five-phase instructional model designed to integrate ICT in studio teaching. The phases include inspire, demonstrate, explore, implement and critique. In all these phases of the instructional process, various types of ICT were used. The teaching model was designed based on learning theories like modelling/imitation learning (Bandura, 1977), scaffolding (Lev Vygotsky, 1986) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984).

Research Group 1 comprised 28 participants who were treated to an intervention-tagged Blended Model 1 that involved the use of ICT and ICT experts as resource persons to model the use of ICT as well as to scaffold the pre-service teachers towards achieving learning objectives set by the instructor and peers. The learning was designed to also enable the pre-service teachers to learn using authentic learning experiences. Research Group 2, made up of 27 participants, was, on the other hand, treated to another level of the intervention-tagged Blended Model 2, which had all the features of the first intervention but without ICT experts to act as role models.

The third research group was made up of 26 participants who received an intervention-tagged Blended Model 3 that had no modelling and scaffolding by the instructor and peers but strictly used ICT and authentic learning.

Data collected were keyed into IBM SPSS computer package version 22 for data analysis. A two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the research hypotheses. The research variables in this study were computer self-efficacy existing at high and low levels and overall mean achievements of pre-service art teachers in graphic design (theory and practical). The computer self-efficacy scores of the participants were ranked and used to divide the participants into two groups: high and low computer self-efficacy groups.

## RESULTS

The mean score of the low computer self-efficacy group in overall graphic design (theory and practical) was computed and compared with that of the high computer self-efficacy group. In Table 1, data presented indicated that there was a difference in overall graphic design means scores between the perceived low computer self-efficacy group and the perceived high

computer self-efficacy group. The mean score of the high computer self-efficacy group (55.73) was higher than that of the perceived low computer self-efficacy group (49.46).

### Testing Hypothesis 1 (Ha<sub>1</sub>)

*There is significant difference in overall graphic design achievements means scores between the high computer self-efficacy and the low computer self-efficacy groups of pre-service art teachers taught using the ICT integrated studio teaching model.*

To test this hypothesis, a two-way between-groups analysis of covariance was used. The test involved was a 2-by-3 between-groups analysis of covariance. The independent variables were the type of teaching model (Blended Model 1, Blended Model 2 and Blended Model 3) and computer self-efficacy existing at high and low levels. The dependent variable was scores on overall graphic design achievement (OGDA 2) comprising of GDAT 2 and GDAR 2 administered following the completion of the treatment (Time 2). Scores on overall graphic design achievement (OGDA 1)

Table 1  
*Means Scores of Low and High Computer Self-Efficacy Groups for Overall Graphic Design Achievement 2 (OGDA post-test)*

Computer Self-Efficacy	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Low Computer Self-Efficacy Group	49.4634	41	4.89437
High Computer Self-Efficacy Group	55.7250	40	6.72152
Total	52.5556	81	6.62759

obtained prior to the commencement of treatment (Time 1) were used as covariates to control for individual differences.

Preliminary investigations were conducted to ensure that none of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes and reliable measurement of the covariate was violated. Levene's test of equality of error of variances was also checked to make sure the assumption of equality of variances was not violated. As indicated in Table 2, the value of the test was 0.148, which is far greater than the 0.05 significance value, meaning it was not significant, which in effect means that the assumption was met.

Table 2  
*Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Overall Graphic Design Achievement 2 (OGDA post-test)*

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.686	5	75	0.148

The ANCOVA test made adjustments for pre-intervention scores after which there was no significant interaction effect observed.  $F(1,74)=0.86, p<0.064$ , with a moderate effect size (partial eta squared=0.07). Both of the main effects were statistically significant, teaching model:  $F(2,74)=20.05, p<0.001$ ; computer self-efficacy:  $F(1,74)=50.57, p<0.001$ . There was no significant interaction effect between the groups and computer self-efficacy as the significance value shown in Table 3 was 0.064, which is above the 0.05 cut-off value. The mean plot in Figure 1 also shows this

absence of interaction. The above results suggest that both the low computer self-efficacy and the high computer self-efficacy groups in general responded similarly in Blended Group 1 and Blended Group 2 as can be seen from the gradient of the slopes plotted. However, the high computer self-efficacy group in Blended Group 3 did not seem to benefit as much. The high computer self-efficacy group benefitted more than the low computer self-efficacy group in all the interventions.

A further look at the adjusted mean in Table 4 shows that there was a remarkable difference in the mean scores of the low computer self-efficacy group ( $M=49.494$ ) and the high computer self-efficacy group ( $M=55.411$ ). Based on the results presented above, the researchers had enough evidence to accept the alternative hypothesis of a significant difference between the low and high computer self-efficacy groups and state that high computer self-efficacy groups in the three intervention groups seemed to perform better than the low computer self-efficacy groups.

Similarly, the mean scores of the low computer self-efficacy group in graphic design theory was computed and compared with that of the high computer self-efficacy group. As can be seen in Table 5, there was a difference in the graphic design theory mean score between the two groups with the perceived high computer self-efficacy group having a higher mean score of 20.35 compared to the perceived low computer self-efficacy group, which had a mean score of 19.439.

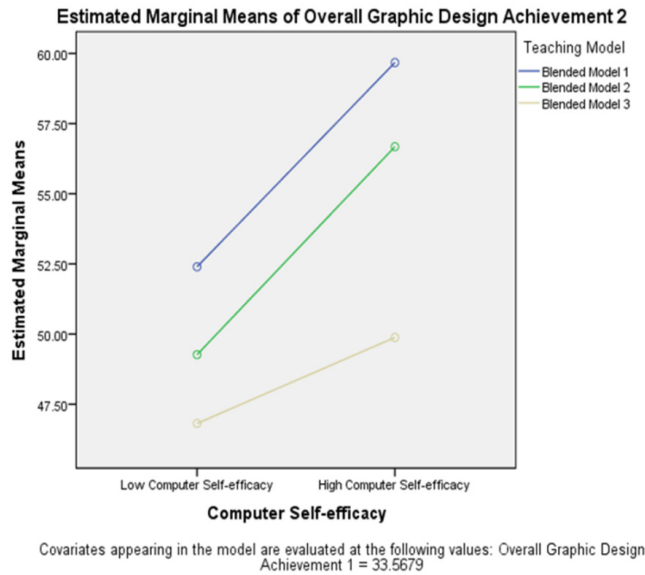


Figure 1. Means plot of estimated marginal means for overall graphic design achievement 2

Table 3

Test of Between-Subjects Effects on Overall Graphic Design Achievement 2 (OGDA post-test) for the Two Computer Self-Efficacy Groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	2480.202 <sup>a</sup>	6	413.367	29.589	0.000	0.706
Intercept	840.367	1	840.367	60.154	0.000	0.448
OGDA1	440.382	1	440.382	31.523	0.001	0.299
Group	755.883	2	377.941	27.053	0.001	0.422
CSE2	706.462	1	706.462	50.569	0.001	0.406
Group* CSE2	79.758	2	39.879	2.855	0.064	0.072
Error	1033.798	74	13.970			
Total	227243.000	81				
Corrected Total	3514.000	80				

Table 4

Estimated Marginal Means Scores Table for Overall Graphic Achievement 2 (OGDA post-test) for the Two Computer Self-Efficacy Groups

Computer Self-efficacy	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low Computer Self-Efficacy	49.494 <sup>a</sup>	.584	48.331	50.658
High Computer Self-Efficacy	55.411 <sup>a</sup>	.593	54.230	56.592

Table 5  
*Means Scores of Perceived Low and High Computer Self-Efficacy Groups for Graphic Design Theory 2 (GDAT post-test)*

Computer Self-Efficacy	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Low Computer Self-Efficacy Group	19.4390	41	3.56405
High Computer Self-Efficacy Group	20.3500	40	4.02269
Total	19.8889	81	3.80132

Table 6  
*Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Graphic Design Theory 2 (GDAT post-test)*

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.665	5	75	0.651

**Testing Hypothesis 2 (Ha<sub>2</sub>)**

*There is significant difference in graphic design theory achievement means scores between the high computer self-efficacy and the low computer self-efficacy groups of pre-service art teachers taught using the ICT integrated studio teaching model.*

The test involved was a 2-by-3 between-groups analysis of covariance. The independent variables were the type of teaching model (Blended Model 1, Blended Model 2 and Blended Model 3) and computer self-efficacy existing at high and low levels. The dependent variable was the scores on the graphic design theory achievement test (GDAT 2) administered following the completion of the treatment (Time 2). Scores on the graphic design theory achievement (GDAT 1) obtained prior to the commencement of treatment (Time 1) were used as covariates to control for individual differences.

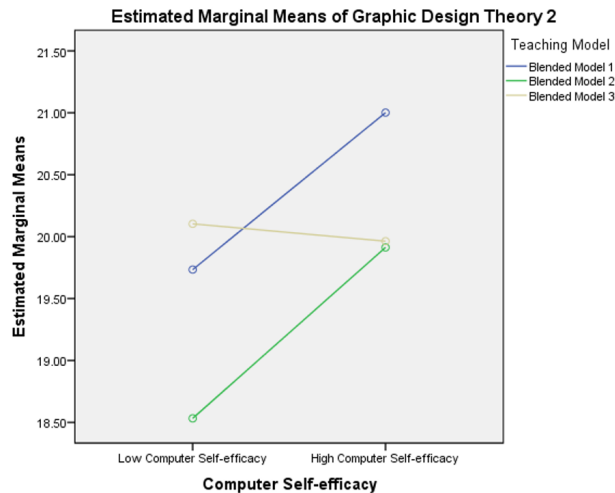
Preliminary investigations were conducted to ensure that none of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes and reliable measurement of the covariate was violated. The results of the investigations showed that none of the assumptions was violated.

Table 7 shows that after making adjustments for pre-intervention scores, there was no significant interaction effect.  $F(1,74)=0.54, p<0.59$ , with a small effect size (partial eta squared=0.014). Both of the main effects were statistically not significant, teaching model:  $F(2,74)=1.06, p=0.35$ ; computer self-efficacy:  $F(1,74)=1.6, p=0.21$ . The result showed no interaction effect between the groups and computer self-efficacy as the significance value shown in the table is 0.59, which is above the 0.05 cut-off value. However, the mean plot displayed in Figure 2 shows there was interaction effect between treatment and computer self-efficacy. These results tend to suggest that both the low computer self-efficacy and the high computer self-efficacy



Table 7  
*Test of Between Subject Effects on Graphic Design Theory 2 for Low and High Computer Self-Efficacy Groups*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	504.858 <sup>a</sup>	6	84.143	9.563	0.000	0.437
Intercept	657.674	1	657.674	74.742	0.000	0.502
GDATA1	462.947	1	462.947	52.612	0.000	0.416
CSE2	14.103	1	14.103	1.603	0.209	0.021
Group	18.622	2	9.311	1.058	0.352	0.028
CSE2 * Group	9.446	2	4.723	0.537	0.587	0.014
Error	651.142	74	8.799			
Total	33197.000	81				
Corrected Total	1156.000	80				



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Graphic Design Theory 1 = 9.5062

Figure 2. Means plot of estimated marginal means for graphics design theory 2.

groups in Blended Model 1 and 2 responded well to the two interventions with regards to graphic design theory. However, the high computer self-efficacy group in Blended Model 3 did not seem to benefit as much from the instruction. In general, there was no significant difference between the high computer self-efficacy group and the low

computer self-efficacy group in all the interventions.

This is confirmed by taking a look at the adjusted means table on the dependent variable under investigation for the two groups. Table 8 shows that there was no remarkable difference in the mean scores of the low computer self-efficacy

group (M=19.44) and the high computer self-efficacy group (M=20.35). Based on the findings as a result of this test, the researchers rejected the alternative hypothesis and concluded that there was no significant difference between the low computer self-efficacy groups and the high computer self-efficacy groups in the three intervention groups on post-intervention scores on the graphic design achievement test.

In the same vein, the mean score of the low computer self-efficacy group in practical design was computed and compared with that of the high computer self-efficacy group. Data presented in Table 9 showed that there was a difference in practical graphic design means score between the two groups with the perceived high computer self-efficacy group having a higher mean score of 35.3750 compared to the perceived low computer self-efficacy group, which had a mean score of 29.8537.

**Testing Hypothesis 3 (Ha<sub>3</sub>)**

*There is significant difference in practical graphic design achievement means scores between high and low computer self-efficacy groups in the three intervention groups of pre-service art teachers taught using the ICT integrated studio teaching model.*

The test involved was a 2-by-3 between-groups analysis of covariance. The independent variables were the type of teaching model (Blended Model 1, Blended Model 2 and Blended Model 3) and computer self-efficacy existing at high and low levels. The dependent variable was scores on graphic design practical (GDAR 2) administered following the completion of the treatment (Time 2). Scores on graphic design practical achievement (GDAR 1) obtained prior to the commencement of

Table 8  
*Estimated Marginal Means Table for Graphic Design Theory 2 (GDAT post-test) for the Two Computer Self-Efficacy Groups*

Computer Self-Efficacy	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low Computer Self-Efficacy	19.457 <sup>a</sup>	0.464	18.533	20.380
High Computer Self-Efficacy	20.293 <sup>a</sup>	0.470	19.355	21.230

Table 9  
*Means Scores of Perceived Low and High Computer Self-Efficacy Groups for Graphic Design Practical 2 (GDAR post-test)*

Computer Self-Efficacy	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Low Computer Self-Efficacy Group	29.8537	41	3.75873
High Computer Self-Efficacy Group	35.3750	40	5.08233
Total	32.5802	81	5.23179

treatment (Time 1) were used as covariate to control for individual differences. Preliminary investigations were conducted to ensure that none of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes and reliable measurement of the covariate was violated. In the same vein, Levene’s test of equality of error of variances was checked, as shown in Table 10. The value of the test was 0.626, well over 0.05, a clear indication that the assumption was not violated.

Table 10  
*Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances for Graphic Design Practical 2 (GDAR post-test)*

F	df1	df2	Sig.
0.700	5	75	0.626

The result of the tests of between-subjects effects conducted is as shown in the main ANCOVA Table 11. After making adjustments for differences in pre-intervention scores, there was no significant

Table 11  
*Test of Between Subject Effects on Graphic Design Practical 2 (GDAR post-test) for Low and High Computer Self-Efficacy Groups*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1770.850 <sup>a</sup>	6	295.142	52.140	0.000	0.809
Intercept	354.211	1	354.211	62.576	0.000	0.458
GDP1	96.627	1	96.627	17.070	0.000	0.187
CSE2	545.647	1	545.647	96.395	0.000	0.566
Group	788.519	2	394.259	69.651	0.000	0.653
CSE2 * Group	24.309	2	12.155	2.147	0.124	0.055
Error	418.878	74	5.661			
Total	88169.000	81				
Corrected Total	2189.728	80				

interaction effect noticed.  $F(2,74)=2.15$ ,  $p<0.12$ , with a moderate effect size (partial eta squared=0.06). Both of the main effects were statistically significant, teaching model:  $F(2,74)=69.65$ ,  $p<0.000$ ; computer self-efficacy:  $F(1,74)=96.4$ ,  $p<0.000$ . There was no significant interaction effect between the groups and computer self-efficacy as the significance value shown in the table is 0.12. which is above the 0.05 cut-off value. The mean plot in Figure 3 also shows this absence of interaction clearly.

These results tend to suggest that both the low computer self-efficacy and the high computer self-efficacy groups responded similarly to Blended Model 1 and 2 but differently in Blended Model 3 with regards to the graphic design practical. However, the high computer self-efficacy group seemed to have benefitted more than the low computer self-efficacy group in all the interventions. This was confirmed by taking a look at the adjusted means Table 12 on the dependent variable under investigation for the two groups.

Table 12 shows that there was remarkable difference in the mean scores of the low computer self-efficacy group (M=29.898) and the high computer self-efficacy group (M=35.10). Based on the results presented above, the researchers failed to reject the alternative hypothesis of a significant difference between the low and high computer self-efficacy groups and concluded that the high computer self-efficacy groups in the three intervention groups performed better than the low

computer self-efficacy groups in the graphic design practical.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study are discussed according to the research questions and research hypotheses. It is also interesting to note the result of the effect of perceived computer self-efficacy on the overall graphic design mean scores of the pre-service teachers. Pre-service art teachers who perceived themselves high in computer self-

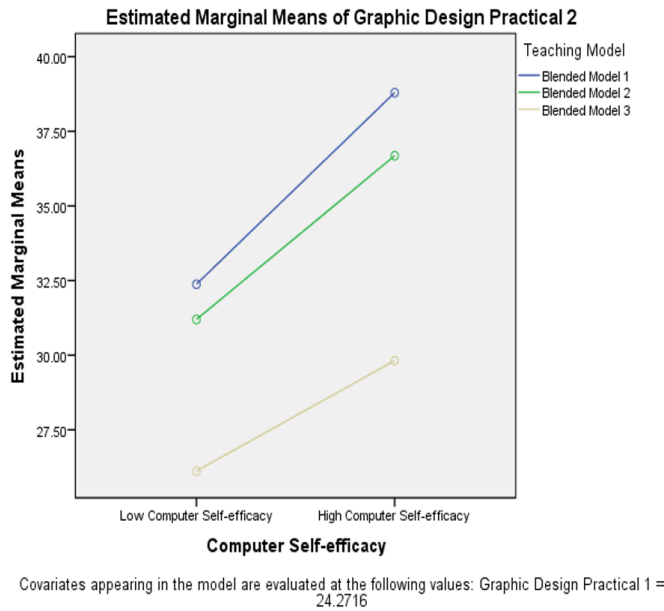


Figure 3. Means plot of estimated marginal means for graphics design practical 2 (GDAR2 post-test).

Table 12  
*Estimated Marginal Means Scores of Perceived Low and High Computer Self-Efficacy Groups for Graphic Design Practical 2 (GDAR post-test)*

Computer Self-efficacy	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low Computer Self-Efficacy	29.898 <sup>a</sup>	0.372	29.157	30.639
High Computer Self-Efficacy	35.098 <sup>a</sup>	0.377	34.346	35.850

efficacy were found to perform significantly higher than those who perceived themselves low in computer self-efficacy. This result lays credence to consistent empirical research findings that have persistently pointed to the fact that academic achievement of students is enhanced by their self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997; Tamara & Koufteros, 2002; Ismail et al., 2005). This can be probably explained by Bates and Khasawneh's (2007) finding that students with higher computer self-efficacy beliefs tended to spend more time using online learning technology and were, therefore, better engaged in the learning processes than their counterparts with low computer self-efficacy beliefs. There is a relationship between perceived self-efficacy with respect to academic subjects and achievements. According to Multon et al., (1991) evidence shows that self-efficacy appraisals make a positive contribution to academic achievements.

No significant difference was found to exist between perceived high computer self-efficacy groups and the perceived low computer self-efficacy groups in graphic design theory post-test mean scores. This finding may seem obvious in view of the fact that one does not require to have high computer self-efficacy beliefs to be able to perform in an achievement test that in itself is not computer-based. In dealing with theory-based learning, both those with high and low computer self-efficacy beliefs had a wide range of resources to turn to in order to perform well in the test. This can be explained in part that any student with

average intelligence should be able to do well in a theory test if the topic has been presented in class or the teacher referred them to some resources for that purpose irrespective of computer self-efficacy belief levels.

On the other hand, differences existed between the perceived high and perceived low computer self-efficacy groups in the three intervention groups that took part in the study with regards to their mean scores in the graphic design achievement (practical). This presupposes that the IISTM can successfully help increase graphic design achievement scores of students, especially Models 1 and 2. The findings are more favourably disposed to learners with high computer self-efficacy. As the graphic design practical involved the designing of visual communication materials using computers and related software, the importance of the pre-service teachers' computer self-efficacy beliefs was at its greatest. Pre-service teachers with high efficacy beliefs will definitely persevere and engage in the design task until a reasonable degree of success is achieved compared to their low computer self-efficacy colleagues whose level of engagement in the design task are likely very shallow (Bates & Khasawneh, 2007). In a controlled learning environment where design process was monitored by the teacher educator to avoid any form of malpractice, the true performance of the participants was thus reflected.

## CONCLUSION

The teaching of graphics design including computer graphics in tertiary institutions in Nigeria has been dominated by theory rather than the practical use of computers and computer software packages as recommended in the NCCE minimum standards for NCE teachers. The findings of this study revealed that high computer self-efficacy beliefs of the pre-service teachers had a positive effect on their graphic design practical achievement. However, the study has shown that computer self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service art teachers have no significant effect on their graphic design theory achievements. On the other hand, its effect on their overall graphic design achievement is very significant.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommend that art teacher educators in colleges of education should improve their computer graphics skills as well as endeavour to model the use of computer technology in teaching the course to pre-service teachers. This practice will motivate pre-service teachers, thereby boosting their computer self-efficacy beliefs. Watching an individual perform such a task using the computer has been reported to stimulate and motivate learners into believing that they are capable of doing so and even doing better than the person demonstrating the task. This makes them persevere in the design task no matter the difficulty level. Cognisant of the importance of motivation in the achievement of learners, teacher educators

should therefore endeavour to promote high self-efficacy belief among learners. They should be mindful of individual differences in learning style and as such, adopt teaching strategies that are capable of benefitting both the high and low computer self-efficacy group of learners.

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## **Learning Style Approaches for Gen Y: An Assessment Conducted in a Malaysian Technical University**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In teaching and learning, the same content can be delivered differently and accepted differently by each student. This also reflects that the same teaching style presented in class is accepted differently by each student. Thus, it is very important for educators to choose the most effective teaching method in order to cater for differences in students' learning styles. Understanding learning styles will help educators maximise teaching materials to suit students' preferred learning styles in order to achieve high quality in the teaching and learning process. The purpose of this study was to identify the preferred learning style among technical students from different faculties in a public university in Malaysia. Neil Fleming's learning style model was the chosen learning style instrument for this study. An online 24-statement questionnaire using 'Yes' or 'No' option was chosen and distributed to 184 respondents. The findings of this study showed that 72.28% of the respondents possessed Visual and Visual-related learning styles. The outcome of the study successfully proved the hypothesis.

*Keywords:* Learning style, visual, technical students

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The learning process is the process through which learners acquire required knowledge and use different approaches and skills to understand information. These differences are known as learning style (Alharbi et al., 2011). Different learners possess different learning styles in order to help them to learn and understand information

effectively. The emergence of numerous learning style models over the past 26 years has contributed to the perception that the learning process can occur in diverse ways. Some learners might carry a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other types of learning styles while another group of learners may find that they prefer to use different learning styles in different situations. There is no specific mix of learning styles to determine this. Everyone can develop a skill in less dominant learning styles, as well as further develop the required skills for most preferred learning styles.

There are many advantages to understanding the suitable learning style that matches each person. Some of these benefits include academic advantages, personal advantages and professional advantages. A learning style inventory can be used in order to determine the preferred learning style among students. There are many learning style inventories available, with each consisting of various questions to test on different types of learning style. A few of the most well-known learning style models are briefly introduced in this study.

The teaching and learning of technical courses or subjects is a challenging task for both educators and learners. Listed below are the most common problems faced by most students and educators in conjunction with learning styles and education.

- Misunderstanding between teachers' expectations of the way students learn and the students' preferred learning styles. Thus, it is a must for educators

to identify the suitable learning style that matches their students' background (Alharbi et al., 2011; Koh & Yaw, 2012; Ganesh, 2014).

- Students' are less motivated when the learning materials do not match their learning style (Alharbi et al., 2011; Baeten et al., 2013).

Underpinning these findings, the main purpose of this study was (1) to investigate the students' learning styles in a public technical university and (2) to validate that visual and visual-related learning styles are the preferred learning styles of most technical students. It is important to note that identifying students' preferred learning styles helps lecturers or educators to align their overall curriculum with the preferred learning styles, and this facilitates an increase in students' levels of comprehension, motivation, and engagement throughout the learning process.

## RELATED RESEARCH

This section considers the learning style of Generation Y and a few well-known learning style models used to measure students' learning style such as Kolb's learning style models (Kolb, 1981), Dunn and Dunn's (Dunn, 1990) and Neil Fleming's Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) learning style model (Fleming, 2001).

### Gen Y Learning Style

Generation Y, Gen Y, refers to the generation of individual born between the 1980s and the year 2000. Another reference to this

generation is the Millennial Generation, or simply Millennials (Waterworth, 2013). Gen Y was born into the age of advancement in technology and used technology throughout their youth. Gen Y is highly visually literate, comfortable in an image-rich environment, equipped with the latest technology and gadgets, such as iPhones, laptops, android-based phones and tablets and are online and connected all the time, 24/7, 365 days a year (Waterworth, 2013).

This group of learners thinks and behaves differently from those of previous generations. They are multi-tasker learners who are easily attracted to ideas from people of their own age and from the Internet rather than to what is taught at school. Research has found that today's learner is less attracted to and less engaged with traditional teaching approaches. Thus, educators must find the best solution to upgrade and realign their teaching materials to suit Gen Y learners (Reilly, 2012). Reilly (2012) also listed useful yet effective teaching methods that bring in technology as a teaching tool to the classroom. Some examples of technology that can be incorporated into teaching and learning are wikis, WebQuests, attractive PowerPoint presentations, video-based activities through the Internet such as YouTube, gamification and the use of social media. Researchers have also highlighted that the Gen Y learner is a skilled multi-tasker and a visual learner (Cekada, 2012; Bhana, 2014; Simpson & Dodigovic, 2014).

A growing body of studies are analysing the preferred learning style in higher institutions across different subject areas

such as mechanical engineering (Koh & Yaw, 2012), computer science (Alharbi et al., 2011; Ocepek et al., 2013) and engineering (Koh, 2008; Hwang et al., 2013; Hill et al., 2014). Although the above studies use different learning style inventories, the final results summarised the same general outcomes. The findings of these studies support that the majority of Gen Y technical students prefer visual-related learning styles the most.

As reported by Social Science Research Network, approximately 65% of the world population is made up of visual learners (Visual Teaching Alliance, 2001; Gutierrez, 2014). Visual Teaching Alliance (2001) also summarised the interesting facts that the human brain can see images that last for just 13 milliseconds; the human eye can register 36,000 visual messages per hour; humans can get the sense of a visual scene in less than 1/10 of a second; 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual; visuals are processed 60,000 times faster in the brain than text; and 40% of nerve fibres are linked to the retina. All of these interesting facts once again support that the human brain processes visual information more efficiently than it does text (Visual Teaching Alliance, 2001).

These findings should encourage educators to include graphics, images and visual representations, especially interactive video clips from television, movies and YouTube in their teaching. Getting learners to engage with visual-based presentations that combine suitable interactive audio and videos in the teaching and learning process

can motivate them to work towards the desired learning objectives. Thus, knowing the right teaching methods and learning approaches to cater for the different learning styles of Gen Y, educators will create a positive impact throughout the learning process.

### **Learning Style Models**

Kolb's learning styles (1981) are defined as the individual's relative preference of the four modes of the learning cycle described in experiential learning theory (ELT), which are Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) and Active Experimentation (AE). This model outlines two approaches to grasping experience, which is Concrete Experience and Abstract Conceptualisation, and another two related approaches to transforming experience, which is Reflective Observation and Active Experimentation. According to Kolb's model, an ideal learning process must involve all four approaches in order for learning to be effective. When a person attempts to use all four approaches, however, he or she tends to develop strengths in one experience involving a grasping approach and one experience involving a transforming approach. The result of these learning styles is a combination of the individual's preferred learning style approaches.

While Kolb's model focusses on four main elements, Dunn and Dunn's learning style model (1989) highlights a different learning style. This learning style model covers observable improvement in student

learning and behaviour. It is aimed at improving the effectiveness of the learning process and was developed for use across all learning levels. The authors believed that instructors must be able to provide multiple strategies in order to cater for different learning styles possessed by each student. By doing this, the educators were able to maximise the teaching materials for more efficient learning (Dunn, 1990). The authors also believed that the learning process in the classroom occurred differently. Students will respond differently to each and every teaching and learning material. Some students are capable of learning and understanding the knowledge by themselves while others look for some help from their teachers and friends. This leads to the hypothesis that learning achievements are greatly subjective and rest on five fixed characteristics, which are environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological and psychological (Dunn, 1990).

Besides Kolb's and Dunn and Dunn's learning styles, another common and widely-used categorisation of learning style is Neil Fleming's Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK or sometimes VARK) model (Fleming, 2001). Fleming defined learning style as an individual's characteristics and preferred ways of gathering, organising and thinking about information (Hawk & Shah, 2007). Three different learning styles are proposed by Fleming, which are visual learning style, auditory learning style and kinesthetic learning style. In Fleming's judgement, most people possess a dominant or preferred learning style; however, some people have

a mixed and some might even possess an evenly balanced blend of the three styles. Fleming's learning style model was chosen as the main learning style model for this study. The reasons for this are outlined in the next section.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used the descriptive research method. This is because this study tried to obtain information and to investigate the learning style possessed by technical students in a public technical university. Thus, descriptive research was deemed the best method to be used. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data for the study. This section provides details of the random sample chosen, the chosen learning style methods, the adapted learning style inventory and data collection and the response rate.

### Research Sample

A total of 184 students (n=184) from four different faculties in a public technical university in Malaysia took part in the survey. The students were from the second and third year of study in a degree programme and therefore, had been exposed to more teaching of technical subjects compared to diploma or first-year degree students. Thus, the bias in the different level of learning understanding was believed avoidable by having the students answer the online questionnaire. This study used the convenience sampling approach. Convenience sampling is useful primarily for documenting a particular characteristic

or phenomenon that occurs within a given group or, alternatively, for demonstrating that not all members of a group manifests a particular trait (Ritchie et al., 2013). Thus, convenience sampling is deemed appropriate for this study. The samples for this study consisted of undergraduate students from two engineering faculties and two computer science faculties as they were studying courses and subjects that dealt with practical-based and laboratory work (Leong, 2011). Table 1 shows the distribution of students from each faculty.

Table 1  
*Number of Students Who Took Part in the Study from Each Faculty*

Faculty	No. of students	Percent
Faculty A	30	16.4
Faculty B	64	34.9
Faculty C	31	16.5
Faculty D	59	32.2
Total	184	100

### Chosen Learning Style Model

Fleming's learning style model was chosen for this study. This model focusses on three main elements i.e. the visual, auditory and kinesthetic, and learners are classified accordingly. Fleming claimed that visual learners prefer looking at learning materials. These learners learn fast through visualisation, love picturing the information they receive and are able to create vivid mental images in order to retain the information gathered. Visual learners also possess more visualisation skills compared to auditory and kinesthetic learners. Some of the activities that they

enjoy most are sketching, painting, creating visual metaphors and analogies (perhaps through the visual arts), manipulating images, constructing, fixing, designing practical objects and interpreting visual images. They are also good at puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts and graphs (James Cook University, 2013); most of these activities are used by the technical students.

In contrast, auditory learners learn best through listening. This group of learners are equipped with good auditory skills and are commonly good at speaking and presenting. They prefer to think in words rather than to visualise information they receive. This group of learners prefer to learn by listening to verbal lectures, discussions, explanations and what others have to say. Most of the time, their auditory skills are practised through storytelling, explaining, teaching, using humour, understanding the syntax and meaning of words, remembering information, arguing their point of view and analysing language usage (James Cook University, 2013).

The last group of learners is the kinesthetic learners. Tactile or kinesthetic learners prefer to learn through moving, doing and touching. This group of learners prefers to express themselves through movement and they possess a good sense of balance and hand-eye coordination. Kinesthetic learners will find it hard to sit still for long periods and are able to process and remember information by interacting with the space around them. Most of the time, their skills are demonstrated through

physical coordination, athletic ability, hands-on experimentation, body language, craft-making, acting, miming, using their hands to create or build, dancing and expressing emotions through the body (James Cook University, 2013).

### **Learning Style Inventory**

The learning style inventory used in this study was the VAK learning style inventory. This cognitive inventory was used as a medium to process, analyse and store information received from the respondents. There was a lot of available online inventory that could be used as a tool to conduct the survey. For this study, an online 24-statement questionnaire using the 'Yes' or 'No' option was chosen as the implemented VAK learning style inventory. This type of inventory option allows the respondents to complete the questionnaire in a shorter time, making it convenient for the respondents to take part in the survey.

The learning styles among the students were analysed into seven respective categories (Koh & Yaw, 2012):

- Visual (V), where the students' learning was mainly through visualisation. This included the use of a mind map, note taking, visualisation of the concept in the mind and information gathering through reading.
- Auditory (A), where the student's learning was mainly based on hearing. This included listening to podcasts and information gathering through listening.



- Kinesthetic (K), where the students' learning was mainly based on touch. This included laboratory work, prototype building, model construction and information gathering through physical involvement.
- Visual and Auditory (V+A), where the students' learning was achieved through visual and auditory means equally.
- Visual and Kinesthetic (V+K), where the students' learning was achieved through visual and kinesthetic means equally.
- Auditory and Kinesthetic (A+K), where the students' learning was achieved through auditory and kinesthetic equally.
- Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (V+A+K), where the students' learning was achieved through all the three types of basic learning styles.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

Table 2 summarises the results of the information gathered on the students' learning style by faculty. The detailed analysis is given later.

Table 2  
*Result of the Students' Learning Style by Faculty*

Learning Style	Faculty A	Faculty B	Faculty C	Faculty D	Total
Visual (V)	15	39	14	39	107
Auditory (A)	5	8	1	1	15
Kinesthetic (K)	3	7	8	5	23
V + A	2	2	3	6	13
V + K	3	6	3	6	18
A + K	0	2	0	1	3
V + A + K	2	0	2	1	5
Total	30	64	31	59	184

Figure 1 shows the learning style of students from Faculty A. The results are plotted based on 30 students with a background in computer science. It can be seen that 50% or 15 students possessed visual learning style, 16.67% or five students were auditory learners, and only 10% or three students were categorised as kinesthetic learners. The rest, a total of 23.33% or seven students, preferred a combination of any two or three learning styles. It is worth mentioning that 6.67% of the students in this group possessed a learning style of V+A+K, which suggests that they would be able to adapt to any of the learning styles to ensure that they are able to obtain the information they need.

Students from Faculty B showed quite a similar result with those from Faculty A, as depicted in Figure 2. The results were plotted based on 64 students, whose education background was in engineering. From the Figure, it can be seen that 60.94% or 39 students possessed the visual learning style, 12.5% or eight students were auditory learners, while only 10.94% or seven students were categorised as kinesthetic

learners. The rest, about 15.62% or 10 students, possessed a combination of any two or three learning styles. Interestingly, none out of 64 students from Faculty B possessed the mixed learning style of V+A+K; this result differed from the results drawn from the information provided by students from Faculty A, Faculty C and Faculty D.

Figure 3 presented a rather different, yet interesting learning style among students of Faculty C when compared with those of Faculty A and B. Students from

Faculty C have a background in computer science. The figure shows that 45.16% or 14 students possessed the visual learning style, 25.81% or eight students were kinesthetic learners and only 3.23% or one student was categorised as an auditory learner. The rest, about 25.8% or eight students, had a combination of any two or three learning styles. None of the students possessed a mixture of A+K learning styles. The result also revealed that 6.45% or at least two students from Faculty C possessed a mixed learning style of V+A+K, which suggests

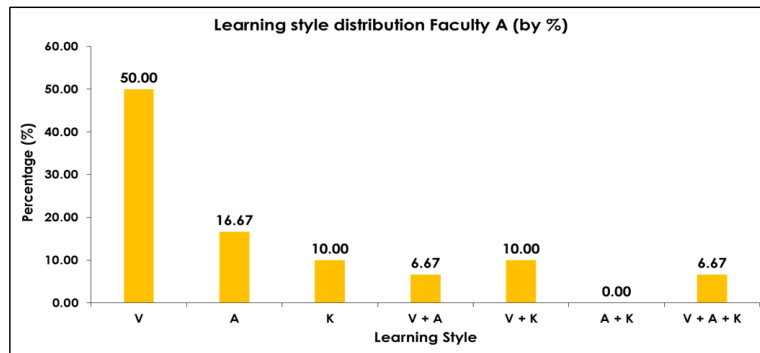


Figure 1. Learning style distribution among 3rd year students in Faculty A. The results were plotted based on 30 students, whose learning styles were categorised into seven learning style categories.

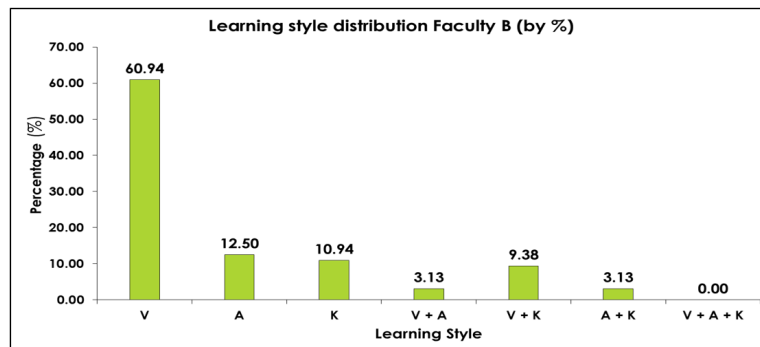


Figure 2. Learning style distribution among 2nd year students in Faculty B. The results were plotted based on 64 students, whose learning styles were categorised into seven learning style categories.

that they would be able to adapt to any of the learning styles to ensure that the learning process can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

Figure 4 shows the learning style of students from Faculty D, who had a background in engineering. As predicted, the majority of the students from Faculty D also possessed the visual learning style. A total of 39 out of 59 students or 66.10% of the students, making the majority group, from this faculty possessed the visual learning style. Another 8.47% or five out

of the 59 students possessed the kinesthetic learning style whereas only 1.69% or one of the students possessed the auditory learning style, making this the minority group for this faculty. It is worth mentioning that there was only 1.69% or one out of 59 students from Faculty D who possessed the mixed learning style of V+A+K.

In terms of the overall sample study, out of the total of 184 students, 107 students or approximately 58.15% of the students were categorised as visual learners; this was the majority group. The second highest

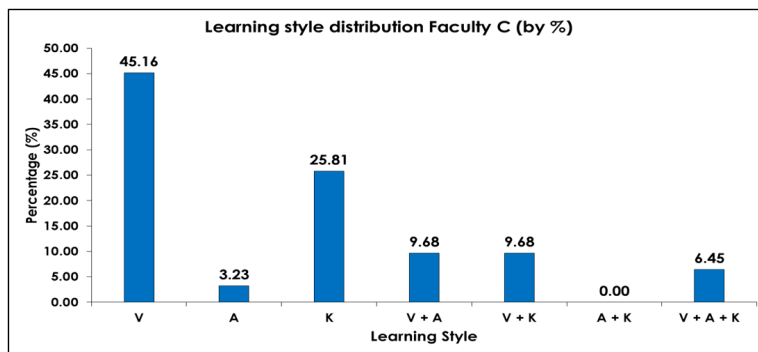


Figure 3. Learning style distribution among 3rd year students in Faculty C. The results were plotted based on 31 students, whose learning styles were categorised into seven learning style categories.

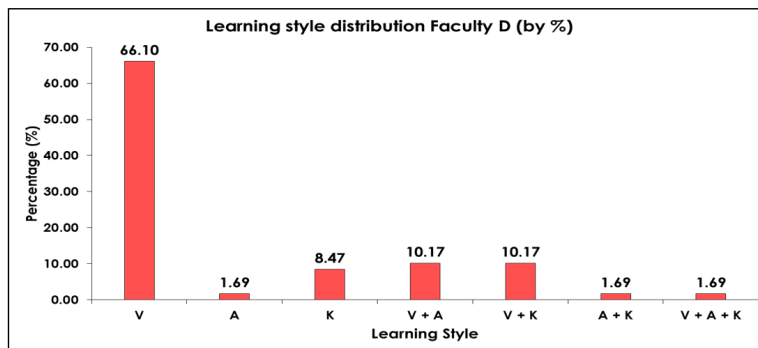


Figure 4. Learning style distribution among 2nd year students in Faculty D. The results were plotted based on 59 students, whose learning styles were categorised into seven learning style categories.

was the group of kinesthetic learners, who comprised about 12.5% or 23 students, while approximately 8% or 15 students possessed the auditory learning style. As for the combination of two or three learning styles, 7% or 13 students preferred the combination of V+A style of learning, 9.8% or 18 students preferred the V+K type, approximately 2% or three preferred A+K, and lastly, approximately 3% or five preferred the V+A+K style. Figure 5 illustrates the overall learning styles distribution as mentioned above.

From the analysis gathered, it can be concluded that the most preferred learning style was the visual or visual-related learning styles; this result is supported by several other studies in this field (Koh Y., 2008; Alharbi et al., 2011; Koh & Yaw, 2012). The second highest preferred learning style was the kinesthetic-related learning styles and the least preferred was the auditory-related learning style. This

is valid as the total sample covering the four faculties was comprised of students doing courses and subjects that dealt with practical and laboratory work, which involved visualisation and hands-on or the kinesthetic approach. This also proved that most of these technical students learnt best through the visualisation and kinesthetic learning styles.

### DISCUSSION

This section provides more information on the three main learning styles, which are the visual-related (V, V+A, V + K, V + A + K); auditory-related (A, V+A, A + K, V + A + K); and kinesthetic-related (K, V+K, A + K, V + A + K) learning styles. The results of this study allow the following propositional statements to be made about the students who took part in the study:

- About 73.34 % or 22 out of 30 students from Faculty A possessed a visual-related learning style; this was the

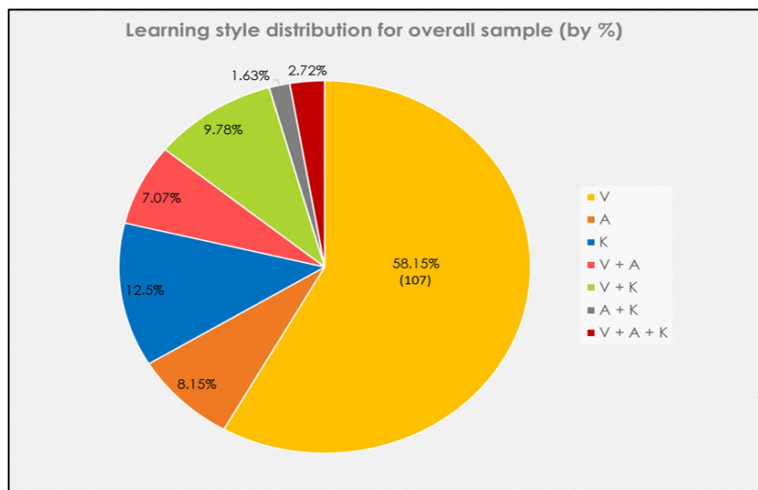


Figure 5. Summary of the overall learning style distribution by percentage (%).

majority group for this faculty. This result was similar to that obtained from the other three faculties, where 73.45% or 47 out of 64 students from Faculty B chose this style, 70.97% or 22 out of 31 students from Faculty C chose it and 88.13% or 52 out of 59 students from Faculty D preferred it.

- The majority of the students in a public university in Malaysia, numbering about 77.72% or 143 students from the overall sample, possessed visual-related learning styles, with 58.15% or 107 students possessing the visual learning style alone. The results revealed that most technical students preferred visualisation as one of their most effective learning style methods. This provided the answer to the first research objective, which was to find out the preferred learning style among technical students. The results also proved the second research objective, as the visual and visual-related learning styles were the preferred learning styles possessed by most technical students.
- The kinesthetic-related learning style was the second highly preferred learning style. About 26.63% or 49 students from the overall sample preferred this learning style. This leads to the proposal that technical students learn best through visualisation and the hands-on or kinesthetic approach.
- Only 19.57% or 36 students from the overall sample possessed auditory-related learning styles, with only 8.15%

or 15 students possessing the auditory learning style alone. This result placed students who preferred the auditory-related learning style in the minority group in this study.

- The distribution of learning styles among the four faculties were rather similar, which suggests that trend of overall distribution of learning styles among technical students in a public technical university in Malaysia.

In addition to the above-mentioned results, one outcome of this study is that it provides an opportunity for educators to look into the learning style distribution of their students from various disciplines in technical fields or even from various other education fields. This would provide educators with an understanding of the suitable teaching styles and methods that can be adopted among students from various backgrounds.

## IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

The results of this study offer some suggestions on using suitable teaching styles to support students' learning preferences. Firstly, by identifying the students' preferred learning style, educators may align their overall curriculum and teaching materials with the most appropriate and suitable learning styles. This will increase students' understanding, motivation and engagement throughout the learning process. Secondly, this study revealed that most Gen Y technical students preferred the visual-

related learning style approach. Thus, there is a need for the development of a specific framework which is able to enhance the learning experience of technical students; specifically, visualisation-based learning approaches should be supported. Further study in this area can compare the relationship between preferred learning styles among Gen Y technical students and other attributes such as between gender and learning style differences among first-year and final-year technical students. The findings would not only be interesting, they would contribute hugely to technical education.

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## **Examining Psychometric Properties of Malay Version Children Depression Invento-ry (CDI) and Prevalence of Depression among Secondary School Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to examine psychometric properties of a Malay version of the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) by using Item Response Theory, particularly the Rasch model, among secondary school adolescents. The Survey method was employed in this quantitative study by distributing the self-report Malay version of the CDI (MCDI) questionnaire to a total of 500 secondary school adolescents in two randomly chosen daily, government (public) schools. The criteria for selecting respondents was that they possessed a minimum competency in the Malay language, were aged 14 or 16 years and were enrolled in secondary schools situated in the selected geographic area. Respondents meeting these criteria were then randomly chosen for this study. This validation study revealed that MCDI items pointing toward one dimension based on item MNSQ, PTMEA values, Rasch residual based on principal component analysis, adhered to Rasch model's expectation, good item separation index (7.30) and very high reliability (0.98). Independent T-test result revealed that females and males differed in terms of the MCDI total score. Female respondents were more susceptible to depression as compared to their male counterparts. School form was not a significant predictor for depression as evidenced by insignificant T- test results.

*Keywords:* Malay version Children Depression Inventory (MCDI), Rasch model, secondary school students; psychometric properties

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Depression, a treatable psychiatric disorder (Malaysian Mental Health Association, 2014), has been studied extensively both in overseas and local contexts. Globally, it has received much attention from researchers and health care personnel in

recent decades. According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, up to 350 million people are estimated to be affected by depression (Marcus et al., 2012; WHO, 2012). WHO also projected depression to be the second leading cause of disability worldwide. This number significantly places a great burden (Marcus et al., 2012) on the existing global crisis of non-communicable diseases and affects all communities across the globe (Marcus et al., 2012; Ferrari et al., 2013). Considerable efforts have been made in studying the disorder's burden both at an international and individual country level. For example, Ferrari et al. (2013) analysed the burden of two subtypes of depression-Major Depression Disorder (MDD) and Dysthymia and presented severity proportions, burden by country, region, age, sex, and year. The findings from this study indicated that depression disorders were a leading cause of disease burden in the 1990 and 2000 GBD studies, in which the statistic had increased by 37.5% in 20 years due to population growth and ageing.

Based on results from the third National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) (2006), approximately 12% of Malaysians aged between 18 and 60 years old were suffering from some forms of mental illness as compared to 10.6 % in 1996. Of those affected by mental illness, depression was ranked number one and made up 2% while psychosis accounted for 1%, worrying 1.8% and the rest accounted for anxiety disorders and other types of mild mental diseases.

In 2008, mental disorders were estimated to contribute 16.8 % of the global burden of disease (WHO, 2008 in WHO, 2011). Mental illness in the local Malaysian context has reached an alarming stage when the latest statistics are compared to those of previous surveys. The statistics involving adolescents aged 15 years and below rose from 13% in 1996, 19.4% in 2006 and 20% (1.0 million) in 2011 (The Star, 2011; NHMS, 2011). Other data reported by the former Health Minister, Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai (The Star, 2011) also pointed towards the rising number of mental disorders among adolescents in the country. It was found that the number of people seeking medical attention for mental illness was 10.6% in 1996 but this number had increased to 11.2%, with 6.4% having considered suicide, in 2006. A high percentage of those people seeking medical treatment for mental illness was from those aged 16 to 19 years and the elderly aged between 70 and 74 years (The Star, 2011). The same pattern of increasing mental health problems among adolescents was also reported by Dr. Lokman Hakim Sulaiman, Deputy Director of General Health (Public Health). Quoting data from the Healthy Mind Programme survey conducted among Form Four (grade 10<sup>th</sup>) students in Malaysia he indicated that approximately 7% of 19,919 students from 157 schools showed signs of severe and extremely severe stress, anxiety and depression based on the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) questionnaire (New Straits Times, 2014).

The scope of research studies has not merely been on examining prevalence rates. Causative factors, age of onset of depressive symptoms and their negative effects on all aspects of life have also been investigated using cross sectional or longitudinal methodologies. Results of longitudinal studies of mental disorders have revealed that depression usually starts during adolescence (Hankin, 2006; Van Lang et al., 2007). The main reason given for this finding is that adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood which demands great coping skills and which is characterised by many cognitive, emotional, psychological and behavioural changes. Such demands and changes might result in this aged group feeling helpless, negative and depressed (Mazza et al., 2010; Mey, 2010). This result is consistent with results of a study by Allen et al. (2007) which showed that the increased prevalence of this mental disorder among adolescents and the life time prevalence rates were approximately 20% to 25%, equivalent to that of the adult population in his study of a United States population (Kessler et al., 1994).

In terms of gender, research studies either at international or local context consistently reported difference in the prevalence of depression. For instance, a study of a sample of 1611 secondary school students conducted in Iran (Daryanavard et al., 2011), found that the female to male ratio of depression occurrence was 1.72 to 1. Similarly, a cross sectional study in Malaysia (Adlina et al., 2007) also reported

that female secondary school students were more depressed than their male counterparts. This finding was based on the fact that the females' mean CDI T-score of 54.73 was significantly higher than the males' CDI T-score of 51.92. In contrast, Weiss and Weisz (1988) found no significant gender difference between males' and females' CDI scores based on their one way ANOVA result.

Due to time and cost factors, depression in children and adolescents has over the last few decades been studied and measured using self-report approaches. Using a self-report approach, youths (excluding those with reading difficulty) are typically asked to endorse a series of statements that best describe their behaviour or characterizes their emotions with regard to a specific symptom of depression during the past two week period. Alternatively, the reading of statements in the questionnaire can be assisted by researchers for those who cannot read. Additionally, there are studies that involve multiple informants; they are children, their parents and/or teachers. Using this approach, self-reports are completed by the children while the other informants complete different forms that rate depressive symptoms in the children based on the informants' observations of the child's behaviour in the school setting and/or in the home environment. This research approach of involving teachers and/or parents is paramount in obtaining more accurate information pertaining to a child's mental health status while at the same time establishing the concurrent validity of the

study conducted. In summary, both methods have their own pros and cons and the choice of approach will depend mainly on the researchers' decision.

Among the variety of self-report instruments available, the CDI has been widely used in studying children and adolescent depression (Kovacs, 1992). The development of this instrument was based on the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Kovacs, 1992) for adults. The CDI requires a minimum reading ability level, has a short administration time of about 15 minutes and targets those aged 7 to 16 years (Kovacs, 1992). These features give rise to its popularity among researchers examining depressive symptoms among youth in non-clinical (schools) and clinical settings worldwide. The psychometric properties of the instrument have been extensively studied using Classical Test Theory (CTT) (Goodchild & English, 2004). Classical test theory is the earliest theory of measurement. The major focus of this theory is estimating the reliability of the observed scores of a test. Examinee observed scores will always depend on the selection assessment items from the domain of assessment items over which their ability scores are defined. Examinees will have lower scores on difficult tests and higher scores on easier tests (Lord & Novick, 1968).

The main reason for examining the CDI's internal structure is to determine the instruments' ability to adequately fulfil two major criteria - validity and reliability. In other words, if the instrument is well designed it will produce psychometrical sound results.

The CDI was initially designed for English speaking samples, but now it has been translated into many other languages to suit the needs of samples from different countries around the world. A review of the literature indicates that the translated versions of the CDI possess different factor structures as compared to the original English version which has only five factors. The factor analysis studies of the translated CDI have produced incongruent results; some yielded as many as eight factors (Monreal, 1988) whereas some studies found only two factors (Del Barrio & Carrasco, 2004). To date, only two validation studies have been conducted of the MCDI in Malaysia and both used children and adolescent samples attending psychiatric clinics (Rosliwati et al., 2010; Tan et al., 2013). The techniques employed in both these studies were based on the CTT method to examine the construct validity of the MCDI.

However, construct validity is an ongoing endeavor that requires the collection of evidence from multiple sources and various backgrounds of samples to determine the psychometric merit of the instrument (Messick, 1995). Messick argued that construct validity essentially must be evaluated in terms of the mosaic of evidence that imbues a person's test scores with meaning. As Bond and Fox (2015) stated, the test score (data) must be able to relate the items and persons together in a coherent and integrated way that represents the construct examined.

Over the last two decades, however, the concern in the health and psychological fields of modern test theory such as those

based on Rasch's measurement model has increased (Shea et al., 2009). More and more research studies have shifted from using the classical approach to Item Response Theory (IRT) given that CTT is weak and the explanation power is not as robust as IRT (Hambleton & Jones, 1993). This is due to two reasons. First, item difficulty and item discrimination are both sample dependent (Hambleton & Jones, 1993; Bond & Fox, 2001). This means that the responses endorsed on the questionnaire itself are affected by the nature of samples recruited in the validation studies (Bond & Fox, 2001). The conclusion of whether statements in questionnaires can be understood in the same way by samples that differ in terms of their cognitive ability is doubtful. A good instrument should be working the same way regardless of the samples and their underlying cognitive ability trait. Second, modern test theory, including the Rasch measurement model (one of the models under IRT), has unique features that can overcome the flaws of CTT. This theory has very robust explanation power (Hambleton & Jones, 1993) because it enables the estimation of the location of item difficulty and samples' ability along an interval scale that uses a unit of measurement called logit (Bond & Fox, 2001). In other words, the results obtained are more meaningful because the instrument works exactly the same way for every sample, no matter whether they are from low or high average knowledge level.

The considerable advantages of IRT has prompted researchers to examine various

depression scales including the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) (Gibbons et al., 2011), the Depression, Anxiety and Stress scale (DASS) (Shea, Tennant & Pallant, 2009), the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Lerdal et al., 2014), to name a few. Being a downward extension of the BDI, the CDI (Kovacs, 1992) has not been extensively examined by means of the Rasch modern psychometric approach. Only one previous study could be found that examined the psychometric properties of the original English version of the CDI using the Rasch model and this study was based on a non-clinical sample of adolescents from the United States (Lee et al., 2011). Other than this particular study, there has been no other similar study conducted in the Malaysian context. Therefore, conducting a study to examine the psychometric properties of the MCDI is necessary before the instrument can be applied to youth of different cultures in the Malaysian context.

#### **AIMS OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to examine the psychometric properties of the MCDI in measuring depression of secondary school adolescents in two selected daily government schools. Additionally, the study also attempted to determine if there are statistically significant differences in CDI total scores according to gender and class form (school year level). Specifically, the objectives of this study were:

1. To examine the psychometric properties of the MCDI by investigating the

dimensionality, item fit statistics, point measure correlation, Rasch residual based principal components analysis, response categories functioning (category frequency, average measure and category threshold), reliability and separation indices, and appropriateness of item difficulty based on a person-item map.

2. To investigate the prevalence of depression among adolescents attending daily government (public) secondary schools.

### **MEASUREMENT THEORY: ITEM RESPONSE THEORY**

Item response theory (IRT) is the modern test theory and also known as latent trait theory (Baghael, 2008). The name item response theory is due to the focal point of the theory being on the item. IRT initially was introduced to the psychometric field with the aim of assisting in ability assessment of students. The emergence of IRT has greatly influenced how test items are created, calibrated and evaluated, and the conclusions that can be drawn about students' learning progress based on the test scores obtained. It is known as the study of test and scores of items based on assumptions concerning the mathematical relationship between a person's abilities and item responses. In brief, the theory is mainly concerned with test scoring and the development of test items (An & Yung, 2014). Generally, test items are developed in educational and psychological fields with the intention to measure various types of abilities such as

mathematical ability, and traits such as personality or behavioural characteristics including depressive tendencies. In addition to the benefits of IRT to the educational field, it is also widely utilized in other disciplines such as medicine, marketing, health sciences, psychology and business (An & Yung, 2014).

While there are many models associated with IRT (e.g. the Rasch model, the 2 parameters logistic model and the 3 parameters logistic model) the present study uses only the Rasch model.

### **The Rasch Measurement Model**

The Rasch model, named after George Rasch, is a psychometric model that can help transform raw data obtained from the human science assessment into equal interval scales. The equality of interval scales is achieved through log transformations of raw data odds and abstraction is accomplished through probabilistic equations (Bond & Fox, 2001). Another feature of the logit scale is that the distance between units on the scale has a consistent value of meaning (Bond & Fox, 2001). This person-item logit scale describes clearly the location of sampled individuals and items of the instrument along the scale (Bond & Fox, 2001).

The Rasch model has a similarity to another of the models in IRT: one parameter logistic model. This model has the fewest parameters: a person trait or underlying ability and an item difficulty parameter, which estimates the degree to which a trait is measured by an item. The Rasch

model is considered as one parameter model where only the item difficulty parameter is taken into account. However, the collected data must first fit the model as the essential prerequisite, not the other way around. In sum, the Rasch model provides approximations of measures which aid in the understanding of the processes underlying the reason why sampled individuals and items of an instrument behave in a particular way. These approximations of measures aid in solving the problems that are impossible to be solved with any other models.

#### *i. Dimensionality*

One of the advantages of the Rasch model is that it builds a hypothetical unidimensional line along which items and persons are located according to the item difficulty and person ability measures (Baghael, 2008). The items that fall close enough to the hypothetical line contribute to the measurement of the single dimension which defines construct theory. Those that fall far from it are measuring another dimension which is irrelevant to the main dimension. Messick (1989) stated that the irrelevant dimensions or sub-dimensions always produce reliable (reproducible) variance in test scores that threaten the construct validity of the instrument. In short, the Rasch model measures one attribute or dimension at a time so that a useful and meaningful composite description can be developed. This focus on an attribute or dimension at a time in measurement is referred to as unidimensionality (Bond & Fox, 2001).

The Rasch assumption of unidimensionality can be measured by the following item statistics: (a) item fit mean square (MNSQ), (b) point measure (PTMEA) correlation and (c) Rasch residual based principal components analysis (PCA).

Item fit mean square (MNSQ) indicates how well each item in the MCDI represented a single underlying dimension, that is depression. MNSQ is calculated by dividing the chi-squared statistic by its degree of freedom and the ratio scale form with expected values of +1.0 (Linacre & Wright, 1994b; Bond & Fox, 2001). Both infit and outfit MNSQ values are always positive (i.e., >0). Items with mean-square values greater than 1.0 indicate underfit to the Rasch model, i.e., the data are less predictable than the model expects, whereas items with mean-square values less than 1.0 indicate overfit to the Rasch model, i.e., the data are more predictable than the model expects (Linacre & Wright, 1994b). These statistics are derived for every item and provide information on the consistency of the responses to each item in MCDI. Point measure (PTMEA) correlation is important to determine if items in the MCDI function as intended. The PTMEA values ranges from -1 to +1, with negative values indicating that items are improperly scored or they do not function as intended (Linacre, 2005a; in Lee et al., 2011). Rasch residual based principal components analysis (PCA) is a statistical test to investigate the dimensionality of the MCDI. Under the Rasch model conditions, the residuals associated with any item are presumed to have no relationship to any other

item in the questionnaire. Consequently, each item's residuals comprise a unique factor meaning that the values in the diagonal of the correlation matrix would be set to zero (Linacre, 1998).

### *ii. Response Categories*

The test of response categories investigates whether each response category in the MCDI (namely, 0 for no symptoms, 1 for mild symptoms, 2 for severe symptoms) is adequately used or function as intended. In the Rasch model, it is achieved by examining the category use statistics (for instance, frequencies of category and the average measures) and also thresholds of each.

Categories frequencies denotes the total number of respondents who endorse a particular response category across each item (Bond & Fox, 2001). According to Linacre (1999a), each category in the MCDI should have a minimum of 10 responses (Bond & Fox, 2001). The average measure, on the other hand, denotes the empirical mean of the measure across categories. It is defined by Linacre (1995) as "the average of the ability estimates for all persons in the sample who chose that particular response category, with the average calculated across all observations in that category" (cited in Bond & Fox, 2001). The average measure values are expected to increase monotonically across categories because the high category endorsement pattern is from a high mean. Category thresholds are boundaries between categories, the measures where adjacent categories are

equally probable and they should also increase monotonically (Bond & Fox, 2001).

### *iii. Reliability and separation indices*

The Rasch measurement model provides indices which assist researchers to examine the adequacy of MCDI items that stretch along the continuum as opposed to clumps of them and also sufficient spread of ability among persons (Bond & Fox, 2001). Person reliability index indicates the replicability of person ordering expected if this research sample of persons were made to answer another set of items that measure depression (Wright & Masters, 1982; in Bond & Fox, 2001). Item reliability index, on the other hand, refers to the replicability of item placements along the pathway if this pool of MCDI items were given to another sample which has equivalent ability levels (Bond & Fox, 2001).

Separation indices estimate the spread of items, or persons, on the measured variables. They are estimated by the ratio of the person or item adjusted standard deviation to the root-mean-square standard error (RMSE), the error standard deviation (Linacre, 2014). These indices provide information of separation in standard error units, with adequate separation in persons and items, measured with an estimate of at least 2.0.

### *iv. Person-item map*

Wright map is easily interpreted when researchers are familiar with what constitute the left and right columns. The left-hand column locates the person ability measures



along the variable. The persons often have a normal distribution (Linacre, 2014). The right-hand column, on the other hand, locates the item difficulty measures along the variable. By ordering item difficulty and person ability on the same linear continuum, researchers can truly understand where a student falls on the scale. If two students received identical raw scores on the MCDI, researchers might conclude they have the same ability. However, by examining the test items in hierarchical order, the researchers might conclude that one individual has a higher ability because he or she may have correctly answered more challenging items. In addition to establishing students' ability, the item hierarchy also allows researchers to determine whether the MCDI is appropriate for the secondary students.

### **CHILDREN DEPRESSION INVENTORY (CDI)**

The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Beck, 1960) was used as a model for developing the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) (Kovacs, 1992). The former scale is a clinically-based, 21 items, self-rated instrument used to screen depression symptoms among adults. Due to the BDI already being in existence and mainly targeting adult group, there was a need to create another similar scale for children and youth. In addition, depression in children and adolescent are easily overlooked and difficult to diagnose due to different symptoms attributed to age and developmental functions (Harrington et al., 1996). Cognitive, social, emotional

and biological changes that transpire over time from childhood to adolescence were proposed as causing phenomenological manifestations of depression symptoms (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998; Weiss & Garber, 2003). Researchers also suggested that "younger children may not have developed the requisite cognitive, social, emotional or biological capacities to experience certain typical adult depression symptoms and secondly, the causes and/or consequences of depression may change across different developmental periods" (cited in Hankin, 2006). Hence, Maria Kovacs, an American clinical psychologist, developed the CDI by changing the wordings of BDI items to make CDI items specifically appropriate for youth aged 7 to 17 years old (Weiss et al., 1991; in Huang & Dong, 2013) and first published it August 1979 (Kovacs, 1992). Items developed can be grouped into 5 factors, including "negative mood", "interpersonal problems", "ineffectiveness", "anhedonia" and "negative self-esteem" (Kovacs, 1992). Descriptions of the subscales of the self-report CDI form are illustrated in Table 1.

Based on the description and review of the literature discussed above, the following is a diagram of the theoretical framework created and which serves as a guideline for this study. The diagram illustration is attached in Figure 1. All 27 items of the MCDI were thoroughly examined by the IRT approach, Rasch model, for its psychometric properties such as dimensionality, response categories, person and item reliability and separation indices as well as the appropriateness of item difficulties for the

recruited respondents based on person-item map. Additionally, the prevalence of depression among the secondary school adolescents was investigated along with significant differences of depression between gender and forms.

**Previous prevalence studies and research related to the examination of psychometric properties of CDI instrument**

CDI has been frequently used by researchers around the world to study depression in children and adolescents in both clinical and community samples (Friedberg & McClure, 2002; Cole & Martin, 2005; Lee et al., 2011). Specifically, its usage in research settings is based on the underlying assumption of the CDI, that is the depressive symptoms experienced by children especially adolescents can be described through the similar symptoms of adults (American

Psychiatric Association, 2000), for instance sadness, guilt, anhedonia (inability to experience pleasure from activities usually found enjoyable) (Dorland, 2009), chronic fatigue, disturbed sleep, social withdrawal and suicidal ideation (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Regardless of its popularity of being used in both clinical and research studies and several empirical studies that have proven the dimensionality of the CDI scales, many criticisms arose pertaining to its usage and assumptions due to the incongruent results obtained from factor analysis studies. The assessment of factor structure underlying the CDI with community and clinical samples varied distinctly. These contrasting findings of the internal structure of the CDI scale can be traced back to research studies undertaken previously. Huang and Dong (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of

Table 1  
*CDI subscales and their definitions*

Number	Factors	Description
1	Negative mood	This subscale reflects feeling sad, feeling like crying, worrying about bad things, being bothered or upset by things and being unable to make up one's mind.
2	Interpersonal problems	This subscale reflects problems and difficulties in interactions with people, including trouble getting along with people, social avoidance and social isolation.
3	Ineffectiveness	This subscale reflects negative evaluation of one's ability and school performance.
4	Anhedonia	This subscale reflects "endogenous depression", including impaired ability to experience pleasure, loss of energy, problems with sleep and appetite, and a sense of isolation.
5	Negative Self-Esteem	This subscale reflects low self-esteem, self-dislike, feelings of being unloved, and a tendency to have thoughts of suicide.

(Cited from Children's Depression Inventory Manual, 2003 in Adlina et al., 2007); Kovacs, 2004 in Psychological Assessments Australia, n.d.).

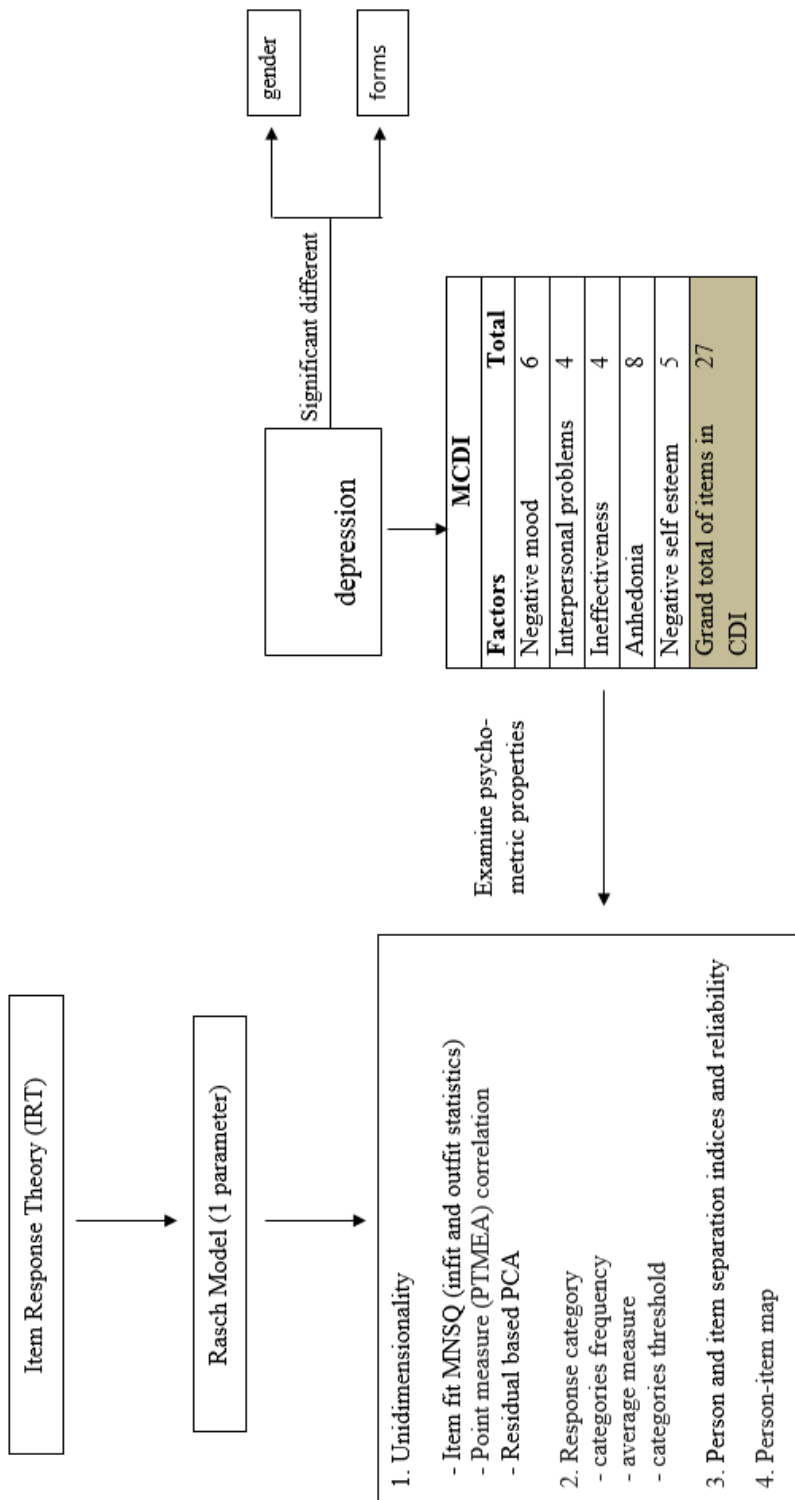


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of the study

the dimensionality of the CDI, involving 24 studies, comprised of 35 independent samples with 18099 participants. They found that the English version of the CDI scale consists of 5 factors whereas non-English versions best comprised only 4 factors. Some researchers found a slightly higher number of factors and argued that the CDI actually consists of 6 factors (Craighead et al., 1998; Gomez et al., 2012), which is different from the 5 factors reported by the original author (Kovacs, 1992). Another study reported as many as 8 factors (Monreal, 1988). Thus, the conclusion from all these CDI structure studies is that the number of factors ranged from 2 to 8.

Despite the shortcomings detected in the scale, especially its internal structure, the popularity of the CDI for use in investigating children and adolescent depression cannot be denied. Many researchers have investigated the psychometric properties such as reliability in the form of test-retest reliability, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency estimates by using Classical Test Theory (CTT) in their research studies (Kovacs, 1985).

The Malay version sample form was validated by Rosliwati et al. (2010) in a study of children and adolescents attending outpatient clinics in Kota Baru, Kelantan state of Malaysia. The psychometric properties reported was adequate as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha value of 0.83, sensitivity of 93% and specificity of 96% based on the area under the ROC (Receiver Operating Characteristic) curve. The study also suggested a cut-off score of

18 to differentiate clinical samples from normal adolescents in the community.

In another validation study of the MCDI conducted in Malaysia by researchers Tan et al. in 2013 who recruited adolescents aged between 12 to 17 years from 6 hospitals in different regions of Peninsular Malaysia, it was found that both reliability and validity values were acceptable. Internal consistency in terms of Cronbach's alpha value was 0.849, similar to findings from another study by Rosliwati et al. (2010). The sensitivity and specificity were 55.6 and 54.4 respectively while the recommended cut-off score based on ROC curve was 17, which was one point less than findings reported by Rosliwati et al. (2010). The scale had good discriminant validity as the scale was able to differentiate between normal and clinical adolescents, with a higher total mean score than those positively diagnosed with depression.

Previous prevalence studies and research related to the examination of the psychometric properties of the CDI from a Classical Test Theory (CTT) approach, as well as several research findings have been described above. The popularity of CTT in validation studies may be due to the reasons of weak assumptions and easily met criteria of the test theory as compared to those from the Item Response Theory (IRT) (Hambleton & Jones, 1993). Despite the easier interpretation and less stringent assumptions of CTT, the true score obtained in the test or questionnaire depends solely on the content of the instrument and the sampled individuals, therefore there is no absolute characteristics of the persons and items.

Under such circumstances, researchers are confronted with problems should they want to compare research findings between groups, not to mention results obtained from different instruments, even where those instruments were similarly operationalized to measure the same construct of depression.

## METHODOLOGY

From a total of 25 secondary schools in Kulim district, a simple random sampling technique was used to choose 2 target schools. At each school chosen, this study employed purposive sampling method, involving only Form 2 (8<sup>th</sup> grade) and Form 4 (10<sup>th</sup> grade) as research samples. Form 3 and Form 5 students are not encouraged by the Ministry of Education to be involved in research study as they involve with national examinations. At the class level, a simple random sampling technique was again used to determine which classrooms of Form 2 and Form 4 would be involved and given the self-report questionnaire. The subjects in this study were 500 secondary school

adolescents (250 from each school) aged 14 (Form 2) and 16 (Form 4) years of both genders.

The breakdown of respondents according to gender and school form are shown in Table 2. According to race, Chinese students constituted the highest number of participants followed by Malay and Indian. There was a total of 288 female respondents.

The Children's Depression Inventory (CDI), Malay language version, was used in this study. The Malay version was translated and validated through factor analysis by Rosliwati et al. (2010). The Malay version of the CDI is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 27 items with 3 response scales of 0 (no symptom), 1 (mild symptom) and 2 (severe symptoms), on which respondents rated themselves based on what they thought and experienced over the past 2 weeks. The scale is made up of five factors: 'Negative Mood' (6 items), 'Interpersonal Problems' (4 items), 'Ineffectiveness' (4 items), 'Anhedonia' (8

Table 2  
*Respondents by school form, gender and race (N=500)*

School form			Race			Total
			Chinese	Indian	Malay	
2	Gender	Female	52	57	34	143
		Male	40	39	28	107
		Total	92	96	62	250
4	Gender	Female	70	13	62	145
		Male	61	12	32	105
		Total	131	25	94	250
Total	Gender	Female	122	70	96	288
		Male	101	51	60	212
		Total	223	121	156	500

items) and 'Negative Self Esteem' (5 items). The total score of depressive symptoms is the sum of all the separate item scores and ranges from 0 – 54, where the maximum score of 54 indicates the more clinically severe level of depression (Kovacs, 1992). However, while a cut-off score of 19 or 20 is generally accepted on the CDI, it is not an absolute, could be identified as severely depressed (Kovacs, 1992). This high cut off-score used in the non-clinical sample aimed to minimize false positives (i.e. children and adolescents who are falsely classified as depressed by means of the CDI) (Kovacs, 1992).

Researchers briefed the respondents on the nature and purpose of the study in their classrooms during the regular school day. Respondents were also informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at any point in time should they feel they were not comfortable while filling in the survey form, with no harm or risk associated with their withdrawal. This study obtained ethical approval from the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and the Malaysia Ministry of Education (MOE), Division of Planning and Policy Research. After permission was granted by MOE, the application process proceeded to Kedah State Education Department. Permission to use the MCDI was obtained from the original author, Dr Kovacs and Multi Health System (MHS) publisher via email. Then, with the two official letters from MOE and State Education Department, researcher went to the randomly selected daily government (public) secondary schools and obtained

the school headmasters' permission prior conducted both the pilot study and the actual field study. The IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics version 21.0 and Winsteps version 3.66 were used in this study. SPSS was used for descriptive statistics analysis and Winsteps for IRT-Rasch analyses.

## RESULTS

All items in MCDI had acceptable infit and outfit statistics, either above 0.60 or below 1.4 threshold values (for Likert scale) for respondents from both school forms (See Table 5). These results fell within the acceptable threshold values, suggesting there existed no redundancy and heterogeneity of items in the Malay version of the CDI for the respondents.

Regarding point measure (PTMEA) correlation, all 27 items in the MCDI for both Form 2 and Form 4 respondents exhibited positive and moderate to strong PTMEAs and ranged from 0.26 to 0.55. All items were acting as expected with regard to the underlying construct but not multidimensional.

Figure 3 shows 26.9% of the variance was accounted for by the unidimensional model which closely matched the modelled value of 27.5%. Additionally, the unexplained variance in first contrast had an eigen value of 1.8 and accounted for 4.9% for the unmodelled data. These results further suggested that the MCDI scale for both Form 2 and Form 4 respondents could be considered unidimensional since the eigen value of the first contrast recorded less

than 5% of the unmodelled variance.

In general, each and every evidence of item statistics [item fit mean square (MNSQ), point measure (PTMEA) correlation as well as Rasch residual based principal components analysis (PCA)] supporting the fact that the MCDI items appeared to be unidimensional for both Form 2 and Form 4 respondents in this study.

From the analysis, it was noted that there were five items in which the response scale had a response of less than 10. They were item 3, 5, 9, 26 and 27. The scale of 2 (indication of clear symptoms) in all these five items had responses of 3 (item 3), 8 (item 5), 7 (item 9), 8 (item 26) and 4 (item 27), following the sequence of items mentioned above. Other than these five items, the remaining items in MCDI had more than the recommended minimum of

10 responses (Linacre, 1999a in Bond and Fox, 2001) for each 0 (no symptoms), 1 (mild symptoms) and 2 (severe symptoms) scale categories (refer appendix 1).

Average measure analysis showed that generally all measure values increased monotonically (ranged from -2.29 to +2.29) across the response categories of 0, 1 and 2. Category threshold analysis findings revealed that thresholds (-1.11 and 1.11) and all three response category scales of 0, 1 and 2 across all items in CDI had their respective distinct peaks and intersections, further suggesting that they were good functioning category rating scales for both Form 2 and Form 4 respondents.

Additionally, each category's outfit MNSQ statistics were less than 2.0, indicating they provided information rather than noise in the measurement process

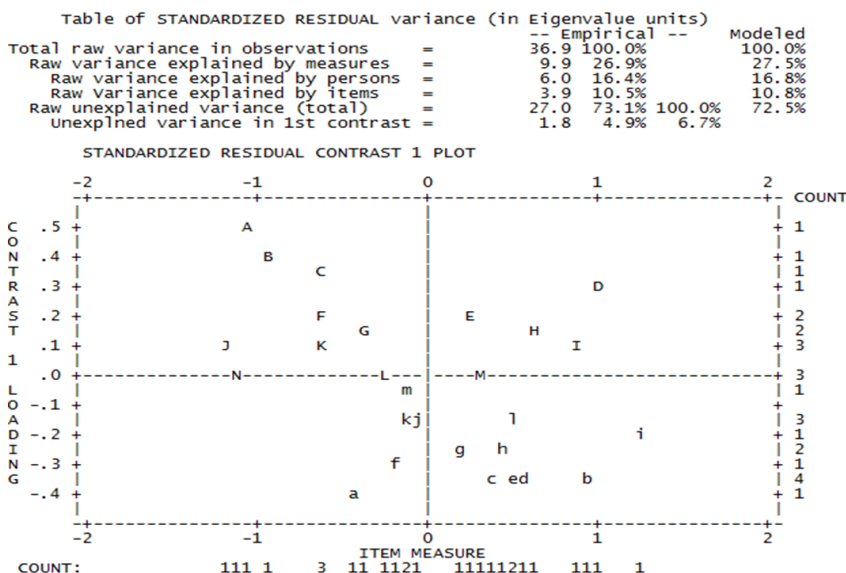


Figure 3. Plot of standardized Rasch residual based principal components analysis (PCA) for respondents (N=500).

(Linacre, 1999a). The results indicated that the three-category rating scale is appropriate for the MCDI.

Person separation reliability value for respondents is given in Table 3. The respondents of these two school forms had an index of 1.90. Both school forms respondents had a person separation value less than 2.00 threshold and concurrently, the reliability estimate was slightly lower than 0.80 threshold. These two values indicate that the MCDI inadequately differentiate between individuals in the study.

Similar to the person separation reliability estimate, results pertaining to the items is presented in Table 4. The respondents had an item reliability index of 0.98, much above the 0.80 threshold. In addition, the sample also had item separation index which was very much greater than the 2.00 threshold, thus, these measures indicated good separation between items used in the translated version of the CDI.

Person latent trait (depressive symptoms) and item difficulty (known as item measure) were arranged following the sequence of highest to lowest; hence, respondents with a higher level of depression and items gauging a more severe degree of depression were located at the top of the Wright map (See Appendix 2). Item difficulty distribution was found higher than the person ability (depressive symptoms level) distribution. Item difficulty covered a range of approximately  $-1.17$  to  $+1.26$  logits (within 2 standard deviations) while person ability covered a range of approximate  $-6.85$

to  $+1.57$  logits (coverage of more than 2 standard deviations).

The Wright map (See Appendix 2) showed that for both the respondents of Form 2 and Form 4, there was not a good deal of overlap (or not symmetrical at vertical axis) between the ranges of all item difficulties with the respondents' range of latent trait parameters. This further indicated that approximately half of the MCDI items which measured the most severe degree of depression were too severe for the samples targeted. Respondents who had higher levels of depression overlapped with MCDI items measuring less severe levels of depression. In addition, from the Wright map, it also illustrated that those respondents with mild to low levels of depression had no overlap with any of the MCDI items. This finding indicates a floor effect for the MCDI items presented to the respondents in the study.

The least likely to be endorsed factor was interpersonal problem. This was checked by just 02. % of the sample for item 27 and 0.6% of the sample for items 5 and 26. The most likely to be endorsed factor was ineffectiveness. It was checked by 34.4% of the sample for item 24 and 26.4% of the sample for items 15 and 23. Generally, interpersonal problem has the lowest calibration, followed by negative self-esteem, negative mood, anhedonia and ineffectiveness, in ascending order. The person mean is approximately 1.5 logits lower than the item mean. This indicates that the majority of the sample was not very severely depressed.



The distribution of total MCDI score (raw score) transformed to comparable T scores is presented in Appendix 3. The highlighted two rows with the raw score of 20 and above for females and 25 and above for males, equivalent to a T score of above 65 and indicates positive for depression.

In addition, there is evidence that female respondents significantly obtained much higher total MCDI scores as compared to their male counterparts at almost each different total MCDI score (raw score) level, as is presented in Appendix 4. Besides that, independent sample T-tests revealed that female respondents had higher mean total MCDI scores, 13.56 ( $SD=6.904$ ) compared to males 12.03 ( $SD=6.303$ ) with a  $t$  value of 2.547 ( $df=498, p=.011$ ). This result indicates that the difference in MCDI total score between genders was statistical significant with  $p$  value less than 0.05 (See Appendix 5). Thus, it also can be concluded that female respondents from both school forms obtained significantly different total MCDI scores than male respondents.

The descriptive statistic showed respondents of different school forms differed in terms of the total MCDI score (raw score). In terms of mean total MCDI (raw) score, the opposite pattern was observed with Form 4 respondents recording a higher mean score (13.20) compared to Form 2 respondents (12.62). However, when the analysis was subjected to independent  $t$ -test, results revealed a non-significant  $t$  value of -0.976,  $df= 498, p>0.05$  (See Appendix 6). The conclusion can be derived from the findings is that the respondents of Form 2 statistically obtained no difference in CDI total score as compared to those Form 4.

## DISCUSSION

The acceptable fit statistics of this study were not consistent with another three studies which utilized fit reference values of 0.6 to 1.5. Firstly, Lee, Krishnan and Park (2011) found two items with poor infit and five items with poor outfit. Secondly, Sauer et al. (2013) reported two items with

Table 3  
Person summary statistics for respondents ( $N=500$ )

Measure	Average ZSTD ( $SD$ )		Adjusted $SD$	RMSE	Separation	Reliability
	Infit	Outfit				
-1.62	1.02 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)	0.83	0.44	1.90	0.78

Table 4  
Item summary statistics for respondents ( $N=500$ )

Measure	Average ZSTD ( $SD$ )		Adjusted $SD$	RMSE	Separation	Reliability
	Infit	Outfit				
0.00	1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)	0.67	0.09	7.30	0.98

Note: RMSE= root mean square error; ZSTD= z-standardized fit statistic.

outfit slightly exceeding the recommended threshold of 1.50 and Thirdly, Shea et al. (2009) reported item five in the depression scale showed (4.76) very high misfit in the first analysis. In terms of PTMEA, this study finding was consistent with Lee et al. (2011) whose values of PTMEA results were positive and also ranged between 0.29 and 0.61. The Rasch based PCA finding of this study, however, was indeed much lower compared to that of Lee et al. (2011) which was 54.7 % (8<sup>th</sup> grader) and 59.6 % (12<sup>th</sup> grader). Compared with another study by Shea et. al (2009), they found that the depression scale failed to fit the Rasch model (appeared multidimensional), however, results improved with the revised scale by removing item five. Although MCDI items pointed toward one dimension, the low variance obtained in this study compared to others, was most probably attributed to by either person measure S.D. or item difficulty S.D. or both were small (Linacre, 2011).

In PCA also, the eigen value served an important function in dimensionality of the items in the MCDI questionnaire. This study's result was similar to those obtained by Lee et al. (2011) as their study had a first construct eigen value of 2.4 (reference value adopted was less than 3.0) for both 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders and the unmodelled variances for lower and higher graders were 4.0% and 3.5% respectively (reference value adopted was less than 5%).

From the perspective of categories response, validation studies using the Rasch model by Sauer et al. (2013), Shea

et al. (2009) and Lee et. al (2011), have also reported that the category thresholds monotonically ordered with reasonable step calibration values, indicating that answer format of the scale is appropriate and is consistent with this study's finding.

The 500 respondents were inadequately differentiated in this study as evidenced by a separation value of 1.90 (slightly less than the desired value of 2.0) and consistent with findings from the study conducted in 8<sup>th</sup> (PSI=1.93) and 12<sup>th</sup> graders (PSI=1.69) by Lee et al. (2011). However, this study found moderate reliability of 0.78 for person separation index (PSI), similar to 0.79 (8<sup>th</sup> grader) and 0.74 (12<sup>th</sup> grader) in the Lee et al. (2011) study, but slightly lower compared to 0.84 in the Sauer et al. (2013) study and 0.89 in the Shea et al. (2009) study.

However, in terms of item perspective, the finding of this study revealed good separation value that was 7.30 with very high reliability of 0.98. This similar phenomenon of off-target person separation index but good separation of CDI items was also reported in the Rasch validation study by researchers Lee et al. (2011) with a value of 5.54 (item separation index) and 0.97 (reliability). A very high item reliability (1.00) was also reported by Sauer et. al (2013). In the context of all the results obtained in this study, this high reliability value of CDI items was informative as it demonstrated that all items were clear in measuring varying sensitivity levels of depression; just that when items were presented to individuals with depression symptoms of low to moderate severity

levels, items would not reliably reflect respondents' true level of depression (evidenced by low PSI). Hence, it would seem that absence of good overlap between CDI items and respondents recruited in this study who were presumably a nonclinically depressed sample was the most probable reason causing this phenomenon.

The uneven spread of MCDI items along the y-axis which did not line up

with the respondents in the Wright map, suggested that approximately half of the MCDI items were unable to provide useful information about the depression as they were not good in detecting milder forms of the disorder. This finding is similar to the findings for non-clinical secondary school samples in the United States (Lee et al., 2011) and the 5035 non-clinical adult sample in Germany reported by Sauer et al.

Table 5  
*Item statistics of Malay version CDI for respondents (N=500)*

Item	Item Difficulty	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	PTMEA Correlation
1	0.52	0.88	0.84	0.44
2	-1.11	1.15	1.12	0.26
3	1.00	0.88	0.85	0.50
4	-0.19	0.97	0.98	0.45
5	0.89	1.03	1.04	0.29
6	0.25	1.00	0.99	0.41
7	0.53	0.81	0.67	0.49
8	0.28	1.03	1.15	0.36
9	0.92	0.85	0.79	0.45
10	0.17	0.93	0.95	0.40
11	-0.65	0.97	0.94	0.49
12	0.42	1.05	1.07	0.34
13	-0.36	1.03	1.03	0.39
14	-0.11	0.99	0.97	0.43
15	-1.04	1.15	1.20	0.40
16	-0.27	1.15	1.24	0.34
17	-0.65	1.09	1.12	0.41
18	-0.13	1.08	1.08	0.38
19	-0.63	1.21	1.22	0.31
20	-0.46	0.85	0.83	0.55
21	-0.05	0.97	1.03	0.43
22	0.38	1.04	1.05	0.36
23	-0.97	0.99	0.97	0.49
24	-1.17	0.96	0.95	0.50
25	0.55	0.87	0.84	0.48
26	0.63	1.09	1.11	0.31
27	1.26	0.94	0.87	0.36

(2013). The most probable reason for the consistently poor person-item map found in this study and others mentioned above is that the majority of respondents recruited were mentally healthy (absence of depressive symptoms) at the time of the studies. From a clinical point of view, the floor effect in the present non-clinical sample does not seem problematic because the CDI instrument is designed for clinical use (Kovacs, 1992) and thus it should be used with more severe levels of depression (Sauer et al., 2013).

From the gender perspective, more female respondents were found to experience depressive symptoms compared to their male counterparts in this study, a surplus of 26 persons. Females also had significantly higher total scores compared to male respondents. In the aspect of mean total score of the MCDI, this study found that female respondents scored significantly higher than their male counterparts with the values being 13.56 and 12.03 respectively. Independent sample T-test results revealed there was a statistically significant difference in CDI total scores between gender ( $t=2.547$ ,  $df=498$ ,  $p=.011$ ). This finding was consistent with findings from the four studies by Adlina et al. (2007), Teoh (2008 & 2010), Yaacob et al. (2009), and Ghazali and Azhar (2012). Ghazali and Azhar found female secondary school students aged between 13 to 16 years old in Sarawak reported a higher prevalence of depression compared to males, the percentage of female to male was 56.9% and 43.1% respectively but independent T-test result was insignificant [ $t(384)=0.13$ ,  $p=0.89$ ].

The study by Yaacob et al. also found females ( $n=728$ ) had higher depression mean scores, 16.85 in MCDI compared to males which was only 15.51 ( $n=679$ ), a score difference of merely 1.34. Results of the study by Yaacob et al. (2009) revealed that a statistically significant difference existed in CDI depression scores between gender with a  $t$  value of  $-4.35$  ( $p\leq.00$ ). A similar pattern was also detected in the findings reported by Adlina et al. in 2007 which revealed females were more depressed than males. Their study involved 2048 secondary school respondents. Similarly, Teoh in her two studies in 2008 and 2010 reported females in lower secondary school were more prone to develop depression with the rate of 14% and 20.6% respectively. The reason that females were more susceptible to depression in this study might be due to two reasons, (1) more female respondents recruited in this study which gave higher prevalence percentage and (2) pubertal development started much earlier in females than their male peers and they were found to be more likely to become depressed (reported by Ge et al., 1996, 2001; Graber et al., 1997).

Independent sample T-tests were also conducted in this study to look for the presence of significant differences between school forms. From Table 10 (See Appendix 6), results showed that Form 2 students had higher MCDI total scores (raw scores) at 18 different score levels (marked by asterisk \*) as compared to only 13 different score levels in Form 4 students. However, in SPSS mean comparison, Form 2 had a lower mean total MCDI raw score (12.62)

as compared to Form 4 respondents (13.20). When it came to the independent T-test, results revealed a  $t$  value of  $-0.976$ ,  $df=498$ ,  $p=0.33$ , indicating that the difference of mean total MCDI raw score between school forms was statistically not significant. Comparison of this study's finding with other research could not be established due to the lack of available evidence in this particular area. In summary, based on the two independent T-test results, it can be concluded that the female respondents were more prone to depression compared to male respondents and that school forms was not a good indicator in predicting depression symptoms.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that the MCDI demonstrates sufficient evidence of psychometric properties. In addition, findings of this study showed that a minority (13.8%) of the respondents were positive for depression based on the MCDI total score (T-score) of 65 and above. Independent T-test result revealed that females and males differed in terms of their CDI total score. Thus, this translated version instrument is useful as a first line tool in screening for depressive symptoms among students before more detailed clinical diagnostic assessment procedures are administered by professional psychiatrists and psychologists. The school counsellor (provided that they are trained to be familiar with the administration and interpretation of results) can benefit from the information gathered by providing timely counselling to the affected students

and make early referral to psychiatrist and psychologists for further depression diagnostic confirmation and follow up management. At a broader perspective, the results of the study pertaining to depression prevalence serve to remind schools, state educational departments and the Malaysia Ministry of Education (MOE) stakeholders to work collaboratively and closely with Malaysia Ministry of Health (MOH) in designing and maintaining appropriate school programmes for monitoring the mental health status of students by all means, before the situation reaches the stage which is beyond anyone's capability for any intervention.

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**APPENDIX 1**

Table 6  
Category frequencies of three response scales

ITEM CATEGORY/OPTION/DISTRACTOR FREQUENCIES: MISFIT ORDER

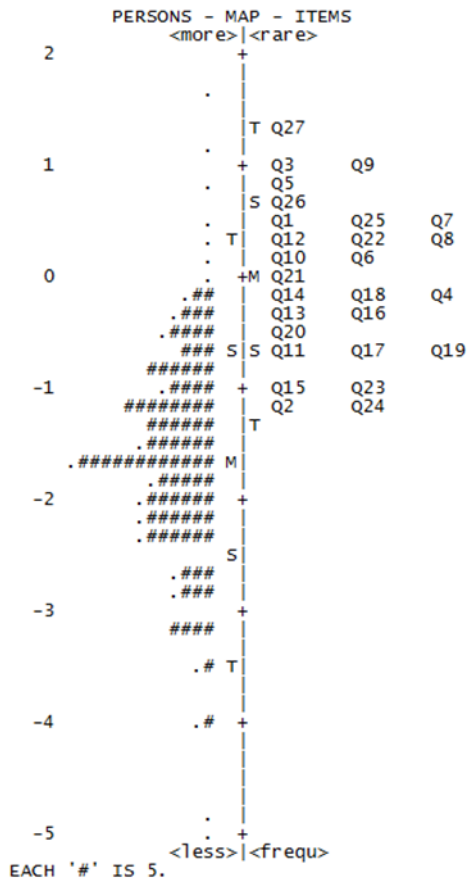
ENTRY NUMBER	DATA CODE	SCORE VALUE	DATA COUNT	%	AVERAGE MEASURE	S. E. MEAN	OUTF MNSQ	PTMEA CORR.	ITEM	
16 A	0	0	356	71	-1.89	.05	1.0	-.37	Q16	0
	1	1	93	19	-1.09	.09	.9	.27		1
	2	2	51	10	-1.03	.12	1.6	.21		2
19 B	0	0	224	45	-2.01	.07	1.1	-.32	Q19	0
	1	1	228	46	-1.39	.06	1.2	.24		1
	2	2	48	10	-1.24	.11	1.4	.13		2
15 C	0	0	215	43	-2.13	.07	1.1	-.41	Q15	0
	1	1	193	39	-1.37	.05	.8	.22		1
	2	2	92	18	-1.12	.09	1.5	.25		2
8 D	0	0	353	71	-1.91	.05	1.0	-.40	Q8	0
	1	1	128	26	-1.01	.07	.9	.37		1
	2	2	19	4	-1.16*	.24	2.0	.10		2
2 E	0	0	78	16	-2.32	.15	1.1	-.28	Q2	0
	1	1	392	78	-1.54	.04	1.1	.21		1
	2	2	30	6	-1.38	.20	1.1	.07		2
17 F	0	0	273	55	-2.01	.06	1.1	-.38	Q17	0
	1	1	161	32	-1.37	.06	1.0	.19		1
	2	2	66	13	-.88	.11	1.2	.30		2
26 G	0	0	313	63	-1.90	.06	1.1	-.31	Q26	0
	1	1	179	36	-1.26	.06	1.1	.29		1
	2	2	8	2	-.94	.41	1.4	.09		2
18 H	0	0	358	72	-1.91	.05	1.0	-.40	Q18	0
	1	1	101	20	-1.04	.08	.8	.30		1
	2	2	41	8	-.95	.13	1.4	.21		2
12 I	0	0	355	71	-1.89	.05	1.0	-.36	Q12	0
	1	1	130	26	-1.08	.07	.9	.34		1
	2	2	15	3	-1.10*	.19	1.6	.10		2
22 J	0	0	302	60	-1.94	.06	1.0	-.35	Q22	0
	1	1	186	37	-1.25	.06	1.1	.31		1
	2	2	12	2	-.67	.23	1.1	.15		2
5 K	0	0	403	81	-1.79	.05	1.0	-.28	Q5	0
	1	1	89	18	-1.14	.08	1.0	.24		1
	2	2	8	2	-.39	.38	1.1	.16		2
13 L	0	0	169	34	-2.23	.09	1.0	-.40	Q13	0
	1	1	311	62	-1.37	.05	1.0	.36		1
	2	2	20	4	-1.17	.19	1.1	.10		2
21 M	0	0	268	54	-2.04	.06	1.0	-.41	Q21	0
	1	1	210	42	-1.27	.06	1.1	.32		1
	2	2	22	4	-.59	.18	1.0	.22		2
6 N	0	0	259	52	-2.01	.07	1.0	-.37	Q6	0
	1	1	229	46	-1.33	.05	1.0	.30		1
	2	2	12	2	-.06	.22	.8	.25		2
23 m	0	0	206	41	-2.23	.07	1.0	-.48	Q23	0
	1	1	217	43	-1.36	.05	.8	.26		1
	2	2	77	15	-.93	.09	1.1	.30		2
14 n	0	0	277	55	-2.01	.06	1.0	-.39	Q14	0
	1	1	197	39	-1.31	.05	1.0	.28		1
	2	2	26	5	-.49	.15	.8	.27		2
4 k	0	0	181	36	-2.19	.08	1.0	-.40	Q4	0
	1	1	303	61	-1.41	.05	1.0	.30		1
	2	2	16	3	-.23	.16	.9	.26		2
11 j	0	0	289	58	-2.08	.06	.9	-.49	Q11	0
	1	1	140	28	-1.19	.06	.8	.29		1
	2	2	71	14	-.85	.09	1.0	.32		2

Psychometric Properties of Children's Depression Inventory

24 i	0	0	137	27	-2.37	.09	1.0	-.43	Q24	0
1	1	1	297	59	-1.52	.05	1.0	.16		1
2	2	2	66	13	-.76	.09	.9	.34		2
10 h	0	0	418	84	-1.84	.05	.9	-.42	Q10	0
1	1	1	50	10	-.75	.09	.4	.30		1
2	2	2	32	6	-.61	.16	1.4	.27		2
27 g	0	0	405	81	-1.83	.05	1.0	-.36	Q27	0
1	1	1	91	18	-.92	.09	.9	.34		1
2	2	2	4	1	-.37	.31	.9	.11		2
3 f	0	0	272	54	-2.11	.06	.9	-.49	Q3	0
1	1	1	225	45	-1.13	.05	.8	.47		1
2	2	2	3	1	.08	.61	.9	.13		2
1 e	0	0	379	76	-1.90	.05	.9	-.43	Q1	0
1	1	1	107	21	-.96	.08	.9	.36		1
2	2	2	14	3	-.26	.20	.7	.23		2
25 d	0	0	342	68	-1.98	.05	.9	-.47	Q25	0
1	1	1	147	29	-.99	.06	.8	.43		1
2	2	2	11	2	-.44	.25	.9	.18		2
9 c	0	0	389	78	-1.89	.05	.9	-.44	Q9	0
1	1	1	104	21	-.88	.07	.7	.39		1
2	2	2	7	1	-.04	.45	.9	.19		2
20 b	0	0	247	49	-2.18	.06	.9	-.52	Q20	0
1	1	1	212	42	-1.26	.05	.8	.34		1
2	2	2	41	8	-.50	.12	.8	.34		2
7 a	0	0	394	79	-1.91	.05	.9	-.50	Q7	0
1	1	1	91	18	-.75	.06	.5	.42		1
2	2	2	15	3	-.30	.27	1.1	.24		2

\* Average measure does not ascend with category score

## APPENDIX 2



Each “.” is 1-4 persons  
 M : mean  
 S : one standard deviation  
 T : two standard deviation

Figure 2. Distribution of persons and 27 Malay version CDI items

**APPENDIX 3**

Table 7  
*Distribution of total CDI score of respondents according to gender (N=500)*

Raw score		T – score	Interpretation of overall symptoms/complaints	Frequency		Percentage	
Female	Male			Female	Male	Female	Male
≥23	≥29	Above 70	Very much above average	31	5	10.76	2.36
20-22	25-28	66 to 70	Much above average	27	6	9.38	2.83
17-19	21-24	61 to 65	Above average	28	10	9.72	4.71
14-16	16-20	56 to 60	Slightly above average	44	33	15.28	15.56
7-13	7-15	45 to 55	Average	117	122	40.63	57.54
4-6	3-6	40 to 44	Slightly below average	30	27	10.42	12.74
1-3	0-2	35 to 39	Below average	9	9	3.12	4.26
0	N/A	30 to 34	Much below average	2	0	0.69	0.00
N/A	N/A	Below 30	Very much below average	0	0	0.00	0.00
Grand total				288	212	100.00	100.00

**APPENDIX 4**

Table 8  
*Distribution of Malay version CDI total score for positively screened depression according to gender (n=69)*

CDI total (raw) score	Female respondents		Male respondents		Cumulative frequency
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage	
20	11	18.97	N/A	N/A	11
21	9	15.52	N/A	N/A	9
22	7	12.07	N/A	N/A	7
23	8	13.80	N/A	N/A	8
24	7	12.07	N/A	N/A	7
25	3	5.17	3	27.27	6
26	5	8.62	2	18.18	7
27	1	1.72	1	9.09	2
29	0	0.00	3	27.27	3
30	2	3.45	1	9.09	3
32	2	3.45	1	9.09	3
36	1	1.72	0	0.00	1
39	1	1.72	0	0.00	1
42	1	1.72	0	0.00	1
Grand total	58	100.00	11	100.00	69

**APPENDIX 5**

Table 9  
*Independent sample T-test for gender (N=500)*

Group Statistics				
Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Female	288	13.56	6.904	.407
Male	212	12.03	6.303	.433

Independent Samples Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances									
Total score	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.451	.229	2.547	498	.011	1.534	0.602	0.351	2.178
Equal variances not assumed			2.582	475.559	.010	1.534	0.594	0.367	2.702

## APPENDIX 6

Table 10  
*Sample T-test for school form (N=500)*

Group Statistics				
Form	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
2	250	12.62	6.998	.443
4	250	13.20	6.373	.403
Total score				

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Total score	Equal variances assumed	1.152	.284	-.976	498	.330	-.584	.599	-1.760	.592
	Equal variances not assumed			-.976	493.707	.330	-.584	.599	-1.760	.592





## **Integrating Rhythmic Syllable with Tonguing Drills in Elementary Brass Instruments Instruction**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Various rhythm syllable systems that are based on the concept that prioritises ‘sound before symbol’ are known to be able to enhance students’ ability to read music notations. To date, these systems are yet to be integrated with basic brass instrumental skills such as tonguing. This research examines the effect of the rhythm syllable system when it is applied as an integrated teaching approach for novice brass instrument learners by combining rhythm learning with articulation. A teaching experiment was conducted with 90 elementary trumpet students assigned randomly into three groups. Each group underwent five weeks of intervention with a single content but using different approaches of rhythm learning. Data analysis showed significant differences among the groups, and the group that used the adapted rhythmic syllable approach achieved the highest both in rhythm accuracy and articulation clarity, followed by the group that used Kodaly syllables and the control group that did not apply any particular syllable system. The integrated rhythmic syllable reduces the time of learning the brass instrument while eliminating the redundancies resulting from compartmentalised teaching. This research has extended the scope of application of the rhythmic syllable system beyond musicianship training. It indicates that methods in musicianship training can be localised for specific purposes in instrumental learning.

*Keywords:* Instrumental teaching, rhythmic syllable, integrated learning, brass instrument, articulation clarity

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The acquisition of musical instrumental skills requires long hours of efforts and a strong sense of self-determination in the learners. It takes months of training before one becomes competent enough to perform as a member of the ensemble on

stage. Bands, orchestras and ensembles in secondary schools have to juggle this need to train competent players and to ensure a smooth succession process of the graduating players every year. To be able to train students within the limited time frame of the school year is among the biggest challenges faced by music instructors and administrators.

The severity of poor succession is more prevalent with an ensemble of a smaller size, or a band/orchestra that has fewer student players. One of the consequences of poor succession is fluctuation of performance quality. In addition, supplementary education like general music classes is not widely available in Malaysian secondary schools. Students' music practices are also distracted by their tuition and other extra-curricular activities. Many school bands have suffered from poor succession and displayed little development over the years.

Our earlier investigation of the widely used method books for wind players (Feldstein et al., 1988; Lautzenheiser et al., 1999; Hickman, 2006; Arban, 2007; Harnum, 2008) revealed music skills are arranged in a compartmentalised manner. For example, lessons for rhythmic pattern hardly mention the need to maintain a stable pulse and other aspects that need to be considered together in playing the blowing instrument. As for drills for tonguing, the technique of multiple tonguing was introduced separately after the chapter that focuses on rhythm patterns. Compartmentalising the learning component is understandably an effective way of presenting information, but it invites

redundancies in the learning process, as mentioned by Hartzler (2000) that it is not advisable to teach skills in isolation. This is because music is integrative in nature and it is impossible to play music in certain aspects only without involving the other aspects.

Many researches have been done to compare the rhythm instruction using different types of rhythm syllable systems, but no conclusion has been made on which system is the best (Varley, 2005). In addition, Varley's survey showed that Kodaly syllable system and the '1e&a' system were the two most popular system used in America while the Gordon syllable system was less popular (Varley, 2005, pp.84-171). However, a recent study done by Pearsall (2009) showed that the Kodaly syllable system and Gordon syllable system achieved significantly higher than the conventional '1e&a' in rhythm instruction. A research conducted by Earney (2008), also related to rhythm instruction, shows that dictation on rhythmic pattern gives some positive impacts on the sight reading test.

Therefore, this study examines an approach in music learning, which could bring some musical elements to be conducted in an integrated manner. Hence, students could see the relationship of these musical elements clearer, in order to learn it easily.


## **APPROACHES IN RHYTHM LEARNING**

Learning to read and play rhythm patterns is one of the fundamental lessons for beginner instrumentalists, alongside others musical elements. Music notations are meaningless

until they are decoded and transformed into the action of sound production. Competency in reading music notations is essential for a player to be able to play in an ensemble. Conventionally, music notation is introduced to the learners through calculation before the rhythmic patterns are made audible. This is done using metric counting. Pulses are numbered in ascending manner beginning with 1 in every bar. The quarter subdivision of the pulse is read as ‘e’, ‘&’, and ‘a’, while the half subdivision of the pulse is given ‘&’ (Figure 1).

In conventional teaching, students are first required to perform the cognitive process of mathematical thinking in order to understand the rhythmic pattern. This system helps students in recognising the musical notes’ position in the bar. As Varley (2005) points out, the ‘1e&a’ system is an approach widely used in the United States.

Rhythmic syllables, as an alternative to the metric counting approach, was found to be effective in teaching rhythm patterns (Ester et al., 2006). Based on the concept that prioritises ‘sound before symbol’, that is the core principle of Pestalozzi in music learning (Feldman et al., 2011, p. 7), it capitalises inner hearing in the learning process. The rhythm syllable system was found to be effective in enhancing learners’ ability in decoding musical notations into sound.

Kodaly’s system remains as the most popular rhythm syllable system used in the US. (Bacon, 1993; Varley, 2005) as well as in others countries including Malaysia. In Kodaly’s system, each note value is represented by a different syllable. The crotchet value is read as ‘ta’, whereas the quaver value is read as ‘ti’. Syllabus for the grouping of semiquavers  was

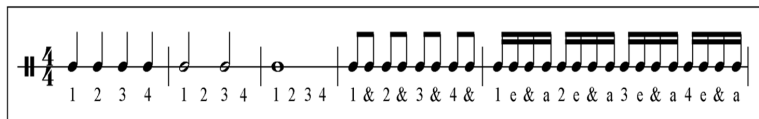


Figure 1. Conventional ‘1e&a’ system of counting rhythm patterns

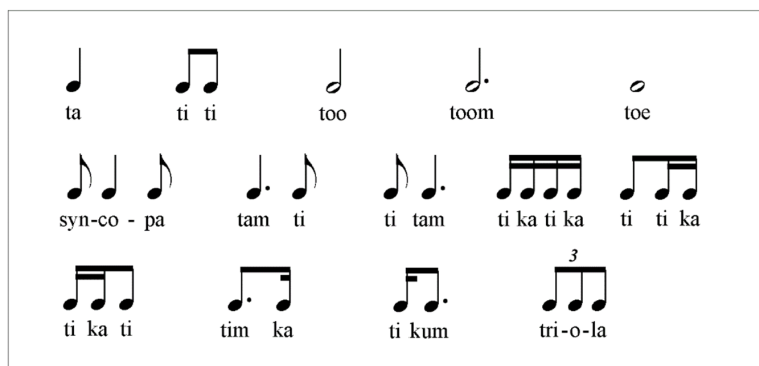



Figure 2. Kodaly syllable system  
Source: Choksy (1988, p. 255)

originally ‘ti-ri-ti-ri’, but was modified to ‘ti-ka-ti-ka’ later in the English speaking region due to the difficulty in pronouncing ‘ri’ unlike in Hungary, the birthplace of the Kodaly system (Choksy, 1988, p.93). Figure 2 illustrates the Kodaly rhythm syllable system.

The use of consonants /t/ and /k/ for the semiquavers’ group  is in accordance with the principle for double tonguing drills (Sletto, 2011). Nevertheless, rhythm syllable systems are usually used in general music classes, and not in instrumental classes. Recognising and counting the notation values are seen as the usual practice in instrumental lessons. According to Gordon (1993, p.143), most of the instrumental method books starts the rhythm learning at a high level of learning in understanding it theoretically .

Besides Kodaly’s, the Takadimi system devised by Hoffman, Pelto, and White (Hoffman et al., 1996) also contains features that are coherent to the tonguing drills.


Figure 3 illustrates the syllables used in Takadimi system.

The Takdimi system uses ‘ta-ka-di-mi’ for the semiquavers’ group. The consonants /t/ and /k/ are useful in tonguing drills as mentioned. However, the second half of the syllables ‘di-mi’ does not have any relation to tonguing drills. Thus, the adaptation for this system has been made for the purpose of this research, to compare the integration effect of rhythm learning and tonguing drills. Figure 4 provides an illustration of the adapted syllable which uses ‘ta-ka-te-ke’ instead of ‘ta-ka-di-mi’ for the fundamental syllable used.

Although both the Kodaly system and the adapted system have the syllables that relate to tonguing drills, there are some differences between these two systems. The syllables in the Kodaly system are vocalised based on the type of musical notes, namely ‘ta’ for crotchet note, ‘ti’ for quaver note, and so on whereas the adapted system which emphasises the pulse, uses ‘ta’ for all



Figure 3. Takadimi system  
Source: Ester et al. (2006, p. 62)

the macrobeats with the vowel /a/ for the down beats and /e/ for the up beats. Both systems use the same consonant /t-/k-/t-/k/ for reading the grouping of semiquavers ; however different vowels are applied for both systems.

There are some other syllable systems for rhythm learning, such as Gordon's sets of syllables and the chanting name system. These systems however, have little relations with the tonguing structure and will not be covered in detail in this paper.

### LEARNING OF BRASS INSTRUMENTS

Unlike other instruments in the orchestra, the sound production of brass instruments involves a technique called buzzing in which the players vibrate their lips on the mouthpiece while blowing. A new student is required to make the sound with the mouthpiece alone before attempting it with the instrument. Fundamentals of brass learning include the aspect of breathing, posture, fingering, embouchure, and articulation. The progress of mastering

these fundamentals depends largely on the teaching approaches adopted.

The control of the tongue in order to articulate is much emphasised in blowing instruments. Tonguing is trained through specific drills from the elementary stage of learning. Brass pedagogue advocate, Claude Gordon, regards the consonant /t/ as most relevant for teaching single tonguing, and the combination of /t/ and /k/ for multiple tonguing to ensure a non-stop air-flow into the instrument (King, 2004, p.70). These two consonants are commonly applied in established method books for brass instruments. Figure 5 contains excerpts of tonguing drills taken from a well-known method book 'Arban Complete Method for trumpet'.

Mastering the fundamentals of an instrument is an initial but essential step for the long term development of students' musicianship and sensitivity towards sound. It is therefore, vital to have the fundamentals taught thoroughly during the elementary stage of lessons for trumpet. Besides the fundamentals for tone production (that

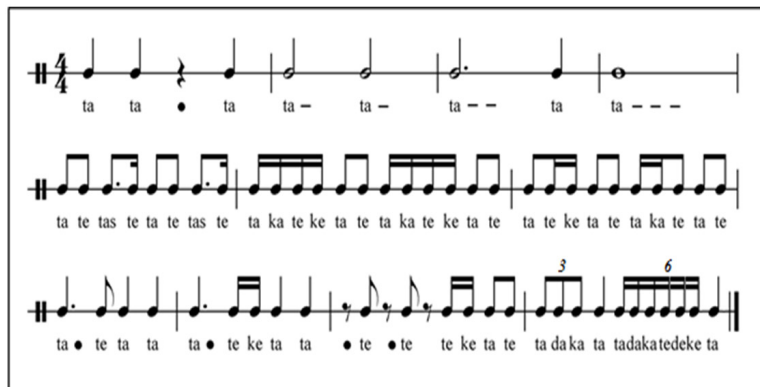


Figure 4. Adapted syllables

include breathing, posture, fingering, embouchure and articulation), the ability to read and play rhythm patterns from notations is necessary before the aspects of pitch and intonation in a melody can be introduced.

## INTEGRATED LEARNING

The potential for an integrated approach arose from the similarities observed between the rhythmic syllables and tonguing drills. Researchers have proven the efficacy of integrated learning in various areas. Students showed better ability in receiving knowledge when they are taught 'integratedly' compared with those who used compartmentalised learning. Students in the conventional compartmentalised approach were less skilful in applying knowledge integratedly for understanding a new concept (Beane, 1995). Integrated teaching brings closer different elements in increasing the understanding of concepts, skills and values of the elements (Goodlad & Su, 1992). Integrated learning helps students grasp the overall relationships and connections among different subjects (Ignatz, 2005).

Regardless of the idea of integration that could bring much benefits to the learning process, the effectiveness of this approach is much dependent on the details of implementation. The lack of resources is the factor which need to be considered (Wallace et al., 2001). Besides this, the constraint of time for collaboration between elements or subjects is also a challenge in producing successful integrated lessons (Flowers et al., 2003). To date, no studies on integrated skills learning of music instrument is traceable.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to examine whether rhythm syllable system can be used in an integrated way in elementary trumpet instruction which involves the learning aspects of rhythm accuracy and articulation clarity. The experiment will see into the efficacy of rhythm syllable system in rhythm accuracy and the efficacy of rhythm syllable system in articulation clarity in an integrated manner. In an effort to create holistic teaching in the elementary brass instruments instruction, this study explores the potential of integrating rhythm syllable system with

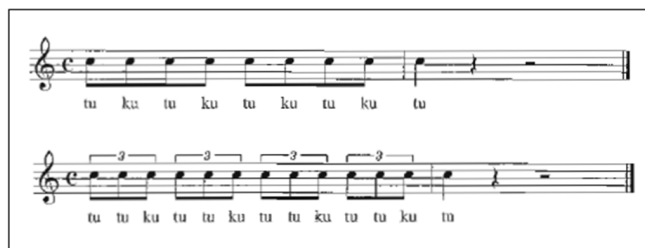


Figure 5. Syllables used for double tonguing and triple tonguing  
Source: Arban J.B. (2007, p. 170)

articulations. Conventionally, the two elements are taught separately. This study intends to examine if the integration of the two elements lead to a better understanding of the relationship between the two. Integration is done by devising an adaptation of the existing rhythm syllable system and applying it in a teaching experiment. The effectiveness of the rhythm syllable system is examined in three aspects: 1) rhythm accuracy; 2) articulation clarity; and 3) when rhythm accuracy and articulation clarity are combined.

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

With the consideration of the problems in practical and academic aspects mentioned, this study will answer the research question: Is rhythm syllable system an approach for creating an integrated instruction for elementary brass learning which improves few basic skills learning (rhythm and articulation) simultaneously?

**RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

Based on Pestalozzian principle of the music system, a concept for music learning which emphasises sound before symbol has been derived. This concept enables the musical notation to be linked to sound. Thus, rhythm syllable systems are introduced, especially for rhythm pattern learning. It uses various syllables for reading the rhythm patterns. The process of decoding musical notation could be done through inner hearing due to the syllables which are linked to the symbols.

To expand the application of the rhythm syllable system beyond mere rhythm learning, tonguing-based syllables are incorporated to cater to the needs for tonguing drills, specifically focused on trumpet learning. The integration applied the “nested model” in Fogarty’s approach to integrated learning (Fogarty, 1991), which targets multiple skills within each subject area. The completed teaching approach requires a learning outcome where the student is able to display rhythm accuracy and the articulation clarity at the same time while playing a given music notation.

Figure 6 shows the conceptual framework of this research.

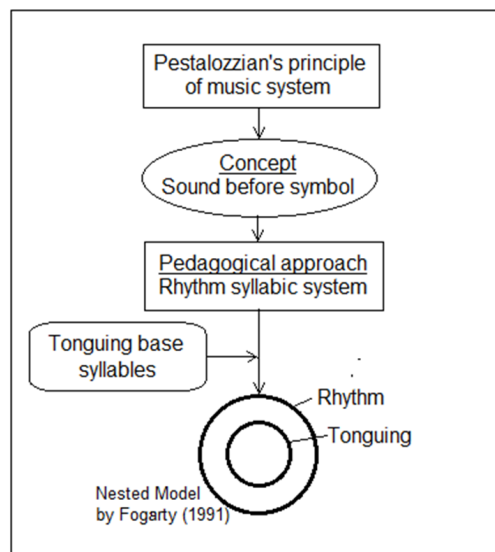


Figure 6. Conceptual framework

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Experimental design was used in this research. A pre-test was conducted before the five-week intervention, followed by

post-test. The control group that learned in the '1e&a' conventional way of rhythm learning (C) as Group 1; Kodaly syllable system (X<sub>1</sub>) as the Kodaly Group, or Group 2, and the adapted syllable system (X<sub>2</sub>) as Group 3. The research design involves pre-test, intervention, and post-test.

	Group	Pretest	Intervention	Posttest
(R)	Conventional '1e&a' System	O <sub>1</sub>	C	O <sub>2</sub>
(R)	Kodaly Rhythm Syllable System	O <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>
(R)	Adapted Rhythm Syllable System	O <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>

Figure 7. Experimental research design

Homogeneity of the respondents' instrumental ability was proven through the result of pre-test. All respondents were secondary school students who had begun with trumpet for several months and have merely done buzzing. Independent variables consist of the three approaches for rhythmic learning used in the intervention while dependent variables consist of 1) rhythm accuracy and 2) articulation clarity. (Figure 8) Intervention is spread over a period of five weeks with a 40-minute lesson given in each week. The learning content are rhythm patterns which consist of ♩, ♪, ♫, ♬, and ♮ for lesson 1; followed by ♩, ♪, and ♫ for lesson 2; ♩, ♪, and ♫ for lesson 3; ♩, ♪ and ♫ for lesson 4; and ♩ for lesson 5.

Assessments of learning outcomes were divided into two parts. The first part was Sight Playing Test on 12 questions of 6-8 beats rhythmic patterns which assessed

rhythm accuracy and articulation clarity simultaneously. The number of questions tested was adequate for rhythm assessment (Geringer et al., 1992; Gordon & Martin, 1993/1994). In order to avoid the possibility of stopping during the assessment due to fatigue lip (Budde, 2011, p.167) which will then affect the assessment, a short two-bar (6-8 beats) rhythmic pattern was used. Furthermore, the two-bar rhythmic patterns were based on the studies conducted by Palmer (1974) and Bacon (1998). The musical notations used were in accordance with the content used in the related studies (Palmer, 1974; Colley, 1984; Rohwer, 1997; Bacon, 1998; Budde, 2011).

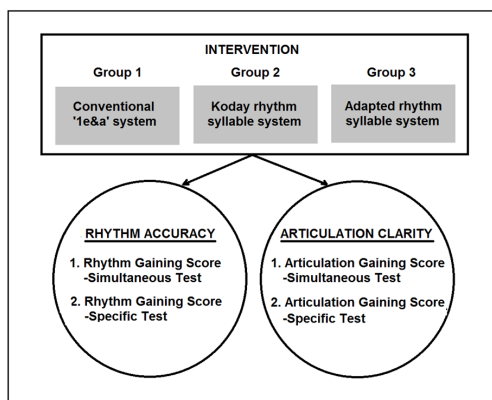


Figure 8. Research framework

The second part was specific tests done separately for rhythm and articulation. The specific test on rhythm accuracy consists of 12 questions of 1-bar rhythm pattern that were shown using flash cards. This specific test on articulation required the students to play rhythm patterns of repeated notes ♩ in the tempo of 60, 90, and 120 crotchets per



minute. Rhythmic patterns used in specific tests for articulation clarity were adapted from the study conducted by Budde (2011).

A pilot test was conducted to examine the reliability of the judges, the reliability of the research instruments and the process of intervention. The number of respondents during the pilot test was 15 students ( $n=15$ ), which was adequate for examining the reliability of instrument through test-retest method (Gouveia, 2013, pp.245-246), and they were randomly assigned into three groups using lottery method (Rajagopalan et al., 2009). During the field test, everything went through the same process as the pilot test with 90 ( $n=90$ ) as the figure for the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was obtained with the test-retest method and a high intraclass correlation coefficient of .997 to .999 for every component in the test was achieved. The reliability of each question in the test which uses the Likert scale was obtained positively with the Croanbach Alpha coefficient of .994, which is more than the accepted reliability value .6 (Zaidatun, 2003, p.345; Chua, 2006, p.285). In addition, all possible threats in the experiment were controlled and successfully reduced to a minimum level by dividing the respondents randomly into groups. These respondents were purely the beginners without any formal music class outside of school. In addition, every step in the intervention was handled by the researcher himself.

The assessments were done by three judges who have been band instructors for more than 20 years. The inter-rater reliability

was scrutinised through the results of pilot test. The marks given by the judges for each component of the assessment during the pre-test and post-test panel was compared with intra class correlation coefficient, a method suggested by L. Rajmil et al. (2010, pp. 255-256) and Samuel et al. (2005, p. 375), and has recorded the coefficient from .719 to .999 which was more than the minimum reliability coefficient .65 (Ebel & Frisbie, 1991).

The intervention used in this research was basically an instruction for rhythm learning which uses the same syllabus of learning (Figure 9), and there was no articulation instruction or explanation during the intervention. The only difference was the approach used for teaching rhythm. This was to examine whether the rhythmic syllables could bring any impacts to the articulation clarity, besides the rhythm lessons. Kodaly syllable system was chosen because it could give some degrees of challenge to the adapted syllable system. This is due to the same consonants of syllable /t/ and /k/ in both system that are usually used for the tonguing drills (King, 2004, p. 70; Arban, 2007, p. 170).

The respondents went through three tests which were judged on rhythm accuracy and articulation clarity. The first test was sight-playing which tested rhythm accuracy and articulation clarity simultaneously (Figure 10).

The second test was tested on rhythm achievement specifically. It was done by sight reading at the one bar rhythm (Figure 11).



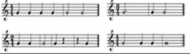












Lesson	Content	Outline
1		- play the following notes and rest with the correct value:  - play the following rhythm correctly: 
3		- play the following notes and rest with the correct value:  - play the following rhythm correctly: 
5		- play the following notes and rest with the correct value:  - play the following rhythm correctly: 
2		- play the following notes and rest with the correct value:  - play the following rhythm correctly: 
4		- play the following notes and rest with the correct value:  - play the following rhythm correctly: 

Figure 9. Syllabus for the intervention



Figure 10. Samples of Sight Playing Test



Figure 11. Samples of Rhythm Reading Test



Figure 12. Articulation Test

In order to affirm the achievement of clarity of articulation, playing on the rhythm pattern which consists of semiquaver groups in slow (60 bpm), moderate (90 bpm), and fast tempo (120 bpm) was conducted (Figure 12).

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In order to examine the achievement of these two dependent variables simultaneously, data analysis was done using MANOVA. First, the analysis for sight playing test


showed a significance difference for the rhythm accuracy achievement among the groups,  $F(2, 87)=257.42$ ,  $p=.000.$ , with a partial eta squared value of .855, showing a large effect size. In Table 1, the post-hoc test with Turkey HSD indicates that Adapted group recorded the highest achievement ( $M=45.93$ ,  $SD=3.859$ ), followed by the Kodaly group ( $M=31.73$ ,  $SD=4.690$ ), and the Conventional '1e&a' group ( $M=20.20$ ,  $SD=4.604$ ).

Results of the specific tests for rhythm (the second part of assessment) is shown in Table 2. The result shows significance differences among groups for the rhythm accuracy achievement,  $F(2, 87)=303.90$ ,  $p=.000.$ , with a partial eta squared value of .875. Again, Adapted group obtained the highest achievement ( $M=49.37$ ,  $SD=3.718$ ), followed by Kodaly group ( $M=36.50$ ,  $SD=4.392$ ), and Conventional '1e&a' group ( $M=21.07$ ,  $SD=5.132$ ).

The result revealed that trumpet students who learn rhythm patterns using syllable systems performed better than those who learned in conventional way. The metric counting of '1e&a' used in the conventional teaching, which is based on the cognitive process of mathematical thinking, was found to be more time consuming. The verbalisation of symbols contained in syllable systems had assisted students in recognising rhythm patterns through sound reference. The process of decoding musical notes happened smoother by transferring the symbols into sound assisted by inner hearing compared with by transferring the symbols into mathematical values. The syllable

system enables the rhythmic pattern learned to be heard internally, and to be recalled and played back in future applications.

Among the two syllable systems used in the intervention, students who learnt with the adapted syllable system (group 3) performed better than the Kodaly syllable system (group 2). This is due to the different characteristics of these two syllable systems. The adapted syllables emphasised the beats of the rhythm within each bar. Every macro beat was consistently read as 'ta', but not for the Kodaly system. The Kodaly system did not use the same syllables for the macro beat each time, and the syllables were based on musical notes. It will be read as 'ta' when there is crotchet note, but it will be read as 'ti' for quaver note, and so on, which means the syllable for macro beats is not same all the time (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

The Kodaly system uses 'tri-o-la' for a triplet. At least for Malaysian students, this is difficult to pronounce compared with 'ta-da-ka' in the adapted system. During the intervention, the reading of 'tri-o-la' seemed harder than reading 'ta-da-ka' among students. Therefore, students did better in the 'triplet' rhythmic pattern for the adapted system. In addition, students performed better in reading  using 'tas-te' for the adapted system than using 'tim-ka' for the Kodaly system.

Although the syllables were pronounced correctly by respondents in the Kodaly group, the rhythm patterns were at times inaccurate. This is due to the fact that much attention was put in differentiating the type of musical notes rather than its rhythm




pattern during the decoding process. As for the Adapted group, rhythm patterns were more accurately performed as the pulse orientated syllables by themselves implied the grouping for each beat within a bar.

As for the variable of articulation clarity, the result of the same sight playing test showed significance differences among groups,  $F(2, 87)=158.04$ ,  $p=.000$ . with a large effect size (partial eta value  $=.784$ ). In Table 3, the result of post-hoc test with Turkey HSD showed that the Adapted group recorded the highest achievement ( $M=49.30$ ,  $SD=4.692$ ), followed by the Kodaly group ( $M=40.23$ ,  $SD=5.374$ ), and the Conventional '1e&a' group ( $M=25.33$ ,  $SP=5.701$ ).

Results of the specific test for articulation also shows significance differences among groups,  $F(2, 87)=74.27$ ,  $p=.000$  (partial eta squared value  $=.631$ ). As showed in Table 4, the Adapted group obtained the highest achievement ( $M=17.80$ ,  $SD=3.022$ ), followed by the Kodaly group ( $M=15.10$ ,  $SD=2.383$ ) and the Conventional '1e&a' group ( $M=10.07$ ,  $SD=1.964$ ). With this, findings from the sight playing test is affirmed. The control group with its '1e&a' approach that did not have any drills for tonguing, performed the lowest in the test.

The vowels /a:/ and /e/ used in the adapted syllable system enables the 'ta-ka-te-ke' to be read with the differentiation between down beat /a:/ and up beat /e/. With the imagery of a down-up circulation, this system assists in securing a steady beat count with all the 'ta's falling on macrobeats. In contrast, the Kodaly syllables use 'ti-ka' for both the down beats and the up beats.

Comparing the 'ta-ka-te-ke' and 'ti-ka-ti-ka', the Kodaly syllable does not assist in the position of macrobeats, although 'ta-ka-te-ke' and 'ti-ka-ti-ka' both are the appropriate syllables for tonguing drills.

When note groups of  are to be read in fast tempo, 'ti-ka-ti-ka' would not give the sense of pulsation. Students may face the risk of tongue slips in the Kodaly rhythm pattern which involves  and , compared with the adapted syllable system which has the controlling for every pulse.

The finding of this study proves that the integration of the rhythm syllable with tonguing drills is successful in producing higher achievement in elementary brass instruction. Without using any rhythm syllable, the control group achieved the lowest assessment. The adapted syllable system has resulted in the highest achievement for both rhythm accuracy and articulation clarity. Rhythm syllable modified to the need of a particular instrument is a viable alternative to the existing teaching method to instrumental instruction. The adapted rhythm syllable system devised in this study has the following advantages compared with the existing approaches: 1) the syllables are orientated to pulsation, 2) ease in pronouncing the syllable, 3) the consonants catered for tonguing drills, and 4) the imagery guidance for down and up beat positions.

Although the syllable system adapted from the Takadimi syllable system achieved the best result in this study, this finding is different from Fust's study (2006) which compared the Takadimi system (the original

system before adaptation) with the '1e&a' system on the rhythmic achievement. The study by Fust did not show the significant difference between the Takadimi approach and the '1e&a' system on the rhythm achievement, while this study has shown the significant difference between the Takadimi adapted system and the '1e&a' system. Fust allowed respondents to use different blowing instruments whereas this study only used trumpet, which means the factor


of musical instrument was controlled in this study. In addition, the consonants used in this study /t/ and /k/ are simpler compared to the Takadimi's /t/, /k/, /d/, and /m/ which involves more consonants. Furthermore, the understanding in subdivision of beats is required to read  as 'ta-mi' under Takadimi system, compared with the adapted system which used 'tas-te' that extend the sound of dotted quaver note naturally, without even understanding the note value. The

Table 1  
*Mean score for the gaining of rhythm accuracy in Sight Playing Test*

Group	N	M	%	SD
Conventional '1e&a'	30	20.20	33.67	4.604
Kodaly	30	31.73	52.90	4.690
Adapted	30	45.93	76.57	3.859

Table 2  
*Mean score for the gain of Rhythm Accuracy in Specific Test*

Group	N	M	%	SD
Conventional '1e&a'	30	21.07	35.12	5.132
Kodaly	30	36.50	60.83	4.392
Adapted	30	49.37	82.28	3.718

Table 3  
*Mean score for the gaining of Articulation Clarity in Sight Playing Test*

Group	N	M	%	SD
Conventional '1e&a'	30	25.33	42.22	5.701
Kodaly	30	40.23	67.05	5.374
Adapted	30	49.30	82.17	4.692

Table 4  
*Mean score for the gaining of Articulation Clarity in Specific Test*

Group	N	M	%	SD
Conventional '1e&a'	30	10.07	41.96	1.964
Kodaly	30	15.10	62.92	2.383
Adapted	30	17.80	74.17	3.022

same situation is faced when reading ♪ as 'tim-ka' in Kodaly system, which does not give the metaphor of the rhythmic pattern effectively.

## IMPLICATION

The concept of verbalisation of symbol as used in the adapted rhythm syllable is effective in reducing redundancies in rhythm learning. The conventional approach has an additional step in the note reading process, that is, to analyse note value before playing the rhythm pattern. Understandably, any analytical process is complex and time consuming. The additional step involves conversing visual symbols into numbers before further conversion into movement (rhythm), which was omitted altogether by using the rhythm syllable. The findings imply that teaching and learning time spent in lessons can be reduced by integrating different elements. It further implies that students may have a better understanding of the relationship between the different elements of instrumental skills when they are taught in an integrated manner.

The consonant /t/ and /k/ are the consonants which are popularly used in tonguing drills (King, 2004, p. 70; Arban, 2007, p. 170). With the integration of the consonants into rhythm syllable system, the tonguing drills could be done simultaneously along with the rhythm learning.

The consistent use of vowels /a:/ and /e/, which group the musical notes for every beat, will assist in detecting the pulse. Moreover, by using the vowel /a:/ which represents the down-beat, and /e/

which represents the up-beat, it creates a metaphor for understanding the macrobeat and microbeat better. This feature enhances the visualisation into rhythm learning which enable the down-up beats (subdivision of beats) be seen innerly, besides hearing the rhythm innerly.

## CONCLUSION

This study has proven the relevance of the rhythm syllable system in instrumental teaching by associating it with tonguing drills. By modifying the syllable to the need for tonguing, a new approach of elementary brass instruction was created, and was found effective. This implies that rhythm syllable systems stand to be localised to the particular needs of instrumental instructions. Different versions of the syllable system can be created for other conditions, for example, for strings, or for some specific learning activities. Educators are reminded of the possibilities that teaching methods can be improved so that the redundancies can be reduced while the process of learning can be more holistic.

One of the advantages of an integrated approach is that it does not need to exclude certain learning content simply for the sake of clarity in the organisation of the learning content. In the case of brass instruction, the skill of multiple tonguing needs time to develop and is usually excluded in the early stage of instruction. With the adapted syllable system, multiple tonguing training could be introduced as early as the introduction of the rhythm pattern. In other words, an integrated approach

accommodates more elements of learning without causing confusion to the learner or needing more teaching time. Interestingly, research on methods of integrated learning in music has received little attention in the past decades. It is hoped that this study could stimulate more attempts in devising integrated and localised approaches in music education. Educators device and modify their approach in their daily teaching, but a research on how these modification are made will contribute to the advancement of pedagogy. A discourse that does not merely focus on how to achieve higher but also on clarifying the process of knowledge production and reproduction .

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## **An Empirical Study on Emerging Issues and Challenges faced by Middle level HR Practitioners in IT Companies, Karnataka, India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Human resource management (HRM) functions are designed to address and fulfil the needs of employees within the company. The function focuses on retaining, maximising the performance of the employee that leads to obtaining the objectives and goals of the company. The HRM acts as a communication platform which connects employees and their employers in order to meet their defined goals within the company. Due to tremendous change in the work environment, the focus of Human Resource (HR) functions has shifted from administration activities to Strategic HRM functions (SHRM). The SHRM acts as a critical success factor for the HR function that helps to identify the required skills and motives which in turn influence key strategic plans and outcome within the company. The role of middle level HR practitioners is changing due to transformation in business needs in the company that helps in formulating and developing HR strategies, policies and procedures that meet the requirements of the company. Various initiatives and engagement activities are carried out by HR practitioners in efforts to reduce the stress level at workplaces which help in motivating and retaining talents within the company. The HR practitioners are specialised in various HR functions such as Human Resource planning (HRP), recruitment and selection, HR information systems (HRIS), employee engagement, leadership and development engagements, career development process, learning and development initiatives, performance management, retention strategies; these are organised within the company. Among the major challenges faced by middle level HR practitioners are: retaining the services of talented workforce, reducing the stress level

at workplace, lack of career development opportunities and developing leadership skills for talented employees. This study identifies and also addresses the emerging issues and challenges faced by middle

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level HR practitioners in their day to day activities in a selected IT firm in Karnataka. Though the study is limited to a particular IT firm in Karnataka, the findings can be generalised to the IT industry in India, other industries in India and overseas to get a fair understanding of the emerging issues and challenges faced by middle level HR Practitioners

*Keywords:* Strategic human resource management, employee engagement, performance management, leadership and development, activities, issues, challenges and career development

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## INTRODUCTION

The HRM functions were formally introduced in 1929 through a Royal Commission on Labour established by the Government of India. After two years of investigation, the commission recommended an appointment of a labour officer to take care of employment and dismissal processes of employees in their respective workplaces. The scope of labour officials were extended during World War 2 in order to facilitate recreation and medical facilities for the labour force based on the Industrial Disputes Act, 1946 and Factories Act, 1947. The labour officers were re-designated as welfare officers with added responsibility of managing wage, leave and retirement process for workers. The welfare officer is renamed and designated as personnel manager by adding new responsibilities such as administrative and operational activities for employees within the organisation (Mirza, 2003). The

personnel management functions give more importance to operational activities in terms of attracting, retaining and motivating the workforce within the organisation, where the human resource management function focus more on strategic perspective with respect to business and its functions in order to gain competitive advantage in the industry. (Randall, 2000).

Human resource management functions are more strategic and comprehensive in nature and thus, the management should give more importance to the employees who works independently or within the team in contributing to achieve the business goals and objectives of the company. The focus of human resource functions have shifted from personnel management functions in managing the work force strategically within the organisation through various HR policies and procedures such as reward and recognition programmes, organising effective training programmes, recruitment methods for selection process to maintaining work life balance and motivating the talented work force within the organisation (Vani, 2011).

Human resource is the most important asset for the organisation and employees help in managing business functions and its operation by handling customers, vendors and dealing with cash flows by communicating through proper channels which ultimately helps the company attain its business objectives. Human resources strategies help in executing business functions successfully through maximising company efficiency, human capacities

and individual competences which ensure the workforce is capable of meeting the company's goals and objectives. (Haslinda, 2009).

### **IT Industry in India**

IT industries play an important role in India's growth and its economy. Indian IT companies offer world class services and business offerings with innovative solutions through cost effective mechanisms when compared with global competitors in the market. India places huge importance on the agricultural sector compared with other sectors but the IT industry helps in shifting the focus from an agricultural-dependent economy to knowledge-based economy in all sectors. The industry offers technical solutions to various verticals such as telecommunications, banking, financial and insurance services, retail, mobile apps, manufacturing, health care and energy utilities services. The Internet facilities enable the introduction of wide range of services such as e-governance applications, online passport applications, online tax filing system, e-ticketing, and virtual conference systems among other. The IT industry thus, offers a wide range of technical services to customers through competitive prices and a focus on global standards (FICCI, 2011).

As per Nasscom, the IT industry contributes to India's GDP from 1.2% in FY 1998-1999 to 7.5% in FY 2012- 2013 with a revenue of US \$100 billion in FY 2012-2013 through exports and domestic revenue amounting to US\$69.1 billion. The IT industry in fact offers a wide

range of job opportunities whereby 2.8 million and 8.9 million employees were employed directly and indirectly by the sector respectively. Around 90% of revenue generated by this industry came from major cities such as Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Noida, Delhi, Mumbai and Pune (Nasscom, 2012). The IT industry dominates the other industries by generating 77% of total revenue. The domestic market plays a significant role in generating revenue for this industry especially in Bangalore, also known as Silicon Valley of India due to the fact that major IT multinational companies are located in and around this city. Close to 33% of Indian IT exports and its revenues are generated from this Silicon Valley of India alone. Most of the corporate offices are located in Mumbai since it is considered as a business capital for the country. The IT industry is widely expanding its operations to other cities such as Hyderabad, Chennai and targeting massive expansion in tier II cities such as Pune, Noida, Trivandrum and Gurgaon due to availability of cheap manpower when compared with other cities in India (Vikram & Sandeep, 2013).

### **Statement of Problem**

Human resource managers have to face several challenges in current business environments due to technology advancements, global workforce, management issues as well as the impact of legal and political issues on the business environments across industry. The above challenges and its outcomes which have led to a rise in pressure for human resource professionals with regard

to motive, magnetise and retain the talented workforce within the organisation (Ekta & Nisha, 2012).

Human resource professionals play a key role in reducing the level of stress generated by the employees' work environment, since stress factors lead to unbalanced workforce which in turn create a negative impact among the workers such as an increase in attrition rates and absenteeism at work place. These are products of stress on the personal life of an employees leading to lower employee work performance (Jordan & Christopher, 2012).

The other role of HR managers is to create a high performance system in order to generate the balance between the performances of employees and aligning their performance towards obtaining the goals and objectives of the company (Sufyan et al., 2013). Human Resource managers drive the learning and development programme which result in increasing the growth of individual skills and capabilities to perform their job effectively (Newell et al., 2009). Learning and development programme help in developing and training the existing resources to create an impact on future business requirement and obtain the objectives of their company (Mousa, 2008).

Human resource managers should focus on career development initiatives in order to increase the participation level of employees and train them to handle critical assignments related to their job. The outcome of this process in not only utilising the potential resources which can benefit the organisation, the process should also guide the individuals to achieve their self-improvement plans and

their aspirations (Polly & Kerr, 1999). The HR leaders help in managing and creating the sustainable work force and business environment (Venkat, 2012), generate positive relationship between employees and employer by developing their skills and attitudes towards work in order to obtain organisational objectives (Doest et al., 2006).

Human resource practitioners should promote employee engagement initiatives to obtain a higher level of motivation within the work force that helps the organisation to obtain better business results and outcomes. Employees who are engaged in their work will have a good understanding of their customer requirements which facilitate in delivering the good quality of products and services. (Siddhanta & Roy, 2012).

By reviewing various literature, the present researchers have identified in the IT industry various level of work related stress, performance appraisal issues, learning and development challenges, career development initiatives, employee attitudes towards work and work culture which are different from other industries. The HR practitioners in the IT industry are facing challenges such as recruitment process, induction programme, fulfilling new employees expectations, career development initiatives, succession planning, compensation payouts, HRIS implementation, employee engagement activities, level of stress at work, various issues, disputes, grievances and complaints. The level of attrition is high due to an increasing number of talented workforce leaving the organisation. HR practitioners would face huge issues and challenges to

retain the talented workforce within the organisation. Literature review has indicated no research has been conducted on the emerging issues and challenges faced by middle level HR practitioners in the IT Industry. This has motivated the present researchers to fill this research gap by conducting a study on this issue.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is:

- To identify the emerging issues and challenges faced by middle- level HR Practitioners in the IT industry in India.
- To identify the relationship between the age of the respondents with the level of stress faced at work.
- To find out the association between educational qualification of the respondents and their response towards learning and development programme.
- To find out the significant variance between the respondents work experience with their response towards performance management system, employee engagement and leadership and development.
- To predict the career development programme with demographic profile of the respondents

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### HR Leadership

HR Leadership is to facilitate the recruitment and selection process for the organisation by transforming administrative functions into

business driven functions through formal communication channels, structured process and right workforces on board which enable the change process for the organisation. The HR leadership needs to understand current designs and performances of the employees to generate a clear picture on what is expected and forecasting the risk assessments to perform the business functions successfully (Mercer, 2013).

Leaders should focus on the issues and challenges such as:

- Clear and good communication process through proper channels.
- Transforming the administrative functions to strategic HR functions.
- Implementing the change process and clarify the expectations and its requirements from the new business environment.

HR Leadership would successfully focus on organisational strategies and business functions. HR business leaders should act as strategic partner, change enabler, administrative practitioners, and employee champion (Friedman, 2007).

### HRM Practices and Procedures

Human resource management practices should be effective in terms of attracting, developing, motivating, retaining the talented workforce and ensure the implementation of effective strategies and policies which facilitate in survival of business and its functions (Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Moreover, HRM policies and practices are

proposed in line with the business process and its functions which would help to achieve the objectives of the organisation (Delery & Doty, 1996). The HRM practices and procedures help in developing the required knowledge, skills and competencies in order to manage the company successfully and gain competitive advantage against the competitors (Minbaeva, 2005). Formulation of human resources strategies and policies should consider future business challenges and ways to tackle them. Lack of human resource management functions have forced talented workforce to leave the company. Hence, effective HRM functions are important to retain talented workforce who have the essential knowledge and potential skills for the company to gain competitive advantage against its competitors (Menefee et al., 2006).

### **HR Strategies**

Strategic human resource management (SHRM) helps in transforming administrative HR functions into strategic business functions. Strategic HRM is apprehensive with the role of HR in company's performance and major focus on aligning the HR strategies with business functions to gain a competitive advantage. Meaningful human resource policies and practices will improve performance in various functions such as production, quality and financial performance (EsraNemli, 2010). Strategic HRM practices are inter linked with organisational strategies, ensuring the exceptionality of a company's human resources process. These strategies

attract highly skilled employees, placing them in suitable positions, offering trainings to match the company's expectations and motivate employees to obtain the goals and objective of the organisation (Wei, 2006).

### **HR Role in Workers Participation**

Human Resource practitioners play a vital role in to enable employees to participate in decision making process that generates the ownership between employer and employees and a hassle free environment in which both willingly contribute to create a healthy work environment (Noah, 2008). Employee's participation in management results in increasing the scope for employee's to participate and influence decision making process at various levels of hierarchy within the organisation (Rathnakar, 2012). Increasing workers participation through collective decisions process will have a direct impact on financial performance of the company and by communicating the future plans, investment opportunities and companies' current financial status that create a good communication platform between employee and employer. These factors encourage the employees to become committed, motivated and loyal to the company, which leads to attainment of the goals and objectives of the company (McNabb & Whitfield, 1998).

### **HR Planning**

Human resource planning helps in forecasting the human needs for the company and formulate the necessary engagements such as recruitment process,

training and development initiatives, career development process, manpower availability, technological changes based on the needs and requirements of the organisation. Human resource planning process identifies the right numbers, the right types of employees at the proper place, the proper time in order to carry the out activities which underpin the companies' goals that help the stakeholders to fulfil their needs. The HRP (Human Resource Planning) process identifies the essential components that satisfy the business requirements and success for the company in a long run (Francis e al., 2012). The HRP plays an important role in corporate planning that identifies the core competencies of the company and its requirements to obtain its goals and objectives. The HRP focuses on people need, its requirements which impact the business functions, gains attention towards the people issue and its development that help in achieving the organisational goals (Prashanthi, 2013).

The HRP also plays a vital role in decision- making process in three categories (Quinn , 1983).

- Categorising and procuring the right number of resources with appropriate skills.
- Motivate the resources to attain higher performance.
- Formulating and collaborating the linkages between business goals and individuals-planning process.

### **HR Role on Performance Management**

Performance management is an important function for human resource management. It is a process of measuring the present and past performance outcomes or results of the individual, team, or organisation (Agnes et al., 2014). The performance measurement should be appropriate, stable and depends on monetary and non-monetary indicators which are related to both preference and equity shareholders. The measurement should be correlated directly to company's goals and objectives that reveal the competitive business environment, consumer requirements and its objectives (Kennerley & Neely, 2002).

### **HR Role as a Change Agent**

HR Managers acts as a change agent through managing the organisation level of transformation, identifying issues that affect the growth of the business, transformational process, managing and developing the employees who can participate with the change management process. The HR leadership should champion the change by driving the transformation process that helps in aligning the right individuals with the suitable skills, attitude and knowledge in order to fulfil the goals and objectives of the company. Human resource managers should facilitate the change and develop the employees through various training initiatives which will increase the performance of the individuals as well as focus on the current and future engagements within the organisation. The HR business leaders are the change enablers who take

charge of change management initiatives, implementing the OD interventions and their processes, technology advancements, formulating world class training initiatives, communications through proper channels which ensure smooth process of implementing the change mechanism (Deepak, 2012). The HR's role in driving the change initiatives differs from one company to another, but the human resource community has not described the process well or prioritised their change exertion within the organisation (Kesler, 2000). The change agent guides the company and assist in the change process (Conner & Ulrich, 1996).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Type of Research

The purpose of using descriptive research is to study a phenomenon that occurs at a specific place and time. Based on this, a

descriptive type of research was adopted in this study.

### Sample

The sample size is determined as

$$n = (z\sigma/d)^2.$$

where z = Value at a complete level of confidence

$\sigma$  = Standard deviation of the population

d = Difference between population mean and sample mean

It is difficult to find the standard deviation and population mean, so, the researchers used systematic sampling method and the survey was conducted among middle level HR practitioners from a leading IT firm in India. The firm has 11 development centres and around 350 middle level HR practitioners work in the branches.



Figure 1. Theoretical Model on Modern HR Functions



In the Karnataka branch, there are nearly 150 middle level HR practitioners. The researchers approached 75 respondents who were willing to respond to the questionnaire and considered as sample size for this study. This is the main limitation of the study.

### **Research Instrument**

This study is purely empirical in nature; hence, questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The researchers developed a well-structured questionnaire which consists of three parts. The first part deals with the demographic profile of the middle level HR practitioners, the second part consists of questions related to emerging issues and the third part focuses on the challenges faced by middle level HR practitioners from a selected IT firm. The researchers have done validity test for the variables in the questionnaire to measure the emerging issues and challenges (19 items with Likert scale in the questionnaire) and obtained  $\alpha = 0.7$ . The questions were used for validity test such as response towards "Recruitment process", their response about "Learning curve", "Succession Planning", "Employee engagement", "Stress Level", "Performance bonus", etc.,

### **Sources of Data**

The current study depended on following source of data collection such as primary and secondary data collection. Primary data collection was obtained through Questionnaire and secondary data collection was gleaned from journals, articles, research publications and magazines. The population

for the study comprises middle level HR practitioners from a selected IT firm in Karnataka.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Primary data collected from questionnaires are computed and analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Pearson's Chi-Square test was used to identify whether two random variables are independent. In this regard, the researchers attempted to find out the level of association between the educational qualification and response towards learning and development programmes offered by the company. Correlation Analysis was used to discover the degree of relationship between independent variable and dependent variable. Hence, the researchers were attempting to establish the relationship between age and the level of stress towards work. The ANOVA was used to identify the significant variance between one independent variable and many dependent variables. Therefore, the researchers attempting to discover the variance between number of years of experience and response towards performance management system, employee engagement programmes, leadership and development program organised within the company. Multiple regression analysis was helpful to find out the important independent variables among all other independent variables to predict the dependent variable. Therefore, the multiple regression analysis was carried out to find out the career development opportunities for HR practitioners at work using variables such

as gender, age, educational qualification, annual income, years of experience. The authors discovered important independent variables compared with other variables in predicting the career development programme organised within the company.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

### Correlation Analysis

To identify the relationship between the age of the respondents and the level of stress at the work environment.

The Pearson's correlation in Table 1 reads a value of 0.081 which shows that there is a positive correlation between age and the level of stress towards the work. Most of the respondents from age group of 26-30 face higher level of stress at the work environment. Respondents from the age group of 36-40 face lower level of stress at work.

### Chi-Square Test

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant association between educational qualification and response to learning and development (L&D) programmes offered by the company.

From Table 2, the Chi-square reads a significance level of 0.368 at 95% confidence level. It is greater than the hypothetical value

of 0.05, hence, H<sub>1</sub> is accepted and there is a significant association between educational qualification and the response towards L&D programmes offered by the company. The Cramer's V 0.368 in Table 3 reveal that there is a moderate association between educational qualification and the response towards the L&D programmes offered by the company. The asymmetric lambda value 0.029 in Table infers that there is a 2.9% error reduction in predicting the response towards the L&D programmes when the respondents' educational qualification is known. If the lambda value increases, then the dependent variable could be predicted more accurately. Hence, the researchers could not predict more precisely the responses towards L&D programmes when the educational qualification of the respondents is known.

### Analysis of Variance

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant variance between number of years of experience and their response towards performance management system followed within the company.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant variance between number of years of experience and their response towards employee engagement programmes organised within the company.

Table 1  
Correlation Value

Correlation	Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval Pearson's R	.081	.105	.695	.489
Ordinal by Ordinal Spearman Correlation	.107	.111	.921	.360
N of valid cases	75			

H4: There is a significant variance between number of years of experience and their response towards Leadership and Development programmes organised within the company.

From table 5, for the first item, the highest mean score is 2.67, which infers that the respondents with greater than 12 years of experience indicating more effective performance management system are available within the company and the least mean score is 2.13 inferring that respondents between four and eight years of experience indicating less effective performance management system are available within the company. The second

items highest mean score is 2.35 reflecting that respondents with between eight and 12 years of experience indicated that employee engagement programmes organised by the company were more effective and the least mean score is 1.67 inferring that respondents with greater than 12 years of experience indicating that leadership and development programme organised by the company were less effective. The third items highest mean score is 2.67; it proves that respondents with more than 12 years of experience indicate that leadership and development programmes organised by company are more effective and the least mean score is 1.92 inferring that respondents between 0 and four years of experience indicated that

Table 2  
Pearson chi-square value

Particulars	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.786	9	.368
Likelihood Ratio	9.546	9	.388
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.815	1	.178
N of Valid Cases	75		

Table 3  
*Symmetric Measures*

Particulars		Value	Approx.sig
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.361	.368
	Cramer's V	.209	.368
N of Valid cases		75	

Table 4  
*Directional Measures*

Particulars			Value	Asymp . Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx Sig.
Nominal By Nominal	Lambda	Symmetric	.016	.042	.378	.705
		Education qualification L&D	.029	.029	1.007	.314
		Dependent	.000	.084	.000	1.000
Nominal	Goodman and Kruskal tau	Education qualification	.044			
		Dependent	.034	.020		.366
		L&D Dependent		.030		.574

Table 5  
Descriptive Measure

Leadership and Development Attributes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Performance Management	0-4 Yrs	25	2.28	.737	.147	1.98	2.58	1	4
	4-8 Yrs	30	2.13	.860	.157	1.81	2.45	1	5
	8-12Yrs	17	2.35	.702	.170	1.99	2.71	1	4
	>12 Yrs	3	2.67	.577	.333	1.23	4.10	2	3
	Total	75	2.25	.773	.089	2.08	2.43	1	5
Employee Engagement	0-4 Yrs	25	1.96	.676	.135	1.68	2.24	1	3
	4-8 Yrs	30	2.17	.747	.136	1.89	2.45	1	4
	8-12Yrs	17	2.35	.996	.242	1.84	2.87	1	4
	> 12 Yrs	3	1.67	.577	.333	.23	3.10	1	2
	Total	75	2.12	.788	.091	1.94	2.30	1	4
Leadership & Development	0-4 Yrs	25	1.92	.954	.191	1.53	2.31	1	4
	4-8 Yrs	30	2.03	1.033	.189	1.65	2.42	1	5
	8-12 Yrs	17	1.94	.899	.218	1.48	2.40	1	4
	> 12 Yrs	3	2.67	.577	.333	1.23	4.10	2	3
	Total	75	2.00	.959	.111	1.78	2.22	1	5

leadership and development programmes organised by the company are less effective. The mean scores in Table 5 proves that the respondents having between four and eight years of experience were less motivated to performance management system and leadership & development programmes vis a vis those with greater than 12 years of experience.

Table 6 shows that the significance value of performance management, employee engagement and leadership and development at 0.603, 0.310 and 0.640 respectively which is greater than the p value 0.05 and hence, H2, H3, and H4 are accepted. The same results were obtained with the corresponding F values. Hence, there is a significant relationship between respondents' years of experience and their response towards performance management, employee engagement and leadership and

development. The study also proved that employees who have between four and eight years of experience were less motivated by performance management, leadership and development programme in the IT sector in the number of years of experience category. Employees with more than 12 years of experience were motivated to performance management, leadership and development programmes due to lesser number of employees under this category.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

Regression analysis between career development programme organised within the company and respondents' gender, age, educational qualification, annual income and years of experience.

In the output of regression model, the value of B gives all the coefficients of the model as follows:

Table 6  
ANOVA

Leadership and Development Attributes		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Performance Management	Between Groups	1.131	3	.377	.622	.603
	Within Groups	43.056	71	.606		
	Total	44.187	74			
Employee Engagement	Between Groups	2.244	3	.748	1.216	.310
	Within Groups	43.676	71	.615		
	Total	45.920	74			
Leadership & Development	Between Groups	1.585	3	.528	.565	.640
	Within Groups	66.415	71	.935		
	Total	68.000	74			

$$Y = 1.149 + 0.027(\text{Gender}) + 0.076(\text{Age}) + 0.021(\text{Education Qualification}) - 0.182(\text{Annual income}) + 0.101(\text{Years of Experience}).$$

From the above equation, it can be inferred that the HR practitioners with greater than 12 years of experience have a good career development opportunities within the company than other category respondents. The best predictor variable is years of experience with a higher coefficient of 0.101. The annual income has a negative coefficient value in the above regression equation. Age, education qualification, gender, years of experience category variables have positive coefficient. The education category has a highest t-value 0.791 which is statistically significant.

The p-level is observed to be 0.023, indicating that the model is statistically significant. The R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.169. The t-test for significance of individual dependent variable indicates that at the significance level of 0.05 (confidence level of 95%) only years of experience are statistically significant in the model. More experienced

HR practitioners gain importance in career development opportunities within the company compared with the income level of the individuals.

### Forward Regression Analysis

In the output of forward regression, the regression ends up with two out of five independent variables remaining in the regression model. The variables are annual income and years of experience of HR practitioners. This variable is statistically significant at 95% confidence level. F-test of the model is also highly significant and R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.150.

$$Y = 1.282 - 0.144(\text{Annual income}) + 0.135(\text{Years of experience})$$

### Backward Regression Analysis

Backward regression analysis shows that annual income and years of experience of HR practitioners remain in the model in predicting effectiveness of career development programme organised by the company when compared with other independent variables. The independent

Table 7  
Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.411	.169	.109	.348

ANOVA

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1 Regression	1.705	5	.341	2.809	.023
Residual	8.375	69	.121		
Total	10.080	74			

Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.149	.227		5.060	.000
Gender	.027	.083	.037	.326	.748
Age	.076	.071	.165	1.067	.290
Edu qualification	.021	.079	.037	.265	.791
Annual income	-.182	.049	-.484	-3.286	.002
Years of Exp	.101	.065	.233	1.537	.129

Table 8  
Forward Regression

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.276	.076	.064	.357
2	.387	.150	.126	.345

ANOVA

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1 Regression	.770	1	.770	6.034	.016
Residual	9.310	73	.128		
Total	10.080	74			
2 Regression	1.511	2	.756	6.349	.003
Residual	8.569	72	.119		
Total	10.080	74			

Table 8 (continue)

*Regression Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.409	.109		12.871	.000
Annual income	-.092	.038	-.276	-2.456	.016
2 (Constant)	1.282	.117		10.919	.000
Annual income	-.144	.042	-.430	-3.444	.001
Years of experience	.135	.054	.312	2.496	.015

*Excluded Variables*

Model	Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
					Tolerance
1 Gender	-.005	-.040	.968	-.005	.982
Age	.285	2.295	.025	.261	.777
Edu Qual	.059	.444	.858	.052	.718
Yrs of Exp	.312	2.496	.015	.282	.756
2 Gender	.024	.217	.829	.026	.972
Age	.172	1.195	.236	.140	.570
Edu qual	.085	.661	.511	.078	.714

variables are statistically significant at 95% confidence level. F-test of the model is also highly significant and R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.150.

$$Y = 1.282 - 0.144 (\text{Annual income}) + 0.135 (\text{Years of experience})$$

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Based on the research and survey conducted among middle level HR practitioners, it was found that respondents from the age group of 26-30 face higher level of stress at the workplace. Respondents from the age group of 36-40 face lower level of stress at work. There is a positive correlation between age and the level of stress towards work. This finding aligns with the findings of Chandraiah (2003), but contradicts with the findings of Sheldon and Denise (2012)

and Uma Devi (2011). From the analysis, it is clear that there is a significant association between educational qualification and their response to learning and development opportunities offered by the company. This finding aligns with the findings of Sturdy and Wright (2011). From the analysis it is clear that there is a significant variance between years of experience with performance management, employee engagement; leadership and development organised by the company. Respondents between four and eight years of experience were less motivated to performance management; leadership and development programme against the respondents' with more than 12 years of experience. The ANOVA reveals that employees with more experienced HR

Table 9  
Backward Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.411	.169	.109	.348
2	.410	.168	.121	.346
3	.408	.167	.131	.344
4	.387	.150	.126	.345

ANOVA

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1 Regression	1.705	5	.341	2.809	.023
Residual	8.375	69	.121		
Total	10.080	74			
2 Regression	1.696	4	.424	3.541	.011
Residual	8.384	70	.120		
Total	10.080	74			
3 Regression	1.680	3	.580	4.734	.005
Residual	8.400	71	.118		
Total	10.080	74			
4 Regression	1.511	2	.758	6.349	.003
Residual	8.569	72	.119		
Total	10.080	74			

Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.149	.227		5.060	.000
Gender	.027	.083	.037	.326	.746
Age	.076	.071	.165	1.067	.290
Edu Qual	.021	.079	.037	.265	.791
Annual income	-.162	.049	-.484	-3.286	.002
Yrs of Exp	.101	.065	.233	1.537	.129
2 (Constant)	1.179	.195		6.037	.000
Gender	.030	.082	.041	.366	.715
Age	.082	.067	.178	1.224	.225
Annual income	-.156	.043	-.465	-3.602	.001
Yrs of exp	.097	.063	.223	1.526	.131
3 (Constant)	1.234	.124		9.983	.000
Age	.079	.066	.172	1.195	.236
Annual income	-.156	.043	-.467	-3.640	.001
Years of exp	.096	.063	.222	1.527	.131
4 (Constant)	1.282	.117		10.919	.000
Annual Income	-.144	.042	-.430	-3.444	.001
Yrs of exp	.135	.054	.312	2.496	.015



Table 9 (continue)

*Excluded Variables*

Model	Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
					Tolerance
2 Education qual	.037	.265	.791	.032	.635
3 Edu qual	.042	.313	.755	.037	.647
Gender	.041	.366	.715	.044	.957
4 Edu Qual	.085	.661	.511	.078	.714
Gender	.024	.217	.829	.026	.972
Age	.172	1.195	.236	.140	.570

professional were motivated by performance management system, leadership and development programmes than the less experienced HR professionals. This findings align with the findings of Susan Abraham (2012), DeRue and Wellman (2009) and Van (2006). The Multiple Regression analysis reveals that the independent variables such as age, gender, education qualification, annual income and years of experience are statistically significant with career development opportunities offered by the company. This study found that experienced employees made use of career development opportunities compared with less experienced one. This finding aligns with the findings of Jennifer et al. (2004).

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Middle level HR practitioners act as a change enabler in the company by formulating and implementing strategies and policies related to recruitment, selection, induction process and performance management process. This study promotes the learning and development, leadership and development, career development opportunities for the

employees and addresses the issues related to grievances, disputes and conflicts at work place by focusing and controlling the attrition levels through effective retention plans and the strategies. Reducing the stress level for the employee is vital through counselling sessions, learning opportunities which lead to a hassle free environment. In particular, the management should consider the recommendations of younger and less experienced HR professionals during various decision making process which helps in greater motivation leading to better decisions. This research has helped to identify emerging issues and challenges faced by middle level HR practitioners. The study is limited to the IT companies in Karnataka, India, which can be extended to IT industries and other industries in India and overseas to get a fair understanding of emerging issues and the challenges faced by middle level HR practitioners.

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## **Domestication and Foreignisation Strategies in Restaurant Menu Translation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Conducted in the framework of two key cultural strategies of foreignisation and domestication postulated by Venuti (1995), this research made an attempt to investigate the strategies used in translation of 40 restaurant menus. It tried to perform a comprehensive analysis of the foreignisation and domestication procedures applied in the translation of food names from Persian into English. After collecting the applied strategies and analysing them, the researcher concluded that foreignisation was the most pervasive strategy in the translation of food names in restaurant menus. At the same time, more inadequate translations were found when the translator resorted to foreignisation translation strategies in comparison with domestication strategies. Moreover, the number of adequate translations in general was significantly more than inadequate ones, which implies the translator's skill in translation. The findings of this present study have implications for translation teachers and students of tourism education.

*Keywords:* Translation strategy, domestication, foreignisation, restaurant menus, Persian-English translation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Translation, acts as a bridge between different languages and cultures to bring them closer to one another and lead significantly to cross-cultural communication. Catford, who presented the first definition of translation (1965, p.1), believes that the "replacement of textual material in [the] target language" is called translation. Many scholars focus their attention on the cultural and linguistic

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role in translation and they consider this an important element in the translation process.

A translator requires two basic translation strategies, domestication and foreignisation, when translating a text from one culture to another. Domestication and foreignisation translation strategies are terms coined by Venuti (1995). Domestication is a type of translation strategy that uses “a transparent, fluent and invisible style in order to minimize the foreignness of the target text and leading the text to be familiar and recognizable” (Munday 2008, p. 144). Foreignisation refers to a type of translation strategy whereby the translator “deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original” (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997, p. 59). The main point of domestication and foreignisation in Venuti’s (1995) model is that it considers the influence of cultural and ideological factors on translation and the influence of translation on the target readers and cultures as well.

A menu is a symbol of the identity and the theme of a restaurant (Lockwood, 2007). The language of restaurant menus involves the use of a simple, informal, personal, friendly and easy-to-read style, in addition to the use of descriptive adjectives, verbs, adverbs and nouns to highlight and exaggerate a situation (Wallace, 1981). Lack of clear and truthful description may cause misleading choices, which is unfair to customers and can cause them never to come back (Kotschevar & Withrow, 2007). The menu as a text is made for a specific purpose and for a specific audience. It has a double function: it is an informative text

that tells the customers what they need to know about the dishes available and at the same time, it is a means of advertising aimed at expressing the restaurant’s image and the culture of the country (Jurate, 2006).

The call for professional translation is due to the fact that translating menus and food terms is not as easy a task as one may think. The difficulty increases whenever there is a cultural gap between the source culture and the target culture (Al Tanero, 2005). Menus are tricky and their translations require not just a knowledge of the two languages but also a deep sense of localisation. This knowledge is necessary because translating foreign food terms can be very difficult (Al Tanero, 2005). Considering the above-mentioned problems and difficulties and the theme of communication in translating menus, filling the cultural gap and preventing misunderstanding is very important. Therefore, taking into account that Iran is a tourist attraction with a variety of food, the present study aimed at working on the English translation of Persian menus to find their potential translation inadequacies.

Many tourists travel to different parts of the world every year and their need for meals is inevitable. Menus are the first and easiest medium that provides tourists with the name of foods and their content. Indeed, as mentioned above, menus are not only a list of dishes and beverages in the context of the first language, but also a medium of defining some aspect of culture in cross-cultural communication. Translation is the building block in this process of cross-cultural communication. Suitable decoding of food names in the

source text and correct encoding in the target text via adequate translation strategies facilitate the target readers' understanding. As highlighted by Kafipour and Hosseini Naveh (2011) and Kafipour et al. (2010), awareness of strategies and their role in teaching and learning can enhance the conscious application of strategies. This, can also foster thinking skills in relation to the reading and comprehending the text content (Karizak & Khojasteh, 2016). This is true for translation and can lead translators to conscious and appropriate use of the strategies in translation.

According to a World Tourism Organisation (WTO) report, the ratio of domestic tourists to inbound tourists in Iran is 10 to 1. One of the factors for low numbers of inbound tourists is rooted in inadequate translation of restaurant menus for tourists, who do not communicate with the target readers because of cultural differences (Nobakht & Piruz, 2008).

Tourist attraction is traced back to the culture of a country. Moreover, every society has its own culture that is influenced by its geography and history. Therefore, the aim of translating restaurant menus is not only to achieve cultural rendering but also to translate the names of the food appropriately from Persian to English. Iran is a tourist spot with a variety of food. Therefore, adequate translation of food names in menus is very important. As far as the researcher knows, most previous studies on this matter, including Hafeth Saleh (2011), worked on the translation of food names from English to their native language. The direction of the

present study is the other way round. This is the novel aspect of the present study as the literature shows that few such studies have been carried out.

The receptor is the final aim of the whole translation process. Hatim and Munday (2004, p. 163) reported on the significant role of the receptor. They considered satisfying the receptor as the main factor that judges the adequacy of translation. In the case of menu translation, it is clear that the aim is to satisfy the receptors' expectations. Therefore, translating food names is very important and necessary. When customers visit a restaurant and the menu offered is understandable and the foreign names are translated correctly, they are likely to place an order and to become regular customers because of the positive feedback. Libman (2009) emphasised the importance of food and beverage translation, saying that, "it would be ideal if you are able to provide your patrons, especially foreigners, with a menu translation ." He demanded a professional translation as an ideal way to increase sales.

The call for professional translation is due to the fact that translating menus and food names is not an easy task. The difficulty increases when there is a cultural gap between the source culture and the target culture. Al Tanero (2005) stressed that menus are problematic and their translation requires not just knowledge of the two languages but also a deep sense of localisation. This knowledge is necessary because translating food names can be very difficult.

Hua Ying (2008, pp. 21–26) suggested the application of the skopos theory for translation of food names. The skopos theory proposed by Reiss and Vermeer in the late 1970s states that the purpose of translation is to determine the shape of the target text. Yung (2008, 24–26) tried to clarify the relationship between the skopos theory and translating food names. He said that a translated menu is expected to achieve four main functions that show the basics of the skopos theory. These are the informative, aesthetic, commercial and cultural functions. A translated menu should keep the characteristics and the style of food for the informative function. Also, it should be done as a work of art (on the basis of the aesthetic function). So, the adaptation technique is used to fill the cultural gap and produce satisfactory translations that can achieve both the commercial and cultural functions and in this situation, translation is considered as intercultural communication. It is hoped that this study can achieve and fulfil this goal.

This study was aimed at investigating different translation strategies used in translating Persian food names into English in restaurant menus based on Venuti's (1995) domestication and foreignisation model in order to explore the inadequate translation of food names in restaurant menus. Ultimately, the present study primarily attempted to uncover any relationship which exists between translation inadequacy and orientation (domestication/foreignisation) of used translation strategies, whether the translators mainly resort to domestication

strategies in the process of translating restaurant menus due to target language cultural determination or whether they use mostly foreignisation as a strategy in the translation of restaurant menus. To fulfil the objectives of this study, the following research questions are investigated:

1. What are different translation strategies used in translating Persian food names into English in restaurants menus?
2. Is there any inadequate translation of food names in restaurant menus?
3. Is there any relationship between translation inadequacy and the orientation (domestication and foreignisation) of the used translation strategies?

Since human beings have existed, translation has been necessary. People communicate in spite of different languages and in some cases, achieve success in proper communication via sign language and the application of onomatopoeic words. However, sometimes communication is lost when there is a lack of equal counterpart words in the two languages (Khojasteh & Kafipour, 2012).

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 563), translation is defined as "the process of rendering written language that is produced in one language (the source language) into another language (the target language)." Venuti (1995) stated that a translation would be successful and satisfactory if it considered the cultural and social conditions in which the text is translated and read. In 'The



Translator's Invisibility', Venuti (1995) mentioned two terms in translation studies, namely, domestication and foreignisation. Domestication refers to the translation strategy that tries to use a clear and fluent method in translation to decrease ambiguity of the source text to make it understandable and reader-friendly. In addition, it tries to approach and adjust source culture to the target culture whereas foreignisation tries to adjust the reader to the source culture. It tries to facilitate cultural and linguistic differences for readers (Lindfors, 2001). Domestication or foreignisation strategies are concerned with the two cultures, and these strategies exist when there are differences in linguistic and cultural connotations. There is a dichotomy of translation strategies as domestication and foreignisation (Venuti, 1995).

Foreignising a translation requires a translator to get close to the author by adopting the original expressions so as to preserve and convey the foreignness of the source text (ST). The target of translation is not to eliminate the differences of language and culture, but rather to demonstrate those differences. The translator tries to keep some original concepts in the source text that may be incompatible with the reader's traditions or unfamiliar to the target reader. Foreignising translation is centred on the faithful conveying of foreign cultural elements, especially those of the marginal culture (Venuti, 1995). Using this strategy, the translator is expected to maintain the foreign identity of the source text. Also, a foreignised translation gives a reader

more information but tends to increase the difficulty of understanding. Domesticating translation, on the other hand, requires translators to get close to the reader or target text (TT) by taking into consideration the linguistic habits of the target language (TL) and preferring to use the conventional expressions of the target readers (TRs). The translated text should be understandable to the target readers as the source text is understandable to the source text readers (adequate translation). As a result of using the domestication process in translation, the readers of the TT experience easing of cultural shock and are willing to overcome cultural differences between the ST and the TT (Venuti, 1994).

Most of the previous case studies on the translation of menus showed that menu translators were non-professionals who could not fill the cultural gap. The translators mentioned in the studies tried to translate the surface structure of food terms without paying attention to the norms of the Target Text (TT). Therefore, they produced inadequate translations that were not understandable to the Target Readers (TR). The following section briefly reports on a number of previous studies on the translation of menus.

Some of these studies have questioned the use of foreign terminology in food names. Hatim (1988, pp. 18–25) indicated that the use of foreign terminology in food names is an "old phenomenon." There are two views concerning the use of foreign terminology in food names. The first one highlights the importance of the

menu as a means of communication that should meet the expectations of customers from different backgrounds. On the other hand, some scholars consider the use of foreign languages in local food menus an unnecessary act. For example, Eckestein (1983, p. 91) believed that it is not advisable to use a mixture of languages on the menu.

McVety and Ware (1990, p. 45–47) identified the factors that influence menu planning such as nationality, age, level of income and religious restrictions on the part of the customer. Other factors that are related to the meal include flavour, texture, shape and colour. The quality of the menu is determined by all these factors.

In 'Are Menu Translations Getting Worse? Problems from Empirical Analysis of Restaurant Menus in English in the Area', Pouget (1999) collected 14 Spanish restaurant menus translated into English in the 1990s. These menus covered 1113 dishes. First, she asked the restaurant owners about the menu translators to see if they were professional translators (people who translate regularly) or non-professional translators (people whose regular job is not translation). Then, she asked two English native speakers about the clarity of food terms in menus in terms of linguistic content. She wanted them to rate the translation of menus from 0 (impossible to understand) to 5 (completely understandable). Next, she wanted them to determine the cultural elements which cause difficulty in understanding the menus. Finally, she performed a T-test for the linguistic and cultural items which caused difficulty in understanding menus.

The results of the study showed that the translators were mainly non-professional. Therefore, the menus translated in the 1990s were poor in terms of quality and the translators lacked translational competence.

In 'A Comparative Study on Translations of Daily and Banquet Menus', Mandy (2011) collected a number of daily and banquet menus from 10 famous restaurants and hotels in Macao. First, he collected 200 dish names from menus, classified them into different categories and analysed them for better elaboration. Then, he conducted a comparative study on the translations of daily and banquet menus from a cultural perspective. This analysis allowed for the cultural differences between daily and banquet menus and the influence of cultural factors in the translation process to be examined. Next, he investigated the translation of dish names by using domestication and foreignisation as translation strategies and methods. Finally, he tried to find out whether there was a clear tendency towards using domestication in dealing with culturally loaded dish names. The findings indicated that the strategies of domestication and translation methods were mainly adopted in translating both Chinese daily and banquet menus into English.

In 'Mediating Culinary Culture: The Case of Greek Restaurant Menus', Grammenidis (2008) dealt with the linguistic and functional characteristics of restaurant menus. He focussed on the translation strategies used to deal with cultural diversity and the relationship between these strategies and the type and function of the text to be translated. The results of the study showed

that in most cases the strategies used in translating menus did not lead either to a functional equivalent or a professionally satisfactory target text. However, the deficiencies recorded were due to the inadequate abilities of those who provided the translations rather than to the fact that translation was practised from the mother tongue to a foreign language. Finally, he concluded that translating is often viewed as a simple process of reproducing linguistic surface structures in another language. This attitude points, among others, to a lack of professionalism, the impact of which is considerable – customer dissatisfaction – and ultimately, reduces upon the mediating translation mission.

Vorajaroensri (2002) studied translation strategies used in translation of menus in Thailand restaurants by focussing on the frequency of techniques employed in different restaurant menus and also the frequency of all methods utilised in the menus. The researcher finally reported that there were 24 translation techniques used in these menus. He further concluded that the most frequent translation was cultural substitution (39.5%), along with literal translation (25.9%) and also loan words with explanation (17.5%); paraphrase translation technique with pertinent words and impertinent words were not employed at all. There are some other studies that are in some way related to the present one although not directly. Since they are about different translation strategies, mentioning them can be a great help for expanding the understanding of strategies.

Roekmongkhonwit (2006) ran a study of Baker's (1992) translation strategies utilised in a travel document from Thai into English. In this study, it was noticed that all in, seven translation methods were used: translation along with paraphrase and a pertinent word (25%), translation with cultural substitution (18.75%), translation with omission (17.70%), translation with loan words or loan words followed by explanation (14.58%), the paraphrase translation with unrelated words (11.45%), translation using general words (8.33%) and translation with expressive words (4.16%). He then reported that translators translated this document using of pertinent words with close equivalents so that they could retain and convey the message of the source text. Additionally, Hatim (1997) referred to the concept of adjustment that included certain techniques such as addition, omission and cultural substitution. These techniques can be very useful to clarify the intended meanings. Blum et al. (1997) emphasised the need to add certain aspects by the translator whenever it is difficult to get accurate literal translation. Still, translators should not try to be helpful through over-translation because interpretative translations may lead to mistranslation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design in this study was qualitative. However, descriptive and inferential statistics were also used to answer the research questions. The sample consisted of 40 Persian menus with English translation. The menus were collected

through purposive sampling. Thus, the menus collected were from restaurants frequently visited by tourists such as Sufi, Tin, Darvish, Sharze, Shater Abbas and Chamran in Shiraz. In this study, the Persian restaurants menus were examined alongside their English equivalents to identify the strategies applied in their translation and to find out if the appropriate strategies were applied.

## RESULTS

Descriptive statistics was applied to answer the first research question i.e. What are the different translation strategies used in translating Persian food names into English in restaurants menus? Table 1 shows the frequency of translation strategies used under the two main categories of foreignisation and domestication.

Table 1  
*Frequency of Domestication and Foreignisation Translation Strategies*

Strategy	Frequency	Percent
Foreignisation	140	80.0
Domestication	35	20.0
Total	175	100.0

Table 1 shows that overall, the foreignisation strategy was used 140 times (80%) while the domestication strategy was used 35 times (20%) in the translation of restaurant menus. To see if descriptive statistics in Table 1 were statistically significant, a chi-square test was run.

As seen in Table 2, the obtained chi-square (63) was significant ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ),

which means that the foreignisation strategy was significantly used more frequently than the domestication strategy in restaurant menus. Thus, the foreignisation strategy was the dominant strategy used in the translation of restaurant menus from Persian into English.

To answer the second research question (Is there any inadequate translation of food names in restaurants menus?), the researcher interviewed five tourists/native speakers of English in Shiraz in order to find out if they understood the translated food names in restaurant menus and if they considered the translated food names as adequate or inadequate translation. Some examples of the data collected are as follows:

For foreignisation/literal translation, the translation of زرشک پلو با مرغ to “Barberries with rice and chicken” is considered an adequate translation. Murat, 36 years old, a Turkish tourist, said that he was familiar with this food as it was available in Turkish cuisine, and he ate this dish in Turkey. Another example of this strategy is the translation of چلوکباب to “A mutton kebab with poached rice.” Jenny, a 43-year old German tourist, claimed that this translation was inadequate because it was absurd and meaningless for her and she did not understand it and there was no equivalent in her culture and language. She understood the word “kebab” and she knew that it was invented by Middle Easterners, but she did not know what “mutton” was, and the tour guide had to explain to her. In her opinion, the best translation was “chelo kebab” or “kebab koobideh”.

As an example of foreignisation/literal translation with explanation, the translation of باقالی پلو با ماهیچه to “Baghela mahicheh (Lambs shanks, rice with baby lima beans)” and the translation of کباب برگ to “Lamb barg (Lamb fillet marinated in saffron oil)” are considered adequate translation. David and his wife, both 52 years old and from Norway, said that in their opinion the best translation was one that included a brief description of the ingredients in different languages and provided information on the cooking method.

As an illustration for foreignisation/zero translation, the translation of خورشت قیمه to “khoresht Qeymeh,” was regarded as inadequate translation by Bob, 40, who was a Canadian tourist. He did not understand the translated food names because there was no description of what it was nor of how it was prepared. He knew that “khoresht” means “to eat” in Persian which denotes stews in Persian cuisine typically served with polo (cooked rice), but there was no equivalent for “Qeymeh” in his language. The second example for this strategy is the translation of سبزی پلو to “Sabzi polo,” which is considered as an adequate translation. Bob understood the food name translation because he was familiar with this food; moreover, it was explained in Persian that “sabz” means green, and “sabzi” can refer to herbs or vegetables and “polo” is a style of cooked rice, known in English as “pilaf”.

For foreignisation/literal translation with explanation, Julia, 41 years old, believed that the dish names such as دمپخت that was translated to “Dampokht (made lamb meat),”

چلوخورشت سبزی that was translated to “chelo khoreshte sabzi (rice-bean-vegetable-meat)” and حلیم بادمجان that was translated to “Halim bademjan (eggplant, meat, retail rice, curd, onion)” were adequate translations because the translation provided enough information including cooking method and raw materials along with information and description of ingredients, so she could easily know what the dish contained. In her language, she said, “dampokht” refers to rice cooked in a single pot, while “khoresht” was a type of stew usually prepared with meat or combined with fresh or dried vegetables. She continued that in her language, “chelo khoreshte sabzi” refers to fresh herb and lamb stew and “halim bademjan” refers to an eggplant.

Finally, as an example of domestication strategy, the translation of کباب دنده گوسفندی to “shish kebab (Lambs fillet with bone, vegetables, French fries)” and the second example, the translation of شاتوبریان to “chateaubriand” were considered adequate translation. Daniel, a 43-year-old Bulgarian translator, stated that the translation was adequate and he could easily understand what the dishes contained because information was provided on how the food or beverage would taste.

Table 3  
*Frequency of Adequacy of Translation*

Strategy	Frequency	Percent
Adequate	118	67.4
Inadequate	57	32.6
Total	175	100.0

According to the answers provided by the tourists/native speakers, 118 out of 175 translated food names were recognised as appropriate whereas 57 out of 118 were found inappropriate or inadequate. To see if this difference was statistically significant, a chi-square test was run. As depicted in Table 4, the obtained chi-square (21.26) was significant ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ), which means that the appropriate or the adequate translations were significantly more frequent than the inappropriate or inadequate translations in restaurant menus.

To answer the third research question (“Is there any relationship between translation inadequacy and the orientation (domestication/foreignisation) of used translation strategy?”), Table 5 provided the descriptive statistics that presented

detailed information about the adequacy and inadequacy of strategies applied in the translation of food names in restaurants with regards to the type of strategy applied.

According to Table 5, 87 out of 140 foreignisation translation strategies (62.1%) were recognised as adequate translation and 53 out of 140 (37.9%) were found to be inadequate. In the domestication translation strategy, 31 out of 35 strategies (88.6%) were identified as adequate translation and four out of 35 (11.4%) were inadequate translation. This difference was found significant by the chi-square test as seen in Table 6 ( $P<0.05$ ). Therefore, the domestication strategy contained more adequate translation than the foreignisation strategy. It can be concluded that the foreignisation strategy leads to more inappropriate translation of food names.

Table 4  
*The Chi-Squared Test for Comparing the Adequate and Inadequate Frequencies*

Statistics Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Adequate	118	87.5			
Inadequate	57	87.5	21.26	1	0.001
Total	175				

Table 5  
*Adequacy of Translation of Two Translation Strategies*

Translation Strategy	Adequacy	Adequate	Inadequate	Total
Foreignisation	Freq.	87	53	140
	Percent	62.1	37.9	100.0
Domestication	Freq.	31	4	35
	Percent	88.6	11.4	100.0
Total	Freq.	118	57	175
	Percent	67.4	32.6	100.0

Table 6  
*The Chi-Squared Test for Comparing Adequate and Inadequate Frequencies*

Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
7.74	1	0.005

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study was in fact an attempt to investigate the translation of Persian foods names in Iranian restaurants to check on their adequacy or inadequacy on the basis of foreignisation and domestication strategies. The first finding of the study was that both foreignisation and domestication strategies along with their varying subtypes were utilised in translating the restaurants' Persian food names but with different rates. To be more exact, the study signified that foreignisation strategies had been used significantly more than domestication strategies. Notwithstanding all the above-cited findings and discussion, one point should not be overlooked. It is the fact that translation is a multi-faceted and complicated process. In a similar vein, Venuti (1995) contended that a translated work is valid as far as it is successful in entrenching a logical relationship between cultural and social conditions under which the work was produced. To put it another way, the translation of a culture into another culture often involves more than a simple selection of what should be translated and what should not (Zare-Behtash, 2009). As Venuti (1996) contended, domestication and foreignisation are heuristic terms and they should not be regarded as binary oppositions. They are likely to make changes in meaning at different times and places.

Domesticating and foreignising practices are often considered consistent with two kinds of translation: transparent and resistant translation (De Linde & Neil, 1999). In the former, contextual factors are regarded as reflecting the writer; it appreciates the foreign text as original, authentic and correct and devalues the translated text as digression and wrong and insists on the process of removing its lower position via a fluent process (pp. 26–27). The latter is in accord with a feature of discontinuity in the sense that it can highlight that difference more effectively by reminding the reader of the merits and demerits in the work (p. 36).

In accordance with this preference of foreignisation over domestication, some experts and researchers assert that foreignisation is a favourite approach especially for the translation of texts related to foreign travellers due to a set of merits including presenting different cultural and historical points of the source text, explanation of the culture and traditions of the source text and also describing the balance between different languages and cultures (Venuti, 1995; Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997; Yang, 2010). Foreignising translation, based on its definition, asks a translator to get close to the author by adopting the original expressions so as to preserve and convey the foreignness of the ST. The target of translation is not to eliminate the differences of language and culture, but rather to demonstrate these differences. The translator intentionally goes beyond the target norms by keeping some of the foreignness of the source text.

The translator's choice in the foreignisation strategy is a kind of cultural digression on the part of TL norms to entrench the linguistic and social discrepancies of the target text. Foreignisation-based translation is centred on the faithful conveying of the foreign cultural elements, especially the marginal culture (Venuti, 1994). Similarly, foreignisation is source language-culture-orientated translation strategy that is opposite to domestication. Foreignisation strategy keeps the value and foreignness of the source culture in the target text to promote cultural communication so that target language readers can feel an alien experience when reading the translated food names. Furthermore, foreignisation leads to a piece of text that might not be baffled with the SL text or even a text jotted down basically in the TL (Baker 1998, p. 4). Finally, it should be stated that strategy awareness will help learners, teachers, and translators to use them consciously and more frequently which will enhance learning and teaching (Jafari & Kafipour, 2013; Yazdi & Kafipour, 2014; Moazen, et. al., 2016) and translation quality.

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## **The Villainous *Pontianak*? Examining Gender, Culture and Power in Malaysian Horror Films**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The *pontianak* is widely recognised as the most dreaded supernatural being in Malay folklore and mythology. Often described as a fearsome mythical creature with vampire-like qualities, she is said to have fangs, possesses ghost-like traits and can only be subdued using a sharp object which is usually a nail struck to the back of her neck. She is also recognised through her high-pitched shrieks, long flowing hair and a fondness for the blood of children. Despite possessing such fearsome and horrifying characteristics, the *pontianak* peculiarly remains popular among Malaysians as the horror film genre has always been popular among Malaysian and Asian audiences due to its deep roots in religious and superstitious beliefs. Many Asian nations have shared cultural, historical and social characteristics. Cross cultural influences across borders are common in shaping each other's culture and a number of Malaysian horror films have been influenced by the Noh and Kabuki-influenced 'shunen' (revenge) and 'kaidan' (ghost mystery) stories. While the horror film is in fact a commercial venture, the genre is also filled with socio-cultural and political contestations. As such, these narratives reflect certain socio-cultural and political anxieties of given moments within the location of the film's production. This paper therefore examines the pan-Asian cultural influences in the current wave of Malaysian horror. As the *pontianak* is also always female, this paper then examines how the employment of female monstrosity articulate male fears around female empowerment and suggests a broader challenge to a sense of normality, cultural and religious beliefs.

*Keywords:* Malaysian cinema, *pontianak*, horror, female monstrosity, power, cinematic villains

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The *pontianak* has become one of the most recognisable figures in Malaysian cinema. To date, there are more than 10 films produced from the 1950s until

the early 2000s about this iconic and instantly recognisable mythical creature. Notable films about this fearsome mythical creature with vampire-like qualities are *Pontianak* (1957), *Sumpah Pontianak* (1958), *Pontianak Gua Musang* (1964), *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam* (2004) and *Pontianak Menjerit* (2005). In these films, the *pontianak* is always female, have fangs, possesses ghost-like traits, and can only be subdued by striking a nail to the back of her neck. The *pontianak* is also known to shriek in a high-pitched tone, has long flowing hair, and dons a long white robe. Despite possessing such fearsome and horrifying characteristics, the *pontianak* peculiarly remains popular among Malaysians as the horror film genre has always been popular among Malaysian audiences due to its deep roots in religious and superstitious beliefs.

The popularity and to a certain extent fascination of horror films is also one that transcends both time and space and has a popular following in Asia. Japan for example, is well known for its J-Horror films depicting blood and gore while horror films from Thailand are often laden with psychological elements. Horror films belonging to this wave of pan-Asian horror often contain distinctive characteristics but the one thing that is commonly shared is the gender of its monster/supernatural entity, which is often female. This employment of female monstrosity in such films however, does not merely articulate male fears of female empowerment. The monstrous female, which can present itself as the archaic mother, with a monstrous womb,

vampire, witch, possessed monster, castrator and castrating mother, is represented as abject, a being which threatens the stability of the symbolic order (Creed, 1996). The monstrous feminine while arousing dread and horror, problematises the symbolic order through the evocation of fear, unease, disquiet and gloom (Creed, 2004). For the restoration of order to occur, the abject needs to be rejected before it becomes too threatening (Creed, 2004). This paper therefore examines the emergence of *pontianak* films in Malaysia and their pan-Asian horror film connection. Secondly, this paper examines *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam* as a case study to suggest how the employment of female monstrosity in Malaysian horror films poses a broader challenge to a sense of normality, and cultural and religious beliefs within a patriarchal society. This case study also examines if the *pontianak* exists as a villain that needs to be destroyed for the re-establishment of a sense of normalcy or a protagonist to defend and boost a status quo under threat.

## DEFINING THE HORROR GENRE

The characteristics that constitute the horror genre are not fixed, as horror is a flexible genre open to varying interpretations. It varies according to the different audiences located within different contexts and moments, and is built on a set of familiar conventions and at the same time using different cultural resources drawn upon by both filmmaker and audience (Tudor, 1989). The horror genre therefore, should

be understood as a collection of related but often very different categories. As an overlapping and evolving set of conceptual categories, the horror genre is in a constant state of flux rather than being a distinct and unified set of films with shared conventions (Cherry, 2009). The simplest definition of a horror film is a film that intends to horrify and thrill a captive audience (Creed, 2005; Davis & Natale, 2010). This statement in itself is a paradox; it is contradictory as it contains two very opposing emotions. The paradox of the horror film lies in its alluring appeal of horrifying audiences. While the term 'horror' itself denotes feelings of fear, shock, disgust, and abjection, when put to screen, horror films can cross cultural, religious, and class boundaries by drawing on and appealing to a range of audiences from different classes, localities and beliefs. As one of the most lucrative genres in the cinema industry, the ability of the horror genre to continue drawing audiences to experience new frights and horrifying sights through morbid preoccupations with fear, death and monsters leads to the question that has fascinated and bewildered critics and academics alike: How do audiences continue to be attracted to something that causes fear and disgust?

This phenomenon of horror film's remarkable popularity and its continued acceptance by audiences has made the horror film one of the most provocative and controversial genres in cinema (Hutchings, 2008). The horror film emerges from being seen as a form of low culture to a form that often reflects the social, cultural,

and political anxieties of the time of its making. It explores fundamental questions about the nature of human existence and the contemporary sense of the world by intensely conveying synchronic associations and ideological and social messages of a certain historical moment (Prince, 2004). As the horror film is meant to draw negative emotions from the audience, it was once seen as a low form of culture (Prince, 2004), as an 'outsider', 'forbidden fruit', 'distasteful', 'tainted', and 'cultural other', existing at the margins of the mainstream with a taboo status (Cherry, 2009). Despite its marginal status, the horror genre has persisted since the inception of cinema. Audience perception of the horror genre has evolved since the days of early cinema. Horror has been a durable genre that has evolved from one generation to the next. The turnaround of horror from a genre existing on the fringes to a driving force in the mainstream locates it as possibly the most sustainable genre in cinematic history. In order to continually scare its audience, the boundaries of the genre have been completely shifted over time to constantly revitalise, evolve, transform, and hybridise into an extremely diverse set of sub-genres and new forms to offer thematic variations to its audience (Cherry, 2009). The durability of the horror genre can therefore, be explained through its ability to relate to the audience's perception of fear in line with shifting times.

## THE MALAYSIAN *PONTIANAK* AND THE FILEM SERAM

In one of the most contemporary discussions about the *pontianak* in folklore and popular culture, Ng (2009) attributes the *pontianak* as possessing similar qualities to the Western vampire, as a hybrid creature that blends Eastern and Western characteristics of a vampire. The cinematic representations of the *pontianak* have blurred the boundaries between traditional belief and popular culture. This is because the *pontianak* has become a recalibration of Malay and Western folklore and popular culture, as she was created with fangs, ghost-like traits, and is subdued using a sharp object (striking a nail at the back of the neck).

Skeat's 1965 study on Malay folklore in Malaysia however, highlights the erroneous belief in the use of the term *pontianak* in current cinematic representations. According to Skeat, the *pontianak* is actually the child of the *langsuyar/langsuir*, a creature that shares similar characteristics? The *langsuyar/langsuir* is an incredibly beautiful lady who dies shortly after giving birth. She dies of shock upon hearing of her stillborn child and returns from the dead in the form of a *pontianak*. Upon returning from the dead, she claps her hands and flies onto a tree. In order to prevent such a transformation, glass beads are placed into her mouth, a chicken egg is placed under her armpits, and needles are pierced through her palms. This is done so that the dead woman is prevented from shrieking and flying, as her arms and movements have been limited. The *langsuyar* is fond of

fish and is easily recognisable by her green robe, long fingernails, and long jet-black hair. Cutting her nails and hair and stuffing it into a hole may subdue her. In doing so, she becomes a woman and is capable of being a wife and mother. While Skeat states that the *pontianak* should theoretically be termed as the *langsuyar*, this female vampire, however has been commonly referred to as the *pontianak* in societal folklores and popular culture. The *pontianak* should also not be mistaken for a certain place by the name of Pontianak located in the province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia. In fact, there is a myth that states how the place got its name as the early settlers at Pontianak were haunted by sightings of the *pontianak*. As such, the myth and belief in the existence of the *pontianak* stretches transnationally throughout Southeast Asian countries. In Indonesia, it is known as the "kuntilanak", in the Philippines, "tiyanak" and in Singapore and Malaysia, the "pontianak".

In Malaysian cinemas, the Malaysian horror film or *filem seram* were most popular during the 1950s–1960s and again in the early 2000s. During these times, it was films with *pontianak* themes that popularised this genre while other films used localised monsters, entities, beliefs, mythologies and superstition. This has allowed Malaysians to develop a deep sense of 'cultural verisimilitude' that invokes a deep sense of plausibility, motivation, justification and belief due to familiarity with the monsters in these films (Lee, 2012). For example, the release of the first *pontianak*, film *Pontianak* (1957),

caused certain members of the audience to lose consciousness as the images were reported to be too shocking. The release of *Pontianak* by B.N. Rao led to an intense rivalry between the two largest film studios Cathay-Keris and Malay Film Productions (MFP) of the Shaw Brothers.

*Pontianak* starred Maria Menado and her husband Abdul Razak was the scriptwriter. The film narrates the tale of the female protagonist Chomel's transformation into a *pontianak* who was abandoned as a baby and adopted by an old man who was an author. She grows up ugly and hunchbacked and is ostracised by the villagers. When the old man dies, he instructs her to burn all his belongings. As she is carrying out his instructions, she finds a book that reveals a secret potion to obtaining good looks. During a full moon, she makes the mixture, drinks it and passes out. However, she fails to notice a clause prohibiting her to ever taste blood. She awakens as a beautiful woman and eventually marries the son of a village head. Her transformation into a *pontianak* happens when her husband is bitten by a snake. In a bid to rescue him, she sucks the venom from his leg but the taste of blood tempts her to ultimately drain his body of blood. She vanishes but emerges as a *pontianak* who returns during the night to visit her daughter, terrorises the village, and kills men after seducing them. The film's success led to two sequels, *Dendam Pontianak* (1957) and *Sumpah Pontianak* (1958).

Being a commercial enterprise, these sequels were produced as 'commercial

feature films to continue telling familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations' (Grant, 2003). Two *pontianak* films - *Pontianak Kembali* (1963) and *Pontianak Gua Musang* (1964) - were directed by B.N. Rao. The Cathay-Keris *pontianak* films proved to be a winning formula with a total of five films released and the *pontianak* until today remains the most recognisable monster. The genre's success eventually led to spin-offs and copycat movies by MFP. In 1958, MFP released Ramon Estella's *Anak Pontianak*. However, MFP only produced two *pontianak* films, the other being *Pusaka Pontianak* (1964). *Pontianak* (1975) became the eighth and final *pontianak* film released before the 30 year hiatus in the production of *pontianak* films. Locally made horror films also lost their lustre with Malaysian audiences and the horror genre became almost non-existent.

In 2004, the *pontianak* returned to Malaysian cinema through Shuhaimi Baba's *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam*. As the first *pontianak* film to be released in more than 30 years since the review of the Film Act in 1971 and the introduction of the VHSC (Violence, Horror, Sex, Counter-culture) policy, the film script was rewritten five times, given a rating of 18PL (A film that may contain a combination of either horror, violence, sex, politics, religion), and a disclaimer at the beginning to remind viewers that the film was fictional and that the *pontianak* is merely a figment of one's imagination.<sup>1</sup> The film achieved critical and commercial success by exploiting

the infamous *pontianak* myth which has deep mythical roots in Malaysia. The film became a local success as it was screened at 29 commercial cinemas, made a return of MYR3.2 million (US\$1.07 million), and received numerous accolades such as Best Editing and Best Male Supporting Actor at the *Festival Filem Malaysia 17* (17<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Film Festival), and 10 awards (including Best Film Production, Best Cinematography and Best Editing) at the 2004 Malaysian Film Workers Association (PPFM) Oscars.

According to Shuhaimi Baba, the film was more popular than Japanese and Korean horror films as Malaysian audiences could easily relate to the Malay language and the localised *pontianak* (Looi, 2011). That film was the first local horror film in the post-2000 era to be commercially screened overseas and at festivals in Spain, London, Bangkok, and Singapore; and to win awards for Best Director, Best Cinematography, and Best Music at the Estepona Horror and Fantasy Film Festival (Spain, 2004), and Best Actress at the Asia Pacific Film Festival (Japan, 2004). The local media, which covered the film's accomplishments extensively, helped the film gain extensive popularity while (re)popularising the horror genre. The popularisation and success achieved by this film then led to the emergence of a new 'wave' of *filem seram* in Malaysia. In 2011 alone, an average of one *filem seram* was released per month with various horror sub-genres and sequels being produced. The 'wave' of popular horror films in Malaysia can therefore, be

attributed to this film. The above illustration exemplifies the continued attraction and fascination of Malaysians towards horror films. This phenomenon will form the basis of my examination of contemporary Malaysian horror films and to explain its sudden (re)popularisation in Malaysian cinema. As a result, another two *pontianak* films were released, namely *Pontianak Menjerit* (2005), *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam 2* (2006) and *Tolong! Awek Aku Pontianak* (2011) The (re)popularisation of Malaysian horror films thus, marks the return of a repressed genre.

### THE MALAYSIAN-PAN-ASIAN HORROR CONNECTION

Horror films have always been popular in Asia. Throughout the years, its audiences have been entertained by Malaysian *pontianak* films such as *Sumpah Pontianak* and *Anak Pontianak* in the 1950s–1970s; Indonesian horror films *Mystics in Bali* (1981) and *Pengabdian Setan* (1982) explored the mystical and supernatural in the 1980s, and the Hong Kong Chinese (hopping) vampire films in the 1990s such as *Encounters of the Spooky Kind* (1980) and *Mr. Vampire* films. As Asian countries have much in common culturally, there exist many similarities in the characteristics of their horror films. For example, James Lee's *Claypot Curry Killers* from Malaysia bears certain similarities to the cannibalistic acts in Fruit Chan's short film *Dumplings* in the *Three...Extremes* (2004) compilation: here, human flesh is used to enhance the flavour and saleability of a certain dish. As



such, it makes sense to examine how the Malaysian horror films are influenced by the current wave of pan-Asian cinematic horror. This is not to be confused with the Hollywood remakes of popular Asian titles such as *Ringu* and *Dark Water* (2002) that were produced using big budgets, stars, and special effects, Asian horror movies began as low-budget and independent productions without the presence of renowned stars or special effects (Rawle, 2010). This current wave of cinematic horror is greatly aided by the rise of digital film-making technology and the internet, and the release of *Ringu* and its subsequent sequels and prequel, that created shockwaves across the region and worldwide.

Beginning regionally in Asia, the *Ringu* phenomenon sparked immense discussions on the Internet, media, academia, and in the cinematic world. *Ringu*, a low-budget independent production, has similarly impacted on Malaysian horror films. The image of a slim figured Sadako dressed in a long white garment, with long straight hair parted to reveal only her left eye, crawling out of a television set and the curse of certain death after the viewing of a videocassette tape and the receiving of a phone call has greatly influenced the horror genre (this image of Sadako has influenced the portrayal of Meriam the *pontianak* in *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam* and the *hantu nombor ekor* in *Sini Ada Hantu* (2011)). The possibility of such a horrendous being emerging from simple everyday appliances shocked and horrified millions of viewers regionally

and worldwide, as this image and storyline tore down the boundaries between what was possible and factual while questioning the fragility of life. The success of *Ringu* (Ring) and the theatrical releases of its sequels *Ringu 2* (Ring 2) (1999) and *Ring O: Birthday* (2000) led to the emergence of the J-Horror movement and eventual rise of the horror movie wave across Asia. Worldwide, the success of *Ringu* and J-Horror led to the film being remade by DreamWorks as *The Ring* (2002). This wave occurred as horror is a cinematic genre capable of transcending borders, because fear as a universal emotion has allowed the horror genre to move easily across cultures.

The pan-Asian horror film represents an incorporation of contemporary regionalism and globalisation that exists at the intra-, inter-, and extra textual levels. It is successfully exhibited and distributed across the Asian region and globally through Hollywood adaptations and taps into themes with strong regional and international significance (Knee, 2009, p. 69). The success of J-Horror, low-budgeted digital film-making and the ability of horror films to cross cultures and borders across Asia has led to the emergence of prominent titles from a number of Asian nations; from South Korea: Kim Ji-woon's *The Quiet Family* (1998); Thailand: Nonzi Nimibutr's *Nang Nak* (1999); Indonesia: Rizal Mantovani's *Jelangkung* (2001); Singapore: Djinn's *Return to Pontianak* (2001); The Philippines: Chito S. Roño's *Feng Shui* (2004); and Malaysia: Shuhaimi Baba's *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam*

(2004). While this list is by no means exhaustive, the above films represent some of the pioneering works from different Asian countries, emerging after the success of *Ringu*.

In pan-Asian horror cinema, the majority of filmmakers and producers have a preference for regional and global production approaches because of their cosmopolitan backgrounds and overseas educations; while the rise and popularity of the internet and digital media have allowed audiences access to information regarding local and national cinemas across Asia (Choi & Wada-Marciano, 2009). The cultural exchanges illustrated by the current horror boom across Asia are also caused by the transnationality of human and technological capital. Cinematic representations in pan-Asian horror, however, differ from Hollywood-established patterns as Asian horror films began as low-budget and independently produced productions without the presence of renowned stars or special effects (Rawle, 2010). Many 'ghosts' in Asian horror films are created with likenesses and traits similar to Sadako's and the movies contain excessive images of blood and gore. Known as the '*onryo*', they are females dressed in the long flowing white gown of the burial kimono, have long straight hair, lifeless eyes on a vacant face, move by crawling in a spider-like motion and embody female murder victims returning from the dead as spirits seeking revenge as seen in Takashi Shimizu's *Ju-on: The Grudge 2* (2003). While the

cultural exchanges illustrated by the current horror boom across Asia are caused by the transnationality of human and technological capital, their themes, style, and exhibition patterns, however, carry strong regional and international significance.

Many Asian nations have shared cultural, historical and social characteristics as cultural flows have easily occurred across borders. A great number of horror films in the current wave of Asian horror while shaped extensively by the Noh and Kabuki-influenced '*shunen*' (revenge) and '*kaidan*' (ghost mystery stories) of *Ringu*, also employ localised elements of religious beliefs, customs, traditions and values. Common themes often explored in Asian horror movies are curses, urban legends and mythical tales such as the masked woman with a mutilated face in *Carved* (2007), vengeance for a transgression in *Shutter* (2004), and tales of haunted buildings or houses that represent a displacement of being 'unreconciled to the past and unconsolated by the present' (Parry, 2004) through spectral nationalities and postcolonial hauntings as captured in *The Maid* (2005). The use of regional themes places their works within an 'Asian Cinematic Imagined Community' of different locations, classes and nationalities.<sup>2</sup> In short, these phenomena represent a sense of postcolonial fear in Southeast Asian nations such as Malaysia, Singapore, and The Philippines.

**THE CINEMATIC MALAYSIAN  
PONTIANAK: *PONTIANAK HARUM  
SUNDAL MALAM***

The story of *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam* takes place in pre-independence Malaysia in a local village known as *Kampung Paku Laris*. *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam* tells the story of Meriam, a distinguished “*gamelan*” dancer, whose beauty many covet. Even the local ruler grants her the honorary title of “*Primadona*” due to her prominence and talent as a dancer. Two friends, Marsani and Danial, who also live in *Kampung Paku Laris* fall in love with her at the same time. Meriam eventually weds Danial and when she is heavily pregnant, her merchant husband is killed in an accident at sea. Marsani then attempts to fill in the void left by Danial. He tries to force himself onto Meriam but as she resists and flees, she is stabbed in the abdomen by one of Marsani’s thugs standing watch outside her home. As she lies dying, her unborn child is miraculously saved. Strange events eventually start taking place at *Kampung Paku Laris* and those closely aligned with Marsani are found dead. It is believed that Meriam has returned in the form of a *pontianak* seeking vengeance and retaliation upon those who have wronged her.

The story then continues to 2003 and Marsani is now in his golden years. He continues to be haunted by the death of Meriam and is still obsessed about her rejecting his love and advances. Marsani also remains paranoid as he continues to worry about Meriam’s continuous vengeance upon

him and his family. In order to protect his family and lineage, he attempts to prolong his lifespan by undergoing plastic surgery and ozone treatments. One day, a girl by the name of Maria, who bears similar looks with Meriam, emerges in his life. Marsani becomes distraught not only because of her striking resemblance with Meriam, but also because strange events once again start happening to those close to Marsani. Marsani’s paranoia becomes even more intense as he is quite certain that Maria is actually Meriam who has returned to exact her vengeance upon him. He then fears for the lives of his grandson Norman and his wife Ana as unexplained shadows begin to emerge around them. One day, they discover a tomb at the place where Norman works and the scent of a tuber rose lingers at their home. These paranormal activities affect the marriage of Norman and Ana and even the sanity of Maria, as she herself wonders if indeed she is a *pontianak* as Marsani finds a scar at the back of her neck.

In *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam*, much emphasis is placed on the careful construction of costumes that reflect 1940s Malaya, an era when the early *pontianak* films were produced. The portrayal of the *pontianak* in *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam* bears certain similarities as well as differences with the *pontianak* of the 1960s. First, Meriam differs from the early day *pontianak* in the films produced by Cathay-Keris and MFP. This is because Meriam has supernatural powers that enable her to fly and climb trees. Second, the advancement of technology and computer generated

images (CGI) has led to the evolution in the make-up and costume of the modern day *pontianak*. Meriam does not wear a rubber mask and neither does she have fangs.

The *pontianaks* however, bear certain similarities. First, the *pontianak* from films such as *Pontianak Gua Musang* and *Tolong! Awek Aku Pontianak* have the capability to disguise themselves as a beautiful woman to seduce, charm and lure their male targets using their beauty. Once they have trapped their targets, they then transform back into an unsightly form before killing their victims. Very often, these targets are individual men who have wronged them during their lifetime. As such, the *pontianaks* in such movies employ the Noh and Kabuki-influenced 'shunen' (revenge) plot. This is similar to the horror movies from Japan, South Korea and Thailand whereby the murdered woman returns from afterlife seeking justice. She is portrayed as a phantom or apparition and kills her perpetrators and their allies. It is only after achieving this her soul is able to rest and justice restored.

The emergence of the *pontianak* as a form of 'living dead' however, transgresses Islamic beliefs as the *pontianak* that continues living after death defies *Barzakh* or the timeframe between death and *akhirat* (afterlife). During *Barzakh*, the soul of the dead hovers above the body in the grave and is in a state of repentance while waiting to be resurrected on *akhirat*. The belief in the *pontianak* transforming into a human however, defies this Islamic belief but echoes the superstitious beliefs in the

Malay *adat* and themes of folktales and superstition in pan-Asian horror films. This is because in Malaysia, *adat* (culture) and Islam play a significant role in the lives of the Malay community. *Adat* has its roots embedded in remnants of Hinduism, as Islam only arrived during the 15<sup>th</sup> century reign of the Malacca Sultanate Empire (Verma, 2004). The existence of *adat* and customs (magic, superstition, spirit worship, taboos), shamanic practices (*pawang*, *dukun* or *bomoh*) and beliefs (*jin* [genie] and *iblis* [Devil]) which predate Islam have existed continuously in Malay culture, but are viewed by Islamic fundamentalists as challenging Islam (Shamsul, 2005).

As such, the *pontianak* emerges as a nebulous figure. The *pontianak* is a nebulous figure not only because of her existence as a being neither dead nor alive but also because of her ambiguous role as it is not clear if she is a villain or hero. While she is brutally murdered and at times possibly slandered before her death, her return from the afterlife seeking death and destruction to those who have murdered her or her loved ones could either be read as a form of vigilance or revenge. On one hand, she could be seen as a villain or antagonist due to the chaos, destruction and murder of those regardless of their innocence; on the other, she could be read as a hero or the protagonist as she seeks justice for those who are oppressed. It must however, be noted here that her role either as antagonist or protagonist represents the changing role of women in Malaysia. The increased number of women holding important portfolios and

significantly contributing economically, socially, politically and culturally can either be viewed as an empowerment of women or as a threat towards the patriarchal order in society. In addition, Malaysian films such as *Penarek Becha* (1955), *Sembilu* (1995) and *Ombak Rindu* (2011) have conventionally stereotyped women as weak, passive and submissive within a male-dominant and Malay-centric culture. The *pontianak* however, is a different representation of woman as she has supernatural strength and abilities and is capable of destabilising the equilibrium of the film's plot. Yet, the need to restore equilibrium through the destruction of the *pontianak* in which the transgressor must be punished occurs. As such, the *pontianak* as a threat needs to be destroyed so that social order can be restored. This can be achieved by getting rid of the villains and redrawing the boundaries by repressing the threat of the *pontianak*. The empowerment of the *pontianak* can be seen as a method of bolstering patriarchy in society as the *pontianak* is projected as the unfamiliar threat that needs to be feared as it causes harm and destruction. The *pontianak* metaphorically represents a 'castration threat' or the empowerment of women in society that is threatening patriarchy. In creating 'landscapes of fear' through the *pontianak*, the *pontianak* generates a social construction of the fearful in society (Tudor, 1989, p. 5). In order for a return to normalcy and departure from a fearful landscape, the solution is to destroy the *pontianak*, which is in effect, a dismissal and rejection of the castration threat which could possibly destabilise the patriarchal order.

The role of the *pontianak* can also be seen as a positive departure from the usual stereotypical roles given to women as the *pontianak* destabilises the plot of the film. The transformation of the *pontianak* from a beautiful woman into a horrifying creature challenges the scopophilic pleasure (Mulvey, 1989) obtained through the cinematic gaze. This transformation challenges the notion that women need to be objectified as beautiful sexual objects to be noticed in terms of looks, body shape and reflection. The transformation of the *pontianak* from beautiful to horrifying demonstrates how the *pontianak* empowers herself by being in charge of her sexuality without having to succumb to classical narrative structures that often objectify the woman as passive and as sources of visual pleasures. The *pontianak* therefore does not play the role of a submissive housewife, nagging mother-in-law or a scantily dressed female character with a low IQ or as sexual prey. The *pontianak* is instead portrayed as a figure of authority and intelligence who can think, manipulate and cunningly presents the threat of castration towards her nemeses who are often men who have wronged her in the past. She achieves this by her loud shrieks and costume designs which is meant to cause shock and horror among the audiences. As the *pontianak* is often dressed in a long, white flowing robe with long hair, this image of horror is shared by the horror films of other Asian cinemas. For example, Sadako from *Ringu* similarly wears a long white robe which is a burial kimono indicating how this female figure has been provided with "*carte blanche*" to carry out

her destructions. While the *pontianaks* do not wear a Japanese burial kimono due to cultural and religious differences, the white costume would metaphorically symbolise her new sense of power, innocence and the completion of a life cycle as she has been given a new lease of life by returning from the dead. The long flowing hair while aiming to scare its audiences, also indicates how the *pontianak* retains her female identity and does not need to succumb to the needs and wants of gender identity as defined by society. Her ability to move from one realm to another and travelling without being confined to gravitational rules also indicates how the female body is no longer confined to the shackling and authority of male regulation and control. As such, the role played by the *pontianak* either as a villain or hero eventually becomes a threat towards the social order and status quo of patriarchy in any given Asian society and reflects the increasing empowerment and liberation of women in societies across Asia.

## CONCLUSION

For many years, Malaysian-made horror films have been popular among its audiences. While there exists numerous mythological and fearsome creatures supernaturally or within one's state of mind, the *pontianak* has become the most popular and feared creature in Malaysian folklore and cinema. The *pontianak* as the female monster or supernatural entity has become iconic in some way, shape or form. In particular, the female *Pontianak* has become possibly

more iconic, memorable and feared than their male counterparts. The empowerment of this female figure through its ability to return from the underworld in order to exact her vengeance on those who have wronged her articulates a sense of fear about the empowerment of women. It leaves the *pontianak* in a state of ambiguity of not being alive nor dead. As such, the act of vengeance of the *pontianak* who returns to kill those who have murdered her as an act of righteousness can also be ambiguously interpreted. Her sense of notoriety for such reasons could either place the *pontianak* as a hero or villain – depending on whether her acts of vengeance are interpreted as acts of cruelty or vigilance. Whatever the status one confers on the *pontianak*, of being either a hero or villain, it is important to note that the cinematic portrayal of the *pontianak* itself as a protagonist breaks away from the usual weak and submissive portrayal of women in Malaysian cinema. This characteristic of female empowerment, which is shared by the horror films of Japan, South Korea and Thailand, becomes a positive departure from the usual stereotypical portrayal of women in cinema while challenging patriarchy in such Asian societies.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Introduced in 1996, films released in Malaysian cinemas were rated according to six categories: U; PG-13; 18SG; 18SX; 18PA; and 18PL. Under the new censorship guidelines released in 2010, these ratings have been revised to U (Suitable for general viewing); PG-13 (Children under 13 may not be admitted unless with parental guidance); and 18 (For adults aged 18 and above for the film may contain mild violence, horror, sex scenes, nudity, sexual dialogues/references, religious, social or political aspects). It was also verbally agreed that scenes of ghosts emerging from graves and too much blood would not be shown, and that the *pontianak* could only appear in dream-like sequences.

<sup>2</sup> I borrow Benedict Anderson's concept of the Imagined Community (1991).





## **Nature or Nurture? A Qualitative Study of the Source of Homosexuality**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Scholars have debated, asserted and posited that the source of homosexuality in both gay men and lesbian women is found either in nature or nurture. Of specific interest to this research was the self-identified source of homosexuality in gay men through their lived experience. A Malaysian-based context was taken due to the growing interest, both politically and socially, of the social phenomenon of homosexuality in Malaysia. As personal experience was the data source selected for this research and social construction of identity was the perspective taken, phenomenology acted as the theoretical underpinning through which the shared experience of the respondents was analysed. The geographic setting of the research was Penang, Malaysia as it was an urban area that had been identified as having a population of self-identified gay men. A qualitative perspective was taken due to the sensitive nature of the research. The sample population was gathered via purposive sampling and the snowball technique and a total of 33 respondents were recruited. All respondents were interviewed in-depth where a semi-structured interview questionnaire was utilised. All data were transcribed and analysed via a content analysis matrix. The findings suggest that the source of homosexuality for the respondents was nature and not nurture. Respondents attribute their homosexuality to genetics, inborn hormonal influence and biology. However, the findings do point out that nurture has a part to play in the development of self-identified gay men as individuals. Nurturing via friendships, role-modelling and environments that are affirming and positive portrayals of homosexuality in the media allow the respondents to internalise positive attitudes towards their homosexuality. Research into the source of homosexuality from the viewpoint of complementarity as opposed to

opposition is a direction that would benefit studies of homosexuality. Longitudinal research would deepen understanding of the source of homosexuality.

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## INTRODUCTION

The debate as to the source of homosexuality being natural or nurtured has orbited the issue area of human sexuality since studies into this area were delved into by scholars like Benkert, Ellis, Kinsey, Ulrich and Hirschfeld (McConaghy, 1987; Edwards, 1994; Jenkins, 2006). While some scholars posited that homosexuality was a natural predisposition in the spectrum of sexual attraction, others asserted that homosexuality was a learned behaviour and was subject to change and/or modification (Savin-Williams & Vrangalova, 2013). To date, this debate regarding gender identity continues within the social sciences (Steensma, Kreukels, deVries, & Cohen-Kettenis, 2013). This paper puts forward the question of whether homosexuality is natural or is nurtured.

### **Nature and Nurture Perspectives of Homosexuality**

Various scholars have attributed the source of homosexuality to nature and have argued that it was related to heritability, biology, hormones and genetics; in other words that homosexuality was innate (Alanko et al., 2010; Jannini et al., 2010; Morgan, 2012). Bailey et al. (2013) argued that homosexuality had a high heritability rate, was partly genetic, was related to an in-utero experience and was biologically determined as did Zietsch et al. (2008). Goodman (1997) asserted that homosexuality was

a genetically heritable family trait and tentatively identified a region of the X chromosome as the cause of same-sex sexual attraction. Other scholars had noted incidents of high heritability of homosexuality (Bailey et al., 1991; Bailey & Bell, 1993; Bailey et al., 1999) that implied that there was a biological/genetic (Blanchard et al., 1996) or hormonal (Schwartz et al., 2010; Blanchard, 2012; Alanko et al., 2013; Diamond, 2013) component to the same-sex sexual attractions of gay men.

Aside from heritability, arguments that homosexuality was formed biologically, hormonally or genetically were put forward by various scholars (Rice et al., 2012). Mondimore (1996) posited specifically that the third interstitial nuclei of the anterior hypothalamus (INAH3) brain functions and anterior commissure of gay men differed from those of heterosexual men, therefore forming a biological argument that attraction to men by homosexual men and heterosexual women were biologically determined. A study conducted by Witelson et al. (2008) in the USA found that that the isthmus of the corpus callosum in homosexual men was greater than in heterosexual men. The isthmus of the corpus callosum was thought to determine sexual attraction, thus again supporting the biological argument for homosexuality.

Based on a study conducted across five nations, namely the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Lippa (2007) suggested that exposure to the hormone androgen during gestation caused same-sex sexual attraction in males. While the

study by Lippa supports the argument for a hormonal cause of homosexuality, research conducted by Turner (1995) hypothesised that homosexuality was genetically determined by a gene at Xq28 of the human DNA structure. Perhaps the most provocative argument for a biological, genetic and hormonal source of homosexuality has been put forward by Whitam (1983) based on a cross-cultural study that found that homosexual men appeared in all societies, that the percentage of homosexual men in most societies were the same and remained stable over time, that homosexual subcultures appeared in all societies where there was enough of an aggregation of people and that social norms did not impede or facilitate the emergence of homosexuality.

Conversely, other scholars have asserted that homosexuality was learnt or nurtured. Taylor (1999) asserted that sexual identity was defined by the meaning attributed to it by an individual. The crux of what Taylor asserted suggested that homosexuality was nurtured through attribution by external sources (such as media, see Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2014) and not sourced from a natural predisposition within homosexuals. Matthei (1995) argued that sexual identity was formed via engagement in gendered professions, asserting that environment engendered homosexuality. For Wilkerson, Ross and Brooks (2009), heteronormativity (the acceptance that heterosexuality, heterosexual norms and heterosexual values were superior to homosexuality, homosexual norms and homosexual values) constructed

homosexuality as inferior and therefore, homosexuality was adopted and nurtured in those who did not meet the superior standards of a society. More recently, studies by Bailey, Hoskins, Green and Ritchie (2014) asserted that environment played a part in sexual inclination and behaviour in different social contexts, and a study by Crowson and Goulding (2013) raised questions that supported the need for socialisation to occur in order for homosexuality to be manifested.

### **Homosexuality in the Asian and Malaysian Contexts**

Some Asian cultures had romanticised homosexuality in past eras. For example, according to Ng (1989) and Van Gulick (1974) the Chinese term *longyang* came from the name of Jun Longyang, a 4th century BC minister who had a homosexual relationship with the Prince of Wei. This is also where the term “cut sleeve” (*duanxiu*) comes from. Schallow (1989) found that gay sexuality was also part of the feudal Japanese culture in the form of romantic/sexual relationships between a samurai and his boy lover known as *nanshoku*. Peletz (2009) found that in the Malayo-Indo archipelago in past times the *sida-sida* (effeminate men) were considered sacred, were attributed high social status and were essential to the running of royal courts.

However, this acceptance of same-sex sexuality was eroded over time and in the present, homosexuality and homosexuals tend to be maligned in the Malaysian context, where society seems to

be becoming more conservative in nature socially, religiously and politically (Rehman & Polymenopoulou; 2012; Owoyemi & Ahmad, 2013a, 2013b; Yodfallah et al., 2014; Pandian, 2015; Wan Roslili, 2015; Brown et al., 2016), and this potentially caused a more negative stance towards homosexuality (Wilkison & Pearson, 2013). According to Poon and Ho (2002), homosexuality worked against well-defined gender roles, family structures, filial piety and family expectations in an Asian context. Based on findings by Baba (2001), common terms used to refer to the sexual identity of gay men in Malay were derogatory (e.g. *bapok*, *kedi*, *pondan* and *darai*). Baba also stated that homosexuality in Malaysia attracted a great deal of attention, although it was not accepted widely socially or politically. Baba further added that there was a lack of positive role models (socially, politically and in the media) and there was discomfort with homosexuality within Malaysian society.

In another study conducted by Baba (2002), it was found that male homosexuality in Malaysia was often mistakenly associated with HIV/AIDS. Baba further found that gay men in Malaysia had no cultural, political or social point of reference from which homosexuality could be developed and accepted. Additionally, the stigma faced by gay men was fuelled by beliefs that same-sex sexual attraction and same-sex sexual activity were not part of the culture of Malaysia. Soraya (2008) and Watney (2000) reported that often gay men were viewed as hedonistic, had chosen to break away from

heterosexuality to satisfy lustful desires and were systematically casting aside traditional Asian (Malaysian) values for values espoused by Western nations. Other research pointed out that within the Malaysian context homosexuality is an ideology that is engendered and can be changed, and that that through counselling homosexuality may be converted to heterosexuality (Ahmad Zaharuddin et al., 2014). The findings of other scholars, however, point out that such views led to negative mental health as well as a lack of interpersonal closeness with other members of society (Newheiser & Barreto, 2014), suicide (Russel & Toomey, 2012) and persistent hiding of the true self from society in general (Ott et al., 2013).

In terms of the literature reviewed, three main points may be made. First, that there were both proponents for homosexuality as natural and homosexuality as nurtured, and neither one of the opposing views had reached a definitive answer; second, that homosexuality in Malaysia was maligned despite homosexuality having been acceptable in different Asian cultures at different points in history; and third, that more research was needed from a Malaysian perspective to understand the source of homosexuality in self-identified gay men in Malaysia as well as other studies on homosexuality in the country.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The philosophy of phenomenology was the theoretical framework that underpinned this research. In phenomenology, social actors determine the aspects of the social world

that is important to them and meanings and interpretations (hermeneutics) of individual worlds are determined inter-subjectively through interaction with peers and other members of society (Basset, 2004; Bishop, 2007). For the purposes of this research, the meanings and interpretations of their individual world facilitated the analysis of the interpretations of the respondents of the source of their homosexuality as well as identified if the source was internal or external to their selves.

From the determination of the aspects of the social world and inter-subjectively determined meanings, social actors created realities of the self that are based on lived experience, introspection and retrospective glances after an action had occurred (existentialist) (Berger & Luckman, 1972). Phenomenology allowed the respondents of this research to reflect on their lived experience of their homosexuality, thus allowing them the reflected-upon view of ascertaining the source of their sexuality, be it internal or external.

Phenomenology also allowed for actions or mental processes that had taken place and were objective to be studied scientifically (Ritzer, 2003, p. 71). As such, phenomenology allowed for the identification of the source of homosexuality from the standpoint of the lived experience of self-identified gay men from a scientific standpoint to be analysed. This in turn created a theoretically reliable basis for the interpretation and discussion of the data.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Opposing views of the source of homosexuality were found in the literature, and while strong arguments were put forward, no definitive answer could be reached. While this research could not provide a definitive answer, the view of the researcher was that by taking an emic view of the experience of gay men in Malaysia a deeper understanding of the experience of self-identified gay men as to the source of their homosexuality would facilitate further discussion, debate and openness on the subject of the source of homosexuality in the country. This would additionally add to the growing body of knowledge of non-heterosexual experiences of Malaysians within a social context. Additionally, a gap in the literature exists where the assertions of the source of homosexuality are made by natural scientists as well as theorists, but very few from the social science perspective that bases the source of homosexuality on the lived and interpreted experience of self-identified gay men.

Therefore, the research question put forward was: "What is the source of homosexuality as interpreted by self-identified gay men?" The research objectives put forward, based on the research question, were: (1) To describe if self-identified gay men attribute their homosexuality to nature or to nurture; (2) To qualitatively analyse the source of homosexuality among self-identified gay men via their lived experience; (3) To add to the discourse of the experience of self-identified gay men in identifying the

source of their homosexuality as viewed through the lens of phenomenology.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The geographic location chosen for the research was Penang, Malaysia. This was because Penang had been identified as a geographic location in Malaysia that had a population of self-identified gay men (Key informant interview conducted with Dr Chow Ting Soo of the Infectious Diseases Unit of Penang General Hospital, Mr Hisham Hussein of the Malaysian AIDS Council and Dr Ilias Yee of the Family Health and Development Association Penang during the period May-June, 2009; Personal Communication, Dr Chow Ting Soo, Head of the Infectious Diseases Unit, Penang General Hospital, October 3, 2010; Personal Communication, Mohd. Shahrani Mohamed Tamrin, Head of MSM Cluster Outreach PT Foundation, Kuala Lumpur, August 4, 2010; Personal Communication, Hisham Hussein, Malaysian AIDS Council, September 28, 2010). Additionally, Penang was classified as an urban geographic region in Malaysia with a large population, thus leading to a higher possibility of gaining rich qualitative data as opposed to the possibility of gaining the needed research data in a rural setting in Malaysia.

The data collected was qualitative in nature. This route was chosen as the aim of the research was to gain rich data and to allow for expression of individual experience as well as out of consideration that self-identified gay men formed a minority that valued their privacy, safety

and security. Additionally, qualitative research was the route chosen due to the sensitivity of the issue of homosexuality in Malaysia. Qualitative methodology was also chosen as the target population was not easily identifiable and formed a minority within Malaysia. A list of structured open-ended interview questions was utilised in a one-on-one in-depth interview setting. Also, the use of the in-depth interview method and tool allowed the researcher to probe (where necessary) to gain more information as well as a deeper explanation and more detail of the experience of the respondents in terms of the source of their self-professed homosexuality. In total, there were nine interview questions, with appropriate probing and segue questions where applicable.

A semi-natural setting for the interviews was chosen where both the researcher and the respondent felt both comfortable and safe to speak freely and openly about the experience of the respondents. Each respondent was interviewed for an average of an hour, with the longest interview being an hour and 15 minutes and the shortest, 57 minutes.

## **Sampling**

As the nature of this research was sensitive, the purposive sampling method and the snowball method were utilised to gather respondents who met the set criteria of the research. The purposive sampling method was used when respondents who were known to be self-identified gay men were referred to the researcher by

the AIDS Action and Research Group (AARG) of Universiti Sains Malaysia and the NGO PAYUNG; and the snowball method was utilised when the self-identified gay men who were identified by AARG and PAYUNG referred acquaintances, colleagues and friends who were self-identified gay men to the researcher. All respondents were self-identified gay men who were residents of Penang, Malaysia; were citizens of the country; and were above the legal age of consent. No age, educational or ethnic parameters were set for the research. This consideration was set by the researcher to allow for as wide and deep a breadth of collection of data for as rich a sampling as possible. Additionally, the aforementioned parameters were not utilised to get as wide an experience of as varied a population of self-identified gay men as possible. Respondents were sought until the point of data saturation was reached and this was achieved when a total of 33 respondents were gathered.

### **Research Tool and Research Analysis Tool**

All respondents were interviewed using the one-on-one in-depth interviewing method, which focussed on the following three subjects:

1. Source of the respondent's sexual attraction
2. Internal factors that shaped the respondent's sexual attraction
3. External factors that shaped the respondent's sexual attraction.

All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed via a content analysis matrix. All data were transcribed within 24 hours of the interview to maintain accuracy. All audio recordings were played back twice in the initial transcription process. Each transcription was then checked by replaying the audio recording a third time for accuracy. This processing of the data allowed the researcher to determine the accuracy of the data and if necessary, clarification was sought from the respondent.

All data were first grouped in the content analysis matrix thematically for similarity of content. The data were then analysed for content shared with the researcher that specifically named the source of the respondents' homosexuality as either nature or nurture and appropriate separation of these two categories was made in the content analysis matrix. Following this, the data were analysed a second time for content regarding the internal factors that shaped the respondents' sexual attraction for confirmation of the respondents' answer on the source of their homosexuality. The data were then analysed a third time for external factors that shaped the respondents' sexual attraction for confirmation of the respondents' answer on the source of their homosexuality.

These thematic groupings of the findings were further analysed for verbal expressions and words that denoted a natural or nurtured source of their sexuality; furthermore, as the researcher was interested in the lived experience of the respondents, particular attention was paid to the verbally-expressed

explanations of how they understood the source of their sexuality from a reflective standpoint. Further data analysis was done via cross-referencing the identified source of the respondents' sexuality with these verbally-expressed explanations in the content analysis matrix to gain a holistic interpretation of their lived experience.

### **Privacy, Confidentiality and Ethical Approval**

Privacy and confidentiality of the research was based on the following protocol:

1. When the potential respondent was referred to the researcher, either through purposive sampling or through the snowball method, the researcher contacted the potential respondent via an email address or telephone number that had been provided to the researcher.
2. The researcher would explain to the potential respondent the academic purpose of the interview, either verbally or in writing, depending on the medium of communication used.
3. If the potential respondent refused to participate in the research, the potential respondent was thanked and no further communication was maintained; however, if the potential respondent agreed to participate in the research a date and time for the one-on-one in-depth interview was negotiated based on the availability of the respondent. The venue was chosen by the respondent in deference to the respondent's need for privacy and security.
4. When the respondent was met, the researcher reiterated the academic purpose of the interview and presented the interviewer with the approval letter from the Ethics Committee of Universiti Sains Malaysia for the research.
5. The respondent was then presented with a consent form that was approved by the Ethics Committee of Universiti Sains Malaysia for perusal and signature if the respondent agreed to proceed with the one-on-one in-depth interview.
6. If the respondent agreed to the one-on-one in-depth interview it was then conducted. If the respondent refused, he was free to leave and no further contact was established.
7. Within the protocol, had the respondent at any time during the data collection process refused to participate or participate further in the research, all data and contact information were deleted by the researcher.
8. All respondents were given a pseudonym for the research and this pseudonym was used when the respondent was referred to and when the respondent was quoted verbatim.
9. The content of the one-on-one in-depth interview was audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher within 24 hours. Extensive notes were taken where applicable.
10. All data, researcher notes and signed consent forms were secured either using 128-bit encryption or locked



within a safe location known only to the researcher.

## FINDINGS

### Demographics and Background of the Respondents

The demographics of the respondents for age, race, profession and highest level of education achieved are presented below.

In terms of age, 17 respondents were between 20 to 30 years of age and 13 respondents fell in the age range of 31 to 40 years of age. Two respondents fell in the age range of 41 to 50 years of age and one respondent fell into the age range of between 51 to 60 years of age. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the respondents according to age group.

By ethnicity, 15 of the respondents were Chinese Malaysian, 10 respondents were Bumiputra Malaysian, four respondents were Indian Malaysian, two respondents were Eurasian Malaysian, one respondent was of Chinese-Thai descent and one

respondent was of Kadazan-Murut descent. The breakdown of the respondents based on race is shown more clearly in Figure 2.

Eleven of the respondents were students. Of these 11 respondents, 10 were pursuing undergraduate degrees at a local public university. The one remaining respondent had just completed a Diploma course at a local private college, and was preparing to begin studies in a foreign undergraduate degree programme offered at a private institute of higher learning.

Two respondents were employed in the field of Information Technology as either IT support or in IT Graphics. Eight respondents considered themselves professionals who were employed in various departments of multi-national companies (MNC) such as Human Resource, Engineering, Accounts and Finance as well as Management. Two of the respondents were entrepreneurs while three respondents were employed in blue-collar professions. One respondent worked in sales, one respondent worked

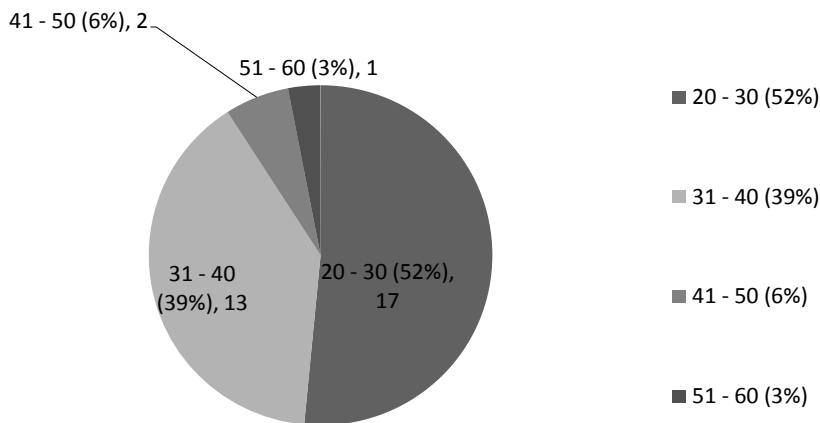


Figure 1. Breakdown of Respondents by Age

in theatrical performance, one respondent was an educator, one respondent was self-employed and one respondent worked in the hospitality industry. Finally, one of the respondents was a retiree. This breakdown is shown in Figure 3.

In terms of highest level of education achieved, the respondents fell into the five basic categories of pursuing an undergraduate degree at a local institution of higher learning, achieved an undergraduate

degree at a local institution of higher learning, achieved an undergraduate degree at a foreign institution of higher learning, achieved a diploma at a local institution of higher learning and had completed secondary-school education. Overall, it could be said that all of the respondents had received or were receiving at the time of the interview an education that was considered acceptable by any standards. This suggested that all of the respondents, in general, were

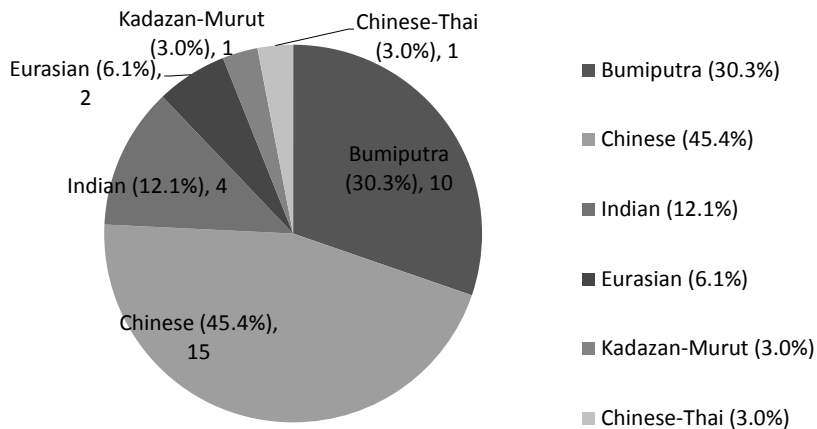


Figure 2. Breakdown of Respondents by Race

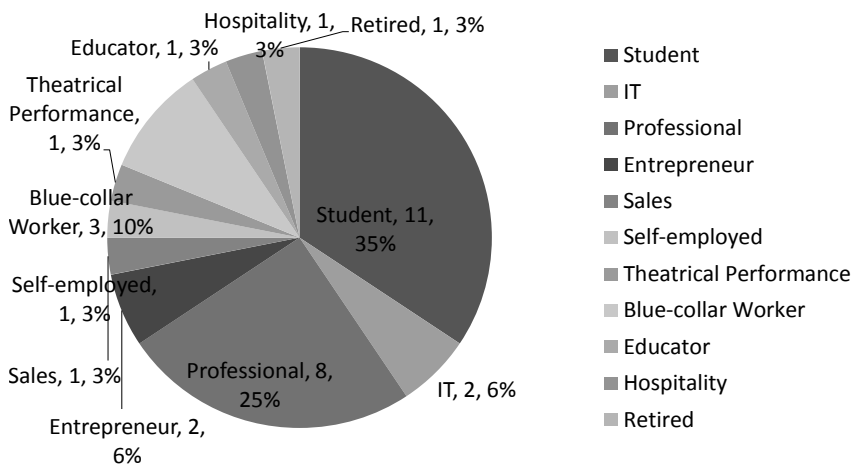


Figure 3. Breakdown of Respondents by Profession

educated men who were able to understand the questions put forward to them in the interviews and were able to lucidly answer the questions with enough clarification on the part of the researcher. This demographic is found in Figure 4.

**Nature: Genetics and Homosexuality**

The findings gave credence to the assertions of scholars who have asserted that the source of homosexuality is genetic and is not constructed by a process of nurturing. This is seen through the verbatim interview excerpts of the following three respondents on their belief that their homosexuality is genetic.

*I would think that most of it comes from genes, we are born with it. It is a genetic thing. Scientists are trying to study this. They have not found the gay gene, but I believe we are wired that way. One study has shown that the gay male brain is similar to that of a straight*

*woman. I think the size of the brain or the chemicals in the brain have something to do with it. I think it is biological, I think it is genetic. I have cousins who are gay and uncles whom I suspect are gay because they have never gotten married.* – Ben, Self-employed, 44 years of age.

*The source for me is something internal. I cannot quite put my finger on it, what or how the whole thing is initiated, so to me it is quite genetically programmed that way.* – Joe, Entrepreneur, 39 years of age.

*It is from my blood. It is the attraction to males. You like the smell of a male. You feel the satisfaction of holding his hand, or cuddling or hugging him. The trust and feeling of being with a man is much better than being with a woman.* – Mike, Entertainer, 27 years of age.

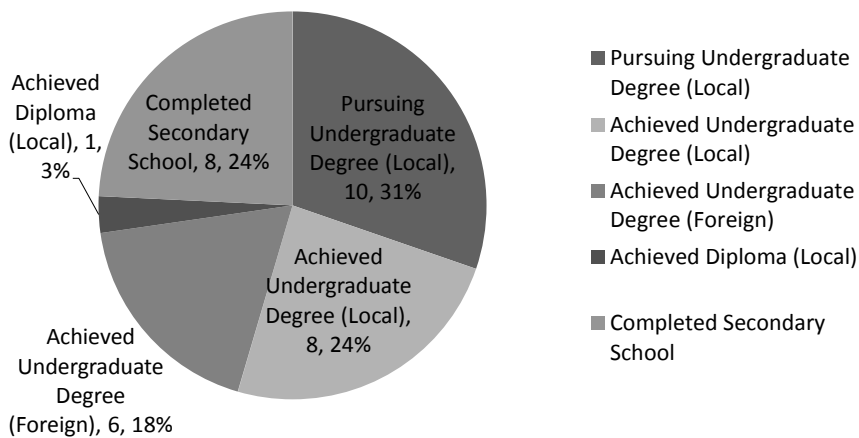


Figure 4. Highest Education Received

### **Nature: Natural and Inherent**

The data collected from the respondents suggested that they believed homosexuality to be natural to them. The source of the respondents' sexual attraction to other men is not attributed to a passing phase, a trend or an external source of influence. Rather, based on the data collected, the respondents had much to say to support the assertion that the source of their same-sex sexual attractions came from within themselves. The respondents used terms such as "born like this," "naluri" (natural instinct) and "in my blood" to describe their belief that their same-sex sexual attraction is natural to them. Examples of this belief in the natural cause of homosexuality are found in the following three interview excerpts.

*I am born this way. I definitely believe this. There is always a tell-tale sign of who I am and how feminine I am when I was young. Then again it was all a big confusion when I was in school. From there I start to believe and start to recognize what I am. – Jack, Graphic Designer, 31 years of age.*

*It is naluri. At the time I started to realise what I am I did not know any other gay guys. It is just me. When I am close to a guy I feel something. I am very interested in guys and I think when I am near a guy I think of sexual things. I think of guys in a certain (same-sex attracted) way. – Kamal, Undergraduate, 22 years of age.*

*I think it is part of my nature and it is not something nurtured. You are who you are. It (homosexuality) is natural; I mean who is there to nurture you as a gay man? Think about it, when we were children did anyone walk into a classroom and say this is how you can be gay and this is how to be a gay? – Karl, Professional, 40 years of age.*

### **Nature: Surfacing of a Natural Inclination**

Additionally, the belief of the respondents was that homosexuality is inherent, and as fluid as sexuality may be, a person's nature will come to the fore. The responses on this finding are presented below:

*I feel that there are some people who become gay because they have been hurt by a girl but to me my homosexuality has been there since I was young. If I look at my past I can see that I have been looking at guys since I was in kindergarten. I know that there are some people who are born gay and some people who become gay after being hurt by a girl. But for me being gay has been there my whole life. – George, Hotelier, 23 years of age.*

*I have met a lot of people who from heterosexual become homosexual. I have heard that there are some people who have been influenced to be gay but I do not think this is real. I have tried to make some*

*people gay but this did not happen. It is a very individual experience. – Bobby, Entrepreneur, late 30s.*

### **Nurture: Nurturing a Health Perspective of Homosexuality**

However, the findings also pointed out that nurturing was necessary to developing sexual attraction to fruition as part of an integrated and whole identity for the individual. As stated by the respondents, their homosexuality was not nurtured. Rather, forces external to them assisted in nurturing a healthy perspective of their homosexuality. Namely, these forces were peers, role models, friendship with other gay men and environments that are nurturing of homosexuality and the media. The following interview excerpts are examples of these forces and the way they nurtured the homosexuality of the respondents.

*I think whether you are gay or not you should really have a very passionate lifestyle and express it and nurture it. If I map out from there to my gay friends I find them more colourful. Colourful in the sense that they put in a lot of effort, they are all very hardworking people, they understand their passion and they actually nurture that. I actually admire that kind of expression of each and every one of my friends' passions. This is in comparison to my straight friends or my siblings who get married at a young age. With marriage*

*came a lot of responsibilities. They give up a part of themselves, their passion, because they have to live up to their responsibilities and to their children. So, when comparing the gay friends I have and the straight friends I have, straight people are less colourful. Between the two I would gravitate more to the colourful people. – Joe, Entrepreneur, 39 years of age.*

*I had a three-year relationship with my ex-boyfriend who was much older than me. He is an ex-boyfriend because he passed away quite unexpectedly. We were happy together and lived together for three years. He taught me a lot about how to be a gay guy because I started at a young age and he was of a more mature age. He molded me to be a confident and strong gay person. Not just in terms of being confident, but also to be mature in my way of thinking. It is important to be mature in my way of thinking so that I will be able to make good decisions in my life instead of just enjoying short-term things. – George, Hotelier, 23 years of age.*

*I think I have a very good role model in the sense that I have an elder brother who is also gay. There is a very big age difference between us and when I was going through my formative years he was overseas and I did not see much*

*of him. But I knew he was gay and subconsciously it has allowed me to think that it is alright to be gay. This is because I see that he is happy and all that. – Alex, Professional, 46 years of age.*

*Through where I studied and worked in Australia. I was surrounded by people who are more open. In a big city I would get people who are more able to be open, whereas when you work in a smaller town people tended to cover up. I think that a lot of gay men are more creative than the straight ones. You tend to have flair which combines the masculine and the feminine. You are not too hard and you are not too soft, you are in between. It gives you the opportunity to be close to gay people who are already successful, so they tend to be more open-minded and they tend to help each other out. – Peter, Educator, 36 years of age.*

*When I was growing up I needed to fund my own education. So I started working in this restaurant where the owner, manager and most of the other staff are gay. They gave me a sense of security and allowed me to see that it was okay to be what I am and to accept who I am. The people around me at this workplace helped me develop security in who I am. – Chai, Professional, 36 years of age.*

*When I was in school I mixed around with friends who are the same as me (homosexual). We had the same interests, the same behaviors. Initially we were not so open to sharing that we had sexual interests in men but after we mixed around more the issue of sexual interest in became normal and was not seen as weird. When I moved to the city I became more exposed to gay men and sex between two men. In my kampong (village) it is difficult to see gay male couples, but in a big city it is easier to see such a thing. It makes me think that it is okay for me to be a gay man. – Badrul, Undergraduate, 22 years of age.*

*I have never thought of being gay as something different, or being the only one, or the only one who has it, or being the only gay on the planet. When I was young I watched a lot of TV and my first image of a gay man was Boy George. This gave me the reinforcement that I am not the only one out there. This made me comfortable with myself. – Dennis, Professional, 35 years of age.*

*I grew up in a village. Actually it is Alor Setar (the state capital of the state of Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia) but I call it a village. I could not explore who I am as a gay man in such a village. So I used the Internet and from there I read a lot about male sexuality; whether it is heterosexuality, bisexuality or homosexuality. Then I made a*

*decision for myself based on what I read that I am attracted to men only.*

– Mike, Entertainer, 27 years of age.

## DISCUSSION

The data suggested that while the respondents recognised that the source of their homosexuality was inborn and/or genetic and therefore natural, the respondents as a whole also recognise that nurture was necessary for self-acceptance, personal growth and self-discovery. Analysis of the data suggested that the biological, hormonal and genetic assertions as the source of homosexuality put forward by past scholars are shared by the respondents. As seen from the verbatim responses shared with the researcher, the respondents claimed that their homosexuality was inborn and that they did not in any way nurture their sexual/romantic/affectionate attraction to members of their own sex. Additionally, the analysis of the data showed that to some of the respondents, their homosexuality was neither caused by nor was it an effect of an external catalyst such as rejection by members of the opposite sex that nurtured their same-sex attractions. The natural instinct of the respondents is to be sexually drawn to other men and to recognise other men as sexual beings. It may be conceded that while the responses of the respondents did not pinpoint the exact internal source of their homosexuality, the variety of expressions of the perceived source of their homosexuality may be grouped thematically into that of an internally intuitive response.

When viewed through the theoretical lens of phenomenology, the lived experience of the respondents allowed them to ascertain that the source of their homosexuality was not found in an external lived experience but in an *internal* lived experience. This suggested that the inter-subjective meaning (hermeneutics) of the homosexuality of the respondents was not only in the evaluation and reflection of the source of their homosexuality with other members of society and their peers but also with themselves. Additionally, the details provided to the researcher verbatim indicated that the source of the homosexuality of the respondents was one that they were comfortable with, and more importantly, there was acceptance that homosexuality was natural to them (existentialist) and required no external confirmation as valid and acceptable. The findings showed that phenomenology as a philosophy and a theory that orbits around heuristics and existentialism is not only an external process. Rather, an internal process of reflection is possible wherein the individual weighs and balances two polar perspectives of a lived experience and reaches a conclusion of the reality of that lived experience. The use of phenomenology as a theoretical framework then becomes more valuable as a tool for exploring the underlying experiential process of individuals as they create individualised meaning of their lived experience.

However, the data also suggested that while the respondents identified the source of their homosexuality to be internal, they

also expressed that external factors or players were relevant to their homosexuality. The characteristics of these external factors or players, based on the interviews, were supportive, affirming and nourishing of the homosexuality of the respondents. In identifying that both the recognition of the internal source of homosexuality and the relevance of the external factors or players to the respondents in the context of their homosexuality, it is plausible to state that nature and nurture are necessary to a holistic development of homosexuality. The findings above point out that although past scholars and scientists may make assertions on the source of homosexuality being natural, for the respondents there was no need for scientific absolutism as they were living their homosexuality. They could state with certainty that it was natural to them. When viewed through the lens of phenomenology, what is additionally found is that it is not the source of the homosexuality that requires nurturing but rather the continued development of the individual as a self-identified gay man.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this research add the dimension of complementarity of nature and nurture to studies of homosexuality. Based on the literature reviewed, this complementarity is relatively untouched and understudied in the social sciences of human sexuality. The implications of this are twofold: First, that studies in human sexuality may need to be viewed from the standpoint of complementarity instead of

dogmatism so that new paradigms in human sexuality may be put forward; and second, that a more in-depth understanding of homosexuality is contingent not only on the source of the homosexuality but also social factors that encourage further exploration, development and self-acceptance.

This complementarity between the nature and nurture aspects and arguments for and against homosexuality was not the main aim of the researcher. However, in viewing this overall finding from a holistic perspective, the researcher is able to recommend that future research on the source of homosexuality include longitudinal studies of men who self-identify as homosexual and their exploration of the internal source of their homosexuality from an internalised heuristic perspective; longitudinal studies of the relevance of peer influence on homosexuality among men who self-identify as homosexual from the perspective of socialisation; and longitudinal studies of the complementarity of nature and nurture in the existentialist development of homosexual male identity.

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## **Role of Parenting Style and Parents' Education in Positive Youth Development of Adolescents**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this research is to determine the role of parenting style and educational level of parents in Positive Youth Development (PYD). Data were obtained using a questionnaire method involving 496 adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor. The findings indicate that there is a significant difference between the means for different races in PYD. This study also revealed that authoritative parenting styles, uninvolved parenting styles, and fathers' level of education are significantly correlated to PYD. The authoritative parenting style was found to be the most significant predictor of higher PYD. These findings suggest that adolescents with authoritative parents in Malaysia show higher PYD and accordingly, they contribute to self, others and community.

*Keywords:* Positive Youth Development (PYD), educational level of parents, parenting style, adolescents, Malaysia

### **INTRODUCTION**

Children and youths are important investment for national development goals and to achieve Vision 2020 of Malaysia,

namely to become a developed country by 2020. Hence, youths are considered as one of the significant assets to achieve sustainable and ongoing growth (Mohamad, Mohammad, & Mat Ali, 2014). Positive Youth Development (PYD) includes all the hopes and ambitions of the entire community to produce strong, happy and experienced adolescents on their way to becoming successful and competent adults (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Malaysia

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as one of the fastest growing countries in the world is an exceptional setting for investigation of behavioural and social sciences due to the differences among the ethnic groups economically, socially, politically, and with cultural variety within a small geographic area (Smith & Thomas, 1998). Likewise, developmental asset-based research is significantly novel and few researchers have given their attention to positive youth development in Malaysia (Abdul Kadir et al., 2012).

Adolescence is a period of biological, psychological, social and economic transitions (Steinberg, 2010), but the negative standardisation of the adolescence period is exaggerated (Damon, 2003). Prevention science considers adolescence as a time of risk-taking, conflicts and troubles (Schwartz, Pantin, Coatsworth, & Szapocznik, 2007). In contrast, the PYD perspective concentrates on the strengths of youths and their capability for promoting a thriving generation through coordinating their strengths with contextual sources (see for example, Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sema, 2006; Lerner, von Eye, Lerner, Lewin- Bizan, & Bowers, 2010).

### **Positive Youth Development**

Lerner's "Five C's" model asserts that a constellation of factors such as Competence (Skills and abilities in social, academic, cognitive, and vocational domains), Confidence (Positive self-worth and self-efficacy), Caring (A sense of sympathy and empathy for others), Connection (Positive and mutual relationships with individuals

and institutions), and Character (Respect for and observation of cultural norms; Personal integrity) will be developed. In sequence, the youth can show a sixth C as Contributions to the context (e.g., self, family, community and also as an active citizen). The Five Cs Model of PYD is the most experimentally supported framework to date (Heck & Subramaniam, 2009). According to various studies concerning PYD, Lerner and colleagues (Lerner et al., 2005; Jelacic et al., 2007; Phelps et al., 2009) discovered "contribution" as a positive and powerful construction (e.g., volunteering, community service) and problem or risk behaviours as the negative construction (for instance, crime and substance abuse) that are extracted from the "Five Cs" of PYD. Accordingly, PYD is connected positively to contribution and negatively to risk and problem behaviours (Lerner et al., 2010). The PYD has emerged to consider youths as a potential to be developed, not as difficulties that should be managed (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Lerner, 2005). According to a recent study by Hershberg, DeSousa, Warren, Lerner, and Lerner (2014), adolescents considered "connection" as one of the most important characteristics of their current lives and also as a considerable feature of their idealised future.

Theokas and Lerner (2006) have identified four forms in the ecology of youth that can create main developmental assets for improving PYD. The first one refers to the people in the youth context, the second asset mentions the institutions existing

in the community, the third discusses opportunities for young people and adults to work together in valued community activities and the last one focuses on access to these individuals and institutions. These assets can be identified in any situation concerning families, schools and communities. While schools and community settings as ecological assets are the initial key for contextual sources for the adaption of youths and their development adjustments (Benson et al., 2006), individuals are one of the ecological assets, specifically parents, that are considered as the most significant asset for the development of PYD in youths (Theokas & Lerner, 2006). Therefore, the current study is designed with a focus on parents which renders each family as a unique unit within the context of Malaysia by different ratios of culture, economy, education, and religion.

### **Parenting Style**

Parenting style as proposed by Darling and Steinberg (1993) refers to the emotional climate within which parents bring up their child. Parents have different tasks during the development of youths and these differences are especially noticeable among middle children and adolescence when youths go through physical changes, behavioural changes and social changes (Collins & Russell, 1991). Darling and Steinberg (1993) held that parenting style and parenting practices are different, in that, parenting practices are focused in the direction of specific goals such as reinforcing the academic success of a child

but the parenting style refers to the whole emotional climate in which particular parent and child communications take place.

According to Maccoby and Martin (1983), based on factor analyses of parental behaviours, normally there are two dimensions that parents manifest through responsiveness and demandingness. They had also revised the conceptual structure of the various parenting styles of Baumrind (1971) and considered four styles: authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent/permissive, and neglectful/uninvolved. Parents with an authoritative style show a responsive and strict manner. They display warmth, support, and encouraging behaviours while at the same time they are firm and set strong rules for their children. In addition, they focus on explaining their opinions to their children and tend to encourage their children to behave in the same way. Parents with an authoritarian style are strict and monitor their children's behaviour. However, they do not show responsive or warm behaviour. Parents of this type specify strong guidelines but their children do not have any right to query or question them. Permissive parents reveal a responsive and warm behaviour, but they have few demands. Uninvolved parents do not control or guide their children and they do not show any responsive or demanding style (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001).

Kaufmann et al. (2000) reported that both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles had positive outcomes with healthy adjustments in children. However,

the prediction of youth development based on their parenting style irrespective of the cultural differences is an inconsideration. For decades, educational and psychology researchers have discussed the need to understand racial/ethnic culture as an asset in child and adolescent development (Spencer, 1995). While the authoritative parenting style is known as the most beneficial in terms of psychological and educational outcomes in Western societies (Baumrind, 1991; Boon, 2007), this cannot be claimed as suitable in other cultures where authoritarian parenting has been found to be linked to positive outcomes (Park & Bauer, 2002). For instance, in Western societies, an authoritarian parenting style usually makes children more aggressive and delinquent while the Westernised children cannot tolerate being monitored firmly by their parents (Baumrind, 1971). On the other hand, in the Asian context, children with authoritarian parents show greater academic achievement and positive psychosocial competence (Ang, 2006). For example, research into the effects of parenting style in Singapore discovered that Malay adolescents with authoritarian mothers had better attitudes toward education and school than adolescents who reported their mothers to be authoritative (Rebecca, 2006). More specifically, children in Malaysia as a collectivist society are raised to follow the directions of the group, show a satisfactory manner socially and behaviourally, curtail their personal needs and show a caring approach to other people within the group. Thus, they must obey their parents

completely (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). Sorkhabi (2005) suggested adolescents consider the authoritarian parenting style as a necessity and required greater homogeneity in collective societies. Further, Keshavarz and Baharudin (2009) identified Malaysian parents as applying an authoritarian parenting style as it is found agreeable in that context. Although Asians perceive the authoritarian approach as a positive parenting style in their collective societies, cultural and economic transitions have changed the parenting styles and childrearing perceptions to Western standards in many different cultures (Chao, 2006).

According to Theokas and Lerner (2006), individuals are known as the most significant development assets which are related to a higher level of PYD and a lower level of risk behaviours (e.g., bullying or substance abuse). Researchers have stated that collective activity in the family setting, such as having meals together, is a main predictor of PYD (Larson, 2006). More recently, Bowers, Geldhof, Johnson, Lerner, and Lerner (2014) conducted a study to determine the features of relationships among youths and their parents and also non-parental adults who had a role in affecting PYD indicators such as the Five Cs during the middle to late adolescence. The findings showed highly involved and authoritative parenting styles can predict a higher level of PYD and a higher possibility of showing more connection to a significant non-parental adult as well. The results for participants who reported they received lower levels of warmth from their parents



(authoritarian, uninvolved) showed they felt lower connection to others in the family, peer groups and the community. Parents who showed warmth to their children and were engaged in their lives could motivate and provide skills for the youths in wider contexts than the home. As there are insufficient studies on parenting style and PYD, this study is designed to address this gap.

### **Parental Education Level**

Recently, a growing number of studies looking at the relationship between the level of education of parents and their involvement in their children's education have conducted which are based on the theory that states a higher parental education level leads to their better involvement in their children's education (Vellymalay, 2011). Likewise, higher educated parents show a more authoritative parenting style in comparison to the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). Teti and Candelaria (2002) suggested that parents with higher education showed a positive authoritative style because the perceived self-efficacy was expected to positively influence their parenting. Further, Theokas and Lerner (2006) stated that within the ecological development assets, the strongest predictor of PYD was found to be connected with individuals in all contexts and also they suggested the family as the most significant predictor of PYD. At the same time, they considered the mother's level of education as a feature of the human

assets inside the family but this did not show any significant effect. In a study by Schmid, et al. (2011), the authors found that respondents who had mothers with a higher level of education were more likely to be in the appropriate PYD, contribution, and depressive symptoms groups when compared with the respondents from families with mothers who had a lower level of education. Although those researchers considered the maternal education as a proxy for socioeconomic status (SES) in their study, in the current study the level of education of the Malaysian parents was studied to clarify the relationship between educational level achieved by both parents and adolescents' PYD.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The aims of the current study were to:

1. Estimate the differences in PYD based on adolescent's race, age, gender, and school location (urban/rural) among adolescent students of national secondary schools.
2. Estimate the relationships between parenting style and parents' level of education with PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools.
3. Estimate whether parenting style and parents' level of education are predictors of PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools.

### **HYPOTHESES**

H01. There is no significant difference in PYD by race, age, gender, and school

location (urban/rural) among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H02. There is no significant relationship between parenting style and PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H03. There is no significant relationship between parents' level of education and PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H04. Parenting style and parents' level of education do not significantly predict PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Participants**

The purpose of this study is to determine the role of parenting style and the parents' level of education on PYD among adolescents from national secondary schools in Selangor. A total of 496 students from national secondary schools of Selangor aged between 14 and 16 in urban and rural areas participated in the research. These students came from four different schools located in urban and rural areas to increase the generalisability of the findings.

### **Measures**

The questionnaire employed in the current research was translated to Malay Language. The first part was related to the demographic variables of the respondents such as race, age, gender, and school location either as

urban or rural areas, and the educational level of the parents. The second part included ten items of PSI-II (The Parenting Style Inventory II; Darling & Toyokawa, 1997). Based on the Brislin back-translation method (Brislin, 1970), three bilingual (in English and Malay language for translation) experts panel was organised to validate the questionnaire. The PSI-II contains 15 items in three different dimensions of parenting style as demandingness (the degree to which parents have expectations and standards they expect their child to fulfil), emotional responsiveness (degree of emotional sensitivity and responsiveness), and psychological autonomy-granting (degree to which parents permit and encourage their children to improve their own ideas, beliefs, and points of view; Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Batenhorst, & Wilkinson, 2007) on a five-point Likert scale. Nevertheless, in the present research 10 questions were posed: five items of demandingness and five items for emotional responsiveness subscales, and the subscale psychological autonomy was left out as the four parenting styles from Baumrind's model used only responsiveness and demandingness as dimensions of parenting style (Nijhof & Engels, 2007). The last part was associated with PYD-VSF (very short form version) (Geldhof et al., 2014) and in this research the questionnaire for middle/late adolescents included 17 items in a two-choice response format and also a five-point Likert scale. The results of the study revealed ideal reliability values by the level of Cronbach's alpha for PSI-II =0.66, and PYD-VSF=0.81.

## Procedure

Letter of approval to conduct this research among secondary school students in national-type schools were obtained from the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Selangor State Education Department. Two schools from the urban areas and two schools from the rural areas were chosen randomly. The sample was selected randomly through the lists of classes. Trained study staff were in charge of data collection. Testing session began with reading the instructions of the questionnaire to the participants in addition to providing consent forms to the participants.

## Research Ethics

The approval of the Ethics Committee of Universiti Putra Malaysia (JKEUPM) was sought before the researchers began the data collection process. All ethical procedures were adhered to strictly, including anonymity, confidentiality of information given by respondents as well as the voluntary nature of participation in the study.

## RESULTS

The first goal of the current study was to investigate the role of parenting style and parents' education in encouraging positive youth development of adolescents. Data were subjected to a normality test. A descriptive statistics test was used to determine the frequency, standard deviation, and mean for each scale. Independent sample t-test and Point-biserial correlation analysis

were applied to clarify the differences and associations between parenting styles, educational level of the parents and PYD. Additionally, a multiple regression analysis was used to explain the most significant predictor of the studied variables in the PYD of the adolescents.

Table 1 shows the independent sample t-test conducted to compare the race, age, gender, and school location (urban/rural) of participants on the PYD score. The race distribution showed majority of the participants were Malays accounting for 61.3% ( $n=304$ ) of the study population followed by 37.5% ( $n=186$ ) non-Malays (19.8% Chinese, 15.5% Indians, and the others with the lowest percentage at 2.2 %). Among participants with different races ( $N=490$ ), there was a statistically significant difference between the Malay students ( $M=8.25$ ,  $SD=0.88$ ) and the non-Malay students ( $M=8.03$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ),  $t(488)=0.01$ ,  $p<.05$ . Among participants of different ages, there was no statistically significant difference between 14-year-old ( $M=8.09$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ) and 16-year-old students ( $M=8.23$ ,  $SD=0.94$ ),  $t(494)=0.81$ ,  $p>.05$ . In terms of gender differences, there was no statistically significant difference between male students ( $M=8.11$ ,  $SD=0.81$ ) and the female ones ( $M=8.20$ ,  $SD=0.82$ ),  $t(493)=0.51$ ,  $p>.05$ . With respect to differences in PYD based on the school location, the results showed there was no statistically significant difference between students from schools in urban areas ( $M=8.15$ ,  $SD=0.89$ ) and rural areas ( $M=8.17$ ,  $SD=1.01$ ),  $t(494)=0.11$ ,  $p>.05$ . Therefore, the first hypothesis is

rejected as there is a significant difference between Malay and Non-Malay students in terms of their PYD.

The parenting style scale comprised two subscales, namely demandingness and responsiveness. In categorising the four expected parenting styles, a high score on demandingness and a low score on responsiveness referred to the authoritarian parenting style. A high score in both dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness implied the authoritative parenting style. The next classification is on the permissive parenting style with a low score in demandingness and a high score in responsiveness, and the last cluster presents the uninvolved parenting style where both subscales of demandingness and responsiveness included the lowest scores among all classifications. In relation to the parenting style classifications of this study, a k-means cluster analysis was applied and the four parenting styles were

realised. The results have shown that most of the respondents perceived their parenting style as authoritative at 28.4% (n=141), the next highest percentage was achieved by the authoritarian parenting style at 27% (n=134), the permissive parenting style was reported at 23.8% (n=118) of respondents while 20.8% (n=103) of the participants considered their parenting style as uninvolved. In summary, the authoritative parenting style was reported to be the highest among the participants of this study.

Educational level of the parents revealed that 74.6 % (n=370) of mothers had lower level of education (primary school and secondary school leavers), while 24.2 % (n=120) of the mothers had received higher level of education (including those with undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, namely Master’s and PhD with 1.2 % considered as missing data. In terms of the fathers’ level of education, 66.1 % (n=328) of the fathers were reported had

Table 1  
*Independent Sample t-test to determine Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

Variable	N	M	SD	t	Df	p
Race						
Malay	304	8.25	0.88	2.54	488	0.00
Non-Malay	186	8.03	1.04			
Age						
14 y/o	239	8.09	0.96	-1.66	494	0.81
16 y/o	257	8.23	0.94			
Gender						
Male	208	8.11	8.11	-1.08	493	0.51
Female	287	8.2	8.2			
School Location						
Urban	249	8.15	0.89	-0.3	494	0.11
Rural	247	8.17	1.01			

lower level qualifications , though 32.3 % (n=160) of the fathers were reported as possessing higher level education, along with 1.6 % considered as missing data. Concerning the educational level of the parents and the parenting style, variables were considered as dummy variables or dichotomous nominal scale variables and the PYD as an interval (or ratio) scale. A Point-biserial Correlation analysis was conducted to explain the correlation between these variables.

According to Table 2, the findings show that the authoritative parenting style was significantly correlated with PYD ( $r=0.39$ ,

$p<0.05$ ) and also the uninvolved parenting style was significantly and negatively correlated with PYD ( $r= -0.44$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). It also reveals a negative significant correlation between the fathers' lower educational level and PYD ( $r= -0.09$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and a positive significant correlation between the fathers' higher level of education and PYD ( $r= 0.09$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Based on the results, we reject the second and third hypotheses.

Based on the regression results, Table 3 shows that the authoritative and uninvolved parenting style explain a statistically significant amount of the variance in the PYD ( $F(3, 484) = 58.56$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,

Table 2  
*Correlations between PYD Scores and Parenting Styles, Participants' and Parents' Level of Education*

Variable	r	P
Parenting styles		
Authoritarian	-0.02	0.54
Authoritative	.390**	0.00
Permissive	0.03	0.42
Uninvolved	-.441**	0.00
Mothers' level of education		
Lower educational level	-0.08	0.07
Higher educational level	0.08	0.07
Fathers' level of education		
Lower educational level	-.091*	0.04
Higher educational level	.091*	0.04

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

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

Table 3  
*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting PYD*

Variables	$\beta$	SE	B	T	p
Constant		0.05	8.16	111.80	0.00
Authoritative Style	0.27	0.08	0.58	6.39	0.00
Uninvolved Style	-0.35	0.09	-0.83	-8.38	0.00
Higher Educated Father	0.01	0.08	0.02	0.19	0.71

Note: Significant level=  $*p < .05$ ,  $F= 58.56$ ,  $R=0.51$ ,  $R^2=0.26$ , Adjusted  $R^2=0.26$

$R^2=0.26$ ,  $R^2_{Adjusted}=0.26$ ). The authoritative parenting style (Beta=0.27,  $t= 6.39$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), uninvolved parenting style (Beta=-0.35,  $t= -8.38$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) made significant contributions to the prediction of PYD. Hence, the most significant predictor of a higher PYD refers to the authoritative parenting style. According to these findings, we reject the last hypothesis of this study.

## DISCUSSION

The PYD perspective focuses on mutually influential relationships between youths and contexts in the way that the youths' strength and their capability for promoting a thriving lifestyle through coordinating their strengths with contextual sources lead to contribution as the positive construct and risk behaviours as the negative outcome (Lerner et al., 2010).

According to Lerner et al. (2005), with regard to revealing the strengths and the power of variations of individuals in the data set, measures are essential to be sensitive to the different personal variables (e.g., race or ethnicity, religious viewpoint, sexual priority, physical skills, and development situations), as well as different contextual status (e.g., family style, neighbourhood, community, culture and historical moments and physical ecology). Previous investigations have shown racial differences among the Five Cs as the indices of PYD (Lerner et al., 2005). Lerner stated that race/ethnicity was the only significant predictor for risk behaviours. With respect to the different ethnic groups in Malaysia, the findings of the current study showed that

there are statistically significant differences in PYD among the races in Malaysia. The source of this variation may be related to the different economic, cultural, educational, religious beliefs and values among the Malaysian races, as well as the individuals from the minority ethnic groups who are classified in the others category. In terms of age, a discrepancy was found when the survey data was compared with previous findings. The results of this study were inconsistent with the findings of a past study (Bowers et al., 2010) that stated older adolescents indicated higher scores in PYD by participants from Grades 8-10 (mean age 14.19 in Grade 8, mean age 15.04 in Grade 9, and mean age 16.05 in Grade 10). These researchers found that adolescents in Grade 9 had lower scores for overall PYD scores in comparison to those in Grade 8. Likewise, the findings based on gender difference were inconsistent with previous studies by Lerner et al. (2005), Schmid et al. (2011), Shek and Wu (2014) in which the girls showed higher levels of PYD. Previous investigations have demonstrated the gender differences of PYD (Lerner et al., 2005) in which girls received higher scores than boys. Boys are generally more involved in risk behaviours than girls (Johnston et al., 2011a), and protecting them from such behaviours can be more difficult. Caldwell and Smith (2006) asserted that the youths in rural areas are probably more prone to boredom, which may increase their at-risk behaviours such as delinquency. These adolescents have less accessibility to youth development programmes, have fewer programmes to select from, and enjoy

less accessible transportation compared with youths in urban areas (Moore et al., 2010). However, During the Malaysian New Economic Policy (NEP), the government of Malaysia took active steps, particularly during the era of the New Economic Policy (1971–1990), to improve rural areas by introducing several development programmes. For instance, the resettlement programme was designed to provide rural communities with better facilities and infrastructure, hence encouraging them to involve in modern sector activities. These rural development programmes improved rural productivity and in the end helped reduce the gap between rural and urban areas. Most of the resettlement programmes were located in less developed states. The Malaysian government introduced numerous strategies and programmes to reduce ethnic income inequality, remove poverty, and also to increase higher living standards in the rural areas. Rural areas were developed as new centres of economic activity. Special plans for rural development were considered such as considerable allocations for rural schools, electricity, roads, health, and the supply of credit (Abdullah, Doucouliagos, & Manning, 2015).

This research has demonstrated that there are significant differences between different parenting styles and PYD. It has also shown how different parenting styles influence the PYD of Malaysian adolescents. Authoritative parenting style has shown the highest mean score among the various parenting styles. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the authoritative parenting

style is positively correlated to PYD and the uninvolved parenting style is negatively associated with PYD. On the other hand, the permissive and authoritarian parenting styles were found not to be correlated to PYD among adolescents in Malaysia. The result of the study, however, demonstrated that the authoritative and uninvolved parenting styles account for variance in the PYD, and the authoritative parenting style was found to be a significant predictor of a higher PYD. The findings of the current study are consistent with a previous study (Bowers et al. 2014) which showed that the authoritative parenting style as a predictor of higher level of PYD. However, according to the past studies in Malaysia which were noted earlier, the authoritarian parenting style is accepted by Malaysian parents. Furthermore, the descriptive findings of the current study have also shown that authoritarian parenting style (27 %) is very close to authoritative parenting style (28.4 %). Irrespective of which is to be recognised as the best parenting style, it cannot lessen the significant value of the authoritative parenting style for PYD among adolescents in Malaysia.

The educational level of the parents plays an important role in the authoritative parenting style, yet, the parents' higher or academic educational level has not shown to be a predictor of PYD while it was positively correlated. This finding is consistent with a past study (Schmid et al., 2011) which found higher levels of the educational level of the parents as a promoter of PYD. It is possible that parents with a higher level of education

may foster their children's or adolescents' academic competence but not necessarily the other indicators of PYD (Five Cs). Still, this finding clarifies the influence of family in the PYD of adolescents once again.

The findings from this study suggest that the authoritative parenting style, uninvolved parenting style, and fathers' level of education are significantly correlated to PYD. However, the authoritative parenting style was found to be predictors of higher PYD. Given the evidence that individuals are the most critical asset in the context of youths (e.g., Theokas & Lerner, 2006), the findings of this study have highlighted the role of parenting style in Malaysia as consistent with findings from Western societies in which the authoritative parenting style was found to be the most significant predictor of a higher PYD.

The findings of this study can support educators, policy makers, parents and practitioners to improve PYD among adolescents. The outcome of the present research may help families, especially parents, to utilise the authoritative parenting style to foster healthy youths and cultivate them towards thriving life trajectories. One clear implication of the study for parents is that higher parental responsiveness and demandingness which leads to an authoritative parenting style may increase PYD among their children, specifically their adolescents. Therefore, it may guide family policy makers to develop and increase the well-being of family and youths. Hence, it is necessary to increase the knowledge of parents of the various

parenting style strategies. Additional research may provide knowledge of how non-Malaysian adolescents perceive their family or context which result in a lower PYD when compared with their Malaysian peers. Another relevant contribution of this study is that valuable information with regard to improving the wellbeing of adolescents is given to the governmental sources of Malaysia, including the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, and Ministry of Education Malaysia.

Although the present study has demonstrated valuable findings specifically in an Asian context, the interpretation of these findings should be undertaken with caution as the sample studied was chosen solely from the state of Selangor.

## CONCLUSION

The present study has provided new information about the role of parenting style and parents' education in positive youth development of adolescents in Malaysia. It is highly recommended that future such studies in the Malaysian context to address the current research gap by considering the background difference of the other racial groups through their past and current situations as non-Malaysians or immigrants (such as the available facilities or resources in both circumstances in their own country and Malaysia), their family (such as their parenting style, parents' involvement, family functioning, connections with other people), or many other related aspects in comparison to the races in Malaysia. A future study may



explore the effects of these relationships and functions in depth, so more variables related to family characteristics should be taken into consideration. In addition, this study recommends sourcing a vast sample from all the states in Malaysia for future research due to the need to increase the applicability of the generalisation. Finally, despite the limitations, the present study has demonstrated valuable findings specifically in an Asian context and it can also be used as a benchmark study for a suitable parenting for adolescents and to encourage PYD in Malaysia.

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## **Developing and Examining a Model of Perceived Quality, Perceived Value and Perceived Risk Affecting Customer Loyalty of Environmentally-Friendly Electronic Products**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Customer perception is a very important factor concerning green marketing management and is viewed as a motivational construct influencing subsequent consumer behaviour. This research uses four constructs i.e. perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk and customer loyalty in the context of environmentally-friendly electronic products in Thailand. It employs an empirical study using the questionnaire survey method to verify the hypotheses. Data were obtained from 420 consumers who bought and used environmentally-friendly electronic products, particularly mobile phones, computers and laptops, in Thailand. The data were analysed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM). The results showed that perceived value and perceived risk had direct effect on customer loyalty while perceived quality had no direct effect on customer loyalty. Furthermore, perceived quality had direct effects on perceived value and perceived risk. The results from the final SEM model are used to confirm the proposed relationships among the variables.

*Keywords:* Customer perception, perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk, customer loyalty, environmentally-friendly electronic products

### **INTRODUCTION**

The idea of natural reserves is an important matter, and globalisation has put pressure on and motivated various industries to improve their environmental operations (Zhu & Sarkis, 2004; Lee, 2008). In the past, investments in environmental activities were considered unnecessary investments.

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However, the regulations concerning strict environmental problems and popular problems about the environment caused a change in the rules of business competition (Bacallan, 2000; Chiou, 2011).

When 'green industry' began to be a byword in industry and businesses became increasingly interested in environmentally-friendly production, consumers began to have options, and this gave businesses the opportunity for competitive advantage. Therefore, to enter the environmental industry, one must study the marketing of products and the consumers of products. By studying consumer behaviour prior to deciding on products, consumers determine what external and internal factors would influence their own behaviour. When environmental factors are taken into account in the system of human thinking, consumers behave with these factors in mind. Businesses should have an interest in the environmentally-friendly market or participate in so-called 'green marketing' to add value to products as a customer's perceived value and reduced perceived risk have an influence on a consumer's decision (Roselius, 1971; Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Havlena & DeSarbo, 1991; Greenleaf & Lehmann, 1995).

To meet the green market principles, studying consumer behaviour is very important. Consumer behaviour includes perceiving quality or product benefits, which most consumers require, to check whether the products are worth using, considering information from advertising and comparing products from competitors.

Loyalty keeps old consumers, and building new interactions is the challenge that a business must face. Businesses need to adjust the loyalty trend to set up a consumer tie strategy that would help their marketing.

Consumer perception is a very important factor in green marketing management and for becoming conscious of being responsible and encouraging participation in environmental activities for the benefit of social effects. A review of prior studies indicates that researchers have studied the relationship between perceived quality, perceived value and perceived risk on customer loyalty. Li and Green (2011) presented an analysis of the empirical literature on mediating influences on customer loyalty, including the role of perceived value. The study sought to answer the question, "Is the perceived value a mediating influence resulting from a marketing strategy of customer loyalty?" Customer perceived value is critical to driving market share and increasing customer loyalty. However, this study focussed on customer loyalty and the antecedents in consumer markets and may not, or does not represent industrial markets. Yang and Peterson (2004) examined the moderating effects of switching costs on customer loyalty through satisfaction and perceived value. They found that the moderating effects of switching costs on the association of customer loyalty and customer satisfaction and on the perceived value were significant only when the level of customer satisfaction or perceived value was above average. Hu (2012) explored

the relationship among perceived risk and customer involvement with brand equity and customer loyalty as mediators. The findings indicated that brand equity, perceived risk and customer loyalty have significant and positive relationships with customer involvement. The findings also supported the hypotheses that brand equity and customer loyalty partially mediate the relationship between perceived risk and customer involvement, while customer loyalty had a slightly stronger mediating effect on customer involvement than brand equity.

Although the literature about the relationships among perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk and customer loyalty is rich, no work has focussed on the relationship of the mentioned variables on customer loyalty of environmentally-friendly electronic products in Thailand. The forces of going green are now extending to the Asian region, where environmental threats are alarming local governments and citizens. Consequently, consumers pay more attention to rising environmental protection activities, and green consumption has gained more momentum for environmental protection. It is necessary to investigate the relationship of these variables in the Thai context.

Thus, for this research, the researcher was interested in studying the influence of the above variables of perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk and customer loyalty on the consumers who bought and used environmentally-friendly electronic products, especially

mobile phones, computers and laptops. The paper is organised as follows. First, a literature review is presented, followed by the conceptual framework of the study, the research hypotheses and the methodology and results. Finally, the conclusions of the research are presented.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study presents a review of the empirical literature and the theoretical framework that is supported by this literature, summarises the literature on green marketing and provides a new managerial framework on customer loyalty. Specifically, perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk and customer loyalty were selected after an extensive review of the marketing literature.

### Perceived Quality

Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived quality as the customer's judgement about a brand's (or product's) overall environmental excellence or superiority. Chen and Chang (2013) proposed a novel construct, "green perceived quality," although environmental consciousness is more popular and was referred to by Zeithaml (1988). Sweeney et al. (1999) defined product quality as products that would be reliable, dependable and durable and for which the workmanship would be good. Perceived quality was defined as the consumers' judgement about an entity's services containing overall excellence or superiority (Zeithaml, 1988 in Snoj et al., 2004). Perceived quality can deliver value to customers by offering them a reason to purchase and by differentiating the

product or brand from those of competitors (Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker, 1991). This research suggested a six-dimensional construct of perceived quality using performance, durability, attention, worthiness, reliability and product safety.

### **Perceived Value**

Perceived value was defined as a consumer's overall evaluation of the net benefit of a product or service based on a consumer's appraisal (Bolton & Drew, 1991; Patterson & Spreng, 1997). Chen and Chang (2012) proposed a novel construct, "green perceived value," because environmental consciousness is currently more prevalent, and they defined green perceived value as a consumer's overall appraisal of the net benefit of a product or service among what is received compared to what is given based on the consumer's environmental desires, sustainable expectations and green needs. In addition, customer perceived value was also defined as the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on his or her perception both of what is received and what is given (Zeithaml, 1988; Sinha & DeSarbo, 1998; Sweeney et al., 1999; in Ulaga & Chacour, 2001). Slater and Narver (2000) stated that product value for a consumer is created when the benefits a consumer receives with a product are greater than the long-term costs a consumer is expected to pay for a product. In conclusion, this study defined the perceived value as the worth that a product has in the mind or opinion of the consumer. It is the value that a customer perceives as obtainable by buying a product.

This research suggested a five-dimensional construct of perceived value using function, performance, environmental concern, environmentally-friendly production and environmental benefit.

### **Perceived Risk**

Perceived risk was defined as an uncertain phenomenon encountered by the consumers while purchasing a product regarding the outcome of the product usage. This uncertainty regarding the product outcome is generally for highly priced products and highly complex items. The literature argues that reduction in perceived risk leads to an increase in purchase probability, so a decrease in perceived risk is useful for increasing customer trust (Wood & Scheer, 1996; Corritore et al., 2003; Chang & Chen, 2008). Perceived risk has been measured by (1) functional risk (Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Murphy & Enis, 1986; Sweeney et al., 1999; Chen et al., 2012; Chen & Chang, 2012; Hu, 2012; Chen & Chang, 2013); (2) performance risk (Roselius, 1971; Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Brooker, 1984; McCorkle, 1990; Crisp et al., 1997; Sweeney et al., 1999; Chen et al., 2012; Chen & Chang, 2012; Chen & Chang, 2013); (3) psychological risk (Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Brooker, 1984; McCorkle, 1990); (4) social risk (Roselius, 1971; Brooker, 1984; Chen et al., 2012; Hu, 2012; Chen & Chang, 2013); (5) financial risk (Roselius, 1971; Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Brooker, 1984; McCorkle, 1990; Crisp et al., 1997; Chang & Chen, 2008; Hu, 2012); and (6) physical risk (Chen & Chang, 2013). Jacoby and Kaplan (1972)



defined the dimension of perceived risk to include functional risk, performance risk, psychological risk, social risk, financial risk, safety and time. This research suggested a six-dimensional construct of perceived risk using functional risk, performance risk, physical risk, psychological risk, social risk and financial risk.

### **Customer Loyalty**

Customer loyalty is defined as a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts that have the potential to cause switching behaviour (Oliver, 1999). With loyal customers, companies can maximise their profit because these customers are willing to purchase more frequently, spend money on trying new products or services, recommend products and services to others and give companies sincere suggestions (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Oliver (1999) defined loyalty as a deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service in the future. A combination of past frequent behaviour and of intent to repurchase (Pritchard et al., 1999 in Tuu et al., 2011; Nijssen et al., 2003) is also used to assess a global and cumulative loyalty measure. Tuu et al. (2011) defined customer loyalty as a cumulative construct including both the act of consuming (action loyalty) and expected consumption (future repurchasing). Most studies measure customer loyalty outcomes using behavioural loyalty dimensions such

as word-of-mouth communication, purchase intention, price insensitivity and complaint behaviour (Bloemer et al., 1999; Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder, 2002; Ibrahim & Najjar, 2008). Another way customer loyalty can be measured is by repurchase intention (Li & Green, 2011; Li, 2011; Cengiz & Yayla, 2007; Haelsig et al., 2007; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Marakanon & Panjakajornsak, 2013). This research suggested a four-dimensional construct of customer loyalty using repurchase intention, complaint behaviour, price insensitivity and word-of-mouth.

Previous research indicated that there is a relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty (Martensen et al., 2000; Bei & Chiao, 2001; Zins, 2001; Aydin & Özer, 2005) because perceived quality helps the customer rebuy a preferred product or service consistently in the future. The subsequent hypothesis explains the relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant association between perceived quality and customer loyalty.

Previous research indicated that there is a relationship between perceived quality and perceived value (Sweeney et al., 1999; Martensen et al., 2000; Teas & Agarwal, 2000; Zins, 2001; Hellier et al., 2003; Snoj et al., 2004; Ball et al., 2006; Vantamay, 2007; Tam, 2012). The subsequent hypothesis explains the relationship between perceived quality and perceived value:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant association between perceived quality and perceived value.

Previous research indicated that there is a relationship between perceived quality and perceived risk (Sweeney et al., 1999; Snoj et al., 2004; Chang & Chen, 2008) because consumer behaviour involves risk in a sense that any action of a consumer will produce consequences that the consumer cannot anticipate with any approximating certainty, and some of those consequences are likely to be unpleasant (Snoj et al., 2004). The subsequent hypothesis explains the relationship between perceived quality and perceived risk:

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant association between perceived quality and perceived risk.

There was evidence to support a relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty (Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000; Yang & Peterson, 2004; Li & Green, 2011; Li, 2011; Tam, 2012; Chuah et al., 2014; Marakanon & Panjakajornsak, 2014b). Perceived value has an important influence on customer behaviour because it influences the decisions on product choice, purchase intention, repeat purchasing and customer loyalty. Hence, the preceding discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant association between perceived value and customer loyalty.

The literature presented evidence to support a relationship between perceived risk and customer loyalty (Tuu & Olsen, 2009; Yen, 2010; Tuu et al., 2011; Hu, 2012; Tam, 2012; Marakanon & Panjakajornsak, 2014a). Hence, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant association between perceived risk and customer loyalty.

The variables used in Figure 1 and the corresponding hypotheses are further elaborated on in the following sections.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Framework

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between customer perception and customer loyalty of environmentally-friendly electronic products in Thailand. Based on the hypothesis, the causal relationship between the potential variables was analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM). The research framework is as follows.

### Research Design

The study reviewed literature that generated items to measure the credibility ascribed to perceived quality, perceived value and perceived risk in determining customer loyalty in order to find appropriate items for the area. This research was quantitative with a questionnaire created as a tool for measuring variables. The questionnaire was developed from studying research papers

related to customer perception and customer loyalty. The tested and validated items were then administered on selected samples through a survey. Then, structural equation modelling was used to find the relationships between the items and was administered to measure the proposed model and hypotheses for analysng causal models. Finally, data analysis and result discussion sessions were represented. Thus, this section presents the measurement design, data collection and data analysis as follows.

**Measurement Design**

The questionnaire consisted of five sections as follows.

- (1) Background: These questions covered research variables including gender, age, occupation, income and buying experience. The purpose was to have further understanding of the investigated subjects.
- (2) Perceived quality: There were 23 items covering six dimensions including performance, durability, attention,

worthiness, reliability and product safety. Reference was made to Sweeney et al. (1999), Yoo and Donthu (2001) and Snoj et al. (2004).

- (3) Perceived value: There were 21 items covering five dimensions including function, performance, environmental concern, environmentally-friendly production and environmental benefit. Reference was made to the work of Chen and Chang (2012) and Roig et al. (2006).
- (4) Perceived risk: There were 20 items covering six dimensions including function risk, performance risk, physical risk, psychological risk, social risk and financial risk. Reference was made to the work of Chen and Chang (2012), Chen and Chang (2013), Jacoby and Kaplan (1972) and Sweeney et al. (1999).
- (5) Customer loyalty: There were 19 items covering four dimensions including repurchase intention, complaint behaviour, price insensitivity and word-

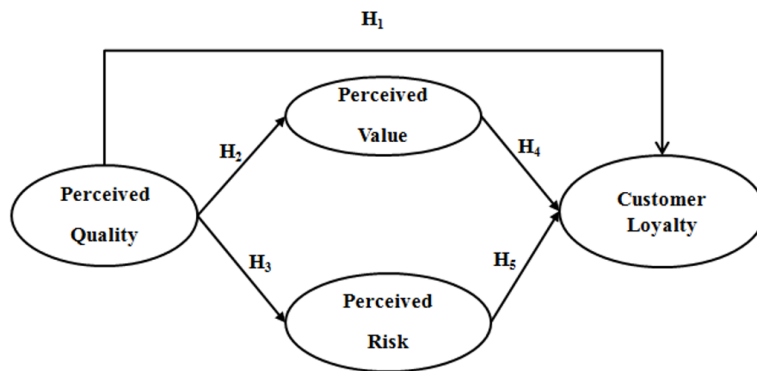


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

of-mouth. Reference was made to the work of Li (2011) and Li and Green (2011).

A questionnaire using a 7-point Likert scale with the anchors of (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree' reduced variability in the results where there may have been differences and enhanced the reliability of the responses. The questionnaire was developed in several stages before it was deployed. First, a draft questionnaire was tested for validity using the Internal Objective Congruence (IOC) technique. The questionnaire achieved an IOC value of 0.984. Second, the draft questionnaire was pre-tested and analysed reliability with Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Nunnally (1978) suggested that the Cronbach's Alpha should be at least equal to 0.5 and preferably larger than 0.7. The Cronbach's Alpha for four latent constructs were calculated, and the results of each item was more than 0.8, meaning that the questionnaire had high reliability.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected from consumers who bought and used environmentally-friendly electronic products, especially mobile phones, computers and laptops, in Thailand. Roscoe (1979) proposed that the rule of thumb for determining a sample size of more than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate for most research.

The researcher used the purposive sampling method due to the infinite population of people who bought and used

environmentally-friendly products. The researcher separated the sample by answered questionnaires related to environmentally-friendly products and collected data from those questionnaires to obtain the targeted samples. The sample size was a proportional allocation separated by region according to which sampling data were representative of relevant data in the data collection.

Sample size was one of the key issues in the structural equation model because it affected the degrees of freedom of the model and the model fitting process. Hence, considering the 21 variables used in confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling, this study required a minimum sample size of 420 respondents.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM). The results from the final SEM model were used to confirm the proposed relationships among the variables.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive Analysis**

The main purpose of using descriptive analysis was to describe the basic features of the data in this study. Results shown in Table 1 revealed that the sample group of this research was the consumers who bought and used environmentally-friendly electronic products in Thailand sectors and most of them (60.0%) were female. The highest range of their age (50.7%) was between 31 and 40

years. Most of them (43.8%) were employees of private companies and their income was between 20,000 and 30,000 THB/month. About 35.5% had buying experience of over 5 times. A fuller description of the participants is shown in Table 1.

**Reliability and Validity Test**

In Table 2, testing normality is presented. The obtained data had normal distribution because the values of skewedness (SK) and kurtosis (KU) were in the range of -3.0 to 3.0 (Glass & Stanley, 1970). There were several measures to confirm the reliability and validity of the constructs. With respect to the quality of the measurement model, the

Table 1  
*Background of the Respondents (N=420)*

Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	168	40.0
	Female	252	60.0
	Total	420	100.0
Age (Years)	Under 20	14	3.3
	21-30	120	28.6
	31-40	213	50.7
	41-50	52	12.4
	51-60	16	3.8
	Over 61	5	1.2
	Total	420	100.0
Occupation	Student	19	4.5
	Government officer	122	29.0
	State enterprise employee	41	9.8
	Private company	184	43.8
	Own business	45	10.7
	Other	9	2.1
	Total	420	100.0
Income (THB/Month)	Under 10,000	15	3.6
	10,001-20,000	133	31.7
	20,001-30,000	175	41.7
	30,001-40,000	63	15.0
	40,0001-50,000	21	5.0
	Over 50,000	13	3.1
Total	420	100.0	
Buying Experience (Times)	1-3	138	32.9
	4-5	133	31.7
	Over 5	149	35.5
	Total	420	100.0

loading of all items of the four constructs were significant. Because the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of all the constructs were more than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), the measurement of this study was acceptable in reliability. In addition, the validity of the measurement can be examined by composite reliability (CR), factor loadings ( $\lambda$ ) and average variance extracted (AVE). This study applied CR greater than 0.8, factor loading greater than 0.7 and AVE at least 0.5 as good criteria (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 2, the CR of the four constructs were 0.838, 0.861, 0.874 and 0.826, which were all higher than 0.7. The AVEs of the four constructs were 0.564, 0.674, 0.701 and 0.615, which were all higher than 0.5. According to the above results, this study possessed adequate reliability and validity.

### **The Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

This study utilised structural equation modelling (SEM) to verify the research framework and hypotheses and applied AMOS 21 to obtain the empirical results. This study started with a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for each latent and observed variable.

Measurement models of factors promoting customer loyalty in the dimension of the consumers who bought and used environmental-friendly electronic products in Thailand consisted of five latent variables including perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk and customer loyalty. CFA was conducted to indicate whether

the observed variables were elements in model and for the factor loading of observed variables.

The results of the CFA showed that the variables of perceived quality could be measured from four observed variables: performance, worthiness, reliability and product safety with standardised loadings:  $\lambda=0.675, 0.772, 0.805$  and  $0.747$ , respectively. The variables of perceived value could be measured from three observed variables: function, environmental concern and environmentally-friendly production with standardised loadings:  $\lambda=0.868, 0.817$  and  $0.776$ , respectively. Perceived risk could be measured from three observed variables: function risk, performance risk and financial risk with standardised loadings:  $\lambda=0.871, 0.934$  and  $0.686$ , respectively. Customer loyalty could be measured from three observed variables: repurchase intention, price insensitivity and word-of-mouth with standardised loadings:  $\lambda=0.862, 0.678$  and  $0.801$ , respectively. All observed variables were significant when considering a p value that was  $<0.001$ .

### **The Results of the Structural Equation Model**

For SEM, this research had to identify the latent variables that were exogenous and those that were endogenous. Exogenous latent variables were independent variables that were not influenced by other latent variables (Chiou et al., 2011). Endogenous latent variables were dependent variables that were affected by exogenous variables in the model. In this study, perceived quality

was an exogenous variable. Perceived value, perceived risk and customer loyalty were endogenous variables. The proposed model (see Figure 1) was validated by four latent constructs, each being measured by the indicators given in Table 3.

Table 2  
*Model of Research Constructs*

	Mean	SD	Standardised loadings ( $\lambda$ )	SK	KU	CR	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
PQ						0.838	0.564	0.840
Perfo	4.55	0.96	0.675	-0.128	0.240			
Worth	4.92	0.96	0.772	-0.271	0.066			
Relia	4.95	0.96	0.805	-0.054	-0.279			
Safet	5.03	0.98	0.747	-0.232	-0.169			
PV						0.861	0.674	0.817
Funct	4.89	0.91	0.868	0.033	-0.327			
Conce	4.98	0.95	0.817	-0.291	0.158			
Frien	5.00	1.00	0.776	-0.025	-0.080			
PR						0.874	0.701	0.887
Funri	4.54	1.04	0.871	-0.144	-0.095			
Perri	4.52	1.11	0.934	-0.191	0.028			
Finri	4.41	1.19	0.686	-0.333	176			
CL						0.826	0.615	0.868
Repur	5.01	0.97	0.862	-0.202	-0.034			
Price	4.97	0.98	0.678	-0.259	0.745			
Word	5.12	1.02	0.801	-0.225	-0.077			

Table 3  
*Observed Variable*

Latent Variables	Observed Variables	Code
Perceived Quality	Performance	Perfo
	Worthiness	Worth
	Reliability	Relia
	Product Safety	Safet
Perceived Value	Function	Funct
	Environmental concern	Conce
	Environmentally-friendly	Frien
Perceived Risk	Function risk	Funri
	Performance risk	Perri
	Financial risk	Finri
Customer Loyalty	Repurchase intention	Repur
	Price insensitivity	Price
	Word-of-mouth	Wordo

The results from the final measurement model were used to evaluate the structural model that tested the significance of the theorised relationships. The final model with path coefficients is shown in Figure 2. Of the five path coefficients, four were significant. The path coefficients were measured to support the hypotheses, as shown in Table 4.

In addition, a goodness-of-fit test was carried out. Table 5 shows the results of the structural model in this study. The overall fit measured for the full model in

the SEM indicated that the fit of the model was acceptable. The set of goodness-of-fit indices that were employed in this study were the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ )/degrees of freedom (df), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Leis fit index (TLI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), a value of 0.9 is acceptable for the model fit of GFI, CFI, NFI and IFI. According to Hu and

Table 4  
*Support Hypotheses: Path Coefficient*

Hypotheses	Support (Yes/No)	Proposed effect	Path coefficient
H <sub>1</sub> : There is significant association between perceived quality and customer loyalty.	No		0.209
H <sub>2</sub> : There is significant association between perceived quality and perceived value.	Yes	+	0.962***
H <sub>3</sub> : There is significant association between perceived quality and perceived risk.	Yes	+	0.752***
H <sub>4</sub> : There is significant association between perceived value and customer loyalty.	Yes	+	0.588*
H <sub>5</sub> : There is significant association between perceived risk and customer loyalty.	Yes	+	0.613*

(\* and \*\*\*represent p levels of 0.05 and 0.001, respectively)

Table 5  
*Measurement of Goodness-of-Fit*

	Heuristic	Final structural model
Chi-Square	$p > 0.05$ <sup>ab</sup>	29.8 ( $p = 0.276$ )
$\chi^2/df$	$< 3.0$ <sup>ab</sup>	1.146
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	$> 0.9$ <sup>ab</sup>	0.990
Comparative fit index (CFI)	$> 0.9$ <sup>ab</sup>	0.999
Normed fit of index (NFI)	$> 0.9$ <sup>ab</sup>	0.991
Incremental fit index (IFI)	$> 0.9$ <sup>a</sup>	0.999
Tucker-Leis fit index (TLI)	$> 0.95$ <sup>c</sup>	0.997
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	$\leq 0.08$ <sup>b</sup>	0.019

<sup>a</sup>Bagozzi and Yi (1988); <sup>b</sup>Hair et al. (2010); <sup>c</sup>Hu and Bentler (1995)



Bentler (1995), a value of 0.9 is acceptable for the model fit for TLI. According to Hair et al. (2010), a value of 0.08 is acceptable for the model fit for RMSEA.

The values of the goodness of fit statistics (illustrated in Table 4) were as follows: GFI=0.990,  $\chi^2/df=1.146$  ( $\chi^2=29.8$ ,  $df=26$ ), CFI=0.999, NFI=0.991, IFI=0.999, TLI=0.997 and RMSEA=0.019.

In this study, the value of  $\chi^2/df$  is 1.146 and is, therefore, acceptable. In addition, the value of the GFI was 0.990, which represents the overall degrees of freedom in the specified model. One value that should be considered in baseline comparisons is CFI, which is recognised as an index to reflect all sample sizes and measure the comparative reduction in non-centrality (Bentler, 1990). The value of the CFI was 0.999 in this model and was highly acceptable.

Next, the values of the NFI and IFI were 0.991 and 0.999, respectively, which fell into the acceptable ranges. The value of the TLI was 0.997 in this study, which is larger than 0.95 and considered a good indicator of good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1995). Moreover, the value of RMSEA was 0.019, which was acceptable.

The results of the full model in this study are shown in Figure 2. Four estimated paths are significant. Therefore, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> are supported in this study.

According to the results shown in Figure 2, the variables of perceived quality had no direct effect on customer loyalty with a statistical significance. The variable of perceived quality had direct and positive effects on perceived value and perceived risk with standardised regression coefficients  $\beta=0.952$  and  $0.752$ , respectively, and a p value  $<0.001$ . In addition, the

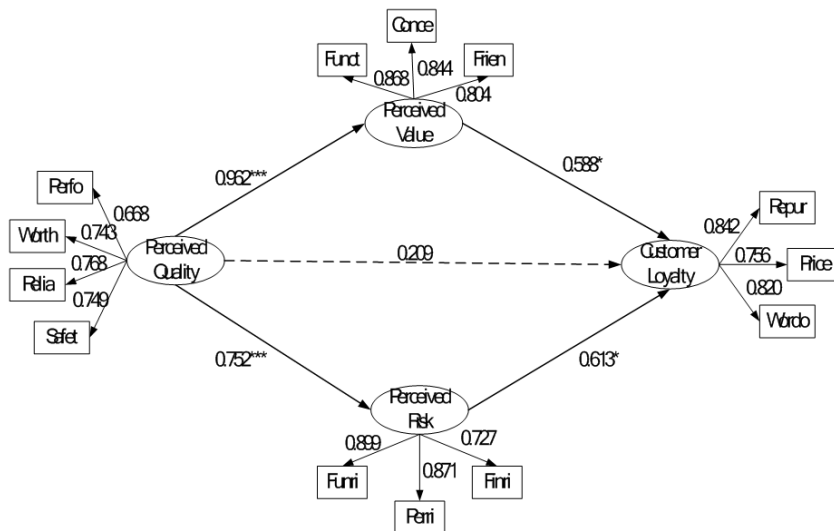


Figure 2. Results of structural equation modelling of perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk, customer trust and customer loyalty. \* $p<0.05$ , \*\*\* $p<0.001$ .

variable of perceived value had a direct and positive effect on customer loyalty with a standardised regression coefficient  $\beta=0.588$  and a p value  $<0.05$ . The variable of perceived risk had a direct and positive effect on the customer loyalty with a standardised regression coefficient  $\beta=0.613$  and a p value  $<0.05$ .

## DISCUSSION

This research used four constructs – perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk and customer loyalty – in the context of environmentally-friendly electronic products in Thailand. Of five path coefficients four were significant. The analysis results revealed that perceived quality did not directly affect customer loyalty, which did not follow the set hypothesis in the research. Although it was not significant, the situation can be explained by the general characteristics of the Thai electronics market. The explanation for the relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty could be that the consumers' perceived quality of products was a personal perception and consumers' perceptions were different for products or services without definite standards. Consumer perceptions depended on the decision of personal sense and experience. The results showed that the customers' comprehension of quality varied with any purchasing reasons, marketing position or differences from other brands, price, attractive channel or expansion. The perceived quality became an asset of the brand caused by the marketing investment, advertising and long-time publication.

Furthermore, to build customer loyalty for a product, the results demonstrated that firms should seek to build satisfactory information in any matters of the products, including branding new products with a strong effort to increase continuous product demand.

The perceived quality directly affected the perceived value, with a statistical significance at 0.001, corresponding to the level in Snoj et al.'s research (2004). Snoj et al. (2004) studied the relationship among perceived quality, perceived risk and perceived product value on mobile phone owners who were students. The research found that the perceived quality positively affected perceived value. These results corresponded with the results of Sweeney et al. (1999) and Teas and Agarwal (2000). Therefore, the perceived value was the customers' sense that concerned the value compared with the expected benefit and the total paid margin to buy products and services. These results corresponded with Beneke et al.'s research (2013), which studied latent variables, perceived quality, perceived risk and perceived product value. Beneke et al. (2013) found that perceived quality positively affected perceived value, and their results also corresponded with those of Patterson and Spreng (1997) and Chen and Chang (2012). They mentioned that the perceived value of green products could be measured from function, ability, efficiency of green products in environmental concern, environmentally-friendly products and benefits.

Perceived quality directly affected perceived risk, with the statistical

significance of 0.001, which corresponded to the research results of Snoj et al. (2004) and Beneke et al. (2013). Snoj et al. (2004) and Beneke et al. (2013) studied the latent variables of perceived product quality, perceived risk and perceived product value and found that perceived quality affected perceived risk and, additionally, that perceived risk was perceived by consumers to be an unexpected and bad result, which happened simultaneously in product or service purchasing (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). That was the fundamental concept of consumer behaviour, which meant that the consumers must face unexpected events prior to buying products in each category and lose the expected level of such results as a result of product buying and having an unexpected level.

Perceived value directly affected customer loyalty, with a statistical significance of 0.05, which corresponded with Li and Green's research (2011). Li and Green (2011) studied the influence of many variables to customer loyalty by studying the role of perceived value and found that customer loyalty was a successful marketing strategy, which was competitive for value building for consumers and corresponded with Yang and Peterson's research (2004). Yang and Peterson (2004) studied customer perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty in the margin change to answer the question, "What is the role of satisfaction and perceived value in building loyalty?" A company should obtain customer loyalty and stated that satisfaction and perceived value are the first

priorities. These results corresponded with Marakanon and Panjakajornsak's research (2014b). Marakanon and Panjakajornsak (2014b) found that perceived value had direct association with customer loyalty. This means that if customers' perceived value is higher, loyalty will be higher and customers will show high loyalty to purchase products.

Perceived risk directly affected customer loyalty, with a statistical significance of 0.05, which agreed with Hu's research (2012). Hu (2012) did research on the relationship among brand value, perceived risk, customer loyalty and customer participation. The population of the research was the consumers who bought digital cameras in Taiwan by measuring the loyalty from repeat buying, the cost increase, suggestion and cross purchase and perceived risk measurement from financial risk, duty or qualification and society. These results corresponded with Marakanon and Panjakajornsak's research (2014a), which studied observed variables, functional risk, performance risk and financial risk. Marakanon and Panjakajornsak (2014a) found that risk, performance risk and financial risk influenced customer loyalty. These results corresponded with the work of Tuu et al. (2011), whose research was the effect of the mediation variables of perceived risk, knowledge and uncertainty on satisfaction and loyalty. The purpose of Hu's research was to discuss and test the overall role of the above-mentioned variables. The research result found that perceived risk had an impact on loyalty.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research studied the structural equation model that influenced customer loyalty in buying electronic products and examined green products in Thailand. The model tested found that the statistical value for testing matched the proposed model and empirical data. The perceived quality factor directly influenced perceived value and perceived risk. Additionally, the factors of perceived value and perceived risk were latent variables that were influenced directly by customer loyalty. However, the factor of perceived quality did not directly influence customer loyalty. Beyond studying the relationship, this study also suggested applications for businesses, especially for electronic products.

### Theoretical Implication

In terms of theoretical implication, the findings do provide some feedback and insights for electronics manufacturer in drafting various managerial strategies on how to increase customer loyalty. This study combines the concepts of green marketing and consumer behaviour to develop a research framework of customer loyalty.

There are four academic contributions in this study. First, it summarised the literature into a new managerial framework of customer loyalty. Second, this study demonstrated that perceived quality is found significantly related to perceived value and perceived risk. Perceived quality plays an important role in enhancing value and risk perceptions of customers. Third, the study demonstrated that perceived

value and perceived risk are found significantly related to customer loyalty, which empirically support the finding that customer perceptions play an important role in influencing customer loyalty. The findings also suggested that customer loyalty can be generated through improving communications with customer. Thus, it is believed that the relationships between customer perception and customer loyalty will be more thoroughly comprehended with perceived quality, perceived value and perceived risk. Fourth, this paper extended the research on customer perception and customer loyalty into the field of green marketing. This suggests that companies must enhance their customer perception in order to raise customer loyalty in this era, which sees the environment as a crucial area of human life.

In addition, based on the confirmatory factor analysis, eight items that measured the constructs (two items for perceived quality, two items for perceived value, three items for perceived risk, one item for customer loyalty) were taken out due to the weak representation of the data. The remaining items for the constructs were tested and proved to fulfil reliability and validity. The construct of loyalty was found to be positively influenced by perceived value and perceived risk. This suggests that the higher customer perception is, the stronger will loyalty be. In conclusion, this research finding has added some theoretical and methodological contributions to the literature.

### **Managerial Implication**

In terms of managerial implication, the practitioners must create different strategies on how to enhance perceived quality (in term of performance, worthiness, reliability and product safety), perceived value (in term of function, environmental concern, environmental friendly) and perceived risk (in terms of function risk, performance risk, financial risk) for the purpose of increasing the likelihood of customer loyalty (enhancing repurchase intention, price insensitivity, word-of-mouth).

This study provided an understanding of what factors affect customer loyalty. Realisation of these factors will help companies anticipate what activities should be undertaken for a successful launch of these practices. According to the empirical results of this study, companies should emphasise their perceived quality, perceived value and perceived risk in order to elevate customer loyalty. As previously mentioned, acquiring new customers is both costly and difficult in terms of marketing for the company when the number of customers has peaked. Hence, it can be said that factors such as perceived quality, perceived value and perceived risk are very important for an electronics manufacturing company to establish loyal customers. A useful starting point for practitioners or marketers is to develop marketing strategies to increase customer perception in order to build longer-term loyalty in the context of environmentally-friendly products nowadays. In order to effectively influence loyalty, it is important that practitioners understand which aspects

of marketing contribute most to customer perception.

Consequently, it is highly recommended to electronics manufacturing companies that they should dedicate sufficient budgets and resources to improving customer perception. They need to emphasise on educating customers about the details of performance, environmental functions, worthiness, reliability and product safety of their electronic products. Moreover, companies should use advertising to convince their customers that the risks for purchasing their products are much lower than others. Therefore, this study suggests that companies should invest more resources for the purpose of increasing of perceived value and perceived risk since both are associated with customer loyalty. Finally, it is hoped that the research results are helpful to managers, practitioners, marketers and policy makers, and will contribute to future research as reference.

### **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Although this research collected cross-sectional data, additional research should include developmental research to study the relationship or change that occurred during the period. The periodic knowledge would apply the comparative data or apply longitudinal studies. Furthermore, this research studied the relation between variables concerning consumer perception, specifically green electronic products. In general, the discussion about the effects of

various variables in developed countries still has little evidence in Thailand. Future research should emphasise the profoundness of consumer perception, awareness or other factors that affect customer loyalty to realise different objectives. However, the present research was undertaken in the case of environmentally-friendly products from Thailand only. Future research should expand the scope to a more representative sample of population and to other products or services. In addition, similar research should be done in other countries or markets for comparison with these results.

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## **The Impact of Message Units as ‘Chunks’ on EFL Production**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate the effect of explicit teaching of language chunks on the writing performance of Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. A total of 42 low-intermediate homogeneous female learners aged between 13 and 14 years from a junior high school, provided the study with randomly assigned control group (N=22) and an experimental group (N=20). During 20 sessions of instruction, language chunks in short paragraphs, dialogues, and reading texts were focused on only on the experimental group. The language chunks and their first language (L1) equivalents were specified in order to determine the boundaries of chunks to convey an intended message. Development of learners' writings was examined through writing tasks that were administered twice - before and after the treatment. Statistical analyses of independent samples t-test revealed significant improvement of the experimental group in their production and overall general writing, whereas moderate improvement was observed in the control group. Hence, the role of chunking strategy in language instruction domain has the potential to improve the writing quality of learners. The findings of this study can be beneficial for learners, teachers, teacher educators, and syllabus designers in foreign language (FL) contexts so as to improve the learners' language production.

*Keywords:* Language production, lexical chunks, lexis, meaningful language units

### **INTRODUCTION**

It has been agreed that formulas or phrases in the form of a combination of two or more words have the potential to convey meanings (Hakuta, 1974; Halliday, 1975; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Nattinger & De Carrico, 1992; Lewis, 1993; Ellis, 2003; McCarthy, 2004; Granger, 2011). On the basis of evidence currently available, the

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meaning potentiality of these language units not only forms the basis for more language use but can serve as a repertoire of messages or meanings that learners use to sustain their production of real time language. According to Lewis (1993), lexis as a basic component of effective communication should be considered as an essential principle in any meaning-centred syllabus. Lewis (1997) regards language as containing mostly multi-word prefabricated chunks and not traditional grammar and vocabulary. It is worth reminding that foreign language learning, like a puzzle that needs to be assembled with accurate pieces in appropriate places, strives to have enough ready-made message units in learner's mind as repertoire of pieces for use. Therefore, lack of adequate repertoire of those accurate and appropriate pieces are the grounds for hesitation, gaps and deficiencies in writing and speech production, thereby, intelligibility does not occur.

With expanding literature on the role of positive and negative evidence, namely 'frequency of input' and 'noticing/consciousness-raising' respectively, Gass and Mackey (2002) argue that positive evidence alone seems to be insufficient to acquire full information about the target language. According to Schmidt's (2010) Noticing Hypothesis, learners must attend to and notice linguistic features of the input that they are exposed to if those forms are to become intake. A closer look at the issue indicates that in foreign contexts, the quality of conveying meaning as a consciousness-raising technique, is very much related

to finding an exact and appropriate L1 equivalence for the lexical items. Lewis (1997) states that "correctly identified chunks do have equivalents in other languages, and ignoring this fact, makes the task of second language (L2) teaching unnecessarily burdensome" (p. 64). Lexical item is a social institution and it has a conventional label for a conventional concept (Pawley & Syder, 1983). A corpus-based study about semantic aspect of the phrasal verbs (as part of lexical chunks) by Zarifi and Mukundan (2015) revealed that these units are more intuitively than empirically motivated. However, recent investigations into positive correlation between teaching lexical chunks and language proficiency has provided ample support, such as Taguchi (2007), Durrant (2008), Zhao (2009), Chu & Wang (2011), Li (2014), and also Iranian researchers, Ranjbar, Pazhakh and Gorjian (2012), Goudarzi and Moini (2012), Eidian, Gorjian and Aghvami (2014), and Araghi, Yousefi-oskuee and Salehpour (2014). Ranjbar et al. (2012) focus on the effect of using lexical chunks on fluency on Iranian university students' paragraph writing. The participants were exposed to teaching these units of language for an entire academic semester. The findings revealed significant improvement on writing fluency among students. Further, Li (2014) found lexical chunks significant to college students writing, as if by increasing the input of English lexical chunks, these combinations can reduce the negative transfer of the native language in their writing. However, both studies were conducted on university

students. Nevertheless, chunking strategy has not been examined on school students' writing in Iran. These students usually have difficulty in initiating a writing text or a conversation, and it seems that they cognitively do not have a repertoire of planned language units ready in their mind in order to convey their messages. Thus, the present study was proposed to address this gap. In a small scale classroom study, the Iranian EFL learners were exposed to teaching these combinations in order to internalise them semantically in their linguistic system over time and thereby, improving their language production. This study was aimed to answer the following questions and accordingly to test their null hypotheses:

1. Is there any significant difference between the chunk instructed group (CIG) and the control group (CG) in the number of lexical chunks produced in the writing tasks?
2. Is there any significant difference between the two groups' grammatical accuracy in writing?
3. Is there any significant difference between the two groups' overall general writing ability?

## RELATED LITERATURE

The idea of lexical chunks/phrases/bundles use, as an essential component of language by linguists (Halliday, 1966; Yorio, 1979; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Sinclair, 1991; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Howarth, 1998; Lewis, 1993, 1997, 2000; Wood,

2002), has gained high status in second language learning. Linguists have used different terms for these language units such as holophrases, prefabricated routines and patterns, prefabricated phrases, clusters, formulaic speech, fixed grammatical frames, gambits, lexicalised sentence stems, speech formula, formulaic sequences, slot-and-frame patterns, formulas, unanalysed language or wholes, and multi-words. But the term 'chunk' was first used by Lewis (1993).

There have been extensive premises on analysing the lexical chunks (Jespersen, 1924; Coulmas, 1979; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Peters, 1983; Chaudron & Richards, 1986; Nattinger & Decarrico, 1992; Lewis, 1993; Ferguson, 1996; Biber, 2006; Ellis, Simpson-Vlach & Maynard, 2008; Allen, 2009; Schmitt, 2012). The linguists' classification of these units, according to Bogart (2011), ranges from purely statistical to linguistic to psychological. The nature of statistical and psychological features is intentional and indicative of the key properties of lexical chunks such as frequency, non-compositionality and being stored and retrieved as a unified whole in human memory (Bogart, 2011). Among the linguists' classification, the agreeable one is that of Lewis (1993) who classified them as 'words' such as *any*, *almost*, *probably*, 'multiword items', which can usefully be sub-categorised to collocations and institutionalised expressions, and 'polywords', the messiest category and usually relatively short, two or three words, which may belong to any word class, such

as nouns, phrasal verbs such as *taxi rank*, *record player*, *put off*, *look up*, *of course* (Lewis, 1993). Lewis states that boundaries between chunks have been unrecognised and the ability to chunk language successfully is central to the theoretical understanding of how language works. Collocations, which constitute a significant area of lexical phrases, have been sub-categorised as fixed expressions (conventionalised forms with their pragmatic functions, like *certainly not*, *not yet*, *just a moment*); and as semi-fixed expressions/sentence frames and heads (frames with slots for various fillers), like *That's all very well*, *I see what you mean* (Lewis, 1997). According to Lewis (1997), "lexis covers single words and multi-word objects which have the same status in the language as simple words, the items we store in our mental lexicon ready for use" (p. 217). Coulmas (1979) sees a lexical chunk including at least two words that are phonologically coherent. Moreover, Sinclair and Mauranen (2006) decline to provide an explicit definition for chunks, instead, they state that human readers will identify them intuitively; although they presented two basic types, those that organise the discourse and those that transmit the message or content, with more specific sub-types.

With regard to lexical chunk functions, Nattinger and DeCarrico's (1992) *form/function composites* (a combination of competence, performance and pragmatics) and Lewis's (1993) *grammaticalised lexis* (and not lexicalised grammar) are among the functions labelled for these combinations. On another line, Halliday's (1994) theory

of 'language as a social semiotic' sees language as cultural acts and contends that the semiotics of the culture is at the level of grammatical constituent, at the level of clause. However, lexical chunks seem to carry with them three main functions; they can be considered as: Meaning-making phrases (Lewis, 1993; Banikowski, 1999; McCarthy, 2004; Ellis, 2003); Memory Enhancing Phrases (Jespersen, 1924; Banikowski, 1999); and Fluency Enhancing Phrases (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Lennon, 1990; Lewis, 1997; Wood, 2002; Hyland, 2008; Segalowitz, 2010).

### **Chunking Strategy in Input Perception and Output Production**

Research has shown that chunking in perception and production do not occur naturally in adults like in children (nature vs. nurture). As stated by Christophe, Peperkamp, Pallier, Block, and Mehler (2004), "experimental evidences have shown that the lexical segmentation strategy is actually exploited by adults" (p.524). In second language acquisition (SLA), adults, there is a need for strategy instruction to understand message units as wholes and away from segmentation. Pawley and Syder (1983) contend that reliance on ready-made expressions does not detract creativity in spoken discourse; rather, it creates facilitation to use new sentences since they need little encoding work and the speaker can channel his energies into other activities. The efficacy of memorising lexical chunks in L2 performance has been explored by Wray and Fitzpatrick

(2008) that memorising and rehearsing conversational turns have helped L2 assisted learners in real-life interaction to a great extent. Furthermore, Bygate (1988, cited in Wood, 2002) observed that subclausal units or fragments make up a great deal of spontaneous conversational interaction in English, a great deal of production and monitoring of language that one can control the conversation through their use.

Empirical evidence for the positive correlation between Chinese L2 learners' use of lexical chunks and language production was provided by Zhao (2009). According to Zhao, these units decrease L2 learners' pressure to decode individual words, thereby, providing an easily retrievable frame for language production. Based on Araghi et al's (2014) study, engaging students in collecting appropriate bits of chunks, first through discussion on an intended topic to elicit key ideas in order to paint a general image for heightening their lexical density, proved beneficial to stimulate learners to enter the complexity of writing text. Along similar line, the improvement of reading comprehension through lexical chunks use has been explored by Sadighi and Sahragard (2013) and Sadat-kiaee, Heravi-moghaddam and Moheb-hosseini (2013). Sadighi and Sahragard (2013) investigated the effect of lexical collocations on EFL learners' reading comprehension with the purpose of considering the different proficiency levels of the subjects. Their finding indicated that the use of high lexical collocations in the text of different levels plays a crucial role in enhancing learners' reading comprehension. Further, different

proficiency levels of the participants did not affect their performance on lexical collocation tests. It was in contrast to Zhang's (1993) contention that good writers, native or non-natives, perform significantly better than poor writers on the writing test (Sadighi & Sahragard, 2013). Moreover, Sadat-kiaee, Heravi-moghaddam and Moheb-hosseini (2013) lend further support to the effective teaching of collocations which led to enhanced level of perception in EFL reading comprehension. On the other hand, Ziafar and Maftoon (2015), in regard to pragmatic competence as one of the main aspects of language learners' proficiency, validate the assumption that providing context for pragmatic units, paraphrasing, and input enrichment techniques can give confirmatory evidence for the effectiveness of these combinations on enhanced pragmatic competence of EFL learners.

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

A quasi-experimental design was followed where two homogeneous groups of low-intermediate level students were selected through non-random convenience sampling. This was because they had previously been selected for this level through the school placement test and they were also the exact students who we had to work with.

### **Participants**

The participants were 42 Iranian female EFL learners aged between 13 and 14 years from a junior high school in Tehran. They had been enrolled in the second grade and

were all native Persian speakers with similar experiences in terms of learning English in free language institutes out of school. The result of the initial sampling, in this case cluster sampling, was the selection of two classes of low-intermediate level with overall 52 learners, composed of 27 and 25 students each. Although the students had already passed a placement test carried out by the school authorities, they were given a Nelson Language Test (200A) to ascertain their proficiency level. This resulted in the selection of 42 learners whose test scores were within one standard deviation below or above the mean score of the whole sample. The learners were divided into two groups of 22 and 20 students that served as the control and experimental group respectively. The other 10 students with very high or very low scores on homogeneity test were not considered in the study although they stayed throughout the entire procedure.

### **Instruments**

The research tools included: 1) instructional materials which were the learners' textbook, the 'Hey There! Book 2' by José Luis Morales and Cathy Myers (2011), and its workbook. The instructor was responsible to chunk the short paragraphs, dialogues and reading texts in advance, only for the experimental group; 2) a homogeneity measurement test, as mentioned before; 3) two tests of paragraph writing in the form of an expository composition of about 150 words each, one adopted as the pre-test and the other as the post-test. The topics were selected from 'Hey There! Book 2'

(Appendix A); and 4) a modified version of Analytic Scoring Scale by Cohen (1994) and Jacobs, Zingraf, Wormuth, Hartfield, and Hughey (1981) that was used as the rubric for scoring grammatical writing quality between groups. The rubric contains five criteria: the content, organisation, grammar, language use and mechanics. Language use (the choice of vocabulary and register) and grammar (grammaticality at sentence-level structure) in this rubric were the main criteria in deciding the level of accuracy of learners' writings. Accuracy in this research refers to the ability to produce discourse or sentences using correct grammar and appropriate vocabulary.

### **Procedure**

During the school semester, the comparison group (CG) underwent the usual instruction of the materials from the 'Hey There! Book 2', whereas the chunk instructed group (CIG) received the classroom instruction on the same materials, along with learning the chunks available in textbook materials. The instructional process lasted for 20 sessions, twice a week, during the first semester of 2014 school year. The teacher reviewed and maximised the use of relevant chunks that the CIG participants encountered in each unit by focusing on their meanings so as to enable the students to get a better understanding of comprehension exercises and discussion activities; while in the listening section, the language chunks were specified by the teacher prior to the activity, along with encouraging students to be more attentive to the phonology of the chunks.



Most often, the teacher asked the students of CIG to work on another text (which is usually available in their workbook) and specify the key phrases by putting slashes between them (however, the students' choices of the phrases overlapped in form). Consequently, the teacher was to arrange to go over all the students' choices of chunks in the next session in order to be certain that they are totally correct. All through these activities, the CG received the materials without focusing on any language chunks. But an accurate understanding of language chunks, in the case of CIG participants, was emphasised and for both groups, understanding the basic grammatical rules. Both groups were determined to have the L1 equivalents through implicitly applying them by the teacher: at the word-level for the CG and at formula/chunk-level for CIG participants.

The participants' spontaneous writing samples, before and after the treatment, were coded twice: 1) regarding the number of chunks the learners produced; and 2) with regard to grammatical accuracy in their writing by using the rubric mentioned earlier. Accordingly, the learners' use of language chunks appropriately and grammatically correct were important and

confusing chunks were left out and not considered in the analysis. However, the writing samples were scored analytically by two teachers. They were experienced EFL teachers with adequate knowledge in writing pedagogy. Holistically then, with regard to grammaticality and writing quality on the whole, the samples were scored by the same teachers independently the first time and their averages as the final scores for learners' overall general writing were recorded.

### Data Analysis

Data obtained from both expository writing tasks as pre-test and post-test concerning lexical chunk production and grammatical accuracy were analysed using SPSS IBM 22, 2013. The KR-21 was run to probe the reliability of the test scores; the reliability indices for the pre-test and post-test of the lexical chunks production were .83 and .88 respectively. These were .70 and .87 for the pre-test and post-test of grammatical accuracy (Table 1).

A factor analysis through the varimax rotation was carried out to probe the underlying construct of the Nelson test, pretests, and posttests of both lexical chunks production and grammatical accuracy. The SPSS extracted two factors which accounted

Table 1  
*KR-21 Reliability Indices*

	N	Mean	Variance	
PreChunk	42	27.88	67.083	0.83
PostChunk	42	37.29	67.331	0.88
PreGram	42	38.95	27.120	0.70
PostGram	42	45.40	28.832	0.87

for 76.30% of the total variance (Table 2).

As displayed in Table 3, the pretest and posttest of lexical chunks production and grammatical accuracy were loaded on the first factor while the Nelson test were loaded alone on the second factor. These results suggested that the pretest and posttest of lexical chunks production and grammatical accuracy measured the same underlying construct which was different from general language proficiency.

Table 3  
Rotated Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
PostChunk	.876	
PreChunk	.871	
PostGram	.836	
PreGram	.731	
Nelson		.971

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

**RESULTS**

The writing scores in the pre-tests and post-tests were the main source of data. The research questions posed in this study were probed through parametric independent

samples t-tests. The subjects' performances on the tests were independent of one another that is the treatments involving group work or pair work were not administered in this study. The dependent variables (writing tasks) were measured on an interval scale. The assumption of normality was also met. Meanwhile, the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors were within the ranges of +/- 1.96 (Table 4).

The Nelson general language proficiency test was administered to 52 subjects. Based on the mean (M = 34.62), +/- one standard deviation (SD = 10.50), 42 subjects were selected to participate in the main study. The KR-21 reliability index for the Nelson test was .92 (Table 5).

An independent t-test was run to compare the CIG and the CG's mean scores on the Nelson test. As displayed in Table 6, the CIG (M = 39.80, SD = 2.98) and the CG (M = 38.95, SD = 3.67) showed almost the same means on the Nelson test.

The result of the independent t-test ( $t_{(40)} = .81, P > .05, R = .12$ , representing a weak effect size) (Table 7) indicated that there was no significant difference between

Table 2  
Total Variance Explained

Components	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	%of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	%of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	%of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.783	55.657	55.657	2.783	55.657	55.657	2.760	55.194	55.194
2	1.032	20.645	76.302	1.032	20.645	76.302	1.055	21.109	76.302
3	.663	13.255	89.557						
4	.350	7.002	96.559						
5	.172	3.441	100.000						

the two groups' mean scores on the Nelson test. Therefore, they enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment.

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = .627, P > .05$ ). Thus, the first row of Table 7 (Equal Variances Assumed) is reported.

**Pretest Analysis of Lexical Chunks Production and Grammatical Accuracy**

Data obtained from the spontaneous writing task implemented prior to the treatment were analysed. Based on the results of the independent t-test on the pre-test scores of CIG and CG, in regard to lexical chunks production, the CIG ( $M = 35.55, SD = 11.26$ ) and the CG ( $M = 34.91, SD = 9.66$ )

Table 4  
*Testing Normality Assumption*

Group		Skewness			Kurtosis			
		N	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
CIG	Nelson	20	.479	.512	0.94	-.552	.992	-0.56
	PreChunk	20	.075	.512	0.15	-1.633	.992	-1.65
	PostChunk	20	-.033	.512	-0.06	-1.678	.992	-1.69
	PreGram	20	-.757	.512	-1.48	-.476	.992	-0.48
	PostGram	20	-.285	.512	-0.56	-.840	.992	-0.85
	Writing	20	-.165	.512	-0.32	-1.418	.992	-1.43
	Valid N (listwise)	20						
CG	Nelson	22	.377	.491	0.77	.507	.953	0.53
	PreChunk	22	.046	.491	0.09	-1.343	.953	-1.41
	PostChunk	22	-.127	.491	-0.26	-1.044	.953	-1.10
	PreGram	22	-.481	.491	-0.98	-.546	.953	-0.57
	PostGram	22	-.360	.491	-0.73	-.633	.953	-0.66
	Writing	22	-.149	.491	-0.30	-1.067	.953	-1.12
	Valid N (listwise)	22						

Table 5  
*Descriptive Statistics, Nelson Test*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	KR-21
Nelson	52	34.62	10.507	110.398	.92

Table 6  
*Descriptive Statistics, Nelson Test by Groups*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Nelson	CIG	20	39.80	2.984	.667
	CG	22	38.95	3.671	.783

showed almost the same means on the pre-test of chunks (Table 8).

The result of the independent t-test ( $t_{(40)} = .19, P > .05$ ) indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the pre-test of chunks production.

Consequently, the result of the independent t-test on the pre-test scores of CIG and CG, in regard to grammatical accuracy in writing, showed that the CIG ( $M = 38.40, SD = 5.04$ ) and the CG ( $M = 39.45, SD = 5.42$ ) enjoyed almost the same level on the pre-test of grammatical accuracy (Table 9).

The result of independent t-test ( $t_{(40)} = .65, P > .05, R = .10$ ) indicated no significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the pretest of grammatical accuracy. Therefore, the

participants possessed the same level of ability in grammatical accuracy prior to the administration of the treatment.

### Research Question One

The first research question was: Is there any significant difference between the number of lexical chunks produced by learners of CIG and CG? Hence, the administration of an independent t-test on the post-test of lexical chunks mean scores produced by groups revealed that the CIG ( $M = 53.55, SD = 7.82$ ) outperformed the CG ( $M = 41.05, SD = 8.66$ ) on the post-test of chunks produced (Table 10).

The result of the independent t-test ( $t_{(40)} = 4.89, P < .05, R = .61$ , representing a weak effect size) (Table 11) indicated that there was a significant difference between

Table 7  
*Independent Samples Test, Nelson Test by Groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	.627	.433	.814	40	.421	.845	1.039	-1.254	2.945
Equal Variances not Assumed			.822	39.537	.416	.845	1.028	-1.234	2.925

Table 8  
*Descriptive Statistics, Pretest of Lexical Chunks by Groups*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest of Chunks	CIG	20	35.55	11.269	2.520
	CG	22	34.91	9.665	2.061

the two groups' mean scores on the post-test of chunks production. Therefore, the first null-hypothesis was rejected.

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = .20, P > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 11 (Equal Variances Assumed) is reported.

### Research Question Two

The second research question was: Is there any significant difference between the two groups' writing grammatical accuracy? Therefore, an independent t-test was run to

compare the CIG and the CG's mean scores on the post-test of grammatical accuracy in order to probe the second research question. The CIG ( $M = 49.15, SD = 3.10$ ) outperformed the CG ( $M = 42, SD = 7.40$ ) on the post-test of grammatical accuracy (Table 12).

The result of the independent t-test ( $t_{(36)} = 5.86, P < .05, R = .69$ , representing a large effect size) (Table 13) indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the posttest of grammatical accuracy, rejecting the second null-hypothesis.

Table 9  
*Descriptive Statistics, Pretest of Grammatical Accuracy by Groups*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest of Grammatical Accuracy	CIG	20	38.40	5.041	1.127
	CG	22	39.45	5.422	1.156

Table 10  
*Descriptive Statistics, Post-test on Production of Chunks by Groups*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest of Chunks	CIG	20	53.55	7.824	1.749
	CG	22	41.05	8.666	1.848

Table 11  
*Independent Samples Test, Post-test on Production of Chunks by Groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
	Equal Variances Assumed	.201	.656	4.890	40	.000	12.505	2.557	7.337
Equal Variances not Assumed			4.915	39.999	.000	12.505	2.544	7.362	17.647

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met (Levene's  $F = 5.35, P < .05$ ). That is why the second row of Table 13 (Equal Variances not Assumed) is reported. The t-test table has two t-values and two degrees of freedom. If the assumption of homogeneity of variances is not met, the second row should be reported. Despite the level of contrast, which is significant as  $P < .05$ , the analysis of independent t-test represents the significant difference of group means on the post-test of grammatical accuracy (Table 12). Therefore, the second null hypothesis is rejected.

**Research Question Three**

The third research question was: Is there any significant difference between the two

groups' overall general writing abilities? Thus, an independent t-test was run to compare the CIG and the CG's mean scores (the average scores of the chunks produced and grammatical accuracy) in order to answer the third research question. It was found that the CIG ( $M = 91.65, SD = 8.21$ ) outperformed the CG ( $M = 74.55, SD = 10.85$ ) on general writing ability (Table 14).

The results of the independent t-test ( $t_{(40)} = 5.71, P < .05, R = .67$ , representing a weak effect size) (Table 15) indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the general writing ability. Thus, the third null-hypothesis was rejected. The CIG showed a significant improvement in general writing after the administration of the treatment.

Table 12  
*Descriptive Statistics, Post-test of Grammatical Accuracy by Groups*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest of Grammatical Accuracy	CIG	20	49.15	3.100	.693
	CG	22	42.00	4.701	1.002

Table 13  
*Independent Samples Test, Post-test of Grammatical Accuracy by Groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
	Equal Variances Assumed	5.356	.026	5.756	40	.000	7.150	1.242	4.640
Equal Variances not Assumed			5.868	36.631	.000	7.150	1.218	4.680	9.620

The assumption of homogeneity of variances was also met (Levene's  $F = 1.65$ ,  $P > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 15 (Equal Variances Assumed) is reported. Therefore, the above tables confirm that chunking strategy helps the chunk instructed students' recognition of language use and production compared with their group's counterpart.

### DISCUSSION

Based on the results, the CIG participants who had been provided with instruction on lexical chunks made statistically significant improvement in their production of language units and grammatical sentences. In fact, the three null hypotheses were rejected. However, the first question was

to investigate the significant difference between CIG and CG on the production of chunks in the writing tasks after treatment. The descriptive statistics of the post-test of chunks produced by groups showed a significant difference between the CIG (with a mean value of 53.55,  $SD = 7.82$ ) and the CG (with a mean value of 41.05,  $SD = 8.66$ ). Meanwhile, the results of the independent t-test ( $t_{(40)} = 4.89$ ,  $P < .05$ ) indicated a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores. The discussion points to the fact that in the first stages of learning, the CIG participants resisted chunk learning as they were used to understanding the meanings at word level; however, encouraging meaningful phrases (by holding messages for maintaining interactions) made them eager to learn the new meanings at

Table 14  
*Descriptive Statistics, General Writing Ability by Groups*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
General	CIG	20	91.65	8.210	1.836
Writing	CG	22	74.55	10.857	2.315

Table 15  
*Independent Samples Test, General Writing Ability by Groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	1.659	.205	5.713	40	.000	17.105	2.994	11.054	23.155
Equal Variances not Assumed			5.790	38.771	.000	17.105	2.954	11.128	23.081

chunk level. In other words, they realised that they are more intelligible to others and got motivated to continue with their chunk learning. The findings of this study concur with Hakuta's (1976) definition of lexical items as the functional meanings that learners are not yet able to construct them from their linguistic system. Hakuta stated that if the learners wait until they acquire the constructional rules for forming an utterance before using it, their motivation for language learning may be seriously affected. Similarly, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) stated that lexical chunks are considered as expressions that learners are yet unable to construct creatively because they are stored and retrieved as whole, thereby, resulting in frustration and at the same time promote language production. Moreover, the current research appears to validate Slobin's (1985) view in relation to young children's extraction of chunks in the environment that "these chunks will provide the material for the child to use in bootstrapping her way into the language system" (p. 1030), thereby improving their language production.

The second aim of this study was to investigate the significant difference between the CIG and CG in grammatical accuracy in the writing tasks. This variable was measured through independent samples t-test. The result showed a significant difference between CIG and CG in terms of the use of accurate grammatical chunks ( $t_{(36)} = 5.86, P < .05$ ). The CIG (with a mean of 49.15, SD = 3.10) performed significantly higher on grammatical accuracy than the CG (with a mean of 42, SD = 7.40). This

finding, considering the important role of chunks in grammar learning and accurate use of grammatical forms, lend support to Gerngross, Puchta and Thornbury's (2007) claim that specifies the initial stage of grammar learning as awareness-raising (chunk learning as the concern of this study) that, as the students, even adult learners, may not simply understand the rules, can aid learners to 'discover' grammar rules and remind why they refer to this first stage as 'discovery'. According to Gerngross et al. (2007), typical discovery processes include 'induction', where learners are given some language data (such as examples of the target grammar items in context) and are then encouraged to work out the rules themselves. It is important to point out that grammar rules were practised (at sentence-level before doing any tasks), manipulated and then contextualised in the form of dialogues and short paragraphs to both groups, but the result showed that chunk instructed group had used accurate grammatical sentences profoundly in their writing texts than the control group.

The third research question was to investigate the difference between the CIG and CG participants in their overall general writing. The overall general writing was moderate among the CG participants. However, the CIG (with the mean value of 91.65, SD = 8.21) outperformed the CG (with the mean of 74.55, SD = 10.85) which was a noticeable improvement. The result of the independent samples t-test ( $t_{(40)} = 5.71, P < .05$ ) revealed the significant improvement of the CIG participants on their general



writing ability. In other words, after the administration of treatment, applying a large amount of lexical chunks used by the CIG participants in writing texts, as a contribution to the utilisation of accurate grammatical sentences, was very helpful to consolidating those grammatically correct language units, thus, impacting their general writing ability. According to Jia-ying's (2006) study, there is a direct correlation between the learner's proficiency level and the amount of lexical chunks used. The comprehensive effects that lexical chunk instruction has on production (writing) skill and grammar learning in this study, and according to researchers, on pragmatics, fluency and memory enhancing, and more important the lexical chunks as tone units, mean that this way of teaching and learning is of overriding importance.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that in EFL contexts it would necessitate teachers to be informed of the basic premise of lexical chunks instruction to chunk the texts correctly in order to provide conditions for successful translation into mother tongue for the purpose of conveying messages. Hence, they can raise the students' awareness of 'chunks' and develop their ability to chunk the texts appropriately for the purpose of self-study. Therefore, in order to expedite the process of language learning, student teachers need to benefit from teacher training courses in order to be familiar with the potential lexical chunks instruction. Finally, the use of tasks, following sentence-level practices of

chunks during the treatment, as fundamental towards contextualised vocabulary learning showed that it could aid learners to benefit from context clues to retrieve and use the language chunks meaningfully in their output. In this way, the learners' intuition for using new patterns of language needed in particular contexts and their meta-linguistic awareness will be enhanced.

The available evidence seems to suggest that chunk instruction seems to be an effective strategy in the cases of very young learners or learners under the age of 13, but the school requirement was to have explicit meta linguistic explanation of grammar rules for both groups in this study. Therefore, the interpretation of the findings of this work should be done with certain reservations, and future studies are required to validate this particular claim without the use of metalinguistic explanation. Moreover, the limited number of participants in this study could affect the results. Third, the time lapse for teaching language chunks was restricted in our curriculum; and learners' prolonged exposure to more language chunks in the classroom is recommended. Finally, in regard to the validity and reliability issues and the time limit in classrooms, this study investigated the effect of chunks learning on writing ability. Further evidence may lie in the findings of this effect on speaking development of EFL learners, with a focus on the phonology of units (not individual words, according to Lewis, (1997)) as important in retrieving and use of language.

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## APPENDIX A

### Topics used in writing tasks:

#### Writing Task 1 (pre-test)

Write about the last time you were sick. Imagine it is now. Include these things:  
Describe how you feel. Where are you? What can't you do because you're sick?

**Source:** *Hey There! Book 2*, By Jose Luis Morales with Cathy Myers

#### Writing Task 2 (post-test)

Write about your ideal job when you grow up. Include these things:  
What will the job be? What will you have to do? How much will you earn?

**Source:** *Hey There! Book 2*, By Jose Luis Morales with Cathy Myers

## APPENDIX B

### Some lexical chunks introduced during the course:

Lexical Chunks	L1 Equivalent
Hey there!	آهای! حواست به من هست؟
As a living statue	مثل یک مجسمه متحرک
A street statue	یک مجسمه خیابونی
A good way to earn money	یک راه خوب برای پول در آوردن
Watch the world	دنیا رو دیدن/ بیرون را دیدن
At the same time	در عین حال
I have to be patient/strong/fit	باید صبور/قوی/متناسب باشم
Not easy to stay still	بی حرکت ایستادن آسان نیست
For long hours	برای ساعت‌های طولانی
To stay in one place	در یک مکان قرار گرفتن
Standing on a platform	روی یک سکو ایستادن
Some people put money in the box	بعضی آدمها تو جعبه پول میاندازند
some don't	بعضی اینکارو نمی کنند
A few people/ try to annoy me	عده‌ای سعی می کنند منو اذیت کنند
Make me move	منو جابجا می کنند
Then at least I can move	حد اقل اونوقت می تونم حرکت کنم
Try hard not to react	سعی می کنم که عکس العمل نشان ندهم
To go on short bus trips	به سفرهای کوتاه با اتوبوس بریم
We're never bored	هیچوقت خسته نمی شیم
A working mom	یک مادر شاغل
Like a horse galloping	مثل اسبی که چهار نعل می تازد
That's incredible	باور کردنی نیست/ عجیبه
That's not all	همش این نیست/ همه مطلب این نیست
A sheet of metal/paper	یک ورق فلز/ یک ورق کاغذ

Sounds like a real storm	صدایش مثل یک طوفان واقعی به نظر می‌آید
He's carrying something	داره چیزی با خودش حمل می‌کنه
Say eight places in your school	هشتتا مکان تو مدرستون نام ببر
He's taking the garbage out of the house	داره آشغال‌ها رو از خونه بیرون میبره
Anything to eat	چیزی برای خوردن/چیزی میل دارید بخورید؟/چیزی برای خوردن هست؟
Hanging out with family	با خانواده یکجا با هم جمع شدن/ وقت گذراندن
Are you a homebody?	آدم اهل خونه هستی؟/ می‌خواهی همش تو خونه باشی؟
The ball is kicked	توپ پرت شده
From one of the four corners of the field	از یکی از چهار گوشه زمین

## **The Effect of Personal-Situational Locus of Control on the Amount of Betting in a Private University**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research employed an experimental design to study the issue of gambling to determine the main and interaction effects of Rotter's personal locus of control and situational locus of control on the amount of betting in a simulated blackjack card game. A total number of 53 undergraduates from a private university in Kuala Lumpur participated in this research. A two-way factorial ANOVA was employed and showed no significant main effects of personal and situational locus of control on the amount of betting. The findings also suggested no significant interaction effect between both measures. With current statistics showing an increase in the number of gamblers, especially among youths in Malaysia, the findings of this research could provide insights into the possible factors contributing to gambling behaviour despite the non-significant effects of personal and situational locus of control.

*Keywords:* Betting, blackjack card, gambling, locus of control, personal locus of control, situational locus of control

### **INTRODUCTION**

Gambling is defined as the wagering of items of significant value, either money or belongings, upon an outcome determined by probabilities (Rickwood, Blaszczyński, Delfabbro, Dowling & Heading, 2010). Gambling activities such as poker, lottery, slot machines, scratch cards, roulette, blackjack, bingo, sports betting and online gambling all share one commonality, which is that they can lead to losses for the players (Rickwood et al., 2010). Losses may trigger

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those who participate in gambling activities to indulge even more in such activities to regain money lost; this pattern of behavior can eventually develop into gambling addiction.

Gambling addiction, which is termed as gambling disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5*, is classified under the category of non-substance-related disorders. Gambling disorder highlights the severity of its negative consequences, which include physiological and psychological disorder (Australian Psychological Association [APS], 2010; Reilly & Smith, 2013). Heavy gamblers tend to suffer from hypertension, lack of sleep, heart problems, peptic ulcers, mood disorders, neuroticism, illusion of control, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, stress guiltiness, indignity, deception and weakened decision-making ability and lower life satisfaction (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002; Griffiths, 2003; Fong, 2005; Taormina, 2009). Additionally, gambling disorders also bring adverse effects to society such as higher rate of crime, lower work productivity and impaired interpersonal relationships.

According to Blinn-Pike, Worth and Jonkman (2010), adolescent participation in gambling activities across the world vary from 44% to 80%. In Malaysia, therefore, the Ministry of Health and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have shown concern for the negative consequences of gambling. The Gamblers Rehab Centre Malaysia (GRC) has found that 89% of 5,000 secondary students have

gambled, 45% of them had financial issues and 36% have experienced disruption of their studies due to gambling (Lee, 2014). Rising numbers of Malaysian youths engaging in online gambling and increasing incidences of secondary school students receiving sports bets in school (Yuen, 2013) have also been reported.

As Malaysian young adults embark on employment, most of them begin to acquire high financial commitments. If they are engaging in gambling activities, the losses from these activities are likely to pile on them will only amplify the financial strain they are experiencing and this may press them to resort to borrowing money from loan sharks or to commit theft or fraud. Such a constrained situation may hinder personal, family and employment relationships and induce psychological conditions such as depression and suicide (Reith, 2006).

The main aim of this research was to determine the factors i.e. external or internal locus of control, that may influence young gamblers in the amount of money they spend on gambling activities and also to determine whether they believed in luck or skill (situational locus of control) as the drive that provoked them to gamble.

It is believed that this study will serve to benefit young adult gamblers in comprehending the types of attributional styles and situational locus of control that could propel them towards heavy gambling. This study can also act as a guide for mental health professionals in generating support for gamblers possessing different spectra of locus of control. The Ministry of Health and



NGOs may also, hopefully, intervene in the psychological concerns of young gamblers by building on the results of this study in order to curb gambling activities.

### **Gambling**

Gambling has existed as early as 4000BC and has been practised around the world from then right up to today (Segal, Smith & Robinson, 2007; Ferentzyn & Turner, 2013). Psychologists have tried to explain the factors behind gamblers' motivation from various perspectives. In the perspective of behaviourism, gambling is viewed as a process of learning and reinforcement that can be conditioned, as gamblers associate intrinsic and extrinsic rewards with gambling and experience negative reinforcement from escaping emotional pain and stress (Smith, Hodgins, & Williams, 2007).

From the cognitive perspective, gamblers hold superstitions to rationalise their wins or losses from games (Smith et al., 2007). Distorted cognition, poor decision-making and persistent irrational beliefs reinforce gambling behaviour as gamblers are capable of finding meaning in random events to justify the outcomes of their games (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002; Smith, et al., 2007).

Studies have found different sources of motivation for gambling including entertainment, desire for winning money, stress relief and sensation seeking (Coventry & Brown, 1993; Zangeneh et al., 2008; Fortune & Goodie, 2010; Centre for Addiction and Mental Health [CAMH], 2012). Previous studies have revealed no

statistical significant results between locus of control and gambling behaviour (Zhou, Tang, Sun, Huang, Rao, Liang & Li, 2011). However, studies have shown an association between perceived control (i.e. belief in luck or illusion of control and belief in skill) and gambling frequency (Moore & Ohtsuka, 1999; Joukhador, Blaszczynski, & Maccallum, 2004; Zhou et al., 2011). Zhou et al. discovered that belief in luck predicts gambling frequency in baccarat and lottery, whereas belief in skill predicts gambling frequency in stud poker. There are also studies that investigate the congruency between personal and situational locus of control and its effect on risk-taking with regards to the amount of money spent on betting (Lefcourt, 1965; Karabenick & Addy, 1979).

### **Locus of Control**

Despite the anticipation of long-term losses, many individuals continue to gamble because of the expectation of winning. An explanation for why people continue to gamble is that they may have positive expectations about their ability to influence outcomes, and this is related to their locus of control.

Locus of control, developed by Rotter, is divided into internal and external and refers to the general expectancy that individuals hold for the outcome of an event, and which guides their future attitudes and behaviour that are included as an aspect of their personality (Rotter & Mulry, 1965; Rotter, 1966; Neill, 2006). Locus of control reflects the degree of control that individuals

perceive towards life events (Wolfe, 2011). There are two spectra assumed in this theory, the internal and external locus of control; individuals fall somewhere in between the two spectra (Lefcourt, 2014). Those who rely on an internal locus of control attribute outcomes to internal factors (e. g. ability or skill), whereas those whose locus of control is external attribute outcomes to external factors (e. g. fate and luck) (Moore & Ohtsuka, 1999; Wolfe, 2011; Wise, 2014). Internal and external locus of control have their influence in latent learning performance such as verbal conditioning tasks (Getter, 1966), achievement-related activities (Lefcourt, 1966; Julian & Katz, 1968) and risk taking (Liverant & Scodel, 1960; Lefcourt, 1966).

Since gambling involves both achievement-related and risk-taking behaviour, it can be investigated using the construct of internal versus external locus of control. Gamblers with a high internal locus of control ('internals') would attribute the outcome of gambling to personal skill. Gamblers who believe that they have competitive skills in a particular gambling area may gamble more frequently. Gamblers who have a high external locus of control ('externals') believe that the outcome of the gambling activity is determined by chance, and may indulge in more gambling when they believe that luck favours them.

Rotter used locus of control to assess individual differences, but later pointed out that increment and decrement in expectancy towards outcomes vary systematically (Rotter & Mulry, 1965). This variation

depends not only on the consistent characteristics of the individual, but also on the nature of the situation. According to Rotter and Mulry (1965), externals are more concerned about their performance and the outcome when luck is involved in a task, whereas internals are more concerned about their performance and outcome when skill is the determinant of the task. Karabenick and Addy (1979) supported Rotter's idea, claiming that locus of control is both a personality and situational dimension.

The concept of locus of control has been expanded to include being situation-specific; this is known as situational locus of control (Scrull & Karabenick, 1975). Researchers have noted that locus of control is the result of interaction between an individual's disposition and the environment (Karabenick & Addy, 1979; Mearns, 2014). Congruency occurs when the individual's personal locus of control is similar to environmental factors, leading to better individual performance (Rotter & Mulry, 1965; Scrull & Karabenick, 1975; Karabenick & Addy, 1979).

There are many different types of gambling game; some are skill-based, such as sport betting, whereas others are luck-based, such as slot machine games (APS, 2010). In gambling situations, congruency between personal and situational locus of control occurs when internals participate in gambling games that are determined by skill, whereas externals participate in gambling games that are determined by chance; this leads to better gambling performance (Zhou et al., 2011).

Rotter and Mulry (1965), using an angle-matching task, investigated the effect of personal-situational control congruency on the value placed upon the task outcome (i.e. length of decision-making time). There was a statistically significant interaction between internal-external control and chance versus skill instructions (Rotter & Mulry, 1965). Internals placed more emphasis on their performance when believing that skill was involved in the task, whereas externals placed greater emphasis on their performance when believing that chance was involved.

Karabenick and Addy (1979) conducted an experiment using different tasks to represent different situational parameters (i.e. puzzle for skill condition or random number guessing for chance condition). This experiment was well-designed as participants were given the option to choose the tasks with different difficulty levels across 10 trials. From the result yielded, Karabenick and Addy (1979) proposed that individuals tended to put greater emphasis on accomplishments when there was congruency between person-situational locus of control. Internals tended to have moderate risk-taking in skill conditions and low risk-taking in chance conditions, whereas externals had lower risk-taking in skill conditions but higher risk-taking in chance situations. Nevertheless, there have been contradicting results as some researchers discovered that internals exposed to skill situation displayed lower risk-taking behaviour in a betting game, which involved dice throwing

(Lefcourt, 1965; Lefcourt & Ladwig, 1965). To explain these findings, the researchers argued that internals were more sensible in setting their goals. Externals exposed to chance situations were also more careful in making choices and shifts in decisions; hence portrayed low risk-taking behaviour (Lefcourt, 1965; Lefcourt & Ladwig, 1965). Different risk-taking behaviours may be due to different outcome expectancies, as high risk takers were concerned about the performance level while low risk takers were concerned about the success or failure in the tasks.

A study conducted by Stadelhofen, Aufrere, Besson and Rossier (2008) found that locus of control tends to affect the severity of gambling. Internals have lower severity of gambling while externals have higher severity of gambling.

In terms of risk-taking, the study by Liverant and Scodel (1960) used a dice betting game and found that internals placed higher bets on the safest categories rather than the riskiest ones. Comparatively, externals were less likely to place more bets on the safest categories. Another study by Strickland, Lewicki and Katz (1966) found opposing results, whereby externals placed in chance tasks preferred bets that gave them a higher probability of winning and preferred having more variability in their selection of bets.

Since gambling is associated with the expectation of learning, which is influenced by the locus of control, there could be an interaction between personal and situational locus of control that affects gambling

behaviour. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate how personal and situational locus of control could affect risk-taking measured by the amount of betting in a gambling activity.

## **OBJECTIVE AND METHOD**

This research aimed to determine the main effect of personal and situational locus of control on gamblers' amount of betting as well as the interaction effect between person-situational locus of control in affecting risk-taking behaviour i.e. amount of money spent in betting.

An experimental research design was employed in this study. Two-way factorial ANOVA was conducted by using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20 to analyse the data collected and generate related statistical results.

### **Materials**

Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale was used as the main instrument to identify the participants' locus of control before proceeding with the experiment. The scale has been validated across several studies, and shows moderate internal consistency ranging from 0.65 to 0.79 and a maximum test-retest reliability of 0.83 (Rotter, 1966).

Studies conducted in Malaysia that utilised Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale have reported low-to-moderate reliability, with  $\alpha = 0.44$  (Alias, Akasah, & Kesot, 2012) and  $\alpha = 0.53$  (Lashari, Alias, Kesot, & Akasah, 2014).

The scale has been used in more than 43 countries. Average reliability is  $\alpha = 0.85$ , indicating a reliable instrument with a strong tolerance for cultural differences (Alias et al., 2012).

Materials used in the experiment included a deck of 52 poker cards, tokens and cash vouchers. As blackjack is a game that involves both skill and chance (Lefcourt, 1965), it was chosen as the gambling activity for this study as it can be used to manipulate situational locus of control (skill or chance). Tokens were used to measure the amount of betting by the participants. Amount of betting can be operationally defined as the cash to be placed for betting purposes and is measured using tokens. Ten tokens were given to each participant as their cash in hand. Tokens were held constant between two conditions. Due to ethical concerns, vouchers with different cash values instead of real cash were given as rewards.

### **Participants**

Fifty-three participants from a private university in Kuala Lumpur were selected. The mean age was 22.4 years old. Random sampling was used in this study. As blackjack was the gambling activity, the first inclusion criterion was to ensure that the participants knew how to play blackjack and did not have religious prohibition towards gambling. For screening purposes, they were required to rate their familiarity with blackjack on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 is 'very unfamiliar' and 5 is 'very familiar'. Only those who obtained the ratings of 3 and above were included.

## Procedure

A total of 100 Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale was distributed inclusive of informed consent to ensure voluntary participation. Demographic data was also collected. Participants were screened based on the inclusion criteria; they were classified as internals or externals according to their score and were randomly assigned to either skill or chance group. Fifty-three participants were divided into four conditions according to their personal locus of control (internal and external) and the situational locus of control (skill and chance). Thirteen participants were placed in the internal-skill condition group, 16 participants in the internal-chance group, 13 participants in the external-skill group and 11 participants in the external-chance group. All four conditions presented normal distribution.

Prior to the experiment, participants were briefed on the procedures of the experiment as well as the rules of blackjack according to both conditions. However, the situational locus-of-control condition was manipulated by giving different information to the participants based on group membership. Participants in the skill condition group were deceived that blackjack was a game in which success depends entirely on skill, whereas in the chance condition, participants were told that blackjack is a game based entirely on chance or luck.

For each session, a group of four to six participants with both internal and external locus of control were included, together

with a dealer. This structure was used to simulate a real gambling environment, where gamblers do not necessarily possess the same locus of control.

Participants gambled for five rounds for each session in both conditions. For every round, each player was given 10 tokens, as a means of holding a variable constant. Participants could bet any amount of tokens with the limit of 10 tokens per round. The remaining tokens and the accumulated tokens gained or lost were kept by the participants. At the end of the experiment, participants exchanged the remaining tokens with the rewards and were debriefed about the objectives of the study.

Internal validity was enhanced by controlling extraneous variables, for example, the use of the same venue; in this case, the psychological lab was used for both conditions. The 'dealer' was the same confederate used in both conditions. No subject loss was found in this experiment.

## Demographic Profile

Out of the 53 participants, 21 were males (39.6%) and 32 were females (60.4%). The number of males and females in the experiment was collected based on the ratio of 40:60 male and female graduates in the private university. Twenty-nine participants had internal locus of control (54.7%) while 24 possessed external locus of control (45.3%). For nature of the game, 26 participants were placed in the skill group (49.1%), while 27 participants were placed in the chance group (50.9%).

**RESULTS**

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for personal-situational locus of control, whether skill or chance based.

Factorial ANOVA was carried out to determine the main effect of personal locus of control (internal and external) on the amount of betting. The  $\alpha$  level was set to be 0.05. Levene’s test for equality of variances showed no significant difference between the three groups’ variance,  $F(3,49)=1.76$ ,  $p=0.168$ . Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. Analysis of the variance test revealed that there was no significant main effect of personal locus of control on the amount of betting among young adults,  $F(1,49)=1.97$ ,  $p=0.169$ . There was also no significant main effect of situational locus of control (skill and chance) on the amount of betting,  $F(1,49)=3.03$ ,  $p=0.088$ .

This study tested for an interaction effect between personal and situational locus of control on the amount of betting. There was no significant interaction effect between personal locus of control (internal and external) and situational locus of control (skill and chance) on the amount of betting,  $F(1,49)=0.32$ ,  $p=.575$ .

**DISCUSSION**

The results showed that the main effect of personal locus of control on the amount of betting was consistent with previous research, whereby there was no significant difference between internal and external locus of control on problem gambling (Sprott et al., 2001; Clarke, 2004). However, one study did present opposing results, where problem gamblers scored higher in external locus of control (Ohtsuka & Hyam, 2003). Since problem gamblers in this study tended to bet with increasing amounts of money, it could be implied that externals tend to bet more than internals. In this study, it was found that there were no significant differences between internals and externals in the amount of betting. This inconsistent result might have emerged because the participants believed that blackjack was a game that involved more luck than skill. Since internals believe that they cannot control the game outcomes, they may have been influenced to simply place larger bets in order to try their luck (Ohtsuka & Hyam, 2003); hence, it could be implied that externals placed more bets than internals because problem gamblers tend to bet with increasing amounts of money. Yet, this

Table 1  
*Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Personal-Situational Locus of Control Scores (Internal/External-Skill/Chance)*

		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Groups	Internal-skill	13	8.38	3.55
	Internal-chance	16	8.06	3.30
	External-skill	13	14.46	1.71
	External-chance	11	15.09	1.81

Note. *M*=mean, *SD*=standard deviation.

contrasted with the results of this study as no significant differences were found between internals and externals in the amount of betting.

The non-significant results could also be attributed to the differences in methodology. Ohtsuka and Hyam (2003) utilised self-report questionnaires that allowed participants to respond to items based on their own experience, interpreting the word 'gamble' to refer to any gambling games in which they were interested. However, in this study, only one type of gambling game (blackjack) was included. Given this singular selection, it is possible that not every participant was interested in blackjack. Therefore, some participants might have felt bored and may have placed the betting amount indifferently, just to finish the five rounds of the game.

Alternatively, the lack of attractiveness of the reinforcements to the participants might also have affected the results in this experiment. Since the tokens were not real money, and the participants were informed that no cash would be involved, they might not have been motivated to keep the tokens in order to exchange them for rewards. It is possible that some participants were not interested in the rewards; hence, they may have simply placed any betting amount to finish the game.

The results of this study also showed that the main effect of situational locus of control on amount of betting was statistically insignificant. In contrast to previous research using various games such as dice betting, puzzles, number guessing and card matching

(Liverant & Scodel, 1960; Rotter & Mulry, 1965; Schneider, 1968; Karabenick & Addy, 1979), findings confirming the concept of congruency in person-situation control combinations did not predict nor explain the results in the present study. Even though the participants were manipulated on situational locus of control, whereby they were briefed on the nature of blackjack (i.e. skill-based or chance-based), it did not influence the amount that they bet. The manipulation of the situational locus of control could have failed to generate the appropriate perceptions among the participants, resulting in the insignificant findings.

Data analysis also revealed that there was no significant interactional effect of personal and situational locus of control on the amount of betting. This finding implies that situational locus of control does not influence personal locus of control in terms of amount of betting. The non-significant results of the interactional effect between person-situational locus of control might also have been influenced by other variables. In the present study, the strength of expectancy towards winning the game, the relative attractiveness of rewards provided for the winners, as well as the capacity of satisfaction in the attainment of success in the game, were possible factors influencing the relationship between locus of control and the amount of betting. This study could be an insight into the betting behaviour of young adult gamblers in lieu of the fact that neither personal nor situational locus of control played any significant role on how much they bet.

It should be noted that the participants of this study were undergraduates from a private university. Hence, the results of this study may not be applicable to young adult gamblers as well as gamblers from other age groups. Secondly, only blackjack, the card game, was used in this study, implying that other gambling games may result in different findings. Thus, this study could be a reference base for further studies to determine the influence of personal and situational locus of control in other gambling activities among problem gamblers.

Therefore, it can be implied from this experiment, that if this kind of gambling behaviour continues, impairment of the mental health among the younger generation may persist. This study suggests that it is good practice for the Ministry of Health and NGOs to advocate harm reduction or harm minimisation to gamblers, especially young gamblers, regardless of personal or situational locus of control.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the amount of cash young adults placed when playing blackjack, the card game, was not influenced by either personal locus of control (internal and external locus of control) or situational locus of control (skill and chance conditions). In other words, in reference to the gamblers' attribution style i.e. possessing external or internal locus of control did not contribute to how much cash they placed on the betting table. Neither did the amount of betting influence their situation locus of control.

Whether gamblers in this study believed in skill in wagering or in pure luck did not affect the money that they placed as bets. In addition, there was no interaction between personal and situational locus of control in the amount of betting.

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## **The Impact of Globalisation on Society and Culture in Qatar**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The discovery of oil and the economic development and growth that followed has placed Gulf Countries on the fast path to urbanisation and modernisation, bringing an impact on traditional family relations and functions. In particular, Qatar has experienced rapid and radical changes that are clearly shaping the family structure because of modernisation. Hence, one could argue traditional ways of life are under assault from modernisation and Westernisation. In order to examine the changes and the impact of modernisation on Qatari families, it is vital to examine the perspectives of Qatari citizens and their thoughts about particular elements of their lives that are affected by modernisation. There are a few studies that examine Qataris' perspectives. This descriptive study analyses 997 completed questionnaires from Qatari families as they present their perceptions of the influence of modernisation on themselves and their families. The findings present perceived changes occurring regarding the many areas of family life in Qatar.

*Keywords:* Globalisation, Qatar, Gulf Cooperation Council, family, culture

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent decades, with the discovery of oil accompanied by explosive economic development and growth, Gulf countries such as Qatar have rapidly transitioned from poor, nomadic societies to wealthy urban societies (Byman & Green, 1999).

Globalisation has placed Qatar on a modernisation fast track that has led to great social and cultural consequences and societal transformation (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Renne and Martens (2003) argue that globalisation involves "cross-national cultural, economic, political, social and technological interactions that lead to the establishment of transnational structures and the global integration of cultural, economic, environmental, political and social processes on global, supranational, national, regional and local levels" (para,

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6). Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton have stated regarding globalisation that, "Few areas of social life escape the reach of processes of globalisation. These processes are reflected in all social domains from the cultural through the economic, the political, the legal, the military and the environmental" (1999, p. 27).

This is the case in Qatar, where globalisation is rapidly changing and challenging many of the local traditions and cultural values. In what follows, we examine possible cultural value conflicts that the country's nationals must wrestle with as they try to integrate the values of globalisation into their own traditions and culture. Examining the perspectives of Qatari citizens regarding their thoughts about particular elements of their lives that are influenced by globalisation provides insight into this complex phenomenon. This descriptive study presents findings from responses of Qataris on a variety of issues dealing with family and marriage.

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the term globalisation has been commonly used to describe important changes in world economic and societal integration (Chase-Dunn & Jorgenson, 2008). Globalisation can be understood as the process of increasing interconnection between countries and societies (Moghaddam & Rahma, 2012). Simply stated, globalisation "describes a constellation of processes by which nations, businesses and people are becoming more connected and interdependent via increased economic integration and communication exchange, cultural diffusion (especially of

Western culture) and travel" (Labonte & Torgerson 2005, p. 158). Globalisation has led to the point where events in one part of the world have considerable effects on other regions and societies (Baylis, 2007).

Held and McGrew (2000) argued that the dimension of globalisation is the "widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual" (p. 2). Thus, globalisation "is shaping a new era of interaction among nations, economies and people. It is increasing contact between people across national boundaries in economy, in technology, in culture and in governance" (United Nation Development Programs, 1999, p 25). The concept refers to the process societies undergo as a result of transitioning from one type of society to another and the effects of economic development of social and cultural structures and values. The term can be defined as an all-encompassing global process of cultural and socio-economic change where the developing society acquires some characteristics and elements common to advanced societies (Haviland, 2002).

Because of the growth of goods, people and information and the crossing of cultural borders, globalisation causes change in traditions and values. Society accepts these changes not only because they are necessary, but also because they prove beneficial to society and to the individual (Ibrahim et al., 2011). The process involves complex interrelated changes of many kinds and other

social changes that completely transform the lives of individuals. Basically, globalisation brings significant social, economic and political changes. It can be argued that globalisation is inevitable, based on the idea that competition strongly selects efficient societies and these will also be the most adaptively complex societies (Charlton & Andras, 2003). The competition and pressure to become more complex and modern makes modernisation not completely deterministic, but very highly probable because of the competition between societies. However, the principal *defining* feature of *modernising* societies is the tendency for permanent growth in the adaptive complexity of the social systems (Charlton & Andras, 2003). Because modernisation is not fixed, but rather dynamic, it is useful to think of modernisation as an evolving process rather than a state.

Byman and Green (1999) stated that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)<sup>1</sup> countries have modernised at a breathtaking pace since World War II. Furthermore, GCC societies have experienced radical changes since the end of the 1970s (El-Haddad, 2003). The discovery of oil (Saudi Arabia in 1938 and Qatar in 1940) is considered the critical element of globalisation in Arab Gulf societies because this moved the Gulf States into the international capitalist market (El-Haddad, 2003). One could argue that currently, the traditional way of life in the Gulf is under assault from globalisation.

<sup>1</sup> The six countries comprising the GCC are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

Al-Yousif (2005) stated, “Globalisation describes the dynamic process whereby the world economy is becoming more integrated because both technical advancements in a more liberal world trade system” (p. 9). A fundamental aspect of globalisation is what is termed cultural globalisation, referring to the fact that “contact between people and their cultures – their ideas, their values, their ways of life – have been growing and deepening in unprecedented ways” (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 33). Globalisation fuels cultural conflict, and these conflicts are evident in almost every society, whether it experiences high levels of globalisation or not (Rothkop, 1997; Telo, 2001; Dutceac, 2004). Crawford (2007) pointed out that although globalisation is considered an integrating force, the cultural conflicts created by globalisation are extensive. The key element in cultural conflict is that the conflicts facing indigenous people involve challenge and threaten deeply held values, traditions and symbols.

A central claim of globalisation is that economic development and growth are directly linked to coherent and predictable changes in cultural and social and political life (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Many of these changes result in conflict because globalisation “tends to break down national borders (remove the boundaries of relative cultural considerations) and bring people (with different cultural values) into closer contact with other people, product and information” (Hird et al., 2007, p. 87). This close proximity enables the values of globalisation to impose a conflicting

relation with social values in developing and developed countries alike (Al-Ola, 2003). The key is that globalisation introduces and often imposes values that conflict with the values of developing countries. Al-Ola (2003) further indicated that globalisation imposes a value system on cultures, presenting these as central values represented by the West. These values are considered as 'modern' and often clash with the traditional social structures of a country. The indigenous group is left to wrestle with the problem of maintaining an appreciation of traditional values or imposition and practice of globalisation values in relation to their traditions.

Crawford (2007) argued that there are two aspects of the globalisation process that are significant triggers for cultural conflict, migration and trade. This argument plays out in the sense that "the expansion of trade and its requirement for state-shrinking impacts both the developed and underdeveloped world, immigration can ignite conflict in the industrialised West, turning homogeneous nations into heterogeneous societies with vast differences in wealth, values, and cultural practices" (Crawford, 2007, p. 34). The heterogeneous values challenges indigenous values and norms and this conflict surfaces as identity conflict. Naz, Khan, Hussain and Daraz (2011) argued:

*Cultural identity and globalisation are correlated and interconnected phenomena these days, where globalisation is a source of transformation of new and modern*

*ideas, development of human capital and information, but on the other side it is a threat to socio-cultural environment in the context of identity. (p. 2)*

In other words, globalisation shapes the world and the lives of individuals by the cultural and identity conflicts infused by globalisation within society. In addition, "Globalisation diffuses cultural traits and values from one society to other, which also disturbs the local culture" (Naz et al., 2011). The key is that globalisation changes the culture and the cultural identity of the local community or society, directly influencing cultural, religious and economic structure (Tomlinson, 1999). Furthermore, the impact of globalisation is evident in the changing values of the family, community and nation.

Globalisation attempts to bring about a global culture where values and beliefs are merged, that redefine cultural contexts. Baroud (2006) argued, "Indigenous cultures are under incessant attack, both literally and figuratively. Some have survived, some disintegrated and others still endure a fateful and decided struggle for recognition, for rights and for a space in an increasingly polarised world" (p. 8). Individuals face conflict as they struggle with their cultural identity, religion and traditions and cultural values because "The openness to foreign content can erode the traditional values and indigenous cultural identity (Naz et al., 2011). Lerche (1998) pointed out that there is some truth to the argument that one negative characterisation of globalisation

is that globalisation is an “engine” of social conflict.

There is little doubt that globalisation influences Gulf States. Now integrated into the capitalist market, Gulf societies have been exposed to direct interaction between Gulf States and the West, starting “ethnic, financial, technological, intellectual and ideological influences which [have] led to radical changes in the social and economic life of society. The changes transformed most Gulf societies into urban societies” (El-Haddad, 2003, p. 2). This is the case with Qatar, which officially became the richest nation in the world as measured by per capita gross domestic product in September 2011 (Edwards, 2011), largely as a result of globalisation.

Globalisation and modernisation have benefitted Qatar. These benefits include a massive educational reform, access to world-class education (for example, in Education City, which offers education from branches of prestigious universities from around the globe), an increase in living standards, improved transportation, financial opportunities and changes in society and lifestyles. Having embraced globalisation in search of greater economic and social benefits, Qatar has adopted ‘modern’ standards that shape Qataris’ lifestyle and culture.

Qatar’s economic growth has created an influx of high- and low-skilled expatriate workers, creating a major unbalance in the population and labour force between nationals and expatriates. The high number of expatriates of differing ethnicities has

perceptibly changed the country’s urban neighbourhoods. “Today Doha boasts residential areas and compounds [that are] home to an array of co-existing nationalities . . . many of which have been brought together indirectly by income level rather than by a shared cultural heritage” (Paschyn, 2012, p. 17). No longer does the traditional village structure exist; rather this has been replaced with “skyscrapers and housing compounds that neither represent nor relate to the cultural identities of the inhabitants” (Baroud, 2006, para. 4).

Qatar has been rapidly changing and one could argue that this rapid change has had negative aspects. Baroud (2006) argued that globalisation engages in a continuous discarding of the local culture for failing to present any sort of viable economic potential. For example, evidence is seen when “falafel restaurants in most Middle Eastern cities are nearly obsolete, while American fast food joints spring up at enormous speed throughout the region” (para. 6). He continued by stating:

*It comes as no surprise then, that the classic imperialism of the past and the more concealed cultural imperialism of the present were and are adamant in ensuring the slow yet irreversible dismantling of what makes a targeted indigenous culture distinctive and unique, its social and spiritual attributes, its economic pillars, its religious adherences; thus, its way of life* (para. 9)

The concern here is that globalisation attempts to strip Qatar of its sense of cultural heritage with social consequences, such as weakening of the use of Arabic language, a changed cultural identity and the decline of Islamic religious values and traditions. For example, there is little doubt that the globalisation and modernisation processes have changed family relations and family functions in GCC countries. El-Haddad's (2003) research has documented major changes affecting families in Gulf countries resulting from globalisation, modernisation and economic transformation. For example, the family's standard of living has risen greatly, enabling families to...

*Increase consumption, reflected in housing patterns, costs of marriage, types of cars and other lifestyle aspects. Economic and social changes have also produced numerous individualistic values at the expense of collective values, thereby resulting in widening the social distance between couples and their children in particular.* (El-Haddad's 2003, p. 17)

El-Haddad pointed out that the improvement of education because of globalisation presented a "new and powerful source of socialisation that competes strongly with traditional family roles or functions" (p. 4). Contemporary forms of communication coupled with peer influence "have increased the knowledge of young people and gave them specific alternatives

that put them in touch with peers all over the world, and especially in the West" (p. 4) influencing the values, traditions and practices of the youth, complicating the socialisation by their families.

The "rising standard of living of families have enabled them to provide wide alternatives to children (particularly daughters) that expanded their world and increased their demands, aspirations and expectations far beyond what existed in traditional society" (El-Haddad, 2003, p. 4). Furthermore, the rising standard of living has changed the functions and structure of the family with the family dependency on foreign babysitters (maids/servants). This dependency raises questions regarding socialisation of young children. In addition, the excessive economic abundance presently available creates a materialistic culture centring on "material differentiation (owning many cars, employing many domestics servants, extravagance in housing, clothing). The more of these symbols the family accumulates the higher its social status" (El-Haddad, 2003, p. 5).

Baqader (2003) argued that globalisation has changed family values, including changing the role of the husband and wife, increasing the number of women in the workplace, increasing the freedom of children and increasing the role of women in contributing to family finances.

The impact of globalisation in Qatar is evident in the number of women working. Women now have a voice in the living conditions of their families and share in decision-making, a transformation



not anticipated a few years ago. More importantly, women can take on these “roles without having to confront the existing cultural system which appears from the outside as a system that deprives her of some rights, or that places so many constraints on her that do not enable her to live happily” (El-Haddad’s 2003, p. 7); Qatar and Kuwait exhibited the highest rate of economic activity for females between 25 and 44 years old (61%) in 2000. However, traditions arising from male patriarchy still exist.

Finally, the marriage age in Qatari society for young males and females prior to 1999 was between 15 and 19 years of age. In 1999, a shift took place, moving the age to between 20 and 24 years (El-Haddad, 2003; General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2012). The latter category represented 43.9% of all marriages in Qatari society in 1999. In 2014, the average age of first marriage for women was 24.1 and 26.5 years for men (Ministry of Development and Planning Statistics, 2015). Overall, the average age at marriage for both men and women is rising, and more Arab women are staying single longer (Rashad, et al., 2005). Globalisation, modernisation and technology have created opportunities for men and women that previously never existed. Coffee shops, malls and mobile telephones all have facilitated contact among youth of both sexes outside family and societal control. These influence traditions and cultural values.

Regarding globalisation, the fundamental issue is the pressures of Western influences and values placed on

developing countries. These pressures create a climate where cultural conflict develops to the extent that it has to be addressed by the nations. This conflict must be resolved in some fashion, and this requires some interpretation, translation, mutation and adaptation in a dialectical manner (Tomlinson, 1991; Lull, 2000).

## METHODS

Globalisation is evident in cultural change. These changes are associated with shifts away from the local traditional norms and values and the embracing of uniquely Western values and thinking that non-western societies could follow, often with the consequence of the stripping of local values and traditions. Currently, there are few studies that examine Qataris’ perspectives regarding the elements of life that have been affected by globalisation. In order to examine the changes of globalisation on Qatar, it is important to begin to examine the perspectives of Qatari citizens and how they think about particular elements of their lives that have been changed by globalisation.

This study had three objectives, as follows.

1. To examine Qatari views regarding marriage, family life and the use of domestic help
2. To compare and contrast participants’ opinions with available literature
3. To analyse participants’ views in relationship to researchers’ personal experiences

This study represented part of a larger national study investigating Qatari family values, structure and lifestyle. The questionnaire was developed by a team of researchers conducting a comparative study of family values in the Middle East and Asian countries. Researchers represented universities from Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Qatar, Lebanon and Jordan. These researchers visited and interviewed families in Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates and based on these conversations, the questionnaire was developed. Cluster sampling was used to sample Qatar including the four largest populated municipalities including the capital city Doha. A professional research company in Qatar was contracted to go from home to home to administer the questionnaire. Each respondent was the head of a household (either male or female).

For this study, data were collected from three sources: a survey, relevant literature on Gulf States, including Qatar, and the personal experiences of the two researchers, one Qatari and the other an expatriate who has lived in the Gulf for eight years. Qatari nationals from various social and economic backgrounds, age groups and gender were asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to obtain responses from participants in regards to family structure, relations and lifestyle. The sample was composed of 716 male and 281 female respondents. The ages of respondents ranged between 18 and over 65 years ( $M=37.64$ ,  $SD=13.73$ ). Table 1 shows the demographics of the study sample.

Three areas were examined in this study i.e. marriage, family life and the use of domestic help. Based on the research objectives, a survey including both open and closed-ended questions was developed that asked participants about their views of marriage, family life and the use of domestic help. Depending on the question, participants were given options to express frequency, degrees of agreement or disagreement or a selection of responses that applied to their situation. For example, some questions asked respondents, *To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Fairly Agree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Somewhat Disagree, 5=Fairly Disagree and 6=Strongly Disagree.* Other questions required the respondents to respond to: *How often do you do the following? 1=Almost every day, 2=Several times a week, 3=About once a week, 4=About once a month, 5=Several times a year, 6=About once a year, and 7=Never.*

Our analytic process involved the interaction between the quantitative survey results and relevant literature on Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in particular Qatar. This process included engaging in self-reflection so a more comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives could be developed. Most empirical studies often ignore the researchers' reflections and experiences (Mruck, 2000). However, this knowledge is important because it provides insights into the realities of the particular research context. Nadig (2004) considered this type of self-reflection the examination of the researcher's thoughts and experiences

in relation to the participants and findings. In this study, this process was especially useful since one researcher was a national while the other was an expatriate. As these findings are described, we provide an insider and outsider's perspective (Banks, 1998) on participants' thoughts regarding particular elements of their lives that have been changed by globalisation, enabling us to shed light on these findings to improve understanding.

The quantitative survey results were analysed by calculating the number of individuals who selected each response. The database displayed frequency and percentages for each of the research objectives. Researchers then viewed the data and discussed what the data were saying in regard to the research objectives. Findings from the quantitative analysis were integrated with relevant literature in an effort to support or contest the findings.

### Limitations

All investigations have limitations that should be addressed. First, the survey limited participants' responses by not providing an avenue for a more developed verbal description of their thoughts and perspectives. Second, we could not consider participant responses as totally accurate because what the respondents actually did or really thought may have differed from their descriptions, and survey research can often be an over-simplification of social reality. Knowing that changes in cultural values are not static, but rather an interactive and dynamic process, this research provided a

Table 1  
*Description of the Study Participants*

Total Responses	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Father's Education	Mother's Education
997	997	0	994	1001	998
Mode	Male 716 (71.8) Female 281 (28.2)	18-25 (48.3) 26-35 (28.4) 36-45(14.4) 46-55 (6) 56-65 (2) 65 Above (1)	Married 598 (60.2) Widowed 28 (2.8) Divorced 24 (2.4) Single 344 (34.6)	No Formal Schooling 235 (23.5) Elementary 89 (8.9) Middle School 104 (10.4) High School 210 (21.0) College or University 204 (20.4) Graduate School 53 (5.3)	No Formal Schooling 332 (33.2) Elementary 144 (14.4) Middle School 104 (10.4) High School 181 (18.1) College or University 204 (20.4) Graduate School 33 (3.3)

snapshot of Qataris' views on globalisation and its influence on several cultural issues.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In what follows, cultural value conflict illustrated by current opinions of Qataris are described based on trends that emerged from the participants' responses. Regarding marriage, participants provided views that both clung to tradition and also demonstrated some shift in thinking on several issues. The participants' views on several aspects of marriage are illustrated in Table 2.

Participants indicated the belief that the husband should be older than his wife (77.6% subtotal agreed), a finding that seemed to support the tradition that women prefer older men because older men are thought to have a better grasp of both Muslim principles and the affairs of the secular world ("What Muslim Women," 2011). Generally, Gulf culture dictates that a husband should exceed his wife in age by a few years (4 years) as a roundabout guideline as men mature more slowly. Muslim women choose to marry men a decade older than them, but a wider age gap is not as controversial as it used to be. ("What Muslim Women," 2011).

Concerning children, Arab families are traditionally large, and large families are viewed to provide economic benefits and bestow on the father the prestige of virility. Males are favoured and are expected to care for their elderly parents. The idea of honour is changing, and both genders are required to honour their families; however, honour is still an important element in Qatari

families. When responding to the question whether children must make the effort to do something that would bring honour to their parents, 86.2% provided an overall agreement. Even in the midst of changing values and globalisation, the honour of the family is of highest importance.

When responding to the importance of children in marriage, 43.7% of the participants agreed that it was not necessary to have children in marriage. El-Haddad (2003) noted the importance of children in traditional thinking; however, now there seems to be a slow shift in thinking regarding the importance of children compared to traditional thought. Nevertheless, other responses indicated some contradiction on this point. Most of the participants (69.8%) agreed that it was important to continue the family line by having a son, yet only 32 agreed that the eldest son should inherit a larger share of the property. This indicated that males were considered important, while there seemed to be a movement away from inequality as very few felt that males should receive a larger inheritance than females.

Regarding interfaith marriage, the results indicate that a Muslim man should be allowed to marry a Christian woman, but a Christian man is not permitted to marry a Muslim woman. The general rule of Islam, however, is that Muslims should marry Muslims, and traditionally, it is considered unacceptable for Muslims and Christians to marry. These participants indicated a small shift in this thinking as 12.3% agreed that it is all right for a Qatari man (assuming the Qatari is a Muslim) to

Table 2  
*Qatari Views on Marriage and Children*

	Strongly Agree	Fairly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Subtotal Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Fairly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Subtotal (Disagree)
Husband should be older than wife	36.3%	25.9%	15.5%	77.6%	3.8%	2.4%	1.9%	8.1%
It is not necessary to have children in marriage	9.7%	11.4%	10.2%	31.3%	11.6%	13.0%	31.7%	56.3%
Children must make efforts to do something that would bring honour to their parents	49.0%	23.7%	6%	86.2%	2.5%	1.1%	4.7%	9.1%
The eldest son should inherit a larger share of the property	9.0%	9.2%	13.8%	32.0%	7.4%	8.3%	37.5%	53.2%
To continue the family line, one must have at least one son	33.9%	20.3%	15.7%	69.8%	5.3%	3.8%	6.7%	15.8%
It is all right for a Qatari man to marry a Christian woman	3.3%	3.6%	5.4%	12.3%	7.9%	24.5%	44.0%	76.4%
It is better for a man to have only one wife	27.7%	32.2%	16.0%	75.9%	4.1%	2.0%	2.5%	8.5%

marry a Christian woman. Although the majority disagreed with this statement, there was a small percentage who agreed with it; this indicated some change in opinion on interfaith marriage.

According to information provided for expatriates on living in Qatar, an Arab Muslim man is permitted to have up to four wives provided he can look after them materially and treat them equally. In Qatar, this practice is no longer being followed because of the expense and because women are more independent and assertive and refuse to accept such rules (*Marriage Laws and Expat Marriages in Qatar*, n. d.).

This is aligned with a 2010 study that revealed that there is a decline in polygamy rates in Qatar from 6.6% to 4% (Al-Delimi, 2010). Currently, the percentage of Qataris who have two wives is 8.4% while the percentage of Qataris who have two or three wives does not exceed 0.9% (Ministry of Development and Planning Statistics, 2015). Participants (75.9% agreed) also indicated that it is better for a man to have only one wife.

This change involves both economic and social values because “Qatari women are no longer dependent on men . . . in the past, only men worked so women did not object when their husbands remarried” (Al-Delimi, 2010, p. para. 7). In addition, the decline in polygamy is a sign of advancement for women and is directly related to change in the culture. Globalisation has created new perspectives where fewer women are willing to become second wives while an increasing number of first wives prefer divorce to

accepting a second wife (Al-Delimi, 2010).

One trend that has been documented by others (El-Haddad, 2003; Rashad et al., 2005) and is evident in this study is the delay in age at the first marriage. Traditionally, early marriage was the universal standard in Arab countries. Fakhreddine (2014) pointed out, “It is no secret that there is a lot of pressure on Arab American women to get married at a young age. Many find it difficult to concentrate on pursuing higher education because of cultural limitations” (para . 2). Fakhreddine (2014) wrote:

*Arab families have for their daughters to get married at a certain age often prevents these women from reaching their full potential. At lot of women in the community never had the opportunity to graduate from college because they were married off young.* (para . 6)

In this study, a mean of 23.46 was indicated for these participants for the age for their first marriage. One reason for this shift may be that the “rising standards of living of families have enabled them to provide wide alternatives to their children (particularly daughters) and this has expanded their world and increased their demands, aspirations and expectations far beyond what existed in traditional society (El-Haddad, 2003, p. 4). With the changes brought by globalisation, such as a shift in gender roles, the Arab tradition of early marriage and pressure to marry young is in conflict with delaying marriage for many

reasons such as education, more employment opportunities for women and the overall redefinition of the role of women. These women face cultural values and traditions that are in conflict with traditions of early marriage and new opportunities as a result of globalisation. Because of globalisation, Arab culture is more intermingled with Western culture and the pressure for early marriage has probably subsided somewhat as evidenced by the rising age of marriage.

Regarding the process of marriage, the family has always been at the centre of life in Arab societies. Unlike the Western world where men and women choose their spouses, in Arab culture marriage is arranged by family members and remains a social and economic contract between two families (Rashad et. al., 2005). Participants in this study indicated that there is some change taking place regarding how one gets to know one's spouse, where they meet and

who arranges their first meeting. Table 3 illustrates participants' responses to these three questions.

As Table 3 shows, participants reported little change from tradition in how they got to know their spouse with 62.3% reporting arrangement and 17.5% indicating they became acquainted with their spouse on their own. El-Haddad (2003) reported, "Local studies agree that the very limited chances given by society to young males and females to get acquainted prior to signing the marriage contract" (p. 11). Regarding the first introduction and where the meeting took place, most responded that the first introduction was traditional (parents or other relatives, 73.4%) and so was the first meeting with the spouse (family-related occasion, 64.9%). This supported tradition because most marriages are pre-arranged by parents, sisters, brothers, other relatives or friends. However, globalisation has

Table 3  
*Introductions to Spouse*

How did you get to know your spouse?	Arrangement	62.3%
	Introduction	20.2%
	Myself	17.5%
Who arranged or introduced the first meeting with your most recent spouse?	Siblings or cousins	13.1%
	Parents or other relatives	73.4%
	Friends or classmates	4.7%
	Colleagues	3.2%
	Matchmaker or professional matchmaking company	.3%
	Other	5.2%
Where did you meet your spouse?	Neighbourhood	12.9%
	School	4.3%
	Workplace	5.1%
	Family-related occasion	64.9%
	Other occasion	12.9%

exposed Qataris to change. For example, in traditional Arab Gulf cultures, it was not traditionally permissible for women to fully participate in the labor force (El-Haddad, 2003). This is no longer the situation, and with change comes a change in thinking. The key is that although women now have the opportunity to leave the house and seek education and work, this does not give them the right of self-determination (El-Haddad, 2003). More importantly, although women are more educated and culture is slowly changing, the power of tradition and patriarchy are still strong (El-Haddad, 2003).

One finding of the study that illustrated a change in thinking regarding marriage and relationships was that 14.1% of the participants agreed that it is all right for a couple to live together without intending to get married (3.5% strongly agree, 4.5% fairly agree and 6.2% somewhat agree). Although 77.8% expressed some level of disagreement, the trend in thinking was quite surprising as Sharia law strictly requires punishment for unmarried people living in the same house. Although this is common in Western countries, it is strongly disapproved of in traditional Arab culture. Considering religion and tradition, couples are not permitted to be alone in a closed room or to go out together alone and no concept of courtship as it is practised in the West is allowed under Sharia law. It is very unlikely that Muslim couples will co-habitate. However, globalisation has introduced more liberal dress, social media and more liberal values. Globalisation exposes individuals to

change and this could be linked to the more liberal view on co-habitation. Whatever the reasons for participants' views, the 14.1% are pushing at the limits set by a society dominated by traditional views; this could be a result of globalisation creating conflict with traditional views on relationships.

Fewer Qataris are getting married, and those who do tend to divorce more than couples did a decade ago (Population and Social Statistics Department, 2011). In Qatar, divorce increased from 376 in 1995 to 391 in 1997, and then dropped slightly to 379 in 1999. In 2010, there were 820 divorce cases among Qataris (Population and Social Statistics Department, 2011). The participants' responses in this study regarding the issue of divorce seemed to support this trend, with a subtotal agreement of 52.3% with the statement that divorce is usually the best solution when a couple cannot seem to work out their marriage. However, 43.5% of the participants believed that couples should wait to get divorced until the children were grown. This thinking could be supported by the 2010 statistics that indicated that the majority of divorces occurred between couples with no children (57.1%), followed by couples with one child (15.5%) and then couples with two children (10.2%) (Population and Social Statistics Department, 2011).

With globalisation, the roles of women and expectations for them have changed as well. These new values are in conflict with traditional values that are ingrained in the culture. For example, the increase in divorce is a result of many factors.



“Up to 36% of divorces were the result of ‘wives disobeying their husbands,’ while the next highest percentages were because the wife was ‘misbehaving’ (20%), and ‘neglecting house chores’ (17%)” (Doha News, 2012). In addition, education levels, with a decreasing number of male university graduates and three times as many women as men graduating, are changing the divorce rate as well (Doha News, 2012). The reference to wives “misbehaving” in Qatari society can mean a wide range of behaviour considered disrespectful to a husband from having extramarital affairs to simply chatting and laughing with male colleagues at work. Thus, a broad range of “misbehaviour” can lead to divorce.

It is evident from the findings of this study that there is a concern about extramarital affairs. Findings from this study indicated that a large majority of participants disagreed (76.8% and 81.3%) that it is all right for men or women to engage in extramarital affairs. However, 15.5% agreed at different levels that it is all right for a married woman to have an affair and 12.2% agreed at different levels that it is all right for a married man to have an affair. Keeping in mind the seriousness of adultery in Gulf countries, it is clear there is small shift in thinking regarding this issue. Khalil (2011) wrote:

*The observed and assessed punishment for the crime of adultery is considered among the sanctions that aim at protecting the interests of society as well as the protection of victims. The Criminal Code prescribed*

*severe penalties for this crime that reaches the death penalty, in order to maintain the fabric of society and so that the legal marriage would be the right way for engagement of men and women to form a family and to be the nucleus of the community.*  
(para . 1)

The punishment for those who commit adultery is defined by the Sharia law and not by civil law. Although less than 15% agreed with the statement, this seemed to indicate a trend in thinking; however, keep in mind that the respondents were sharing their view and this cannot be taken as behavior they would adhere to.

Arab culture honours and respects the family. Abudabbeh (1996) claimed that the family is the cornerstone of Arab culture. Although there might be differences between countries “in the intensity of the centrality of the family, but not the impact on the dynamics of family. Final authority rests with the father, or in his absence with the oldest male in the family” (p. 430). This is supported by 82.0% of the participants, who agreed with the idea that the authority of the father in a family should be respected under any circumstances. Although globalisation may place stress on the family, the Arab family structure remains the main system of support, and currently there is no institution that has replaced its role (Abudabbeh, 1996). The participants of this study, therefore, agreed with El-Hadded (2003) that, “We can still observe some indicators that signify contraction and

retreat in patriarchal family structures” (p. 12). Furthermore, the importance of family honour continues to be stable in Qatar, as demonstrated by 86.2% of participants expressing belief that children must make an effort to do something that would bring honour to their parents. Even in the midst of great economic change, traditional values regarding the family seem to be stable.

In the Gulf States, there is a heavy reliance on domestic help. El-Haddad (2003) argued that this dependency of Gulf families on domestic servants “has to do more with the urban culture that was introduced by the financial provisions resulting from increased wealth” (p. 5). In many Gulf countries, “Children are often looked after by hired help. But the role of “nanny” is usually undertaken by women from non-Arabic-speaking countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia, who officially live and work in Qatar as ‘housemaids’ (Walker, 2015, para . 10). According to these findings, nearly 80% of Qatari households employed at least one domestic worker; 27.3% of Qatari household employed one domestic worker; 25.4% employed two domestic workers; 14.5% employed three; 6.7% of Qatari families employed four workers; 2.9% had five workers; 1.5 employed six and roughly 1.5% of Qatari households employed from seven to 11 domestic workers. This directly influences family life regarding work and childcare. Table 4 illustrates participants’ responses regarding their role in household work.

Table 4 demonstrates that the majority of these participants did not engage in

household chores most of the time. This clearly supported the concern that there is a strong dependency on domestic workers. More importantly, 90% of the sample of women in Qatar preferred to maintain their dependence on domestic servants (El-Haddad, 2003). Table 4 also demonstrates that Qataris did not rely on their maids to do the grocery shopping. This seems odd; however, from our own experiences, the reason for this centres on the issue of the trust in the domestic help. Kovessy (2015) pointed out, “Domestic workers are not covered by Qatar’s labour law, making them vulnerable to several abuses . . . being prohibited from leaving their sponsor’s residence unaccompanied” (para. 11). If the domestic help were to do the grocery shopping, they would have to be trusted with money. Also, the worker would be alone, and this permits some freedom to make friends or possibly to leave their employer and not return. These reasons could explain why Qataris go grocery shopping and take their maids with them to help.

Table 4 also demonstrates the belief by the majority of the participants that both the mother and father are responsible for childcare and that the mother is foremost in providing childcare. Few participants acknowledged that domestic workers are responsible for or are actually provide childcare. Most Qatari families, regardless of whether mothers are employed outside the home, employ foreign maids; however, the participants’ view of the role of domestic help and childcare seemed to clash with some of the common problems that are

raised about domestic help in Qatar.

Dhal (2011) wrote, “94 per cent of 23,851 Emirati families surveyed in Dubai keep nannies or housemaids to help in the rearing of their children and other household tasks” (para. 6). This is not only true for UAE, but also for Qatar: “substituting maternal care for paid childcare in the familial home is related to the near universal employment of female housemaids by Qatari families” (Evans, Powell-Davies, & Chung, 2010, p. 29). From the participants’ responses, it can be inferred that their maids did not play a significant role in raising their children. However, this seemed to be challenged by the government, who wants to find a way to decrease Qatari women’s dependency on housemaids to raise their children (The Peninsula, 2013).

Regarding the role of domestic servants, Chatriwala (2012) mentions that Qatar’s Permanent Population Committee “has recommended decreasing the Qatari

household dependency on maids, most local families say that maids are inevitable to keep the house running .” Furthermore, this concern about the prominent role handed to domestic servants is evident in a recent policy put into place by Hamad Medical Corporation. Starting in April 1, 2015, “Public pediatric centers will not treat children who are brought in for routine or non-emergency treatment by a housemaid, nanny or driver” (Walker, 2015, para. 2). This policy raises questions about the prevalence of household help in Qatar and its effect on childcare.

The socialisation of children and the influence of various cultural values and languages through the influence of domestic servants in the Qatari household has serious consequences on Arab values and language and has negative effects on Arab children’s behaviour (El-Haddad, 2003). In addition, “Most domestic servants (maids) are not trained to raise children or to care for them.

Table 4  
*Qataris and Household Work*

How often do you do the following?	Almost every day	Several times a week	About once a week	About once a month	Several times a year	About once a year	Never
Prepare the evening meal	12.9%	13.0%	10.0%	9.5%	7.9%	6.8%	39.8%
Do the laundry	6.7%	7.1%	8.1%	6.2%	5.0%	4.6%	60.4%
Clean the house	8.8%	7.8%	10.5%	8.1%	6.9%	4.9%	53.0%
Take out the garbage	8.3%	8.2%	7.2%	6.8%	4.8%	4.4%	60.3%
Grocery Shop	11.6%	23.0%	23.3%	13.8%	8.5%	3.3%	16.6%

They add that the characteristics of the maids, such as education, language, religion age, don't qualify them to raise children" (Haddad, 2003, p. 5).

## CONCLUSION

These findings provided a glimpse of Qataris views on various issues regarding family, marriage and other relevant issues. Certainly these views are limited because of the lack of data available regarding how Qataris previously viewed these specific issues and little research that examined long-term changes in values. More importantly, there are some topics raised in this research that have not been studied. For example, extra-marital affairs have not been studied. Nevertheless, these findings presented a glimpse into the current thinking of a sample of Qataris regarding family and related issues.

The thesis in this paper is that globalisation creates cultural value conflicts and that individuals must deal with these conflicts. Inglehart and Baker (2000) pointed out that there are two schools of thought regarding modernisation and globalisation and the shifting of values. One school emphasises:

*The convergence of values as a result of "modernisation" – the overwhelming economic and political forces that drive cultural change. This school predicts the decline of traditional values in their replacement with "modern" values. The other school of thought*

*emphasises the persistence of traditional values despite economic and political changes (p. 20).*

This first view believes that values are somewhat independent of economics. The second school of thought believes that it is unlikely that there will be a merging of traditional and modern values because "traditional values will continue to exert an independent influence on the cultural changes caused by economic development" (Inglehart & Baker, 2000, p. 20). Examples from this study seem to support both schools of thought. The convergence of values is evident in such examples as a small percentage who think that extra-marital affairs are allowed and the clear indication that many participants delay marriage. The persistence of traditional values is found in other examples, such as how spouses first met and the authority of the father in family life.

It seems that there is a set of core values identified as terminal values (Schwartz, 1992) that serve as the core social fabric of a society and these are unlikely to change in response to the many aspects of globalisation. There is also, however, a set of instrumental values (Schwartz, 1992) vulnerable to conflict where differences in views occur. These values are more susceptible to change and are, therefore, more directly affected by globalisation. These are the values and changes that need to be examined and understood more fully in order to see the consequences of globalisation on Arab cultures.

Another concern is that globalisation is a very complex issue occurring at various levels and speeds that make it difficult to measure. Hofstede (1984) argued that change is a very slow process, while other researchers believed change is more rapid and the research on values must be periodically updated (Triandis, 1984). The speed of change in values will greatly depend on the values that one is considering. Terminal values will take more time to shift if at all, while instrumental values could be changed rather quickly. In order to gain a more complex understanding of the change in values, there is a need to focus on what specific values are changing and the degree of change. This research does not claim to have analysed these changes regarding degree or speed, but rather provided a glimpse of the participants' thinking and compared this to the current literature available. Clearly, more research is needed to test if general patterns in value shifts can be uncovered, keeping in mind that the vast phenomenon of globalisation cannot be fully explained by one statistic. This research, however, provides an important step in developing an understanding of globalisation and its impact on Qatari society. In closing, it is clear that Qatari family life will not be change to be similar to family life in Western cultures in the next few decades; however, there will be changes as the globalisation process affects Qatar. It is important to begin examining these changes through research. The use of interviews could prove useful in probing individual opinions.

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## **Leadership Styles and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: Role Ambiguity as a Mediating Construct**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the intervening construct of role ambiguity on the causal association between leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) in various industrial settings. The sample of this study involved 280 respondents from major industries i.e. services, manufacturing, mining and construction. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate that a transformational leader has a positive relationship with OCB and that a transactional leader has a negative relationship with OCB. Role ambiguity was found to mediate the causal relationship between a transformational leader and OCB. Role ambiguity is not directly linked to OCB but rather serves as a mediating variable between transformational leadership style and OCB. From a managerial standpoint, this study recommends that transformational leadership style should be emphasised to encourage greater OCB. Cultivating transformationally-orientated organisation at all levels can be done through training and development, organisational design, job design and human capital decisions. The mediating effect of subordinates' role ambiguity has a direct and indirect effect on OCB. Role ambiguity functions to increase the strength of transformational leadership on OCB. These findings show that the effectiveness of leadership styles is mediated by subordinates' perception of their role ambiguity. This paper adds value to existing study in this field by testing the mediating effects of role ambiguity that directly or indirectly affect leadership styles related to OCB.

*Keywords:* Transformational leadership, role ambiguity, citizenship behaviour, organisational behaviour, transactional leadership

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to examine leadership styles on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) of subordinates. Role ambiguity is studied for its mediating effects on OCB when exposed to different leadership styles. Leadership style is an important predictor as a wide body of literature records that leadership styles have the biggest impact on subordinates' response to work situations. Although studies have been done on the relationship between leadership style and organisational citizenship behaviour (Podsakoff et al., 1996; Bass et al., 2003; Boerner et al., 2007), there has yet to be research investigating role ambiguity as a mediator. The study was initiated to see if there is truth in the perception that in a given leadership style, well-structured role identification will lead to greater OCB or OCB itself can thrive in a less structured situation in an environment of greater freedom. By integrating leadership styles with structural impression of role ambiguity and OCB, our research can broaden the perceptual approach to OCB by examining the mediating effects of the role ambiguity within the prevailing leadership styles.

This study was confined to the Malaysian context for three reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of empirical studies exploring role ambiguity as a mediator. Secondly, the study hopes to add to existing literature in the field of organisational behaviour. Lastly, as Malaysia is a diverse social and cultural country we believed it would be interesting to research its organisational culture. The Malaysian context was chosen for

purely practical reasons. There is no cogent reason why this study cannot be extended to other cultural contexts. In this study, theoretical exploration was initiated to find a relationship with work-related issues, if any. Hence, the study should provide an indication of how Malaysians in organisations react to different leadership styles and structural impression. The study took into consideration the interpersonal relationship that is founded by favourable leadership styles and employee impression; this is important to the success of an organisation and is consistent with the humanistic and co-operative work environment that is pursued by contemporary managers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The review was done based on the following model in Figure 1.

### Leadership Styles

Transactional leadership is established on exchange relationship where subordinates agree, accept or comply with their superior so as to receive rewards, resources or to avoid disciplinary action in return (Podsakoff et al., 1982; Podsakoff et al., 1990). Recently, there was extensive empirical work on transformational leadership, specifically on the degree to which transformational leadership expands the effect of transactional leadership where various outcomes were explained. Past researchers have helped shape existing literature by suggesting two outcomes. Firstly, transformational and transactional leaders use different leadership styles to

influence their subordinates to conform. Secondly, transformational and transactional leaders bring about different forms of subordinate conformity. However, emergent leadership style supports transformational leadership styles in motivating subordinates to perform above and beyond the ordinary call of duty (Howell, 1988).

**Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)**

Bateman and Organ (1983) first introduced the construct of OCB. They suggested Katz and Kahn’s concept (1966) of super role behaviour. Some of the examples of subordinate OCB are accepting additional responsibilities and duties at work, willing to work overtime when needed and assisting other subordinates with their tasks (Organ, 1988; Masterson et al., 1996). Research into organisational behaviour and social psychology has sought to determine why subordinates would engage in OCB (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; McNeely & Meglino, 1994). Research into OCB is narrowed down to the effects of OCB on individuals, behaviour of leaders and the performance of the organisation (Bolino et al., 2002). Some predictors of the outcome of OCB have been identified, such as interpersonal trust

(Podsakoff et al., 1990), transformational leader behaviour (Greenberg, 1988), civic citizenship and covenantal relationship (van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994), job attitudes (Organ, 1988; Shore & Wayne, 1993), organisational justice (Moorman, 1991) and task characteristics (Farh, Podsakoff, & Organ, 1990). The outcomes of OCB studied include perceptions of fairness (Tepper & Taylor, 2003) and job commitment (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986)

**Role Ambiguity**

Kahn et al. (1964) suggested a definition of the term “role ambiguity” by stating that:

*Role ambiguity is a direct function of the discrepancy between the information available to the person and that which is required for adequate performance of his role. Subjectively, it is the difference between his actual state of knowledge and that which provides adequate satisfaction of his personal needs and values. (p. 73)*

In short, the elaboration of role ambiguity offered by Kahn et al. suggests that the concept is quite diverse. Perceived

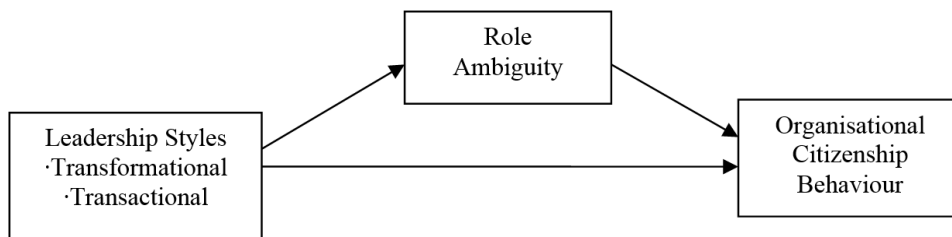


Figure 1. Interactions of variables

role ambiguity arises when a focal individual feels he or she is uncertain about the relevant information necessary to perform his or her role. Similarly, Kahn et al. associated role ambiguity with another concept, observing that certain organisational positions or jobs are characterised by greater role ambiguity and conflict – those in which the incumbents have to: (i) cross boundaries, (ii) produce solutions that are innovative to non-routine problems, and (iii) be responsible for the task of others. The relationship between experienced role ambiguity and affective outcomes is expected to be influenced by an individual's 'need for clarity'. In other words, subordinates who have a low need of clarity when experiencing role ambiguity will not sense the aversive consequences as forcefully as compared to subordinates who have greater need for clarity.

Rizzo et al. (1970) in support of the work of Kahn et al. went on to expand the definition of role ambiguity. Rizzo et al. (1970) defined role ambiguity as an individual who is in a position where he or she does not have clear directions on the expectations of the role given to him or her by the organisation. The lack of understanding of the behavioural expectations that are held for the role and predictability of the outcomes of role behaviour (House & Rizzo, 1972) is likely to lead to an individual's experiencing role ambiguity (Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

Besides behavioural outcomes being "unpredictable," Rizzo et al. (1970) added a second component to their definition: "a lack of the existence or clarity of behavioural

requirements, often in terms of inputs from the environment which would serve to guide behaviour and provide knowledge that the behaviour is appropriate" (pp. 155–156). This modification is significant because the scale they developed measures role ambiguity operationalisation in most empirical research. The two components comprise the scale 'unpredictability' and 'information deficiency'.

Pearce (1981) and Cooper et al. (2001) commented that role ambiguity arises due to insufficient information required to enact the role. Therefore, "certain information is required for adequate role performance in order for a person to conform to the role expectations held by members of this role set" (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 22). However, it has been proposed that role ambiguity is generated by one of several conditions i.e. a lack of required information, a lack of communication of existing information or the receipt of contradictory messages from different role senders (Kahn et al., 1964). In the past, there have been many correlational studies to examine role ambiguity in the context of a series of antecedents (i.e. propensity to leave, organisational commitment, tension or anxiety, job involvement, job satisfaction, job performance, boundary spanning, participation in decision-making, formalisation and individual characteristics) and consequences (i.e. job satisfaction, performance, tension and employee turnover).

Based on role theory, role ambiguity is a result of subordinates who adopt coping

behaviour in an effort to resolve problems or use defense mechanisms to change real situations and as a result, subordinates avoid stress. As such, role ambiguity will cause a subordinate to be dissatisfied with his or her role in the organisation (Rizzo et al., 1970). It is clear that the consequences and effects of role ambiguity thus have potential cost implications to organisations. High employee turnover and low performance are evident, but also the true cost of attitudinal variables is also now understood (Mirvis & Lawler, 1977; Cascio, 1982).

This view has been reinforced by empirical findings where research has been centred on examining the effects of role ambiguity, and findings have started to reveal the cost of role ambiguity. Kahn et al. (1964) and other theorists (Rizzo et al., 1970; Miles, 1976, 1980; ) have proposed that when role ambiguity is high several unfavourable psychological effects will follow. Such effects are likely to influence the effectiveness of an organisation as role ambiguity occurs when subordinates are not sure of how to perform given tasks. Among these effects are tension, stress, hostility, dissatisfaction, low productivity, performance and turnover (Merton, 1957; Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Subsequently, a significant amount empirical research on role stress has revealed that when role ambiguity is high, both the individual and the organisation's results are unfavourable (Kahn et al., 1964; House & Rizzo, 1972; Miles, 1975, 1976; Miles & Perreault, 1976; Morris et al., 1979;

Hamilton, 2002; Slattery et al., 2008). Bedian and Armenakis (1981) have found "a causal relationship between role ambiguity and increased tension, frustration, anxiety and propensity to leave ." Role ambiguity has also been suggested to be correlated with low levels of motivation, quality of work life, individual and group productivity, organisational commitment and an increase in withdrawal behaviour (Blau, 1981; van Sell et al., 1981; Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Dougherty & Pritchard, 1985; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Luthans, 1989; Onyemah, 2008).

The study of role ambiguity is still important for organisations, especially when issues such as diversity, globalisation and competitive pressure are evident. Ultimately, in order to guarantee that the organisation is successful, superiors and subordinates need role clarity. Subordinates who are experiencing low levels of role ambiguity may be working on tasks that are not parallel to the organisation's missions and objective and are unaware they are doing so (van Sell et al., 1981). Singh and Bhandarker (1983) once stated that "managerial role clarity is viewed as one of the basic requirements for organisational effectiveness ." They further stated that "managers suffering from role ambiguity are invariably observed to be pre-occupied with trivial organisational chores ." As a result based on role theory, high levels of role ambiguity will unlikely reduce subordinates' satisfaction levels. In an even worse scenario, it increases work anxiety, distorts reality and produces less effective work outcomes (Rizzo et al., 1970).

This study specifically explored role ambiguity rather than role conflict to establish the causal relationship between the variable and its antecedents and consequences. There were several reasons for the choice of role ambiguity over role conflict, namely: (i) role ambiguity is an important concept in role theory and in the path-goal theory of leadership; (ii) of all role concepts, role ambiguity has received the most study; (iii) in contrast to role conflict, role ambiguity is more responsive to managerial intervention and thus the implementation of programmes aimed at diminishing role ambiguity is relatively less difficult, and (iv) studies involving role ambiguity have yielded inconsistent results, prompting greater research incentive.

## **HYPOTHESISED RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Leadership Styles and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour**

Literature is extensive on transformational leadership i.e. that it affects subordinates' OCB (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Lowe et al., 1996; Geyer & Steyrer, 1998). Graham (1988) has suggested that "the most important effect of transformational leadership behaviour is the ability to promote extra-role behaviours." Podsakoff et al. (1990) was in support of Graham's view and suggested further that "the most important effects of transformational leaders should be on extra-role performance, rather than in-role performance."

Transformational leadership is said to "lift ordinary people to extraordinary

heights" (Boal & Bryson, 1988) and to effect subordinates to "do more than they are expected to do" (Yukl, 1989) and "perform beyond the level of expectations" (Bass, 1985). House, Landis and Umberson (1988) responded that these leaders motivate their subordinates to "perform above and beyond the call of duty ." Thus, transformational leadership may have a crucial effect on extra-role behaviour of OCB that is discrete in nature, which does not altogether follow subordinates' formal role requirements.

Past researchers have asserted that the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB is positive. As a result, transformational leadership is directly linked to high levels of subordinates' OCB across various settings (Graham, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Whittington, 1997; Geyer & Steyrer, 1998; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Goodwin et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2005). For example, Podsakoff et al. (1990) and Podsakoff et al. (1996) concluded that the relationship between transformational leader behaviour (i.e. articulating a vision, role modelling, intellectually stimulating employees and communicating high performance expectations) and subordinates' OCB is positive.

In comparison, transactional leadership may not trigger extra-role behaviour because subordinates' behaviour is likely to be based on the reward received after a particular task is done (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Transactional leadership "is explicitly designed to clearly define and reward in-role performance instead of extra-role behavior" (Podsakoff et al., 1990). A transactional

leader is negatively related to subordinates' OCB. This is because a transactional leader is largely based on an economic exchange (Pillai, Schriesheim, & Williams, 1999). If the relationship between superior and subordinate is primarily focussed on economic exchange, the superior will not appreciate when a subordinate performs more than what is required. Hence, the contributions of the subordinate towards the organisation will solely be in agreement with the compensation or reward system. As such, hypotheses for this study were based on theoretical and empirical background as stated below:

Hypothesis 1a: A transformational leader will have a positive effect with OCB.

Hypothesis 1b: A transactional leader will have a negative effect with OCB.

### **Role Ambiguity**

Transformational leadership behaviour influences subordinates by seeking clarification in their understanding of what the leader intends them to achieve, which is important because leaders who clarify the role expectation may reduce ambiguity. For instance, transformational leaders clarify the employees' roles by articulating a vision to inspire the subordinates to pursue goals (MacKenzi et al., 2001). Transformational leaders regard that clarification of the term 'vision' is important in the transformational leadership process. As a result, the following relationship was expected.

Hypothesis 2a: The relationship between transformational leadership and subordinates' role ambiguity is negatively correlated.

Transactional leaders may decrease role ambiguity. The plausible explanation for this is that transactional leader behaviour involves providing immediate feedback on subordinates' job performance, which should increase the subordinates' understanding of their roles in the organisation (Kohli, 1989). Sims and Szilagyi (1975) have commented that leader-contingent punishment behaviour "is related to satisfaction through his or her ability to reduce perceived role ambiguity .... ." Past research has sustained this expectation that relationship between contingent punishment of transactional leadership or task-orientated leadership is negatively related to role ambiguity (Bateman et al., 1983; Podsakoff et al., 1984; Luthans, 1989; MacKenzie et al., 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2006). Thus, the following relationship was expected:

Hypothesis 2b: The relationship between transactional leadership and subordinates' role ambiguity is negatively correlated.

### **Role Ambiguity and Outcome**

Theoretically, a high level of role ambiguity impedes the opportunity of a person to perform effectively and efficiently (Kahn et al., 1964). Unfortunately, the relationship between role ambiguity and

job performance is unclear. Although some studies have demonstrated a negative relationship between role ambiguity and job performance (Behrman et al., 1981; Behrman & Perreault, 1984; Lysonski, 1985; Fried et al., 1998; Beehr et al., 2000; Stordeur et al., 2001; Onyemah, 2008), other studies indicated weak or no relationship (Schriesheim & Murphy, 1976; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Although no definite conclusions can be drawn, the inconsistencies in previous results indicate that the “literature clearly lacks theoretical and empirical integration” (Fry et al., 1986).

In addition, role ambiguity has been found to negatively influence in-role performance in a number of studies (Jaworski & Kohli, 1991; Brown & Peterson, 1993). In fact, Churchill et al. (1985) stated that salesperson performances were more strongly related with role perceptions. This is because when salespeople are clear about what is expected they can better focus on the necessary objectives and as a result achieve higher performance. Higher performance can be inferred to extra-role behaviour (Borman & Motowildo, 1997). Hence, unclear expectations due to role ambiguity may cause lower performance. Thus, the next relationship was expected:

Hypothesis 3a: Subordinates’ organisational citizenship behaviour is suspected to reduce as role ambiguity increases.

### **Role Ambiguity as Mediator of Transformational Leadership Style and Outcome**

In explaining the importance of role ambiguity as an intervening variable between various job conditions and job outcomes role theory provides a strong conceptual framework (Kahn et al., 1964). There is some evidence supporting the possibility of role ambiguity as a moderator or mediator variable on the relationship between leadership style and subordinates’ outcomes. A number of studies have suggested that role ambiguity does moderate the relationship such that under conditions of high role ambiguity, higher levels of initiating structure and consideration become more important (House, 1971; Weed et al., 1976). Yet, others have found that role ambiguity is not such a moderator (Schriesheim & Murphy, 1976).

The dispute is made that role ambiguity as an intervening variable occurs because role ambiguity represents a situational factor that is within a superior’s domain of influence. When role ambiguity increases there is a greater dependency on information and feedback that can clarify the appropriateness of one’s action (Dobbins et al., 1990). Hence, when role ambiguity is high, the superior is more important because the role clarifying information and feedback available from the superior becomes more significant (Kerr & Jermier, 1978; Howell et al., 1986; Abdullah & Kassim, 2011; Judeh, 2011; Madera et al., 2013; Salmon, 2013; Sahadev et al., 2015). On the other hand, when role ambiguity is low, role-clarifying



information from the superior becomes less important. Hence, the relationship between leadership and OCB is stronger when role ambiguity is high and weaker when role ambiguity is low. In addition, the transformational leader is able to decrease role ambiguity by clarifying a person's role (Churchill et al., 1985; Jaworski & Kohli, 1991). Based on this rationale, the following relationship was expected.

Hypothesis 4: There is a mediating effect of role ambiguity between transformational leader and OCB.

## RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

### Sampling Design

The sample selection for this study comprises executives, managers and professional people in services, manufacturing, mining and construction companies located mainly in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. This sample was selected for two reasons. Firstly, major industries were selected in order to represent the major sphere of activities in Malaysia. These industries are among the more dominant industries in Malaysia that contribute significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment. It is also believed that the power of the theoretical framework would be increased substantially if the predicted relationships between leadership styles, downward influence tactics and OCB were observed in a more diverse industrial setting. Secondly, samples were drawn only from companies who employed more than 35 employees, in order to include only organisations where

a more formalised structure and system of supervision and interactions were more likely to exist and function (Hall, 1977).

### Research Instruments

**Leadership styles.** Fourteen items of the Transformational Leadership Behaviour Inventory (TLI) and seven items of the Leader Reward and Punishment (LRP) by Podsakoff et al. (1990) was applied in this study.

**Role ambiguity.** The present study employed a six-item scale developed by Rizzo et al. (1970) to measure role ambiguity. In fact, 85% of previous studies have applied the role ambiguity tool developed by Rizzo et al. (1970) according to Jackson and Schuler (1985) and Tubre and Collins (2000). Secondly, it seems to have adequate construct reliability and validity, which all support the continuous use of this scale (House et al., 1983). The reported Cronbach Coefficient Alpha levels of the Rizzo et al. (1970) (RHL) scale range from 0.65 to 0.82, while Nicholson and Goh (1983) demonstrated  $\alpha=0.84$  for both role conflict and role ambiguity. In this study, the researcher made the decision to use the RHL scale that suit the purpose of this study, which demands less computing effort and analysis.

**Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB).** In the present study, the researcher decided to adopt the OCB instrument developed by Smith et al. (1983) and measure it as a global construct. This instrument consisted of seven items on the altruism and compliance dimension.

The two-dimensional view of OCB was chosen over the broad categories of OCB due to its popularity in earlier studies conducted by Smith et al. (1983). In a test of the scale produced by Smith et al. (1983), Alpha Coefficients of 0.88 and 0.85 were reported, respectively. Jones and Schaubroeck (2004) reported the reliabilities of the two measures as being 0.79 (altruism) and 0.80 (compliance) for the employee-rated measures.

The OCB scales were completed by the respondents themselves, who were asked to rate on a seven-point scale with anchors ranging from “never” (1) to “always” (7) where they have engaged in these citizenship behaviours. Examples of sample items for the OCB are “I help others with their work when they have been absent even when I am not required to do so”; “I volunteer to do things not formally required by the job”; “I take the initiative to orient new employees to the department even though it is not part of my job description”; “I willingly attend functions not required by the company management, but which help its overall image.”

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

Path Analysis was the primary statistical technique used. The secondary technique used was correlational analysis.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Respondents' Characteristics**

From the total of 1,500 questionnaires sent, a total of 293 responses were received,

with data from 280 of those completed questionnaire being usable. The response rate was 19.5%. The sample selection for this study comprised executives, managers and professionals in services, manufacturing, mining and construction companies located mainly in the Klang Valley, Malaysia.

### **Scales Validation**

The internal consistency reliability coefficients for all the scales were satisfactory (Nunnally, 1978). All the scales had coefficient Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.78.

### **Hypotheses Testing**

**H1a & H1b: Leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour.** Hypothesis H1a expected a transformational leader to have a positive effect with OCB. The positive relationship between transformational leadership and OCB is in the hypothesised direction. Table 1 shows there was a relationship between transformational leadership and OCB ( $r=0.64$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The path analysis result in Table 2 ( $\beta=0.343$ ,  $p<0.005$ ) also confirms this relationship. These results are similar to past research studies (Ferres et al., 2002; Schlechter & Engelbrecht, 2006) that definitely show that relationship between transformational leadership and OCB is positive. The relationships between leadership and OCB were empirically studied and it was concluded that transformational leadership was consistently associated to subordinates' higher level of OCB (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Lowe et al., 1996; Wang et al., 2005).

With this strong conceptual support, it can be said that transformational leaders do motivate their followers to exhibit extra-role behaviours. This is in line with a study conducted by MacKenzie et al. (2001), who commented that the transformational leadership style influences salesperson to perform “above and beyond the call of duty.”

Hypothesis H1b expected that a transactional leader would have a negative effect with OCB. Correlation results in Table 2 showed that the relationship between a transactional leader and OCB ( $r=-0.52$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) is in fact negatively associated. Although it seems logical, this relationship was not confirmed by the path analysis results in Table 3. Paradoxically, transactional leadership style did not seem to influence OCB in a negative way. The direct effect of transactional leadership on OCB was too weak and insignificant to lend support for hypothesis H1b. A transactional leader adopts a hard approach, which is expected to be ineffective in increasing subordinates' OCB. However, the inconclusive findings point to the fact that the relationship between transactional leadership and OCB is possibly more of an indirect relationship. This result is somewhat different from the work of Yammarino and Bass (1990), who commented that transactional leadership is favourable when subordinates have attitudinal and behavioural responses; however, it fails to evoke subordinates' voluntaristic initiative to go beyond the normal call of duty.

**H2a & H2b: Leadership styles and role ambiguity.** Hypothesis 2a predicted that the relationship between transformational leadership and subordinates' role ambiguity would be negatively correlated. Both the correlational result (Table 2;  $r=-0.60$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The path analysis result (Table 3;  $\beta=-0.660$ ,  $p<0.005$ ) lends support to Hypothesis H2a. The negative relationship between transformational leadership and subordinates' role ambiguity is in the hypothesised direction. Stating it in another way, transformational leadership promotes role clarity. This is a more likely outcome as the transformational leader tends to clarify the employees' role by articulating a vision to inspire them to achieve the organisation's common goals. This result supports the previous finding by Teas (1983), whose results indicated that leader consideration is statistically significant to salespeople's perception of role ambiguity. However, a study by MacKenzie et al. (2001) reported that only the core transformational leader behaviours were negatively related to role ambiguity and that there was no relationship between high performance expectations and individualised support on role ambiguity.

Hypothesis 2b predicted that the relationship between transactional leadership and subordinates' role ambiguity would be negatively correlated. The correlational result in Table 2 and path analysis result in Table 3 showed that transactional leadership was not related to subordinates' role ambiguity. This result seems to support the findings of a study

conducted by MacKenzie et al. (2001) that the contingent reward characteristic of transactional leadership is not related to role ambiguity, and only the contingent punishment aspect of transactional leadership is negatively related to role ambiguity ( $\beta = -0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, Kohli's (1985) study on the effects of supervisory reward and punishment behaviour commented that "punishment may have a negative impact on role ambiguity primarily when a leader is indiscriminately punitive." The different effect of supervisory reward and punishment behaviour has nullified its effect on subordinates' role ambiguity. Hence, Hypothesis H2b, which predicted that transactional leadership and role ambiguity was negatively correlated, was not confirmed. Again, the result showed the potential benefit of conceptualising transactional leadership as a multi-dimensional construct.

**H3: Role ambiguity and OCB.** Hypothesis 3 posited that subordinates' organisational citizenship behaviour would be reduced as role ambiguity increased. Both the correlational result (Table 2;  $r = -0.60$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the path analysis result (Table 3;  $\beta = -0.342$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) lend support for Hypothesis H3. Thus, the result seems to agree with the conventional reasoning that role ambiguity impedes the opportunity of a person to perform effectively and efficiently (Kahn et al., 1964). Other research findings (Walker et al., 1977; Behrman et al., 1981; Behrman & Perreault, 1984; Lysonski, 1985) have also demonstrated a negative relationship between role ambiguity and

performance. Although the conclusion here is not entirely equivocal (as in the contradicting result of Brief and Aldag (1976) and Jackson and Schuler (1985), there is clearly more empirical evidence to suggest the simple conclusion that the lack of role ambiguity ensures better performance (including extra-role) as one is more certain about what is expected to be accomplished. Hopefully, the decrease in role ambiguity will lead to an increase in organisational commitment and task performance and ultimately, increase the employees' OCB level (MacKenzie et al., 1998; Tubre & Collins, 2000; MacKenzie et al., 2001).

**H4: Role ambiguity as mediator between transformational leadership and outcome.**

Hypothesis 4 predicted the mediating effect of role ambiguity between transformational leader and OCB. The direct relationships between transformational leadership and role ambiguity ( $\beta = -0.660$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) and between role ambiguity and OCB ( $\beta = -0.342$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) were both in a negative direction and significant. In Table 4 and Figure 2, the mediation effects of role ambiguity can be seen as significant at the 0.001 level for path X1 (Transformational leadership)  $\rightarrow$  X2 (role ambiguity)  $\rightarrow$  X3 (OCB). The indirect effect of role ambiguity, which is the product of  $-0.660 \times -0.342 = 0.225$  makes a positive contribution. This finding asserts that transformational leadership has a direct relationship with subordinates' OCB and that this relationship is mediated by role ambiguity. In relation to the direction of effect, it would appear

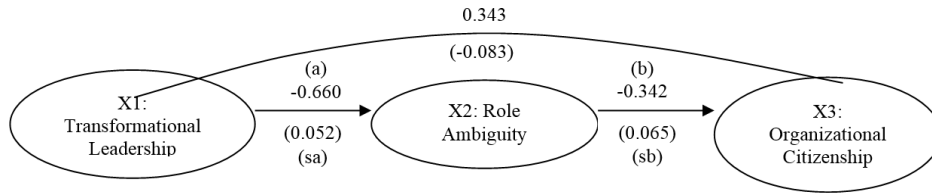


Figure 2. Indirect effects through a mediator.

Table 1  
Correlations Among Key Variables

	Variables	Means	S.D.	1	2	3	4
1	Transformational Leader	4.57	1.17	1.00			
2	Transactional Leader	3.56	1.52	-0.76**	1.00		
3	Role Ambiguity	2.97	1.07	-0.60**	0.41**	1.00	
4	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	4.67	1.30	0.64**	-0.52**	-0.60**	1.00

Table 2  
Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent and independent variables	Regression coefficients	Path coefficients
OCB		
Transformational	0.0380(0.83)	0.343***
Transactional	-0.100(0.057)	-0.177
Role Ambiguity	-0.413(0.065)	-0.342***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.476	
F	85.554***	
Df	3,279	
Role Ambiguity		
Transformational	0.604(0.067)	-0.660***
Transactional	-0.060(0.052)	-0.085
R <sup>2</sup>	0.353	
F	77.137***	
Df	2,279	

\*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.005

Table 3  
Path Analysis Result

Measurement path	Before mediator		After mediator		t-statistic $t=(ab)/\sqrt{(b^2sa^2+a^2sb^2)}$
	Regression coefficient A	Standard errors sa	Regression coefficient b	Standard errors sb	
X1 → X2 → X3	-0.660	0.052	-0.342	0.065	4.860***

Degrees of freedom=N-1=280

\* p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.001

that role ambiguity serves to reduce the strength of the relationship between transformational leaders and OCB. In other words, transformational leadership will generally reduce role ambiguity, and this will lead to an increase in OCB (MacKenzie et al., 2001). Transformational leaders by their attempt to provide followers with a clearer perspective on their work may actually reduce employees' role ambiguity. Nonetheless, role ambiguity will always be present in any organisational setting as it represents a complex interplay of contradicting thoughts in the minds of individuals. The present result seems to acknowledge the contention made by several researchers that leadership style effectiveness is very much dependent on the role situation (Fiedler, 1967; House & Dessler, 1974; Weed et al., 1976).

### MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study provides a number of clear managerial implications. The findings show that a leader would practise transformational leadership. The transformational leadership style seems to invoke a superior-subordinate

power difference in the influence network. Transformational leadership can be nurtured by recognising the development needs of the subordinate mainly through training in mentoring. The transformational leader should also promote integrative problem-solving superior-subordinate relationship and not win-lose relationships, which lead to detrimental results. By adapting such practices coupled with an open feedback system, an increase in subordinates' work productivity will be seen in the organisation. The transformational leadership style, being flexible, can be adapted by organisations that are facing rapid environmental change. The mediating effect of role ambiguity has shed light on how the variable provides indirect effects on leadership styles and its outcome. This indicates that a transformational leader deals with role ambiguity to induce higher OCB – the more reason why this style must be emphasised.

### FUTURE DIRECTION

By appealing to the leadership of management, this model offers the theoretical foundation for future researchers

to make comparisons on the effectiveness of different leadership styles with OCB (cf. Podsakoff et al., 2000; Walumbwa et al., 2008). This study concludes that the tendency of subordinates to have high levels of OCB comes from the transformational leader's request, which is more interesting and encouraging as compared to that of the transactional leader. Future studies should consider other constructs like motivation and commitment that are more indicative of organisational performance.

## CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore the effectiveness of leadership styles when dealing with role ambiguity and its consequences on OCB. It has been suggested that in order for subordinates to perform beyond their call of duty, a superior must adopt an appropriate leadership style. The findings support those of past researchers, who commented that in order to achieve greater subordinate OCB, superiors should be more inclined to adopt transformational leadership rather than transactional leadership. When investigating role ambiguity, this study found that role ambiguity was able to mediate the relationships between leadership styles and OCB. The presence of correlation shows the relevance of leadership style in promoting subordinates' OCB in organisation. Such behaviour should have great practical significance and thus, should be promoted in an organisation. The finding also supports the contention that subordinates' role ambiguity has a direct and indirect effect on

the outcome, serving to increase the strength of transformational leadership on OCB. This result seems to support a widely held assertion that the effectiveness of leadership depends very much on the situation at hand (Fiedler, 1967; House & Dessler, 1974; Weed et al., 1976).

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## **Academic Listening Practices among International Graduate Students in English as Medium of Instruction Context: Difficulties and Corrective Measures**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Academic listening practices in English language are challenging for international students in Malaysia. This is because English is not their first and second language. The influx of international students, especially at graduate level in Malaysian tertiary institutions, has encouraged researchers to look for ways to ensure a smooth academic journey for them. Therefore, this research focuses on the difficulties faced by international graduate students in their academic listening practices and the measures utilised to overcome their difficulties. The qualitative findings are based on focus group interviews among 70 international graduate students in taught Master's programmes in a public university. The findings revealed that the difficulties faced are mainly attributed to the fact that English is not their native language and also that English is not the lecturers' socio-linguistic background. These findings would be an academic platform to ensure that the difficulties faced by the students can be gradually reduced by the students themselves, academicians and the university's administrators through the application of stringent measures.

*Keywords:* Academic Listening Practices, Difficulties, International Graduate Students, Master's Programme, Overcoming Measures

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past two decades, non-English-speaking countries, where English is the second language, such as Malaysia, Singapore and South Africa have been increasingly attracting foreign students (Reinties et al., 2012; Crewe, 2004). As stated by Norshisham et al. (2008) and the Ministry of Higher Education (2010),

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a significant number of international graduate students are from the Middle Eastern countries. They make up one of the largest number of students in Malaysia. Coming from countries that consider English as a foreign language, the influence of the students' native language on their academic background affects how they negotiate academic discourse at graduate level. Simultaneously, in the countries mentioned by Crewe (2004) and Reinties et al. (2012), a wide gap exists in research focusing on academic literacy practices, especially international graduate students' academic listening practices in the context of English as a second language (Wahi et al., 2012). Therefore, research pertaining to international graduate students' academic listening practices in Malaysia in the context of English as a second language and as the medium of instruction for taught Master's programmes is a new and unexplored field that should be examined thoroughly to improve the academic positioning of the students and attract more international students into a conducive academic learning environment.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Mastery of English language is crucial for knowledge acquisition and class participation in new academic literacies practices at graduate level in Malaysia, especially for international graduate students who come from English as a foreign language (EFL) environment. In the context of academic listening practices in English, these students would definitely face obstacles as they

would be exposed to listening to Malaysian lecturers and the academic community of multi-ethnic origin that offer a diversity of pronunciation, slang and accent in spoken English. In the context of this research in a Malaysian university, stakes are also high in the taught Master's programmes. The taught Master's programmes require students to attend lectures, participate in tutorials and negotiate various academic literacy activities in English language. As highlighted by Kaur (2000), the actual learning process in the coursework Master's programmes in the university is sustained through classroom lectures, tutorials, seminars, individual project work, industrial or business placement, problem solving classes, group projects, research dissertation or discussion groups that involve academic listening practices apart from other academic literacy practices such as academic writing, reading and speaking.

Crosswhite (1996) states that whenever learners participate in any communicative exchange (speaking, reading, writing or listening), they "*affirm these competences to use a particular language in a particular way and so affirm the appropriateness of particular discourses and all that belongs with them*" (p.190). Furthermore, successful engagement with particular academic discourse can be particularly stressful for non-native speakers of English who may try to reconcile contradictory desires to adjust to and resist new ways of practising academic literacy at graduate level in a foreign education institution.



## FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The exposure to academic literacies at school and undergraduate level among international graduate students who are non-native speakers of English in their native countries have been mainly through the use of their first language. Lack of English language exposure has an adverse impact on the academic literacy challenges when the students embark on their graduate study in Malaysia. At the same time, most recent Malaysian based researches focused heavily on examining the academic writing practices of international graduate students (Kaur & Shakila, 2007; Hisham, 2008; Koo, 2009; Kaur & Sidhu, 2009; Al-Khasawneh, 2010; Al-Zubaidi and Rechards, 2010; Mahmud et al., 2010; Nambiar & Ibrahim, 2011; Ibrahim & Nambiar, 2011a; Ibrahim & Nambiar, 2011b). As Braine (2002, p.63) puts it 'a fundamental shortcoming of most studies of socially situated academic literacy is their focus on writing tasks alone' and also the relationship between writing practices and learning and the written assignments product (Wahi et al., 2012). It is of a general understanding that processes, instructions and assessments of second language listening are less well understood and researched than the other three conventional skills which are reading, writing and speaking (Rowley-Jolivet, 2002; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Vandergrift, 2006; Vandergrift, 2007) to the extent that research has focused primarily on written genres (writing and reading). Duff (2010) also indicated that oral academic discourse socialisation is not given equal emphasis

in studies of academic discourse that give prominence to writing and reading.

Furthermore, English has been used as the medium of instruction for almost all taught Master's programmes in higher education institutions in Malaysia that include international graduate students who are non-native speakers of English (Manjet, 2013). The international graduate students in the taught Master's programmes fulfil the English language requirement of the programme. However, the fulfilment of the English language requirement such as TOEFL or IELTS does not guarantee that these students are able to meet the academic demands of their graduate study. Hafriza et al. (2004), Kaur and Shakila (2007), Hisham (2008), Koo (2009), Sidhu and Kaur (2009), Al-Zubaidi and Rechards (2010), Ibrahim and Nambiar (2011a, 2011b), and Nambiar and Ibrahim (2011) indicate that these students still face difficulties negotiating the new and different academic expectations in their academic listening practices as well as adapting to appropriate academic demands of their academic listening practices.

This particular research study therefore, explores international graduate students' academic listening practices in Malaysia, where English is the second language and is used as the medium of instruction for postgraduate studies (Mahmud et al., 2010; Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Specifically, the study looks into a neglected research area that is the difficulties faced by the international graduate students in their academic listening practices and the measures utilised by them to overcome those difficulties.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

As a receptive skill, listening is similar to reading. Academic listening at university level is generally interpreted as listening to lectures and taking down notes. These are the principal genre of instruction (Lee, 2009a). However, Lynch (2011) has expanded these interpretations to include the involvement of students in other communicative events as well. The communicative events that require the effective use of reciprocal listening skills include small group discussions and team projects, tutorials, seminars, meetings with supervisors and many more. Each of these communicative events has demands requiring the students to process and respond to the spoken language.

Listening employs dual explicit sources of information: perceptual and conceptual. Perceptual information, based on auditory input, has two categories. The first category is having knowledge of a piece of language which does not mean that it will be recognised in connected speech; second, input does not represent the intake as the input will be not be successfully decoded unless a high level of second language knowledge and listening proficiency are achieved (Field, 2008). Subsequently, conceptual information is based on the listener's own world and topic knowledge as well as the recall of what has already been said (Field, 2008). There are two main purposes of conceptual information. First, it adds to what has been decoded to enrich the understanding of competent listeners and compensates for gaps in listening for the less proficient listeners. The axiomatic

of perceptual and conceptual information brings to the understanding of a relationship between the quality of information obtained from listening and the extent to which the less proficient listeners have to fall back on their own world knowledge. Therefore, Field (2011) acknowledges that challenges in decoding the speech signal originating from linguistic limitations or lack of listening experience require the second language listeners to draw more on context and co-text.

Rost (2005, p. 503) further elaborates on the listening skill as '*a complex cognitive process comprising three cognitive components (reception, construction, and interpretation) that allows a person to understand spoken language*'. Listening as a spontaneous activity that depends on immediate processing requires the listener to simultaneously decode, comprehend and interpret the incoming message. Rost listed reception and construction as more challenging for second language listeners.

In the context of academic listening, according to Flowerdew (1995), "academic listening has its own distinct characteristics and demands placed upon listeners, as compared with conversational listening." These distinct characteristics can be explained as the type of prior background knowledge required, and the capabilities to differentiate between relevant and non-relevant information, and the application of turn-taking conventions. Other important characteristics involve the ability to concentrate on and understand long stretches of talk without the chance of being engaged

in the facilitating functions of interactive discourse and note-taking. (pp. 11-12)

The most distinctive problem with listening is that it is rarely an observable product as it involves more than just decoding the spoken word. Although the listeners' responses indicate that comprehension is successful through the recognition of words, understanding the meaning the words convey and relating them to some knowledge base, there is no guarantee that the utterances have actually been understood. Zamel (1995) adds that students with multilingual backgrounds understand the information differently when they hear it compared with when they read it in English. Furthermore, university lectures are value-laden discourses in which the lecturers aim to inform, evaluate, review the information brought forward to students' attention (Lee, 2009b). The different aims of lecture impose a heavy load on listeners who may have to interpret detailed and extended monologues.

Cammish (1997) and Lynch (2011) indicated that listening is a complicated process in a second language context. Lynch (2011) highlights that the speaker, text or context such as novel expressions, rate of speech, accent, unfamiliar content and cultural references are the external factors that influence complications in a second language. To undergo the process in a foreign language is a difficult task for the international students. However, in King's (1994) earlier study, listening was identified as not presenting great demands on the students. One of the assumptions derived

from this finding is that the popularity of the use of PowerPoint in lectures has transformed the nature of listening and note taking. Listeners' dependence on the spoken dimension of lecture input was reduced with the use of PowerPoint. At the same time, it gave the lecturers greater flexibility in presenting their lectures (King, 1994).

### **Related Studies on Academic Listening Practices of International Graduate Students**

Mason's study (1995) among 26 international graduate students on lecture comprehension strategies in an English medium environment found that lecture comprehension involved a range of levels; processing the lecturer's manner of speaking, accommodating a new educational system and adjusting to unfamiliar lecture formats. Furthermore, a study by Reid et al. (1998) on tertiary literacies identified that international students face problems with comprehension and note taking in lectures. In 1999, Ramsay et al. found that international students at an Australian university had difficulties understanding lectures in terms of vocabulary and speed and with tutors who spoke too fast or who gave too little input. In addition, a lecturer's attributes such as mumbling, talking fast, not providing visuals and using inaccessible vocabulary or slang increased international students' difficulties with listening (Ferris, 1998). In addition, the students' confusion was increased when lecturers did not use the appropriate devices to signal changes in topic or focus. Students with low level of

English fluency were overwhelmed with the difficulty of using high standard of English to understand lecturers, tutors and complete written work.

Furthermore, Johnson (2008) in his qualitative study reported that most of the international students in New Zealand in their first year of study understood only 20–30 % of what they had heard in lectures. They often understood the language at the level of the meaning of each word but not the extended discourse. Unfortunately, most of the students did not take steps to overcome this problem as they were reluctant to approach their lecturers for clarification. Those who have been studying for some years estimated that they understood between 70–90% of what their lecturers said. Most often, new students are assumed to be fully accommodated and apprenticed within their new communities and will also have sufficient exposure to the target academic discourse practices they are expected to employ in their daily academic communication practices (Haneda, 2006; Duff, 2007). This suggests that linguistic competence develops as participation in the academic discourse increases.

Yet, in other research concerning second language students, self-reports indicate that the students have difficulty in understanding lectures due to their professors' rapid speech and accents; use of colloquialisms, unfamiliar cultural, political or historical allusions, unknown vocabulary and use of humour (Senyshyn et al., 2000; Mendelsohn, 2002; Holmes, 2004). Their inability to recognise the vocabulary in spoken

form also hampered students' listening ability (Vandergrift, 2006; Field, 2008). Hence, lack of fluency in English not only affects graduate students' understanding of academic content but also has spin-off effects in other aspects of their lives. In Nayak and Venkatraman's (2010) study, it was revealed that Indian international graduate students in an Australian university encountered difficulties focusing on unfamiliar accent of some of the foreign lecturers teaching there. As a result, they required more time adjusting to the accent as well as in understanding the requirements in writing and presenting their assessments critically. This result reveals a need for the training of academic staff to improve their delivery skills and as mentioned by Carroll (2005b), lecturers should be more attentive to the comprehension level of students.

In other studies conducted by Leki (2001), Morita (2004), Gourlay (2006) and Brown (2008), it was discovered that second language listeners found it challenging comprehending the lectures due to the speed with which the lecturers speak and a lack of control over the speaker. According to Leki (2001) and Morita (2004), this challenge is further aggravated among international students at university level when there is a need for them to comprehend and later produce their work.

Mahmud et al. (2010) reported that students' low English proficiency and their difficulty in understanding local dialects and slangs would hinder academic socialisation processes. Al-Zubaidi and Rechards (2010) reported that the international

graduate students in Malaysia discovered that the instruction given in their classes were fast-paced. This is due to language, communication style, local education system and social and cultural differences. Kaur (2006) and Lee (2010) also highlighted that the educational system in Malaysia presents a different academic culture with variations in the expectations of class participation, evaluation process and English language difficulties. These scholars also found that international students experience academic culture differences as they get used to new values and norms. This review indicates that although all learners in academic settings face disciplinary enculturation issues, the difficulties associated especially with academic literacies can be serious for the international graduate students considering the cultural and linguistic hybridity this diverse student population bring to their encounters with academic literacies in English (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Casanave, 2002; Duff, 2003; Kubota & Lehner, 2004).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This qualitative study is part of a larger scale study that focused on challenges faced by international graduate students in their academic literacy practices. The design is an exploratory study which employed in-depth semi-structured focus group interviews to provide detailed data on the difficulties faced in the academic listening practices and measures employed by international graduate students to overcome them.

### **Sampling**

The sample consisted of 70 full time international graduate students registered in the taught Master's programmes. These respondents were in their second, third or fourth semester and they were from the Arts, Hybrid or Sciences faculties at a selected higher education institution. Purposive sampling was employed in this qualitative study to select all eligible respondents who could provide accurate and reliable information regarding the research problem (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, 2009).

### **Focus Group Interviews (FGI)**

This study employed focus group interviews (FGI) with international graduate students to gather qualitative data. The focus group interview was selected as it is the best instrument to collect data from people who are an important source of information about themselves, their experiences, knowledge, opinion, beliefs, feelings and the issue that affect their lives and they can articulate their thoughts and feelings (Best & Kahn, 2006).

The focus groups had a minimum of three participants and maximum of seven participants. The "rule of thumb" advocated by Bloor et al. (2001) on the number of participants in a focus group interview was observed. At the same time, pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity of the participants. Confidentiality was maintained with the use of a coding scheme developed to code the participants. For example, a participant from a particular faculty who responded in the interview session is coded as 'S2A'. The symbol S represents the

respondent, 2 represents the respondent's number and A represents the faculty's code.

Open ended questions for the focus group interviews were designed based on literature review in the area of the research. Questions were created based on the dimensions of time: past, present and future. Krueger's categories of questions (1998) (Table 1) and Krueger's (1994) (Table 2) focus group data collection flow chart were used as a guide for the present study.

Seventeen interview sessions were administered with the 70 participants. Apart from the interview, each focus group interview session that lasted between 40 minutes to one hour included providing the participants an introduction to the study, the purpose of the focus group interview, the

participation statement sheet and consent form.

Reliability and validity of the interviews were increased by audio-taping the interviews. This was followed by transcribing the interview. Although an interview guide was used to facilitate the interviews, the participants were allowed to discuss issues and concerns pertaining to any aspects of the academic listening difficulties.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis involved the use of qualitative data analysis software, NVivo version 10. The NVivo 10 is helpful in transferring data easily from one code to another and to memo the data as it is being analysed. The core feature of the qualitative

Table 1  
*Categories of Questions (Krueger, 1998)*

Question Type	Purpose
Opening	Participants get acquainted and feel connected
Introductory	Begins discussion of topic
Transition	Moves smoothly and seamlessly into key questions
Key	Obtains insight on areas of central concern in the study
Ending	Helps researcher determine where to place emphasis and brings closure to the discussion

Table 2  
*Data collection flow chart of FGI adapted from Krueger (1994)*

Data Collection Flow Chart of the FGI	Description
Sequencing of questions	Opening questions, introductory questions, transition questions, key questions, ending questions.
Capturing and handling data	Audio-taping, field journal notes of researcher
Coding of data	Placing codes in the margin of the interview transcript
Member Checking	Emailing the transcript to the FGI respondents for member checking.

data analysis of this research was coding. The researcher organised and analysed data and emerging patterns. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) and Braun and Clarke (2006), data coding was done using thematic analysis which is a qualitative analytic method used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The themes that captured relevant data from the interview transcripts to answer the research questions and to represent the patterned responses within the data set were created. Table 3 shows the analysis procedures design (Creswell & Clark, 2007) used in this study.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

**Difficulties in Academic Listening Practices**

Four themes emerged in the analysis of difficulties faced in academic listening practices. The themes were comprehending listening, language and culture barriers, lack of use of technology in lecturing and lack of discipline content knowledge.

**Comprehending Listening**

Accent plays an important role in comprehending listening. Nearly half of the respondents, particularly those from

Table 3  
*Data Analysis Procedures' Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)*

<b>Qualitative Procedures</b>	<b>General Procedures in Data Analysis</b>
1. Organising documents and visual data	Preparing data for analysis
2. Verbatim transcribing of interview (Merriam, 1988) text from the FGI. (audio-taped data)	
3. Checking transcription accuracy (e.g. member checking) which functioned to enhance the reliability and validity of the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008).	
4. Preparing the data for computer analysis (Nvivo 10)	
1. Reading through data	Exploring data
2. Writing memos	
3. Developing qualitative codebook to organise data	
1. Coding data	Analysing data
2. Assigning labels to codes	
3. Grouping codes into themes (or categories)	
4. Interrelating themes (or categories) or abstracting to smaller set of themes	
5. Using qualitative software programs (NVivo 10)	
1. Representing findings in discussions of themes or categories	Representing data analysis
1. Using the researcher, respondents and reviewers' standards	Validating data
2. Employing validation strategies (member checking and peer review)	

[Note: Qualitative codebook is a statement of the codes for a database (Creswell & Clark, 2007). It was generated during research and depends on the codes that emerged during an analysis. It helped to organise data (adopted from Miles & Huberman, 1994; Creswell & Clark, 2007)].

Thailand, Nigeria and the Middle East, cited difficulty in comprehending the accent of the lecturers and students, especially lecturers of Indian and Chinese origins and other Malaysian students. The lecturers were reported to speak fast and with a localised slang. Therefore, the students could not cope with the fast spoken pace of the lecturers. Furthermore, spoken English language by Malay lecturers was found to be more incomprehensible compared with lecturers of Chinese and Indian origin. This was due to their accent. As an example, S10G specified that her difficulty with listening was caused by the different pronunciation styles of the lecturers. In another case, S18G's previous exposure of listening to American and British accented lectures found listening to the local lecturers especially those with Chinese accent, a hindrance. In general, the use of 'lah' in Manglish (Malaysian English) added further confusion to the students.

The disadvantage in the academic listening practices such as not being able to identify the answers according to the requirements of the questions, results in the students being unable to interact with their lecturers in the teaching and learning environment. Furthermore, as cited by S8C, some additional time is required for the purpose of understanding and responding to a remark given orally. The respondents also faced difficulty in comprehending the accent in conversational activities with local students. This difficulty in listening also impaired their ability to interact for academic and social purposes with the local students.

*"everything different to start your study here. ?? culture different, everything different here when I came here. For example lecturers, from Chinese the accent different because the lecturer my country was USA and UK, so when I start is US is maybe hard for me," [S18G]*

*"when I come to Malaysia I think Malaysia English is very difficult to understand, all I will look at speaker mouth, I will guess what he or she say and then I will answer the question and second is speed, if the speaker speak very fast I can't follow his..." [S3C]*

*"Listening is the most terrible part for me, almost in many I can't follow people what they say (in English)" [S3G]*

When these international students felt unmotivated and shameful of being made fun of by their fellow students due to their weaknesses in academic listening practices, they refused to participate actively in the teaching and learning process. For example, the respondents do not take the initiative to be involved in the question and answer sessions during lectures due to their inability to comprehend the lecture and views of their fellow local students. In addition, this is also due to the accent of the lecturers and the students themselves.

*I want to say that I could not understand the accent or speaking*



*of Chinese student and Chinese lecturer when you go to presentation, Chinese student present always I could not find even one word at the end, but he lecturer shake head, say completely understand what the Chinese guys say in the board but lecturer shake his hand and say okay, okay and at the end of presentation, he ask us any question and we look at him, sorry we couldn't understand what he say that we want to ask any question."* [S11G]

*"Because they pronounced in different....way. Different way. For example one day our lecturer talk about bridge, Penang bridge in our language we pronounced bridge but in their language they pronounced "brich". We couldn't understand. We couldn't understand and they make us funny. We know the meaning but because of different style we cannot understand very well."* [S2E]

### **Language and Culture Barriers**

Local lecturers were also found to be not accommodative of their international students' language backgrounds. The tendency of lecturers to code-switch between English and Malay language during lectures further created comprehension difficulty among the respondents. As English language is a second language to the lecturers and they themselves are not proficient in the language, they are definitely unable to

deliver their lectures well. This is in addition to the difficulty faced by the respondents in their academic listening practices. Besides, the lecturers seemed to have ignored the presence of international students in their lectures and delivered the lectures in Malay language. Furthermore, difficulties with listening heightened when the respondents were presented with different versions of information both in the oral and written form.

*"Some course, ... that's mix it they forget you are international student or maybe all the lecturer speak in Bahasa sometimes"* [S3D]

*"Everything is okay all the lecturer were very cooperative except one she was talking Malay most of the time, talk in Malay which cannot understand."* [S4H]

*S4H: We make a group study with some Malaysia colleague, we didn't tell the lecturer anything, because we were afraid that she will angry with us. So we just made a group study before the last, last exam, final exam. That's why we manage to pass.*

*Researcher: In your opinion, since the lecturer taught in Bahasa Malaysia or Malay language, was the lecturer aware that you are an International student and you have no understanding on Bahasa?*

S4H, S5H and S6H: Yes. [S4H, S5H and S6H]

*“The definition they said in their words when they are going to read it and you cannot understand what is written you cannot get the meaning from the.. academic writing. I mean this is the difference that you see in the lecturers I mean they... I mean they themselves they have two kind of explaining, one, once it is written and once... Oral. The other one is oral.” [S3D]*

### **Lack of Use of Technology in Lecturing**

The respondents' dilemma in academic listening practices further increased as the lecturers were not technology-savvy. Three respondents from School G stated that their request to the lecturers to use e-learning portals for teaching activities was denied. A technology channel that could be employed to overcome the difficulties in academic listening practice is through the uploading of lecture materials for students' reference in various e-learning portals. Unfortunately, the lecturers lacked technological expertise in using the e-learning portals.

*“the lecturer should know that some of the student don't understand what he or she say exactly. ...because I remember in the previous semester we ask from our lecturer please put your, because his accent was awful and we ask please put your slide and your notes in the e learning before you came to class and is*

*better for us to read this is slide, this note give to class and come to class we try to understand but he told say no but he no I cannot I put the slide after finishing my lecture it is really bad, surely bad because lecture can improve this weakness” [S11G]*

The lecturers' dependency on the use of Power Point slides further increased the difficulties students faced. Lecturers were found to browse quickly the Power Point slides while speaking at a fast pace. Furthermore, five respondents from School E stated that their lecturers lacked presentation skills in delivering their lectures. These setbacks affected the students' comprehension of lectures.

### **Lack of Discipline Content Knowledge**

The challenges in understanding the Malay lecturers' accent became worse when lecturers applied professional words or discipline-specific vocabulary in their oral communications. Some respondents related two reasons for the difficulties in comprehending the lectures. First, there is lack of discipline content knowledge to understand the meaning of the words used during lectures. Second, lecturers' accent caused the understanding of the specific terms more difficult. Therefore, lack of content and lack of listening proficiency are interferences that affect their level of understanding and comprehension.

*“Actually the main difficulty I had seen during the first semester*

*until now, that when our lecturer explain about the topics our subjects, I cannot understand couldn't understand exactly the main idea. Not because, just his accent, and also the subject itself. I don't have any background about this subject...*” [S1H]

### **OVERCOMING THE DIFFICULTIES IN ACADEMIC LISTENING PRACTICES**

Three themes emerged in the analysis of the measures applied in overcoming the difficulties in academic listening practices. The themes are enculturation in graduate study environment, expectations of lecturers and the role of students.

#### **Enculturation in Graduate Study Environment**

More than half of the respondents also indicated that prolonged exposure to the graduate study environment was crucial to the success of comprehending information successfully. They added that the gradual process of comprehension took about one to two semesters. The initial semester in their graduate programme is crucial for them to accommodate and get adjusted to the accents and pronunciation of local lecturers and other graduate students.

#### **Expectations of Lecturers**

Majority of the respondents also stated that their lecturers have an important role to play in helping them overcome their difficulties

in their academic listening practices. Lecturers have to ensure that they speak with clear pronunciation and that the localised language elements in standard spoken English are reduced. Furthermore, the lecturers are expected to equip themselves with the latest technological advancement in delivering lectures to ensure that students do not only have to depend on their ability to listen in the lecture halls. Students also hoped that the lecturers were able to speak at a slower pace to allow them to take down notes and understand the lecture at all times.

*“Frankly I told her can you speak a bit slowly so we can understand, we can follow then she said okay, she was really very nice maybe she take for 2,3 lectures slow in a good way after that she go back to her....”* [S1D]

Second, more than half of the respondents also indicated that lecturers should be more sensitive towards the difficulties faced by the students in comprehending English language spoken with various accents in the multicultural academic community at the university. The respondents recommended that lecturers should not only be reading from their PowerPoint slides but should also explaining rigorously to allow students to understand the lecture topics. Furthermore, S2G stated that lectures should not be a one-way mode of communication. Lecturers should also take the initiative to make the lecture interactive through the participation of students.

This would allow the students to build a good student-lecturer relationship and improve their understanding of listening.

*“I think lecturers can play more role. Because I think they are closer to the students so that they should improve on the rate interaction with the students. It shouldn't be like, all the time the lecturer will be standing talking and just talking while the students may not understand, or may not even comprehend what he is saying. But when he talks interactively with the students that will be like more of a discussion so that he will understand the student and the student will also understand him. Because in interaction, you open --- Because if you stay, it's not as if everyone understands because you don't feel like seeing what is in your mind. But when you improve the interactions, I think its going to help better.” [S2G]*

The same group of respondents also suggested that the university must ensure the lecturers are given speech training to overcome the problems faced by the students in understanding the variation in local lecturers' accents.

*“I think some lecturers are don't have enough ability to do some lecture but they have enough knowledge in fields but they can explain good may be because of*

*language, for example Chinese lecturer can't speak good English and about (deleted name of institution), I think (deleted name of institution) do some session for lecturer to tell them this matter is useful to improve the speech to improve this level of education for student also for university is important I think.” [S12G]*

### **Role of Students**

Immersing oneself in the target environment would help students overcome the challenges faced in academic listening practices. Majority of the respondents also indicated that they immersed themselves in the local environment, read the lecture topic in their first language before attending the lecture and lastly, did a lot of listening in English to overcome the difficulties of comprehending lecturers' accents. Prolonged contact with local community also helped the students overcome difficulties faced in the academic listening practices. S2A cited that paying more attention and concentrating on the speech is helpful to overcome the challenges faced in listening.

In addition, patience is also an important factor to help students to overcome the difficulties they face in academic listening practices. Three respondents explained that it is their responsibility to request the speaker to continuously repeat the speech until they understood what is spoken. Respondents such as S4D who is an African national, also took the initiative to improve

English language proficiency by attending English language classes before enrolling in the Master's programme.

*S4D: From 2008 I'm here so I can understand and the...*

*Researcher: 2008? Your first degree is at Africa, your master is here, you started what year?*

*S4D: 2010.*

*Researcher: Before this what are you doing? S4D: Study English because when I came here I don't know English. [S4D]*

The assistance rendered by classmates is also one way to overcome the challenges faced in listening. S4E stated that approaching other classmates to explain a speaker's speech would help the students to overcome the difficulties in their listening. Furthermore, as mentioned by three other respondents, listening to international students who are more proficient in English language and speaking with classmates outside the classroom would be of great help to the students to improve their English language proficiency.

Audio recording the lectures also helped the respondents to overcome their difficulties in their academic listening practices. Three respondents stated that they used audio recorder to record the lectures in the class. This measure helped in aiding the understanding of the lecturers' accent. By repeatedly listening to the audio recordings,

one's understanding of the lecture would be further enhanced and English language proficiency would improve. In addition, reading the PowerPoint slides' handout repeatedly would also assist in decreasing the difficulties faced in academic listening. S5D, S10G and S14G explained that continuous reading of reference books is more helpful to overcome the setbacks of listening challenges.

The effort to explore internet resources such as Google to download the videos of lectures with similar content from other universities such as Cambridge and Oxford also helped in the students' academic listening practices. By listening and watching the videos of lectures with similar content, students were able to understand the lectures conducted by their lecturers. YouTube was also highlighted by S11G as an alternative media resource to listen to lectures of similar content. In addition, listening to English channel programmes or BBC helped to improve their listening ability while watching downloaded movies and listening to the dialogues also helped to improve their English language proficiency.

*"return back to the internet and google it, and download the video from other universities so that can I understand the English accent from Cambridge university, Oxford university. So we can understand and after that I will make a review to the lecture and so can I understood"*  
[S1H]

## DISCUSSION

Academic listening practice is a challenging academic communicative event. The findings of this study showed that listening and comprehending multiple accents involved in academic listening practices are challenging. According to Odlin (1989, pp. 77–80) and Ringbom (1987, pp.113–114), the “*difficulties faced in the academic listening practice are influenced by the language distance between their first language and second language or third language*”.

The language distance influences the amount of transfer that can take place between languages. For example, Arabic speakers take a longer time to acquire English vocabulary because the transfer from third languages seems to depend very much on relative language distance. This situation makes learning English language difficult for students, especially low level proficiency students. Literature has also confirmed that input does not represent intake because input will not be successfully decoded unless a high level of second language knowledge and listening proficiency have been achieved (Field, 2008). Furthermore, university lectures impose heavy load on listeners as they have to interpret detailed and extended monologues. This is due to the value laden discourses in which the lecturers aim to inform, evaluate and review the information brought forward to students’ attention (Lee, 2009a, 2009b).

The findings are also parallel to studies conducted by Manjet, Pandian and Kaur (2015) and Prescott and Hellsten (2005)

indicating accents of other languages may produce comprehension difficulties between international students and lecturers. Manjet et al.’s (2015) quantitative study examined the academic listening difficulties students faced in understanding their classmates’ accents and identifying differing views/ ideas. Students also faced challenges in understanding lecturers’ accents. Johnson (2008) reported that although international students often understood the language at the level of the meaning of each word during listening, they were not able understand the extended discourse.

Furthermore, the students indicated reluctance to approach their lecturers directly for clarification. However, in this study, the respondents took initiative to consult the lecturers for clarification or for added information after the lectures.

Consequently, to overcome the challenges in their academic listening practices, many students indicated that listening to non-academic programmes such as music and watching movies helped a lot. In the context of recording the lecture for later review or borrowing other students’ lecture notes for reference, it was found to be unpopular.

Students preferred to obtain lecture hand-outs and copies of the PowerPoint slides from the lecturers either before or after the lecture. The nature of listening and note taking in lectures has been influenced by the popularity of the use of PowerPoint. King’s (1994) earlier research indicated that the use of PowerPoint has reduced listeners’ dependence on the spoken dimension

of lecture input and brought in greater flexibility for the lecturers.

This study recommends that lecturers should play a more active role in helping international students overcome the challenges they face in academic listening practices. The lecturers should focus on improving their English language proficiency and teaching pedagogy of the academic fraternity. At the administrative level, the university should take the responsibility to identify language related weaknesses among the lecturers at an early stage of their career development as educators and to provide them opportunities to improve their English language proficiency through in-house language courses. Carroll (2005a, 2005b) stated that communication skills in transmitting knowledge are crucial for positive student learning experience. This will indirectly contribute to successful academic listening among the students. Therefore, it is suggested that lecturers should be trained in the art of teaching and provided in-house training to improve their communication skills, feedback mechanisms and clarity in their course delivery.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the difficulties international graduate students faced in their academic listening practices. The interview findings indicated that the students' low level of English language proficiency affected their listening comprehension. The difficulties in academic listening were further aggravated by the lecturers'

Malaysian English pronunciation and accent that was dissimilar to their personal language experience. The qualitative data also indicated that the measures used by the students to overcome their difficulties and their feedback to their lecturers helped in improving their academic listening practices. This research has highlighted that higher learning institutions, before accepting international students, must have a clear instructional and learning plan that is able to sustain the multifaceted nature of the linguistic and cultural background of the students for successful academic listening practices.

However, this study's limitations such as a relatively small sample size of 70 respondents might not provide sufficient support for any conclusive findings that may be generalisable to the international graduate students' population in similar taught Master's programmes in other higher education institutions in Malaysia. However, data from this study will be beneficial for various stakeholders to improve the academic learning environment of the international students. At the same time, it also serves as a scaffold for a more extensive research into academic listening practices which currently is an under-researched area among other academic skills such as writing, reading and speaking.

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## **The Effects of a Single Bout of Moderate Cycling Exercise During Ramadhan Fasting on Mood States, Short-Term Memory, Sustained Attention and Perceived Exertion among Sedentary University Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Ramadhan is the fasting month in the Islamic calendar when consumption of water and food is abstained from. Previous studies of exercising during Ramadhan have shown mixed findings. The aim of this study was to determine the effects of a single bout of moderate cycling exercise during the ritual fasting of Ramadhan on mood states, rating of perceived exertion and short-term memory among physically inactive university students. Participants were 13 healthy male university students, with a mean age of  $23.54 \pm 3.41$  years, height of  $170 \pm 7.02$  cm, weight of  $66.95 \pm 7.40$  kg and body mass index (BMI) of  $23.33 \pm 1.74$  kg.m<sup>-2</sup>. Data on mood states, rating of perceived exertion and short-term memory were collected before and after cycling exercise. All of the participants performed cycling exercise at progressively increasing intensities of 45%, 60%, 75% of VO<sub>2max</sub> for 30 minutes (10 minutes for each intensity) a week before Ramadhan and in the first and fourth week of Ramadhan and 2 weeks after Ramadhan. The results of the mixed factorial ANOVA revealed no significant interactions between sessions across trials. In conclusion, exercise during Ramadhan fasting exhibited no significant effects on mood states, perceived exertion and cognitive performance.

*Keywords:* Mood states, oxygen consumption, perceived exertion, sustained attention

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Fasting over a period of time is a feature of several religions and it is considered a healthy practice in many cultures and religions. For Muslims, fasting is usually performed during the ninth lunar month

of the Islamic calendar. During this one-month period, in the month of Ramadhan, Muslims are required to abstain from eating and drinking during daytime hours between dawn to sunset for 28 to 30 consecutive days. In a tropical climate, a daily fasting duration of 12 to 14 hours is common (Sakr, 1975). Within this period, when food and water consumption is abstained from, the effects of physical activity are not immediately known, especially for the general population.

Among athletes, previous studies have revealed mixed findings. On one hand, several studies reported that exercise performance was not affected during Ramadhan fasting compared to the non-Ramadhan fasting season when the same exercises were undertaken (Chaouachi et al., 2009). On the other hand, other studies have reported adverse impacts of Ramadhan fasting on exercise performances (Aziz & Weileen, 2008; Fallah, 2010, Waterhouse, 2010). For instance, Fallah (2010) reported that one day of fasting has no or a small effect on performance. However, 30 consecutive days of fasting affected several performance factors, including cognitive and endurance functions (Fallah, 2010). There are also studies that observed the tendency of Muslim athletes to report an increase in subjective feelings of malaise, lethargy and fatigue during the Ramadhan fasting period. These negative mood states are known to affect athletes' ability to perform at their optimal ability, particularly in high-intensity exercise (Ramadhan, 2002; Roky, Houti, Moussamih, Qotbi, & Aadil, 2004).

For the general population, exercise behaviour is usually slowed down or ceased during Ramadhan. It has been observed that fasting for 30 consecutive days without exercise can result in regression of strength and fitness. Individuals who stop training during Ramadhan fasting often face a relapse with regard to cardiovascular and resistance adaptation. Furthermore, going a month without exercise is equivalent to losing four months of exercise (Noorbhai, 2013). However, Ramadhan and Barac-Nieto (2000) indicated that exercising during Ramadhan provides no negative effects among sedentary individuals.

Mood is an important aspect of psychological health in a person's daily life. It is largely known that mood, especially negative mood, may affect many aspects of individuals' functions of daily living such as decision-making and effort. Roky et al. (2000) observed that during Ramadhan, positive mood tends to decrease and is accompanied by decreased willingness to work. They also observed that the ability to optimally perform physical and mental activities decreased during Ramadhan (Roky et al., 2000). Given the non-specific nature of mood, its potential sources are numerous and nonspecific. It is therefore interesting to observe if exercising during fasting contributes to this effect.

To our knowledge, studies on the effects of Ramadhan fasting on selected cognitive and psychological parameters following moderate cycling exercise among the general population such as university students are limited. While many previous

studies focussed on athletes, the present study aimed to determine the effects of progressively increasing exercise intensity during Ramadhan on mood states, perceived exertion and cognitive performance in sedentary university students. It is hypothesised that cycling exercise during fasting has no detrimental effects on measured variables.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Participants

Thirteen male university students participated in this study. Their mean age, height, weight and BMI were 23.54 (3.41), 170 cm (7.02), 66.95 kg (7.40), 23.33 kg.m<sup>-2</sup> (1.74), respectively. All the participants provided written informed consent. Only healthy Muslim students with previous fasting experience during Ramadhan and had no chronic diseases were included. The Human Research and Ethics Committee of the authors' institutions approved the protocol of the study. The sample size was calculated using the PS software (Dupont & Plummer, 1997). The calculated sample size was 13 participants and this was sufficient to achieve the specified power, including the estimated dropout rate of 10%.

### Measurement Instruments

Measurement instruments that were used to collect data include a Vmax spectra (Sensormedics, USA) to measure maximum oxygen consumption (VO<sub>2max</sub>) and oxygen uptake during the experimental trials, a telemetric heart-rate monitor (Polar S710

Polar Electro Oy, Finland) to monitor the participants' heart rate and Seca 220/221 measuring rod to measure the standing height and body weight of the participants. Besides, Rating of Perceived Exertion, Digit Span Test, Digit Vigilance Test and Brunel Mood Scale were also used.

Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE; Borg, 1970) was used to measure the degree of heaviness and strain experienced in physical work as estimated according to a specific rating method. It measures the participant's subjective rating of their strain experience of the extent of stress on the scale of 6 (no exertion), 7 (very, very light), 8-9 (very light), 10-11 (fairly light), 12-13 (somewhat hard), 14-15 (hard), 16-17 (very hard), 18-19 (very, very hard) and 20 (maximal exertion). The participants selected the rating that most closely represented their level of physical workload.

The Digit Span Test (DS; Kaplan et al., 1991) is a subtest from the Wechsler Memory Scale – Third Edition (WMS-III), which is an individually administered battery of learning memory and working memory measures (Attention, concentration, mental control). This task consisted of 15 sets of a sequence of numbers from 0-9 arranged forwards (8 sets) and backwards (7 sets).

The Digit Vigilance Test (DVT; Kelland & Lewis, 1996) is a subtest of Lafayette neuropsychological cognitive batteries that has been widely used with all age groups. The validity and reliability of the DVT have been tested by Kelland and Lewis

(1996) and the result indicates that the DVT possessed high test-retest reliability and adequate convergent and discriminate validity to measure sustained attention.

The Brunel Mood Scale (BRUMS; Terry et al., 2003) is a self-report questionnaire consisting of a 24-item mood scale designed to measure six mood dimensions (tension, depression, anger, vigour, fatigue and confusion). The validity of BRUMS has been previously reported (Terry et al., 2003; Hashim et al., 2010).

### Procedure

The study was designed to have four testing periods: one week before Ramadhan (BR), the end of the first week of Ramadhan (1W), the fourth week of Ramadhan (4W) and two weeks after Ramadhan (AR). During the first visit, subjects were informed of the test protocols and what was required of them. They were asked to provide a signed informed consent form should they decide to participate in the study. Sub-maximal and  $VO_{2max}$  tests were conducted prior to the study in order to determine the appropriate exercise intensity for each subject. At each period (i.e. BR, 1W, 4W and AR), the subjects cycled at progressively increasing exercise intensities of 45%, 60% and 75% corresponding to the maximal oxygen consumption value. The test was performed in the afternoon between 2 o'clock and 5 o'clock. BRUMS, the DS and the DVT were administered before and after the subjects performed the cycling exercise. However, RPE was measured at the end of exercise.

### Testing Procedures

**Sub-maximal and  $VO_{2max}$  test.** Participants performed a sub-maximal exercise testing to establish the relationship between speed/workload and oxygen uptake. During the test, participants cycled on the ergometer (Lode Groningen BV, Netherlands) starting at the workload of 50 watt and 60 RPM. It was subsequently increased by 30 watt at the end of each 4-minute increment. Following the sub-maximal test, the participants performed the  $VO_{2max}$  Test on an electromagnetically braked cycling ergometer (Excalibur Sport, Lord Groningen BV, The Netherlands). The participants started to cycle at workload 50 watt and then at 60 RPM. It was subsequently increased by 15 watt at the end of each 1-minute stage. Expired gas and heart rate were measured throughout the test. Maximal oxygen uptake ( $VO_{2max}$  value) was obtained when participants fulfilled the following criteria as suggested by the American College of Sport Medicine (McArdle et al., 2001): (1) Oxygen uptake ( $VO_2$ ) showed a plateau as a small or no increase in  $VO_2$  ( $\leq 2.0$  ml/kg/min) in response to an increase in work rate; (2) Threshold values for post-exercise blood lactate concentration were in excess of 8 mmol/L; (3) A heart rate within 10 beats per minute of age-predicted maximum heart rate; and (4) A respiratory exchange ratio (RER) of 1.1 or above.

To test short-term memory, subjects were asked to replicate the number shown by the test instruments (i.e., DS) on a provided sheet. Sequences of increasing length were administered in both test forms.



For each test form, one point was given if the subject wrote the exact sequence and 0 point was given if the subject made an error in the sequence. The sum of scores from both test forms was used for the total score.

For sustained attention, the task required the subjects to cross out either all of the six (Test Form 1) or all of the nine (Test Form 2) items. The number identified was recorded as the indicator of the level of sustained attention.

For mood states, respondents indicated the extent to which they experienced the feelings described by the 24 mood descriptors such as worried, anxious, furious, bad-tempered, worn out, exhausted, energetic, mixed-up, uncertain, miserable and downhearted using the reference timeframe of “*How do you feel right now?*” The subjects’ response was recorded using a 5-point Likert scale of 0 (‘Not at all’), 1 (‘A little’), 2 (‘Moderately’), 3 (‘Quite a bite’) and 4 (‘Extremely’).

**Exercise protocol.** Participants performed 30-minute exercise in progressively increasing cycling intensity corresponding to their  $VO_{2max}$  on four occasions: (1) week before Ramadhan, (2) first week of Ramadhan, (3) fourth week of Ramadhan, and (4) two weeks after Ramadhan. The participants progressively cycled at exercise intensities of 45%, 60% and 75% of their  $VO_{2max}$  for 10 minutes each (Stannard & Thompson, 2008). The intensities were fixed in such an order to avoid sudden exposure to a fixed exercise intensity considering the subjects were fasting. Prior to the start and at the end of the 30 minutes of cycling, mood states and

cognitive performance were measured. RPE was measured at the end of the exercise.

### Statistical Analysis

All statistical tests were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 20. Mean and SD (standard deviation) (mean  $\pm$ SD) values were calculated for all dependent variables. RPE was analysed using repeated measures ANOVA whereas mood states, sustained attention and short-term memory were analysed using 2 (pre and post)  $\times$  4 (Before Ramadhan, 1st week, 4th week and after Ramadhan) mixed factorial ANOVA. Statistical significance was set at an Alpha of less than 0.05.

## RESULTS

The descriptive statistics for the primary measures are presented in Table 1. Results of repeated measures ANOVA revealed no significant time effect for RPE. Results of mixed factorial ANOVA revealed a non-significant interaction ( $p > 0.05$ ) for any mood state dimensions. Similarly, the results revealed a non-significant interaction for digit span and digit vigilance test 1. However, we observed a significant ( $F_{(3,36)} = 4.85$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) interaction in Digit Vigilance Test Form 2. A simple effect test was then performed and the results are presented in Table 2.

## DISCUSSION

The present study examined the effects of exercising at moderate intensity among inactive male adults. Cessation of exercise during Ramadhan is common, especially

among non-athletes. Complete cessation has been shown to result in a regression of strength and fitness. Individuals who stop training during the Ramadhan fasting often face a relapse with regard to cardiovascular and resistance adaptation. Furthermore, eliminating exercising for a month is equivalent to losing four months of exercise (Noorbhai, 2013). The results of the present study indicated no significant difference in the participants' perceived exertion in any of the testing sessions. The

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics for Mood States, Rating of Perceived Exertion, Short-Term Memory, and Sustained Attention at Each Testing Period*

	Testing sessions	Pre-exercise Mean ( SD)	Post-exercise Mean ( SD)
RPE	BR VS 1W	-	14.77(1.96)
	BR VS 4W	-	15.23( 3.11)
	BR VS AR	-	14.85( 2.67)
	1W VS 4W	-	14.08(3.15)
Tension	1W VS AR	2.77(2.49)	2.38(2.25)
	4W VS AR	3.15(2.30)	2.85(2.11)
	BR VS 1W	2.23(1.87)	2.77(2.38)
Anger	BR VS 4W	1.92(1.89)	1.92(2.21)
	BR VS AR	1.46(1.27)	1.77(1.53)
	1W VS 4W	1.85(2.11)	1.77(1.73)
	1W VS AR	1.08(1.32)	1.62(1.93)
Depression	4W VS AR	1.54(1.61)	1.46(1.61)
	BR VS 1W	2.00(1.41)	2.08(2.25)
	BR VS 4W	1.46(1.80)	2.08(2.10)
Fatigue	BR VS AR	1.62(1.50)	2.15(1.77)
	1W VS 4W	1.62(1.55)	1.85(2.03)
	1W VS AR	3.46(2.11)	4.69(2.59)
	4W VS AR	4.08(2.29)	5.69(3.52)
Vigour	BR VS 1W	4.69(2.84)	7.00(2.82)
	BR VS 4W	2.46(1.98)	2.46(1.98)
	BR VS AR	9.31(2.09)	8.69(3.14)
	1W VS 4W	6.54(3.47)	6.23(3.11)
Confusion	1W VS AR	6.15(3.97)	6.08(3.52)
	4W VS AR	7.38(3.70)	6.23(3.91)
	BR VS 1W	3.46(1.39)	2.38(2.53)
	BR VS 4W	2.62(2.14)	3.00(1.95)
	BR VS AR	2.15(1.72)	2.92(2.36)
	1W VS 4W	2.15(1.46)	2.46(1.66)

Table 1 (continue)

	Testing sessions	Pre-exercise Mean ( SD)	Post-exercise Mean ( SD)
DS Memory test	1W VS AR	14.46 (2.76)	14.62 (3.23)
	4W VS AR	16.62 (2.47)	17.38 (2.69)
	BR VS 1W	16.77 (2.35)	18.15 (3.58)
	BR VS 4W	18.31 (2.84)	19.31 (2.28)
DVT1	BR VS AR	96.00 (4.66)	94.00 (5.33)
	1W VS 4W	95.15 (4.16)	96.69 (3.59)
	1W VS AR	95.38 (4.59)	95.00 (4.88)
DVT2	4W VS AR	94.00 (6.08)	96.00 (5.66)
	BR VS 1W	96.85 (2.38)	93.54 (4.59)
	BR VS 4W	97.31 (4.40)	97.69 (3.52)
	BR VS AR	94.62 (4.81)	97.77 (3.11)
	1W VS 4W	97.31 (2.96)	97.46 (4.03)

Note:

DS=Digit span test (memory test)      DVT=Digit Vigilance Test (concentration test)  
 BR=Before Ramadhan                      1W=1<sup>st</sup> Week of Ramadhan  
 4W=4<sup>th</sup> Week of Ramadhan              AR=After Ramadhan

Table 2

*The Pairwise Difference in Sustained Attention Scores Across Measurement Sessions*

Variable	Time	Trials	Mean difference (95% CI)	Std. Error	P -value
DVT 2	Before Exercise	BR VS 1W	-0.46 (-3.292,2.369)	1.299	0.729
		BR VS 4W	2.23 (-0.987,5.449)	1.477	0.157
		BR VS AR	-0.46 (-2.607,1.684)	0.985	0.648
		1W VS 4W	2.69 (-0.059,5.444)	1.263	0.054
		1W VS AR	0.000 (-1.796,1.796)	0.824	1.000
	After Exercise	4W VS AR	-2.69* (-4.932,-0.453)	1.028	<b>0.022</b>
		BR VS 1W	-4.15* (-7.535,-0.773)	1.552	<b>0.020</b>
		BR VS 4W	-4.23* (-7.141,-1.321)	1.336	<b>0.008</b>
		BR VS AR	-3.92* (-7.106,-0.740)	1.461	<b>0.020</b>
		1W VS 4W	-0.07 (-2.818,2.664)	1.258	0.952
		1W VS AR	0.23 (-2.658,3.120)	1.326	0.865
		4W VS AR	0.30 (-1.528,2.144)	0.843	0.721

Note:

DVT2=Digit Vigilance Test (concentration test)      BR=Before Ramadhan  
 1W=1st Week of Ramadhan                              4W=4th Week of Ramadhan  
 AR=After Ramadhan

absence of significant differences in this variable before, during and after Ramadhan indicates that exercise during fasting was not perceived to be stressful by the participants. Despite these non-significant differences, the pattern of the data indicated an increase in perceived exertion during Ramadhan compared to during a non-fasting period. It was especially higher at the beginning of Ramadhan. Understandably, participants were in the early process of adapting to the non-consumption of food and water.

As mentioned, mood is an important aspect of psychological health in a person's daily life and may affect many aspects of an individual's daily routine such as decision-making and physical effort. The results here indicated no changes in mood states after exercising before, during and after Ramadhan fasting. Despite these non-significant differences, a pattern of decline in positive mood (vigour) and an increase in negative mood (fatigue) during Ramadhan was compared. This pattern corroborated with the increase in perceived exertion observed following exercise during fasting. An implication that can be drawn from this specific finding is for the exercisers to maintain their level of exercise intensity or adhere to a moderate level of exercise intensity during fasting instead of ceasing exercise altogether.

Roky et al. (2000) observed a decrease in mental ability following exercise during fasting in one of their studies. Contrary to Roky et al.'s (2000) finding, our finding suggests that exercise during Ramadhan has no influence on cognitive functions, particularly sustained attention and short-

term memory. In fact, it was observed that exercising at moderate intensity enhances attention. However, because this was observed in only one of the test components (i.e., Form 2 of DVT), further studies are indeed needed to confirm the generalisability of this finding.

When interpreting the findings of this study, the limitations should be taken into consideration. Specifically, our study was limited in terms of the sample size, which was relatively small and the study was conducted among university students aged 20 to 30 years old; thus, the findings may be limited to this age group. Furthermore, the participants' activities between trials were not controlled and that may have affected the results. Further studies involving sedentary individuals are indeed required to confirm the effects of exercising during Ramadhan on this population. To conclude, a single bout of sub-maximal exercise during Ramadhan fasting was significantly associated with increased sustained attention but did not significantly influence the students' memory and showed no adverse impact on mood changes and cardiovascular strain. Thus, exercise at moderate intensity during Ramadhan can be performed without any adverse effect on the measured variables.

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## **Wh-Movement in Sudanese Arabic: A Minimalist Approach**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The difference in the morphological and semantic properties of cross-linguistic wh-expressions is due to the difference in wh-question formation strategies. It is the contention of this paper that wh-expressions are universally consistent, in the sense that their semantic force is undetermined in the lexicon. However, once they are chosen for the computation, the wh-expression becomes merged syntactically with another element and this gives rise to relative or interrogative semantic interpretation. The syntax of wh-expression generally falls in two categories: argument wh-expression and non-argument wh-expression. In conclusion, this paper maintains that the wh-movement's driving force is underspecified by the [+Q] feature of the head C operator wherein the interpretation that wh-expression gets is at the level of the interface.

*Keywords:* Wh-expression, wh-movement, Sudanese Arabic, minimalist approach

### **INTRODUCTION**

Also known as Khartoum Arabic, Sudanese Arabic<sup>1</sup> is included in the classical Arabic dialect varieties and is most widely-spoken in Sudan's capital city, Khartoum. While Standard Arabic is Sudan's official language, which it shares with numerous other nations, Sudanese Arabic can only be understood by Sudanese speakers since this dialect has unique linguistic forms. Different grammatical features have sprung

<sup>1</sup> The term Sudanese Arabic is used here to refer to the spoken Arabic, as the writing language for the state is still the standard Arabic.

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from these distinctive linguistic forms of Sudanese Arabic: syntax, morphology, and semantics, which differ significantly from Standard Arabic or any other variety of Arabic dialect.

This study thus intends to do an investigation of such idiosyncratic features of Sudanese Arabic as it pertains to *wh*-question formation. In terms of theoretical perspectives, this study employs the current version of generative syntax as presented in Chomsky's 1993 and 1995 Minimalist Program (MP). This study is structured into four sections. Section 1 provides an introduction to the study. Section 2 outlines the *wh*-movement in Minimalism's theoretical background. Section 3 gives a review of related literature on *wh*-movement in various spoken Arabic languages. Section 4 analyses the movement of *wh*-expressions in Sudanese Arabic.

Rizzi (1997) and Puskás (2000), among numerous other proponent scholars and researchers working in theoretical linguistics, have put forward the concept that the structural position at the clause's left and right periphery exhibit particular discourse functions. For example, they contend that the left edge relates to passivisation, topicalisation, contrastive topic, question formation, and narrow focus while the right edge is associated with focalisation, both wide and narrow. Related to this is the view of Sturgeon (2008, p. 7) that the lexical verb in the domain of *vP* as well as the inflectional category *T* in the domain of *TP* represent two structural positions that provide a demarcation to elemental domains in any clause.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Minimalist Program changes the theories from the past Principles and Parameters (P&P) framework. In this framework, the main goal is stated thus: reaching the economy of derivation through the elimination of both Deep Structure (DS) and Surface Structure (SS). It is subsequently replaced by Spell-Out, referring to the point, wherein the derivation has both Phonetic Form (PF) and Logical Form (LF). As a consequence, any constituent movement is revealed to be a Last Resort operation that secures structures from crashing. Chomsky (1995) puts forth as a proposal the Principle of Procrastinate that requires the movement to occur at LF and not before. To guarantee the economy conditions on the derivation, the movement needs to go through the shortest steps. As per Chomsky's 1995 outline, the movement is therefore motivated only when a checking of the features is needed. This means that the element's movement is licensed if the ensuing structure could lead to the facilitation of features' checking. This concept is informally expressed by Hornstein (2001, p. 18):

- (1) Move the element A to the target position K if the feature of one of these elements is checked by the operation.

As a result, this turns the movement analysis as a Copy and Merge operations complex. Here, traces which mark the position from where the movement happened get replaced by the lexical copies.



It can thus, be assumed that displacement is among the defining characteristics of any human language, in which a few elements of sentence structure can surface in positions that are distinct from those that get interpreted; e.g. *wh*-expression (Aoun et al., 2010). Consequently, this is the central goal of any syntactic theory: to satisfactorily clarify the dependencies between the elements which get preposed to the periphery and the position to which they get relegated to within the same sentence. Depending on the parametric variation cross-linguistically, such a position is constantly occupied either by trace or by pronominal resumptive element.

On *wh*-movement, Chomsky (1995) also posits that generally, *wh*-movement is set off by the functional head *C*'s strong feature, wherein it is presumed that the head *C* bears an operator feature that is, by nature, morphological and matches operators as *wh*. Thus, *wh* as an operator essentially moves for the purposes of feature checking in a proper feature checking domain, hence – [Spec, CP]. As a result, if the *C* operator feature is strong, the *wh*-expression goes through overt movement, while if the operator feature is weak, the *wh*-expression goes through covert movement. In the minimalist inquiry, Chomsky (2000) however, argues that in *wh*-movement, the *wh*-expressions exhibit the uninterpretable feature of [-*wh*] and an interpretable feature of [+*Q*] that matches the uninterpretable feature [-*Q*] of the head *C*. And because *C* is probe looking for the goal (*wh*-expressions), the uninterpretable features of both are

verified through spec-head relationship and ultimately deleted.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

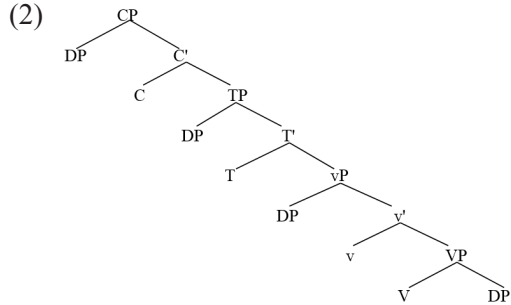
Within Arabic literature, Fasih (2007a, 2007b and 2011), Alotaiba (2013) and Alshorafat (2013) have expounded on the syntax of Standard Arabic *wh*-movement as a part of the constituents which occupy the left periphery of the clause structure in Standard Arabic – hence [Spec, CP]. For instance, Fasih (2011) argued that the *wh*-phrase in Standard Arabic cannot be positioned in-situ; it undergoes overt movement to [Spec, CP]. Alotaiba (2013) on the other hand, claimed that *wh*-movement is applied only to VSO word order paradigm and not to any other paradigms.

Several researchers have alternatively provided analyses on the phenomenon of *wh*-movement in different Arabic varieties. Among these studies are the following: Abu Jarad (2008) - Palestine Arabic; Bardeas (2005) - Makkan Arabic; Almamani and Alsaiaf (2010) - Jordanian Arabic; Leung and Aleisaei (2011) - Emirate Arabic; Altouny (2011) - Cairo Arabic; Cheng (2000), Lassadi (2003), Soltan (2010) and Yassin (2013) - Egyptian Arabic. In the above studies, the researchers emphasised the analysis of *wh*-phrases, giving explanations whether these languages allow *wh*-movement or remain *wh*-phrases in-situ. They also delved on the material syntactic processes involved in coming up with *wh*-questions. For example, in Palestinian Arabic, only non-argument *wh*-phrase undergoes movement, whereas argument

wh-phrase must be in-situ position. In contrast, Jordanian Arabic applies both wh-movement and in-situ strategies, whereby wh-movement is triggered by focus feature, thus wh-phrase moves to [Spec, FocP] to license this feature. In Najrani Arabic, subject-wh undergoes movement to [Spec, CP], however, illi “that” is analysed as the head of FocP, and the wh-phrase in this construction occupies [Spec, FocP]. On the other hand, the objective of this study is to offer the wh-movement’s syntactic explanation, which included the processes involved as well as the structural position wherein they get preposed.

In examining wh-movement in Sudanese Arabic, it is imperative to review the important elements of Chomsky’s phase-based model (Chomsky, 1999, 2001, 2005 and 2006). In this model, it is assumed that a clause involves two fundamental phases: CP and vP. CP means the force of the clause, be it interrogative, declarative, exclamative, or imperative. On the other hand, v\*P dominates the inner shell (hence VP) as well as the outer shell (hence vP). In support of his assertion considering CP and vP as phases, Chomsky stated that CP represents the complete complex which includes the force marker while vP stands for the complete thematic structure which includes the external argument. He also argued that the heads C and v constitute phases where there is a satisfactory agreement between probes and goals (Chomsky, 1998, 1999 and 2001). He further maintained that C, T and v are probes, in which the syntactic

operation – Merge is applied before probing can occur, as exemplified in the following:



We have so far accepted the standard assumption that CP makes up a head C, which, in languages such as English, can always be filled by a complementiser or a preposed auxiliary with TP as the complement. Such an analysis, however, raises a question on the position occupied by the wh-constituents, as seen in the following example (3) with wh-expressions preceding auxiliary.

- (3) **How many books** do you read?  
**When** are they coming?  
**What** do they do?

Each sentence in (3) is derived involving an inverted auxiliary that occupies the head position of CP and the wh-expression preceding it. This wh-expression serves as the verb complement in its canonical structure as in the paraphrased sentences in (4).

- (4) You read **how many books**?  
They are coming **when**?  
They do **what**?

In such examples (4), structures are termed as **wh-in-situ**. Wh-expressions remain in situ in their canonical position since they do not get preposed; they also serve as direct objects to their predicates. This style of questioning, when wh-in-situ is utilised, are therefore **echo questions** (Radford, 2009a). As a result, echo questions in (4) puts forth the proposal that wh-expressions are originally obtained as complements of their predicates; they are then shifted to the front of the whole clause where they occupy the specifiers of the head C.

**WH-MOVEMENT IN SUDANESE ARABIC**

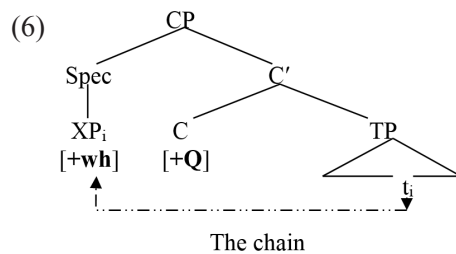
Syntactic analysis of wh-movement has gotten a widespread focus across various languages worldwide. Consistently, the results demonstrate the universal principles as well as the parametric variation cross linguistically when it comes to syntax of wh-questions. Among several scholars, however, the generic conclusion points to wh-question being split into argument wh-expression and adjunct wh-expression. Related to this, Sudanese Arabic allows various kinds of wh-question, i.e. wh-in-situ, simple wh-movement, relative clauses, pied piping wh-questions, and embedded wh-questions. Before one proceeds to analyse the syntax of Sudanese Arabic wh-questions, it is important to make an introduction of the wh-interrogatives in Sudanese Arabic, as seen in the list below:

(5) Wh-interrogatives in Sudanese Arabic

Wh-interrogative	Gloss
shunu	<i>what</i>
min / minu	<i>who</i>
kam	<i>how many</i> <i>/ how much</i>
kaif	<i>how</i>
laih	<i>why</i>
bitain / mitain	<i>when</i>
wain	<i>where</i>
yatu / yata	<i>which</i>

**Simple Wh-Movement**

As for wh-movement in contemporary version of generative syntax, it is accounted for the derivation of A'-movement to [Spec, CP]. The significant property of such a construction is the chain that links wh-expression and its trace (Culicover & Jackendoff, 2005, p.311). In such a structure, the trace must be made to agree with the moved wh-element, which, in turn, should appear in the clause initial position, as exemplified in the following:



The structure's two basic aspects in (6) consist of the existence of C with [+Q] and [Spec, CP] with [+wh] feature. Consequently, this position in the structure is marked by C with the movement triggered by licensing this [+Q] feature. This, in turn, necessitates

agreement between C and something in the position of specifier, (Chomsky, 1995; Rizzi, 1996). Thus, in declarative clauses, the parallelism between wh-movement and the movement to the left periphery proposes the following: in general, the movement to the left periphery is urged by licensing and setting the agreement relationship between the head C and the preposed XP (Rizzi, 1997). It is therefore obvious to connect these agreement relations to the information structure (for example, non-subject movement), wherein the preposed element is interpreted as topicalised element, establishing the agreement for [+topic] features.

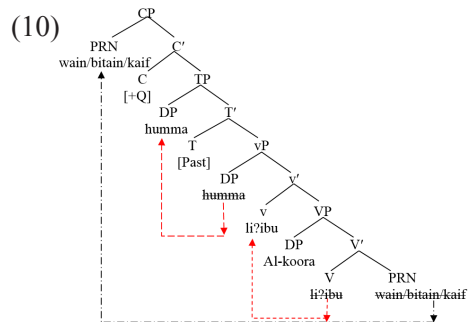
The syntax of the simple wh-movement in Sudanese Arabic will be explored in the following section. This aims to illustrate how wh-questions can be derived. Consider the Sudanese Arabic examples below:

- (7) **Wain** humma li?ib-u al-koora?  
 where they play-Pl.Past the-football?  
 Where did they play football?
- (8) **Bitain** humma li?ib-u al-koora?  
 when they play-Pl.Past the-football?  
 When did they play football?
- (9) **Kaif** humma li?ib-u al-koora?  
 wow they play-Pl.Past the football  
 How did they play football?

Taking into account the MP movement justification, these derivations (7, 8, and 9) involves three basic devices. First, the existence of wh-expression in the clause initial position. Second, the critical step of copying **wain/bitain/kaif** (where/when/

how respectively) and adjoining the copy to the clause that is initially in the [Spec, CP] position. Lastly, while adjunction is limited by the feature-checking requirement on the functional head C, it must be matched with the corresponding features of the adjoined constituent in the [Spec, CP].

Consequently, from its canonical position inside vP, the wh-expression shifts overtly to the front of the clause and therefore, the leftmost periphery occupying [Spec, CP]. Theoretically, this movement is simply considered as a specific kind of Merge operation, which encompasses taking out an element from the lexical array, then merging it with other elements as an external merge. On the other hand, an internal merge involves a movement of an element from the current structure to a new position within the same structure. Considering this, a wh-expression that is moved leaves a copy of an extraction (trace) in the position from which it was moved. Therefore, the moved wh-expression is co-indexed or bound to its trace. In theory, therefore, taken together, a moved element and its trace constitute a movement chain, as seen in the following example:



Since making structures as minimal as possible is part of the MP's requirement, the derivation of wh-movement therefore, does not map phrase structures into phrase structures. Rather, it maps the representations as these form their conceptual structure into phrase structures. As a result, no syntactic operations (i.e. Move, Copy or Merge) can tell the difference between the representation of wh-expression in the clause initial position and non wh-expression in the post-verbal position (Culicover & Jackendoff, 2005, p. 313). To achieve both of these, the interface rules map various components into a specific position this is based on their syntactic properties and semantic roles. Furthermore, the process of binding wh-expression to its trace is not obtained by Copy, Merge and Deletion, but by chain creation, as the head of the chain is linked and positioned in the clause initial position.

MP's theoretical mechanisms state that wh-movement is a feature-driven operation, which includes checking of the morphological features. Wh-movement in (10) is thus set off by feature checking in the proper checking domain – hence the head C. Wh-expression then carries [wh] feature, while the head C carries [Q] feature that attracts the [wh] feature on wh-expression. Wh-expression, therefore, moves to its position as a specifier for feature checking. Lastly, Chomsky (1995, 1999) notes that through the syntactic operation Merge or Move, the [+wh] feature on wh-expression then goes into the checking domain with [+Q] feature of C. Thus, the scopal properties either in [Spec, CP] or in the position they

adjoined to are satisfied by wh-expressions (Gad, 2011).

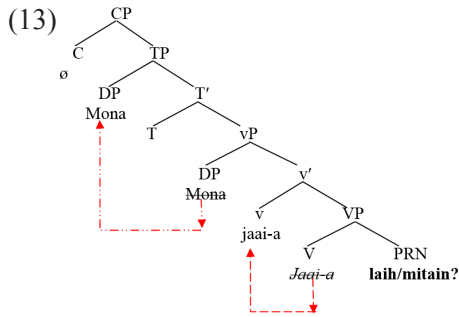
### In-Situ Wh-Questions

In the previous section, the key assumption in deriving wh-questions concerns the extraction or chain constrains between the moved element and its trace. In deriving echo questions, however, there exists no extraction constrains. Since wh-word remains in its canonical position, i.e., as a complement of the predicate, in situ wh-questions do not involve trace. Such constructions are connected to prosody, which generates the characteristic intonation, as can be gleaned in the Sudanese Arabic examples below:

- (11) Mona jaai-a                      **laih?**  
 Mona come-Fem.Future    why  
 Why is Mona coming? / Mona is  
 coming why?
- (12) Mona jaai-a                      **mitain?**  
 Mona come-Fem.Future    when  
 When is Mona coming? / Mona is  
 coming when?

In such structures (11 and 12), the wh-expressions do not get preposed; instead, they remain in situ in their canonical position, which is related to their grammatical function as non-arguments – hence A'-constituents. This provides extra information pertaining to the event expressed by the predicate. They are, therefore, positioned after their verb – **jaai** (coming). In situ questions are thus normally used as echo questions, i.e. echoing and questioning something that

has previously been said by someone. The structure of in situ similar to (11 and 12) can be seen in the following:



The structure in (13) thus indicates that wh-expressions originated as complements of their verbs; eventually, they got moved to [Spec, CP] deriving non-echo-question similar to those in the earlier section.

### Wh-Movement in Relative Clauses

In Sudanese Arabic, relative clauses have a relative complementiser *alli* “i.e. that/which” and a wh-pronoun before it. This relative complementiser indicates someone or something in the sentence’s conceptual structure at its D-structure level. This is demonstrated in the Sudanese Arabic examples below:

- (14) a. Fatima masha-t  
 Fatima leave-Fem.Past  
 Fatima left  
 b. \***min/ minu** masha-t?  
 who leave-Fem.Past  
 Who left?  
 c. **min/ minu** *alli* masha-t?  
 who that leave-Fem.Past  
 Who that left?
- (15) a. Mohamed katab gissa  
 Mohamed write.Past story  
 Mohamed wrote a story

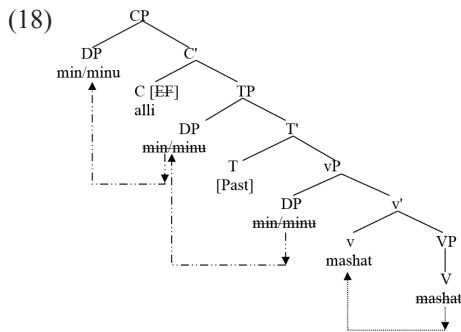
- b. \***min/ minuk** atab gissa?  
 Who write.Past story  
 Who wrote a story?  
 c. **min/ minu** *alli* katab gissa?  
 who that write.Past story  
 Who wrote a story?

- (16) a. Ahmed eshtara ?arabiya  
 Ahmed buy.Past car  
 Ahmed bought a car  
 b. \***shunu** Ahmed eshtaraa-ha?  
 what Ahmed buy.Past-Fem  
 What did Ahmed buy?  
 c. **shunu** *alli* Ahmed eshtaraa-ha?  
 What which Ahmed buy.Past-Fem  
 What did Ahmed buy?

A careful consideration of the examples in (14a, 15a, and 16a) shows that there is a movement of the DPs from their canonical position within vP towards [Spec, TP]. In obtaining non-echo-wh-questions, the usual practice is to put the wh-expression in front towards the clause-initial position or to the clause’s left periphery. However, as can be seen in (14b, 15b and 16b), ungrammatical structures, which are considered unexpected questions in Sudanese Arabic, are derived. The examples in (14c, 15c and 16c) illustrate the solution to this problem through the grammar of Sudanese Arabic inserting the relative complementiser *alli* “who/that/which” that instantly follows the argument wh-expression. Consequently, the Sudanese Arabic word *alli* “who/that/which” can be considered as the relative complementiser that heads C of CP. The assumption of Chomsky is that interrogative constructions have a readily apparent wh-expression, wherein such derived constructions, such as the wh-features, are adjoined covertly

to Q in CP. Thus, the wh-expressions shift to [Spec, CP] to license Q-features of the complementiser C, as demonstrated in the example below:

- (17) *min/minu* *alli* *masha-t*?  
 who that leave-Fem.Past  
 Who that left



So as to rationalise wh-movement, Chomsky posited that **Edge Feature (EF)** causes the wh-constituent to move into [Spec, CP]. Moreover, he asserted that in the same way the T in finite clause has an Extended Projection Principle (EPP) feature that requires it to have a subject in its Spec position, C in interrogative clause also has an EF feature that necessitates having a specifier on the edge of CP.

The structure in (18) is derived this way: the verb *mashat* “left”, which is merged with its external argument *min/minu* “who” combined with the lexical verb, shifts from V to v, forming the complex vP. Next, the external argument also has a movement from its canonical domain [Spec, vP] to [Spec, TP] in order to check EPP feature on T, forming TP. Thereafter, TP merges with the complementiser *alli* “that”, forming C'. It is requisite for the EF feature on C to have a specifier; therefore, EF of C

causes wh-expression into moving towards the [Spec, CP] position, so that the clause gets its interrogative interpretation. This is according to Interrogative Condition, outlined by Radford (2009b).

(19) **Interrogative Condition**

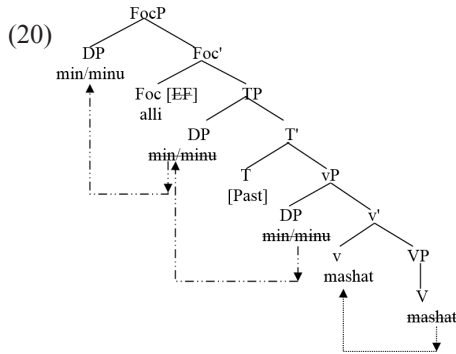
A clause is considered as a non-echoic question if it features an interrogative word in its specifier position

(Radford, 2009b, p.194).

Another proposal is also stated in the structure in (18): the wh-expression cannot go through an overt movement to [Spec, CP] across the complementiser *alli* “who/that/which”. This is due to the fact that in such a construction, *alli* functions as a wh-island constraint, blocking any movement made openly by wh-expression to [Spec, CP] position. But, this constraint is utilised for certain types of Sudanese Arabic wh-constituents (argument wh-expression), specifically *min/minu* “who/which” and *shunu* “what”. Such obligatory *alli* insertion in Sudanese Arabic with wh-expression placed before it in the syntax of wh is a characteristic that can be ascribed as the relative complementiser that heads C of CP. Moreover, its EF feature necessitates it to require a specifier in its [Spec] position.

Because *alli* has robust focus features [+Focus, +Nominal], these need to be checked somewhere during derivation. Since *alli* is a probe in search of a goal, wh-expression is the closest goal owing to the fact of being the constituent that occupies the edge of TP. Therefore, wh-expression moves to [Spec, FocP] in order to check

these features; else, the derivation will crash, as illustrated below:



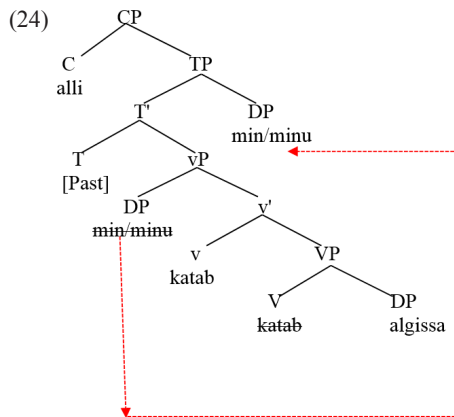
In such constructions, *alli* “who/that/which” can therefore also be considered as a relative pronoun heading the focus projection in the deep structure. In relation to that, Rizzi (2001), Gad (2011) and Fakh (2014) proposed that wh-expression overtly moves to [Spec, FocP] in order to license strong focus feature on the head Foc.

As both analyses of *alli*-construction in Sudanese Arabic are examined, it can be asserted that in such constructions, *alli* is a relative complementiser instead of a relative pronoun. This argument has its basis on the wh-in-situ strategy for the similar wh-phrases used with *alli*, with *alli* remaining in the clause-initial. Consider the following:

- (21) a. \*katab al-gissa min/minu *alli*?  
write.Past the-story who that  
Who wrote the story?  
b. *alli* katab al-gissa min/minu?  
That write.Past the-story who  
Who wrote the story?
- (22) a. \*Ahmed eshtaraa-ha shunu *alli*?  
Ahmed buy.Past-Fem what that  
What did Ahmed buy?  
b. *alli* Ahmed eshtaraa-ha shunu?  
that Ahmed buy.Past-Fem what  
What did Ahmed buy?

In careful scrutiny of Sudanese Arabic *alli*-constructions, *alli* is considered as a relative complementiser with the clause containing it as relative clauses. This is so because, in such constructions, *alli* is in reference to someone/something in the preceding wh-expression, as demonstrated below:

- (23) b. *alli* katab al-gissa min/minu?  
that write.Past the-story who  
Who wrote the story?



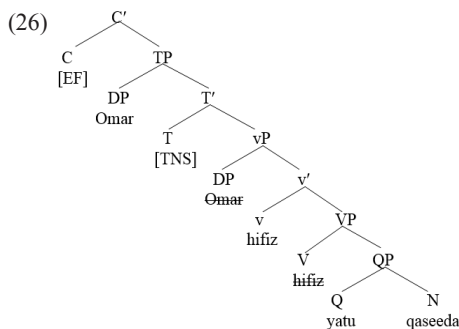
### Pied-Piping Wh-Expression

So far, analysing this wh-expression has included the movement of wh-word to a higher position within the same structure. In certain cases, however, it is not just the preposed wh-word under the scope of wh-movement that undergoes movement, as can be seen below:

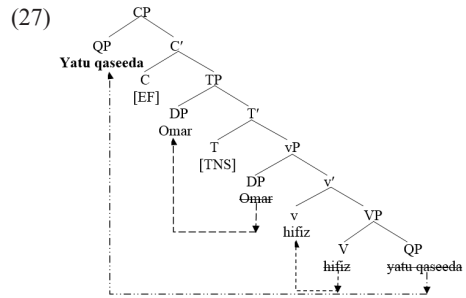
- (25) a. Omar hifz yatu qaseeda?  
Omar memorise.Past which poem  
Omar memorised which poem?  
b. \*yatu Omar hifz qaseeda?  
which Omar .memorise. Past poem  
Which poem did Omar memorise?  
c. yatu qaseeda Omar hifza-h?  
which poem Omar memorise-it Past  
Which poem did Omar memorised?



Wh-movement along with its C-command domain is illustrated in the examples in (25). The sentence in (25b) is thus ungrammatical since the material that is C-commanded by the wh-expression needs to be **pied-piped** (dragged) along with it. As a result, the complete wh-phrase needs to move to [Spec, CP] so as to derive a grammatical sentence like the one in (25c). This is how (25c) is derived: the quantifier *yatu* “which” combined with the noun *qaseeda* “poem”, forming QP *yatu qaseeda* “which poem”. Then, this QP is merged with the lexical verb *hifiz* “memorised” towards forming VP. Eventually, the lexical verb shifts and joins with the small v forming v', with the resultant v' joining with the subject Omar in order to form vP *Omar hifiz yatu qaseeda* “Omar memorised which poem”. vP is thereafter merged with the finite T, which forms T'. The subject Omar then moves to [Spec, T], forming TP. The TP that results from this is then joined with the null interrogative C, which has edge features, forming C' as exemplified below:



Wh-phrase is attracted by the edge features of C, causing its movement to the specifier position on the edge of CP, which can be seen below:



The reason why wh-word is unable to move on its own to [Spec, C] is because such a movement violates the Chain Uniformity Condition. This is formally outlined by Chomsky thusly:

- (28) **Chain Uniformity Condition**  
 “A chain is uniform with regard to the phrase structure status” (Chomsky, 1995, p.253)

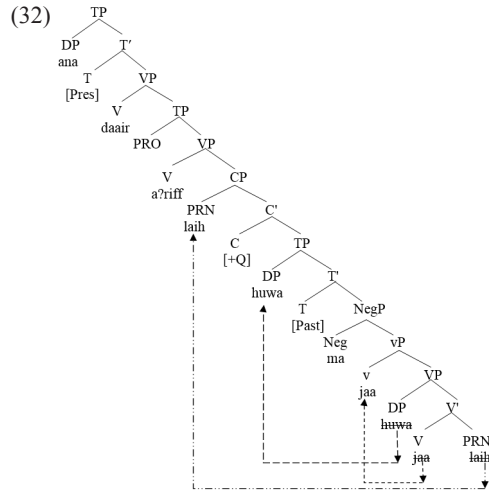
As appropriate to the particular circumstances, Chain Uniformity Condition imposes restrictions on movement and entails that any copy in the movement chain be uniform. The derivation, as seen in the following example, will not converge at LF; therefore, it will crash. This is because the status of the wh-word that was moved to [Spec, CP] has a maximal projection since it is the largest component headed by the wh-word *yatu* “which”. Moreover, the status of its copy has a minimal projection, being the head of QP. Therefore, the UG condition in (28) is violated by the wh-chain.

**Wh-Expression in Embedded Clauses**

It is also possible that a question in Sudanese Arabic be an embedded, wherein the wh-expression is placed in the initial position of embedded clause, such as:

- (29) Ana daair a?riff **laih** huwa ma jaa?  
 I want know why he not come.past  
 I want to know why he did not come?
- (30) Ismail bi-yassal **wain** Idriss masha?  
 Ismail Cont-ask.Pres where Idriss go.Past  
 Ismail is asking where did Idriss go?

On the basis of its semantic and syntactic criterion, the example used in (30) involved the verb **a?riff** “to know”, which is accusative. This verb requires two arguments: the experiencer, which is allotted to the external DP argument **ana** “I”, and the theme, which is assigned to the matrix internal CP **laih huwa ma jaa** “why he did not come”. On the level of grammatical function, the subject of the accusative verb **a?riff** “to know” is the DP, while the CP complement functions as the verb’s grammatical object. Theoretically, verbs which project a matrix clause are referred to as matrix verbs. There are two key facets of such a structure: one is the embedded clause with the wh-phrase in its initial position, and, two, the verb **jaa** “to come” which theta-marks only and only one argument, which is the agent assigned to the DP **huwa** “he”, as seen below:



This is how the tree diagram in (32) is formed: first, the derivation starts with the embedded clause, which contains the unaccusative verb **jaa** “came”, merging with its optional wh-expression complement **laih** “why”, forming V’ **jaa laih** “came why”. The resultant V’ is then joined with the DP **huwa** “he”, which receives the theta role theme from the verb **jaa** “came”, in order to form VP, which, in turn, has the paraphrased interpretation **huwa jaa laih** “he came why”. The lexical verb **jaa** then moves to join together with the small v by virtue of being a strong affix, thus, forming the complex of vP shell for the verb **jaa**. Such a movement of this verb leaves a trace which is ultimately deleted.

Combining the complex of vP shell with the negative particle **ma** “not” then forms NegP **ma jaa huwa jaa laih** “he did not come why”. Next, the resultant NegP is merged with the null functional head T, which has [EPP, Tense, *u*Case] to form T’. T’s EPP feature necessitates a movement of an element from its c-command domain

in order to check this feature. Since the pronoun **huwa** “he” is the closest DP, this DP shifts to [Spec, TP] so as to check the EPP feature of T. This forms TP **huwa ma jaa laih** “he did not come why”. In turn, TP is joined together with the functional head C which carries the [+Q] feature, forming C' **+Q huwa ma jaa laih** “+Q he did not come why”. The [+Q] on C feature needs an element in its c-command to have its matching feature move and adjoin it. Furthermore, this C probes the closest goal that has the matching feature. Because the wh-expression **lahih** “why” is the closest element with this matching feature c-commanded by C, this wh-expression shifts from its canonical place as an optional complement of the verb **jaa** to [Spec, CP] in order to license this [+Q] feature, with its trace left behind. The sentence, therefore, gets an interrogative interpretation **lahih huwa ma jaa** “why he did not come”.

Next, because the verb **a?riff** “know” requires an embedded clause complement, the resulted CP is merged with **a?riff** forming VP **a?riff laih huwa ma jaa** “know why he did not come”. This VP is henceforth merged with the non-finite null subject PRO so as to form TP, which receives the theme theta role to the higher matrix verb **daair** “want”. The TP that comes out of this is then combined with the matrix/control verb **daair** “want” in order to form the highest VP **daair a?riff laih huwa ma jaa** “want to know why he did not come”. VP is then merged with the null functional head T, forming T', which is, in turn, merged with the subject **ana** “I”, which then receives

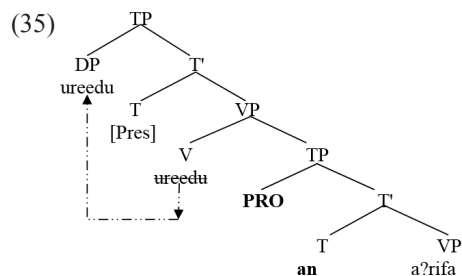
the theta role as experiencer, forming the highest TP **ana daair a?riff laih huwa ma jaa** “I want to know why he did not come”.

The subject **ana** “I” of the matrix clause controls the null subject in the control clause’s complement. Simply put, **ana** is the antecedent of PRO. Furthermore, this PRO is an empty category because it has a null spell out, having the grammatical and semantic features but lacking in phonetic features. The existence of PRO projection in (32) is evident in its counterpart Standard Arabic example used for the same sentence, as can be gleaned from the following:

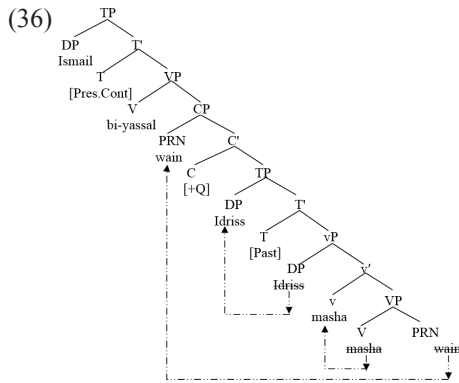
- (33) Ana daair a?riff  
 I want know  
 I want to know *Sudanese Arabic*
- (34) U-reed-u an a?rif-a  
 I-want-Nom to know-Acc  
 I want to know *Standard Arabic*

With these as givens, the Standard Arabic example in (34) can be seen in the tree diagram below:

Therefore, in Sudanese Arabic, the non-finite **an** “to” which c-commands PRO in Standard Arabic has become a null spell out.



The example in (31) has also involved the lexical verb **bi-yassal** “is asking”, theta-marking two obligatory arguments: the DP **Ismail** and the matrix CP **wain Idriss masha** “where did Idriss go”. The DP bears the theta role as agent and the CP as theme. The function of this CP is to be the grammatical object to the verb **bi-yassal** “is asking” while having the fronted wh-phrase in its [Spec, C] position. Structurally, the sentences in (31) can be read as follows:



The structure in (36) is derived as below: the derivation first begins at the embedded clause with the unergative verb **masha** “went” merging with the optional argument, the wh-expression **wain** “where”, forming VP **masha wain** “went where”. The verb **masha** gets to move and adjoin the small light verb in *v* because of its strong affix, which triggers the lexical verb to adjoin it, thus forming *v'* *v*+**masha wain**. Next, this *v'* is then merged with the external argument DP **Idriss**, which is obtained from the numeration, forming *vP* shell. The theta role of agent is assigned to this DP by the unergative verb **masha**. At this point in the derivation, all related features are checked off, while the verb **masha**’s thematic/

argument structure is being syntactically realised in the *vP* shell, which itself is a phase undergoing a transfer.

As the derivation proceeds, the complex of *vP* shell joins with the null functional head *T* that carries [Tense, EPP, & *uCase*] among others. This leads to the formation of *T'*. *T* has an [EPP] feature and it entails the movement of an element in its c-command domain to activate this feature. Because the DP **Idriss** is the closest element c-commanded by *T*, this DP moves to [Spec, *TP*], thus fulfilling this requirement. In turn, *TP* is combined with the functional head *C* which carries [+Q] feature, forming *C'* **+Q Idriss masha wain** “+Q Idriss went where”. Having a [+Q] feature comes with the requisite of having an element with the matching feature in order to move and adjoin it. Furthermore, this *C* is a probe for the closest goal that has the matching feature. Since wh-expression **wain** “where” is the closest element with this matching feature c-commanded by *C*, the wh-expression moves from its canonical position as a complement of the verb **masha** towards [Spec, *CP*] in order to license this [+Q] feature with the sentence getting an interrogative interpretation.

Lastly, the matrix verb **bi-yassal** “is asking” is combined with its *CP* complement. This *CP* ultimately receives theme theta role from the matrix verb, forming *VP* **bi-yassal wain Idriss masha** “is asking where did Idriss go”. This *VP* is then merged with the functional higher *T*, forming *T'*, which is then merged with the DP **Ismail**. This forms *TP* **Ismail bi-yassal wain Idriss masha wain** “Ismail is asking where did Idriss went”.

## CONCLUSION

In MP parlance, movement is extremely driven by the morphological requirements of a particular lexical item, thus, enhancing agreement morphology. The locality principle is a crucial point to movement. It is here that the relationship between probe and goal makes the checking and the valuing of features ensured; therefore, achieving morphology-syntax interface. Derivation-by-Phase has been adopted towards providing the syntactic discussion on such movement.

Relative to wh-movement, this paper has analysed and discussed wh-expression with simple questions, namely: with wh-expression moving into the [Spec, CP] position within the same clause; wh-expression in situ, where it stays in its original position within the vP complex; wh-expression in relative clause with the grammar of Sudanese Arabic inserting the particle “alli” in particular with argument wh-expression; pied-piping wh-expression; the structure in which wh-expression is forbidden from the movement on its own, must be dragged into its NP complement and have to be moved together; and wh-expression in embedded clauses with the movement constrained by the control verb heading the upper VP. The common property among all these instances of wh-movement is on the [Q] feature of the head C, which needs an element with the matching feature to move and adjoin it in its [Spec, CP]. Through the movement of wh-expression to [Spec, CP], this requirement is satisfied, thus satisfying the requirement of feature checking between the probe and goal.

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## **Problematizing Femininity in Slimming Advertisements**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The portrayal of women in contemporary advertisements is varied. All advertisements seem to prescribe assumptions of what it means to be a woman. In isolation, each group of ads depicts a very narrow aspect of gender definition. Together, however, they reflect the complexity of contemporary womanhood. Along product and service weight-loss ads, slimming becomes a means of defining femininity, reconstituting it and disseminating it as direct knowledge of the social world as representations of reality. The images of femininity, as they appear in slimming advertisements, have the power to narrowly define and construct the 'feminine.' Advertisements, therefore, can be understood as carriers of a dominant ideology of femininity. Advertisements define what forms of femininity are acceptable and desirable. Experiences that contradict prevailing values of those given are either excluded or denied, reinforcing existing limited meanings of femininity. This paper examines the ideological construction of femininity through a close analysis of slimming advertisements found in Malaysia's leading English daily, *The Star*. Using the framework of Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis and Jewitt's (1999) visual social semiotics, the paper aims at discovering how language and visual means are exploited to define what forms of femininity are acceptable and desirable. Through this, the paper seeks to clarify some of the discursive mechanisms used in disseminating an ideological construct of femininity that spurs women's relentless pursuit of slimming.

*Keywords:* Advertisements, body, critical discourse analysis, femininity, ideology, slimming, visual social semiotics

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The scholarship of advertisements and its impact on body image is a growing concern globally. A slim body is seen as one of the mainstream concepts of feminine beauty

(Wolf, 2002; Albani, 2005; Ng, 2005; Lee & Fung, 2006; Thompson, Schaefer, & Menzel, 2012; Lau, 2013). The proposition of female attractiveness in terms of a slim body is one of the chief reasons behind increased female body dissatisfaction, body shame, eating disorders and even body modification (Chernin, 1983; Kilbourne, 1987, 1999a, 1999b; Featherstone, 2000; Bordo, 2003; Grogan, 2008; Orbach, 2009; Ata et al., 2013). However, exactly how an advertisement works to engage a person in such life-changing behaviour remains relatively understudied.

The present study problematised femininity in slimming advertisements. A close examination of the selected slimming advertisements was done to show how the concept of femininity in an advertisement works to influence people. Existing literature on the concern of advertising and body image has rarely dealt with this topic through the lens of semiotics and linguistics analysis. This paper attempts to fill this gap. This study is significant for several reasons: firstly, it delved into images of the ideal body promoted in slimming advertisements; secondly, it used the analytical framework of Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis and Jewitt's (1999) visual social semiotics as methods of enquiry on the written and visual content of slimming advertisements; and thirdly, it unmasked the ideological construction of femininity that subtly engages women of all ages into desiring this ideal body. The following sections outline the ideological roles of advertising

and propose a theoretical framework that combines semiotics and linguistics analysis to problematise femininity in slimming advertisements. This will uncover the opaque relationship between slimming and advertising – one being ideological and invested in the concept of femininity and the other, as a vehicle to promote and disseminate it.

### **Advertising and Its Ideological Roles**

Advertising, in the past and present, has been and still is, using gender as one of its preeminent social resources, where gender is an integral part of the social structure and psychology of advertising (Jhally, 1987, p.134; Barthel, 1988, p.6; Mager & Helgeson, 2011; Zotos & Tschla, 2014). Given the popularity of advertisements in our contemporary culture and the representations of gender within them, it is hardly a surprise that advertising has become a focus of analysis for researchers concerned with the ways in which advertisements influence the ways women view their body.

Admittedly, ever since the 1960s, the portrayal of women in advertising and their impact have been topics of contentious debate. The portrayal of women in contemporary advertisements is varied. In isolation, each type of advertisement depicts a very narrow aspect of gender definition. Together, however, they reflect the complexity of contemporary womanhood. From the head to the toe: skin care, hair care, cosmetic, fashion, perfume, jewellery, slimming, just to name a few, are some of the advertisements that



target women exclusively. At best, they all intend to enhance female beauty; at worst, they are really saying that every female has something physically wrong that needs correction, either through the products or services promoted. The growing concern with the ways in which women have been constructed within popular media is founded on how media representations constitute gender difference, rather than simply reflect or represent that difference.

Many critics have described advertising as “a bellwether of cultural trends, a mirror of social values, and a powerful, usually malevolent force that shapes those values.” (Duffy, 1994, p. 5). Such descriptions convey the heavyweight impact of advertising’s influence. What most criticism is uneasy with is the troubling fact that advertisements prescribe assumptions of what it means to be a woman (Berger, 1972; Williamson, 1978; Kilborne, 1987, 1999; Duffy, 1994; Wood, 2001; Wolf, 2002; Zuraidah, 2003; Zimmerman & Dahlberg, 2008; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014). In fact, John Berger (1972), the art historian, went even further by noting that advertising had infiltrated and become a central part of the culture of consumer society. In its power to ascribe and communicate meaning, advertising moved from being part of the business enterprise to becoming a social institution, replacing the functions traditionally held by art or religion (Berger, 1972; Williamson, 1978). What appears to be problematic is that advertisements do not just reflect the social world but a highly selective reconstitution of day-to-day life. As Saco

(1992, p. 25) contended, while the meaning of femininity and masculinity is constructed through advertisement representations, these constructions are usually projected as though they hold direct knowledge of the social world, that is, representations of reality. In the context of this paper’s investigation, these problems pertaining to advertising’s ideological functions are in line with Shelley Budgeon’s (1994, pp. 56–7) concerns: The images of femininity, as they appear in advertisements, have the power to narrowly define and construct the ‘feminine’. Therefore, feminist analysis of these mass-produced and mass-circulated images has been a struggle over meaning. This struggle has been motivated by a concern for the implications that definitions of ‘femininity’ have for women’s lives. The importance of understanding the images of women in advertising, as well as the power these images have in defining femininity, is to be found in the connection between these images and the wider social context within which they exist. Budgeon’s emphasis on the “importance of understanding the images of women in advertising, as well as the power these images have in defining femininity” cannot be ignored. In contemporary society, women are becoming obsessed about their physical appearance. This can be seen from the variety of diet products, thriving gym culture and the alarming rate of cosmetic surgery for beauty’s sake (Wykes & Gunter, 2005; Orbach, 2009; Dworkin, 2009; Brooks, 2004; Lirola, 2012). Even the natural process of ageing has become an unacceptable fact of life (Zuraidah,

2003; Carter, 2014). This has tremendous rippling repercussions in the wider social context. First and foremost, the co-optation of female insecurity as a capital for the consumer market has become insidiously rampant. To profit from someone's fear is as good as daylight robbery. Second, the psychological implications are further noted when anorexia, bulimia or many other forms of body dysmorphic disorders have become uncontrollable social issues among the young and old. Third, and certainly not the last, in the macro social contexts, we see how a narrow meaning of femininity has been perpetuated for economic purposes. At its best, advertising alerts us to the potential for unintended effects of advertising messages and portrayal of women; at their worst, advertising perpetuates sexist stereotypes and encourages exploitation by marketers (Duffy, 1994; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014).

### **Femininity: A Social and Cultural Apparatus**

The word 'femininity', like the term 'gender', is understood as a social, symbolic creation. It is neither innate nor necessarily immutable. Gender, from a vast repertoire of gender studies, is understood to be socially constructed and acquired through interaction in a social world and it is malleable (Coates, 1971; Jhally, 1989; Kilbourne, 1999a, 1999b; Wood, 2001; Sunderland, 2006; Deutsch, 2007; Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). Wood (2001, pp. 22-3) explained how a culture constructs and perpetuates meanings of gender by endowing biological

sex with social significance. In Wood's words:

*The meaning of gender grows out of a society's values, beliefs, and preferred ways of organizing collective life. A culture constructs and sustains meanings of gender by investing biological sex with social significance. [...] To be masculine is to be strong, ambitious, successful, rational, and emotionally controlled. [...] To be feminine is to be attractive, deferential, unaggressive, emotional, nurturing, and concerned with people and relationships. Those who embody the cultural definition of femininity still don't outdo men (especially their mates), disregard others' feelings, or put their needs ahead of others. Also, "real women" still look good (preferably very pretty and/or sexy), adore children, and care about homemaking.*

Drawing from this, femininity is also malleable in every sense as it is constructed within social interaction and its norms, conventions and relations are constantly negotiated. Wood (2001, p. 25) added, "individuals who internalize cultural prescriptions for gender reinforce traditional views by behaving in ways that support prevailing ideas about masculinity and femininity." This also extends to support the assumption that the body is an entity that is not immutable and subscribes to

social construction (Zuraidah, 2003; Frith et al., 2005; Pienaar, 2006; Zuraidah, 2009; Wilkinson, 2015). Advertising perpetually sells ideal beauty as young, with flawless skin, perfect curves and features – all these “manufactured” as the advertisers deemed fit and in the process, distorts reality or in Zuraidah’s (2003, p. 265) deft observation, “[o]nce a certain look is sanctioned by enough people, it redefines normal appearance, even if society has crossed over the borderline of sanity.” It is exactly when a distorted reality is sanctioned as acceptable and normal, that the ideology of femininity is considered most successful. van Dijk (1998, p. 8) in developing “a new notion of ideology that serves as the interface between social structure and social cognition”, informed us that: “[...] ideologies may be very succinctly defined as the basis of the social representations, shared by members of a group.” This means that ideologies allow people, as group members, to organise the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, for them, and to act accordingly [emphasis author’s]. The normalisation of even a distorted reality calls for the need to pathologise femininity: what is to be considered as a beautiful face, body, complexion or body shape? Messages of femininity are, over time, rooted in a culture and shared by kith and kin, literature, media and especially, the beauty industry. It is a site of cultural imprint where the cultural imperative is that women’s bodies require size control, unblemished fair faces and certain looks that are critically seen as

being the product of discursive practices and social practices.

Slimming advertisements, as a specific type of discourse in the process of promoting services and selling products, offers stereotypical notions of the appearance of women that reinforce socially constructed ideas of femininity. This is a manipulation of the essentialist characteristics of women, setting them in a highly fixed mould of how a woman should behave and look like. Hitherto, what constitutes femininity and beauty in contemporary culture needs to be re-examined.

## METHODOLOGY

This paper examined the ideological construction of femininity through a close analysis of the slimming advertisements found in Malaysia’s leading English daily – *The Star*. The data comprised advertisements on slimming products and services collected over 18 months, from July 2007 to December 2008. Slimming advertisements as a genre, and a form of discourse and system of language, have not been thoroughly researched. It is fertile ground for an interrogation of the linguistics and visual exploitations that lead to a rich site of contestation and ambiguity in the production of meaning. The intersecting of different disciplines (gender, media and applied linguistics), therefore, constitutes an attempt for the analysis of linguistics and visual components in advertisements and how they are salient elements in the process of the production and consolidation of meanings.

To critique ideologies implicit in advertisements, a methodology anchored in critical discourse analysis was warranted. Critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA) is entrenched in critical theory and is used to locate representations of ideology within a particular discourse.<sup>1</sup> The chief strength of CDA lies in its 'critical' aims that enable it to champion social issues and forms of inequality in society by making apparent opacity of the issues concerned. van Dijk (2000) informed that CDA is not a singular unitary framework, but rather, some of its main analytical tools stem from various disciplines: systemic functional linguistics, pragmatics, speech act theory and of recent development, visual semiotic. CDA uses these analytical tools to disclose encoded ideologies implicit in various texts. Central to CDA is analysing, describing, interpreting and critiquing social life portrayed in texts. It aims to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and discrimination and how these sources are produced, maintained, legitimised and perpetuated within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts (van Dijk, 1988). CDA attempts to illuminate ways in which the dominant forces in a society construct versions of reality that favour their interests. By uncovering such practices, CDA supports the victims of such marginalisation and oppression, stirs awakening and even encourages resistance.

In this paper, the theoretical framework is based on Norman Fairclough's CDA. According to Fairclough (1993, p. 135), CDA:

*Aims to systematically explore often opaque relationship of causality and determination between a) discursive practices, events and texts and b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations and power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor of securing power and hegemony.*

The main thrust of CDA is to unmask ideological assumptions that are hidden in the words of our written or spoken discourse. CDA aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships between discursive practices, texts and events and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. It strives to examine how these non-transparent relationships are a factor in securing power and hegemony and it draws attention to power imbalances, social inequities, nondemocratic practices and other forms of injustice in hopes of spurring people to corrective action (Fairclough, 1989).

In this paper, to critique ideology implicit in the slimming advertisements, CDA takes on the descriptive framework of visual social semiotics.<sup>2</sup> As slimming advertisements are rich in visual components, this analytical tool is considered to be most appropriate. Jewitt's (1999) visual social semiotics

approach is referred to as the consideration of the ‘social’ dimension and helps to show the connection between these images and the wider social context. Jewitt also stressed on the role of human agency and social context in the construction of meaning.

The following is a replication of Jewitt’s (1999) framework of visual social semiotics analysis of visual communication. Jewitt adopted the metafunctions in Kress and van Leeuwen’s choice of

terminology: representation, interactive and compositional.<sup>3</sup> Each of these three is further expanded to its sub-categories. All three metafunctions carry significant weight in the construction of meaning. However, in this paper, the analysis is limited to the interactive metafunction in order to allow more space for in-depth analysis. Nonetheless, with just the interactive metafunction, the detailed and systematic analysis is sufficient to demonstrate how images in slimming

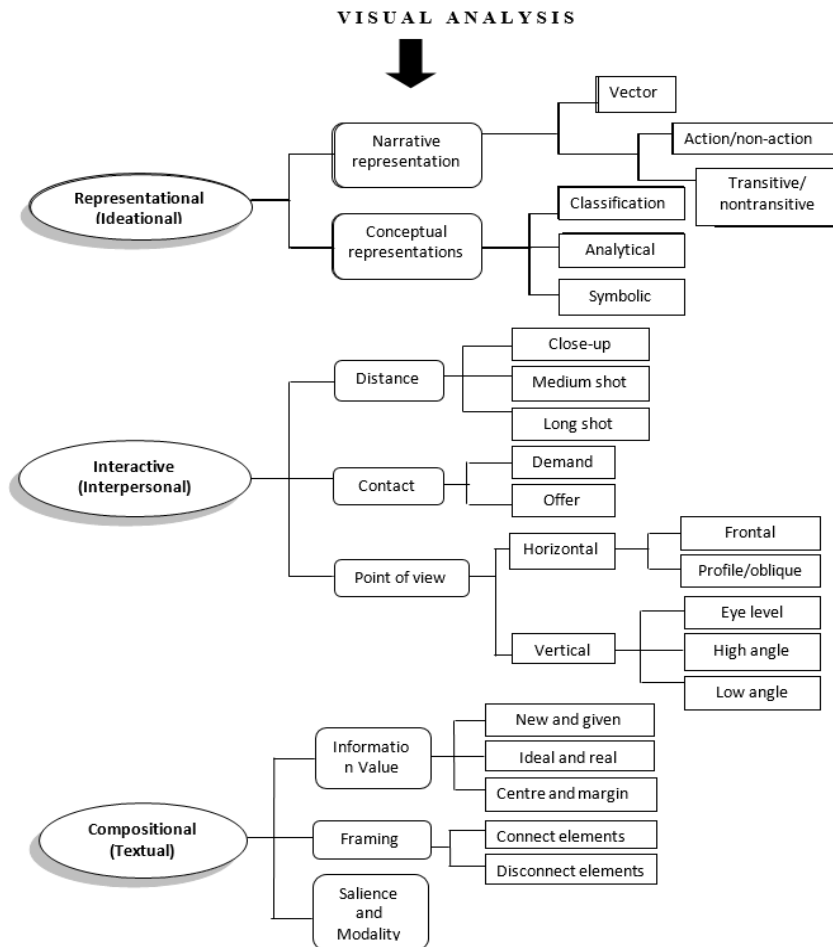


Figure 1. Visual social semiotics key dimensions (adapted from Jewitt, 1999).

advertisements contribute to the ideological notion of feminine appeal or femininity.

## DISCUSSION

The analysis explored a discursive practice in a particular site, namely slimming advertisements. The analysis included both written and visual text types. The first closely followed Fairclough's (1989, 1995 & 2003), analysis of discursive practice and focussed on the content and linguistic features of the selected slimming advertisements to disclose the ideological construction of femininity. As for the visual components, Jewitt's (1999) visual social semiotics was employed to disclose the exploitation of visuals in reinforcing stereotypes of feminine beauty. These theoretical frameworks demonstrate how the female body image is constituted in advertising and how the ideas of femininity are relegated to strait-jacketed ideals.

We see how slimming ideals are constructed in visual and written forms to stir up feelings of shortcomings, either regarding negative body images or general feelings of inadequacy. With these crippling feelings of dissatisfaction, insecurity and even fear, inevitably one is compelled to feel a need to shape up. In this way, slimming advertisements play a role in constructing, disseminating and perpetuating ideologies about femininity as 'truth'. In this paper, selected advertisements were examined closely to underline the prevailing ideological construction of femininity. 'Marie France' is a renowned slimming centre in Malaysia and in many other

countries as well. In Malaysia, its publicity is rampant in major newspapers. Selected from 'Marie France' are five advertisements featuring three spokespersons.

The following are the tagline and bodycopy from these advertisements:

Extract 1 (Appendix 1)

FLAUNT SLENDER, TONED ARMS

*Flabby, sagging arms will now be a thing of the past. The experts at Marie France Bodyline can help you trim away those unwanted inches. At Marie France Bodyline, we understand your body. Different problem areas require specific targeting methods. Our slimming programmes use a combination of advanced technologies all aimed specifically at removing stubborn flab and toning the arm area. You'll feel confident with your new fit and fabulous arms!*

Extract 2 (Appendix 2)

THIGH ENVY

*Actresses have nightmares too! Me? I've always been a victim of thunder thighs and chunky legs. Months of vain attempts to keep trim by dancing did nothing for me. This, coupled with my hectic schedule and diet struggles only served to discourage me further – as I always ended up exhausted and unhappy. Then I realized, "I can't be doing this forever!" So I turned to Marie*

*France Bodyline for help. What a good move!*

*There, I was quickly introduced to BioThermie Plus, an excellent fat reduction programme that targets the most stubborn areas to help you shed excess pounds. The next thing I knew, I looked in the mirror one day and saw a total body transformation! Finally, I had the shapely, toned legs that I've always dreamed of. Thanks to Marie France Bodyline, I'm now the envy of all women. And I say, "Hey, if you've got it, flaunt it!"*

Extract 3 (Appendix 3)  
WHEN YOUR CLOTHES GET TOO TIGHT, IT'S TIME TO LOSE THE FLAB

*Start shedding the excess inches with Marie France Bodyline today. After giving birth to my now 8 year-old son, I couldn't regain my once svelte figure. On top of that, I battled with hormonal imbalances and I couldn't control my diet as I had a weakness for pastries and cakes. One day, my son innocently asked why I couldn't be slim and beautiful like his friends' moms. Little did he know, he made me realize that I had to do something about my weight problem. Desperate to shape up, I tried almost everything from diets to pills but none worked. In the last attempt, I approached Marie France Bodyline – and it was*

*the best decision I've ever made! After undergoing their proven and effective slimming programmes, I now boast a slimmer, healthier body, and am proud to be a beautiful mom. If I can do it, so can you!*

Extract 4 (Appendix 4)  
IS YOUR TOP SPILLING OUT FROM OVER-EATING?

*Let us help you trim your waistline and shape your body. Expanding waistline and unsightly bulges? Fight the flab with Marie France Bodyline. With our expertise and wide range of revolutionary programmes, your individual slimming needs will be well taken care of. Our proven results, up-to-date technology and thousands of satisfied customers make us the one name that women trust when it comes to slimming. So come to us and embark on a journey to reveal a slimmer, sexier you!*

Extract 5 (Appendix 5)  
BATTLE YOUR BULGE

*Don't wait till you pop out of your clothes. It's time you did something about those stubborn bulges. Luckily, slimming experts Marie France Bodyline has what it takes to help you slim down and show off a sensational silhouette. The Laser Pulse System (LPS) consists of a 3-pronged approach*

*that targets and breaks down stubborn fat and reduces cellulite by stimulating cell metabolism and boosting the lipolysis (fat reduction) effect. No more worries about cellulite, unsightly bulges and saggy skin as you can now flaunt a stunning figure. Our proven results, advanced technology and thousands of satisfied customers make us the one name women trust when it comes to body perfection. Come to us and achieve a slimmer and more sensational body, just like Andrea!*

### TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In the following section, the range of discursive mechanisms employed in the ideological construction of femininity is discussed at length. These discursive mechanisms operate in different levels: from lexicalisation to discourse practice.

In examining these taglines and bodycopy, the recurrent 'problems' to promote feminine beauty always revolve around an obscure problem, namely a bulging tummy, flabby arms, thunder thighs, unsightly cellulite and so forth. The irony of this is that the advertisements harp on flaws to 'entice' women into buying their services or products. The tagline, usually, is a short catchy statement to arrest one's attention. It either encourages desire or zooms in on problems respectively: "Flaunt slender, toned arms", "Thigh envy" or "Battle your bulge", "When your clothes get too tight, it's time to lose the flab" and at times, in

the form of a question, "Is your top spilling out from over-eating?" By giving specific qualities of what is desirable for one's arms or thighs, the purpose is to stir a desire to have those "slender" and "toned" arms or thighs. At times, even linguistic feature like the alliteration of bilabial voiced plosive, /b/ in "Battle Your Bulge" is used to enhance the notion that being overweight is a "battle" in life; there is a sense of war-like imagery where the need to combat the "bulge" is likened to undertaking a military task. Rhetorical questions are also used to advance the need to drop some pounds. The tagline, on the other hand, thrives on negative body images of "bulge," "flab" etc. to constantly remind women of the need for physical trimming. By constantly bombarding women with negative body images, slimming advertisements peddle and reinforce the hyped-up slimness as a core quality of femininity or feminine appeal.

Bodycopy, on the other hand, usually expands on the key tagline, with details to further support the negative body image, thereby making body slimming a crucial matter for women. Likewise, bodycopy oscillates between creating desire and highlighting flaws. In suggesting these ideals ("You'll feel confident with your new fit and fabulous arms!"; "a slimmer, sexier you!"; "slim down and show off a sensational silhouette"; "flaunt a stunning figure" and "achieve a slimmer and more sensational body, just like Andrea!"), women are bombarded with slim and trim ideals. The choice of celebrities as



spokespersons usually strengthens the message as celebrity-worship is pervasive pop culture today. The phrase, “just like Andrea!” creates a desirability and possibility to be as attractive as Andrea. Wykes and Gunter (2005, p. 52) informed us that these voices act as “subjects of social construction” of what it is to be a woman.

*The problem seems to be that so many of the images offered to women in the media are the same – slender, fair, fit, young, sexual – and the goods sold to women are sold to ‘help’ them achieve that image whilst, at the same time, women are expected increasingly to occupy a large variety of roles – sex symbol, career woman, mother, wife, housewife, athlete. [...]. All women modify, some morph and some mutilate in the effort to define themselves – all of us are subject to the same pressures and so to some extent all women suffer as subjects of social construction.*

On the same continuum, demeaning women through drilling them to feel more and more dissatisfaction with their bodies is yet another tactic to further reinforce this unrealistic ideal. Some of the words, “flabby, sagging arms,” “stubborn fat,” “thunder thigh, chunky legs,” “expanding waistline,” “unsightly bulges,” and “cellulite” drum in fat-removing must-do. This creates body shape dissatisfaction so much so that “women tend to regard themselves as bigger

than they really are” (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 5).

From here, the prescription of cures is made available and these claims are supported by various methods: motivational, creating desire, focussing on flaws and medico-scientific genres, just to name a few. Naturally, this elevates the advertiser to a hoisted vantage point as the expert voice and source of knowledge to give readers the kind of professional advice needed. By ascribing clinical identity through affiliation with technologically advanced or medico-scientific genres of body slimming, the advertiser becomes the authorial discourse of ‘chosen’ feminine appeal and further endorses the cultural context of the construction of the ideals of femininity. That said, perhaps the question to ask at this point is, “Is femininity relegated to outward appearance alone?” From these advertisements, the messages seem to be so.

## VISUAL ANALYSIS

In this section, the interactive meaning from the visual in slimming advertisements will be explored closely in terms of the paper’s research goal. Jewitt and Oyama (2001, p. 145) stated that, “[i]mages can create particular relations between viewers and the world inside the picture frame. In this way they interact with viewers and suggest the attitude viewers should take towards what is being represented.” Such interaction is to project the represented world inside the picture frame to viewers and to invite them to respond to it. Jewitt (1999, p. 273), following Kress and van Leeuwen

(1996), delineated that there are three interactive structures that play a key role in the realisation of these meanings: distance, contact and point of view. Jewitt added that together they can “create complex and subtle relations between the represented and the viewer.” We will take a close look at each of the interactive structures closely and see how interactive meanings are played out in the selected slimming advertisements.

### Contact

Jewitt and Oyama (2001, p. 146) explained that when the represented people in the picture frame look directly at the viewer, they attempt to “make contact” with the viewers. This, in turn, establishes an imaginary relation between these two parties. According to Jewitt and Oyama, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) relegated such pictures as being “demand” pictures where

*The people in the picture symbolically demand something from the viewer facial expression and gestures then fill in what exactly they ‘demand’ in this way: they can demand deference, by unblinkingly looking down on the viewers, or pity, by pleadingly looking up at them; they can address viewers with an ingratiating smile or unsettle them with a penetrating stare [...].*

Jewitt and Oyama (2001, p. 146) explained that “[g]estures can further modify what is demanded, as in the famous ‘Your Country Needs YOU!’ recruitment poster. Without this kind of ‘imaginary contact’ we look quite differently at the people in the picture frame. We ‘observe’ them in a detached way and impersonal manner as though they are specimen in a display case. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) called such pictures “offers” – an “offer of information” is made [...].”<sup>4</sup>

In all the five selected slimming advertisements, there are three spokespersons. Andrea Fonseka (Appendices 1, 4 & 5), Bernice Liu (Appendix 2) and an unnamed lady (Appendix 3) appear in long shots and seem to have something to offer to viewers. By appearing in long shots, they are showing the full length of their shapely and slender bodies to the viewers; the unnamed lady posed for before and after shots. Standing position, dressing and facial expressions all sum up what they have to offer to the viewers. Clad in body hugging tops and either hot pants or short flowy skirts, the spokespersons showcase their feminine silhouette. The gleeful facial expressions show that they are offering their happiness, satisfaction, beauty and most of all, their shapely bodies for the viewers’ consumption. The information offered is that the woman pictured is desirable simply for her good looks; the viewers therefore, are drawn to share in their attractive appeal. The direct gaze at the viewer attempts at eye-contact and thus, establishes an imaginary relationship between the represented and the

viewer. Again, the ideological construction of femininity ideals projected through these images constantly reminds women that they are synonymous with their appearance.

Apart from the interactive structure of contact, it is also useful to understand the social context of the use of celebrities like Andrea Fonseka and Bernice Liu. Both are well-known personalities in Asia.<sup>5</sup> Their representation conveys that even celebrities struggle with weight issues and opt for slimming centres. If they can do it, so can you! There is a connection made between successful people and (anonymous) you. Therefore if you do what they do, you will also be viewed as successful, confident individuals who are admired and looked up to. This includes the emotional, intellectual and psychological dimension in these slimming adverts. If you do as they do, you will be emotionally happy and fulfilled, psychologically well-adapted and successful in your life. The physical construct determines the other dimensions of your personality.

### Distance

Another way of discerning the level of interactive meaning can be seen in the 'distance' of people, places or things as they appear in the viewer. This suggestion of distance can either narrow or expand the gap between the viewer and the represented in the images. Similar to our day-to-day interaction, the norms of social relations decide the distance we keep from each other. This, according to Jewitt and Oyama (2001,

p. 146), "translates into the 'size of frame' of shots." They further explicated that,

*[t]o see people close up is to see them in the way we would normally only see people with whom we are more or less intimately acquainted. Every detail of their face and their expression is visible. We are so close to them we could almost touch them. They reveal their individuality and their personality. To see people from a distance is to see them in the way we would normally only see strangers, people whose lives do touch on ours. We see them in outline, impersonally, as types rather than as individuals. This does not mean of course that the people we see represented in close-up are actually close to use, or vice versa. It means they are represented as though they belong or should belong to 'our group', and that the viewer is thereby addressed as a certain kind of person.*

Distance, in other words, projects the possible relationship between the represented in the image and the viewers. Borrowed from the terminology of electronic media, a close-up, according to Jewitt and Oyama (2001, p. 146),

*[a] close-up (head and shoulders or less) suggests an intimate/personal relationship; a medium shot (cutting off the human figure*

*somewhere between the waist and the knees) suggests a social relationship [...]; and a 'long shot' (showing the full figure, whether just fitting in the frame or even more distant) suggests an impersonal relationship.*

However, in the case of slimming advertisements, the long-shot is usually used to enable viewers to have a good look at the slender shape, sometimes captured sideways, to further enhance the slim appeal. Thus, in the case of the selected slimming advertisements, the use of close-ups was not exactly to suggest an impersonal relationship as suggested by Jewitt and Oyama. In the case of slimming advertisements, close-up and medium shots may not deliver results as good as do long shots. In close shots, you see everything, and everybody knows perfection is impossible. Long shots add to the idealisation and possibilities of perfection offered by the ads. They foster the 'dream' and vaguely suggest that 'you too can be like this' without going into the details – which would only flush out all the imperfections of the person in the picture. Likewise with medium shots: they do not provide flattering shots of the represented silhouette. Therefore, with slimming advertisements, this interactive structure is employed with a twist, not as the original framework would have it, as "an impersonal relationship." Rather, in slimming advertisements, the long shot is fully utilised to achieve the commercial goal:

to get the viewer to desire the represented body shape.

### **Point of View**

Another means of drawing out potential meaning is 'point of view' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, pp. 135–53). This can be drawn from horizontal or vertical dimensions. In Jewitt's (1997, 1999) study, which explored the visual representation of male heterosexuality in British sexual health materials aimed at people aged 13 to 19 years old, she described how in the horizontal dimension, frontal angles were used to increase audience identification and involvement with represented participants and vertical angles were used to represent men as powerful in particular roles. Jewitt and Oyama (2001, p. 135) clarified:

*'power', 'detachment', 'involvement', and so on, are not 'the' meanings of these angles. They are an attempt to describe a meaning potential, a field of possible meanings, which need to be activated by the producers and viewers of images. But this field of possible meanings is not unlimited. If you want to express that something or someone is impressive and powerful, you are unlikely to choose a high angle, and if you see someone depicted from a high angle, you are unlikely to conclude that he or she is represented as an impressive and powerful person*

*[...] symbolic relations are not real relations, and it is precisely this which makes point of view a semiotic resource. It can 'lie'. Photographs can symbolically make us relate as an equal to people who in fact have very considerable power over our lives (for example, politicians), or it can make us look in a detached way at people who we are involved with [...].*

In saying this, what appears in an image may not be entirely true; it is only a representation and functions at the symbolic level. Yet, this symbolic projection is the very grounds for viewers to believe in the possibilities, ideals or parallel between the represented and themselves. From here, what can be said of the frontal shots of Bernice Liu (Appendix 2) and unnamed lady (Appendix 3) are varied. While Liu and the unnamed lady's frontal angles are used to increase audience identification, the former invites desirability while the latter invites repulsion

at her fatness or even admiration, especially with her new slimming success self-pose next to the before-shot. If you are fat, you are anonymous and your name is not even mentioned, as in the case of the unnamed lady; you vanish into the background. You are projected as not successful or happy or fulfilled. But if you could slim down, like Liu and Fonseka did, then everyone will notice you because you are considered beautiful, confident, successful, happy and fulfilled. You can be famous too! In addition, in the spokespersons' apparent display of their bodies, we also see how a muffin and two torsos make up the collage of images in a single ad in Appendices 3, 4 and 5. Each image contributes to building up the aim of Marie France: to entice viewers into joining their slimming services. Appendix 3 shows an unidentified someone struggling to zip up her trousers, obviously to illustrate the tagline "When your clothes get too tight, it's time to lose the flab." The same strategies are seen in Appendices 4 and 5. The image of a muffin "spilling out" from a cropped pair of trousers in Appendix 4

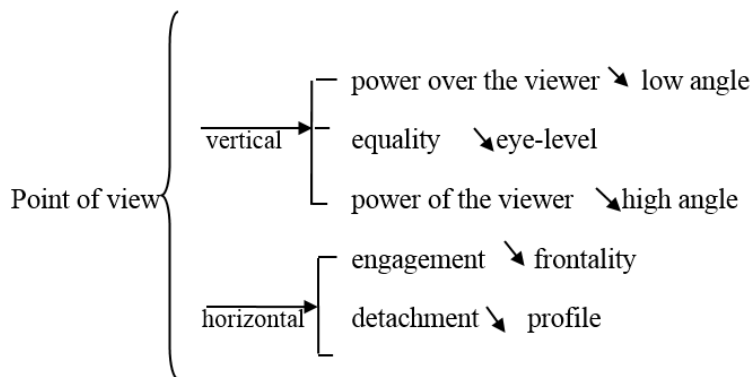


Figure 2. Resource of 'point of view' (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001).

and the super-imposed torso buttoning up, with the tagline “Battle your Bulge” across the image of Appendix 5, carry the same message: the co-optation of women’s body image dissatisfaction drives the inclination to ‘buy’ the suggested ideas of femininity.

## CONCLUSION

As we have seen from the analyses of these advertisements, advertising is a forceful carrier of the dominant ideology of femininity. In these slimming advertisements, the dominant meanings of femininity are limited to body appearance. The definitions are narrow and pertain only to the physical. It is implied that the physical is the ‘doorway’ to many positive psychosocial aspects in life: for example, friendship, romance, confidence, happiness and success. This romantic lie is insidious because it pretends that if you lose a few pounds (physical), you will find eternal bliss, romance, success and many other non-physical fulfilments. Although body image is only an aspect of female beauty, slimming becomes a means of defining femininity, reconstituting it and disseminating it as direct knowledge of the social world, that is, representations of reality in a larger social system. The images of femininity, as they appear in slimming advertisements, have narrowly defined and constructed femininity. These advertisements define what forms of femininity are acceptable and desirable. Such a limited view can displace people, male and female alike. In addition, experiences that contradict with prevailing values of those given are either excluded

or denied. Rigid definitions of femininity relegate those who do not fit in to a constant state of insecurity. For the single person, they strive to achieve the feminine appeal so that they are attractive to the opposite sex and fit the bill in the social norm of must-marry-before-it-is-too-late; for the married person, the constant striving is to lose post-natal weight, portrayed as one of the main concerns. Other constant battles throughout a lifetime include having to ward off the signs of ageing and the need to maintain a flawless complexion and shapely body, among others. This, as mentioned earlier, has translated into gym culture, diet fads and a booming beauty-line industry.

Critical analysis of representations of women in advertisements is necessary to understand how ideology is produced, maintained, legitimised and disseminated. Only through exposing such narrow definitions as being ideologically invested, can these representations be critically challenged and questioned. The importance of understanding the images of women in advertising, as well as the power these images have in defining femininity, is to be found in the connection between these images and the wider social context where notions such as slim body appeal are exploited for the profit of the beauty industry.

The findings above, in a way, have extended the previous research in the disciplines of gender and media. The major lines of advertising research focus on three areas: i) content analyses, where a variety of analytical tools are used to establish sexism;

ii) audience or reaction studies, which measure responses to advertising portrayal and strategy; and iii) critical analyses, which concentrate on the implications of advertising to society (Duffy, 1994). By drawing on the descriptive frameworks of visual social semiotics and CDA, this study highlighted that a network of different disciplines is possibly more enriching. Linguistics and semiotics as modes of enquiry help to expose and challenge the narrowed definition of feminine appeal as suggested in slimming ads. This study explored and challenged the main ideology of a slim body image. It is hoped that this study will help women to avoid falling prey to the ‘promises’ of slimming products and services. It creates awareness and a constructive ‘suspicion’ of such promotional materials.

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Although a young science, CDA can be traced as far back as Marxist discourse, and its manifesto is more closely drawn from the members of the Frankfurt school comprising philosophers such as Habermas, Adorno, Benjamin, Althusser, Bakhtin, Gramsci, Foucault and Pecheux (van Dijk, 1993). Stemming from Habermas’ (1973) critical theory, CDA aims to highlight social issues that are mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationships, all perpetuated by means of communication in written or spoken words.

<sup>2</sup>The analytical tool of visual social semiotics is based on Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) theory of the grammar of visual design. It is a descriptive framework that attempts a detailed and systematic description of each of the images based on 18 descriptive dimensions. For further reading, see Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) *Reading Images* and Jewitt’s (1999) “A

social semiotic analysis of male heterosexuality in sexual health resources: The case of images”.

<sup>3</sup>Kress and van Leeuwen, on the other hand, adapt these three metafunctions from the work of linguist M. A. K. Halliday (1985).

<sup>4</sup>The terms ‘offer’ and ‘demand’ were taken from Halliday (1985), who uses them to distinguish between different classes of speech act, questions and commands, which ‘demand’, respectively, ‘information’ and ‘goods and services’, and statements and offers, which ‘offer’, respectively, ‘information’ and ‘goods and services’.

<sup>5</sup>Andrea Fonseka is the title holder of Miss Malaysia Universe 2004. She was also, for two consecutive years, voted the world’s sexiest woman by FHM Singapore’s Top 100 Sexiest Women. Bernice Liu, on the other hand, is no less a celebrity. Hailing from Vancouver, Canada, she rose to fame after being crowned Miss Chinese International 2001. Subsequently, in Hong Kong, she gained stardom as a singer, actress and commercial model. She was TVB’s top earning artist in 2007 with earnings of HK\$4.8 million.

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APPENDIX 1

23 JULY, 2007 THE STAR, N23

# Marie France Bodyline

**FLAUNT SLENDER,  
TONED ARMS**

**Flabby, sagging arms will now be a thing of the past. The experts at Marie France Bodyline can help you trim away those unwanted inches.**

At Marie France Bodyline, we understand your body. Different problem areas require specific targeting methods. Our slimming programmes use a combination of advanced technologies all aimed specifically at removing stubborn flab and toning the arm area. You'll feel confident with your new fit and fabulous arms!

Call Marie France Bodyline today for a consultation.

## 88 SESSIONS FOR ONLY RM2,999

- 10 Lipo Detoxification Therapies
- 10 Essential Marine Mineral Thalasso Therapies
- 10 Body Contouring Therapies
- 10 Mineral Sculpting Therapies
- 10 Essential Shoulder Kneading Sessions
- 3 Body Retexturing Therapies
- 3 Silhouette Remodelling Therapies
- 3 Silhouette Kneading Sessions
- 3 Detoxifying Seaweed Mask Therapies
- 13 Beautiful Hand Sessions
- 13 Active Lifestyle Enhancement Programmes


**SMS Now To Receive A Free Slimming Session**

1st 10 SMS senders will receive a **Mineral Remodelling Therapy FREE**

MFB - \*space\*  
 #name, #age,  
 #preferred centre

send to  
**32996**

Technology powered by Micro Kiosk Berhad. RM0.50 will be charged for each SMS.



**ANDREA FONSEKA**  
Miss Malaysia / Universe 2004 & Marie France Bodyline Client

Up to 12 months\* interest free installment plan now available (with selected credit cards. Terms and Conditions apply. With a suitable nutrition plan.

<b>KUALA LUMPUR</b>	<b>SELANGOR</b>	<b>NEGERI SEMBILAN</b>	<b>AKHOR</b>	<b>PERANG</b>	<b>SARAWAK</b>
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Mel: 03 2281 1822	1 Utama (New Wing) 03 7728 6333	Tel: 03 7438 3099	Tel: 04 507 0900		
Penang 07 4524 0283	Selangor 03 8053 9233	<b>MAKKAH</b>	<b>IRRAWADDI</b>	<b>PERAK</b>	<b>SARAWAK</b>
Cheras 09 4933 2518	Hang 02 2343 9409	Makassar Fandi 06 286 4900	Kuantan 09 915 6486	Kuala Lumpur 09 540 2287	Kuching 082 911 6111
					Putrajaya 061 885 428 801

Consultation Hours: (Mon - Fri) 9.45am - 8.30pm (Sat - Sun) 9.45am - 4.30pm - Ampang, Puchong, Malacca & Kota Kinabalu (Mon - Sun) 10.30am - 8.30pm - Kuala Lumpur & Ipoh (Mon - Sun) 10am - 10pm - 11pm - Cheras, Seremban, Kuantan & Mel (Mon - Fri) 10.30am - 8pm (Sat) 10.30am - 4.30pm (Open on Sundays) Johor Bahru (Mon - Fri) 10.30am - 8.30pm (Sat - Sun) 10.30am - 7.30pm - Batu Pahat & Pua (Mon - Fri) 10am - 8pm (Sat - Sun) 10am - 6pm

SWITZERLAND HONG KONG SHANGHAI SINGAPORE MALAYSIA THAILAND KOREA INDONESIA PHILIPPINES MACAU BRUNEI

\*Terms, Fees, Marie France Bodyline, Bodyline and "Marie Silhouette Clinics" are trademarks owned by Cosmetic Care First Limited, a member of Global Beauty International Limited Group. Marie France Bodyline Ltd. 50th Company No. 11071981.

“Flaunt Slender, Toned Arms” (The Star, July 23, 2007)





APPENDIX 4

DAY 6 OCTOBER 2008 THE STAR N21

# Marie France Bodyline



## Is Your Top Spilling Out From Over-Eating?

LET US HELP YOU TRIM YOUR WAISTLINE AND SHAPE YOUR BODY

Expanding waistline and unsightly bulges? Fight the flab with Marie France Bodyline. With our expertise and wide range of revolutionary programmes, your individual slimming needs will be well taken care of. Our proven results, up-to-date technology and thousands of satisfied customers make us the one name that women trust when it comes to slimming. So come to us and embark on a journey to reveal a slimmer, sexier you!

**MEMBERSHIP for only RM12.99 a day!**

ENJOY THE 1ST BODY CONTOURING THERAPY AT **RM38** MFB upgrade, name, app, preferred cards send to 32996

Call us now at **1-800-88-7933** for a FREE PERSONALISED CONSULTATION. For more information, visit [www.mariefrance.com](http://www.mariefrance.com)

*Andra Fonseka*  
 National Contest of Marie France Bodyline & Miss Malaysia/Universo 2004

Up to 12 months\* interest-free instalment plan now available (with selected credit cards). \*Terms and Conditions apply. With a suitable nutrition plan.

<b>KUALA LUMPUR</b>	<b>SELANGOR</b>	<b>NEGERI SEMBILAN</b>	<b>JOHOR</b>	<b>PENANG</b>	<b>SARAWAK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KLCD 03-2161 1895</li> <li>Mid Valley 03-2283 1622</li> <li>Angkang 03-253 4253</li> <li>Cheras 03-633 3318</li> <li>Kepong 03-620 9299</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damanusa Utama 03-7729 8945</li> <li>S. Utama (New Wing) 03-7728 8333</li> <li>Selang 03-8023 8233</li> <li>Cheras 03-343 9459</li> <li>Shah Alam 03-5515 8919</li> <li>Bandar Tinggi, Klang 03-3326 2266</li> <li>Sunway Pyramid 03-5636 8111</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seremban 06-763 1633</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plaza Pelanduk 07-332 2806</li> <li>Bank Pelanduk 07-338 3099</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plaza Sunway 04-225 7435</li> <li>Auto World, Pen 04-507 3866</li> <li>Queensway Mall 04-643 9969</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kota Kinabalu 088-248 576 / 088-263 567</li> <li>S. Benno Centre 088-485 886</li> </ul>
	<b>MALACCA</b>	<b>PERANG</b>	<b>PERAK</b>	<b>SULAWAY</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malakia Parade 06-281 4050</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East Coast Mall 05-680 9906</li> <li>Kinta City, Ipoh 05-548 2267</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kuching 032-971 011</li> <li>Bank Plaza, Miri 085-624 951</li> </ul>		

Marie France Bodyline THE WORLD'S SLIMMING PROFESSIONALS A member of Global "Eating International"

SWITZERLAND HONG KONG CHINA SINGAPORE MALAYSIA THAILAND KOREA INDONESIA PHILIPPINES MACAU BRUNEI VIETNAM

“Is your top spilling out from over eating?” (The Star, October 6, 2007)

APPENDIX 5

MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2008 STARTWO 711

# Marie France Bodyline

## Battle Your Bulge

**DON'T WAIT TILL YOU POP OUT OF YOUR CLOTHES.**  
It's time you did something about those stubborn bulges. Luckily, slimming experts Marie France Bodyline has what it takes to help you slim down and show off a sensational silhouette.

**The Laser Pulse System (LPS)** consists of a 3-pronged approach that targets and breaks down stubborn fat and reduces cellulite by stimulating cell metabolism and boosting the lipolysis (fat reduction) effect. No more worries about cellulite, unsightly bulges and saggy skin as you can now flaunt a stunning figure.

Our proven results, advanced technology and thousands of satisfied customers make us the one name women trust when it comes to body perfection. Come to us and achieve a slimmer and more sensational body, just like Andrea!

**RM1,999 FOR 60 sessions**

**AND ENJOY RM2,000 CASH VOUCHER REBATE INSTANTLY\***

10 x Lipo Detoxification Therapies  
 10 x Essential Marine Mineral Thalasso Therapies  
 10 x Body Contouring Sessions  
 10 x Mineral Sculpting Sessions  
 10 x Beautiful Hand Sessions  
 10 x Active Lifestyle Enhancement Programmes

Up to 12 months' interest-free instalment plan now available (with selected credit cards). \*Terms and Conditions apply. With a sensible nutrition plan.

<p><b>KUALA LUMPUR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KLDS 03-281 1895</li> <li>• Mid Valley 03-2281 4322</li> <li>• Ampang 03-4253 4253</li> <li>• Cheras 03-9331 8118</li> <li>• Kajang 03-4250 9299</li> </ul>	<p><b>SELANGOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damansara Utama 03-7729 8945</li> <li>• 1 Utama (near WTC) 03-7728 6333</li> <li>• Sunway 03-8923 5233</li> <li>• Klang 03-3345 8909</li> <li>• Shah Alam 03-9512 8899</li> <li>• Bukit Tinggi, Klang 03-3329 2296</li> <li>• Seremban Puteri 03-5630 6151</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEGERI SEMBILAN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seremban 05-763 3833</li> </ul>	<p><b>IPAH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plaza Puteri 07-332 2659</li> <li>• Batu Pahat 07-438 3099</li> </ul>	<p><b>PENANG</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plaza Sunway 04-228 7433</li> <li>• Air Itam, Penang 04-837 3985</li> <li>• Queensbay Mall 04-843 9889</li> </ul>	<p><b>SARAH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kota Kinabalu 086-244 576/086-703 397</li> <li>• 1. Borneo Centre 086-885 896</li> </ul>	<p><b>MALACCA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malacca Parade 06-288 4050</li> </ul>	<p><b>PAHANG</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Coast Mall 09-990 9969</li> </ul>	<p><b>PERAK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ipoh City, Ipoh 05-548 2267</li> </ul>	<p><b>SARAWAK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kuching 086-871 051</li> <li>• Batu Pauh, Kuching 086-424 851</li> </ul>
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**CALL US NOW AT 1-800-88-7933 | www.mariefrance.com**

SWITZERLAND HONG KONG CHINA SINGAPORE MALAYSIA THAILAND KOREA INDONESIA PHILIPPINES MACAU BRUNEI VIETNAM

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“Battle your Bulge” (*The Star*, November 10, 2008)

## **The Effectiveness of using Vocabulary Exercises to Teach Vocabulary to ESL/EFL Learners**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the KBSM English syllabus, vocabulary learning is only incorporated in the teaching of the four main skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking as target words are usually taught implicitly. Often, learners are unaware of the different meanings of a word and its spelling due to the common method of teaching the target words. This study investigates the effectiveness of the use of vocabulary exercises for vocabulary teaching involving 60 selected students from Form Two classes of a sub-urban school in Ipoh. The mean scores of the pre-test and post-test are analysed by using descriptive statistics. The questionnaire in the student's feedback form was analysed descriptively in terms of frequency counts and percentage of responses. The open-ended written responses in the student's evaluation form are categorised and analysed using content analysis. The results suggest that the incorporation of vocabulary exercises is effective in learning the target words among Form Two learners.

*Keywords:* ESL/EFL learners, target words, vocabulary exercises, vocabulary teaching

### **INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary learning is an undoubtedly important element in learning English as a second language or a foreign language (ESL/EFL). Sufficient vocabulary will help learners to construct semantically correct sentences. English vocabulary can be obtained by self-discovery or through formal education. As mentioned by Read (2004), second language (L2) learners

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realise that their limited repertoire of vocabulary greatly affects their ability to convey intended meaning in communication using the target language. ESL/EFL learners usually face problems in communicating and writing in English because of their lack of vocabulary content. As a result, they are unable to write and communicate effectively using English. Perhaps, minimum exposure in terms of English language use in day-to-day life contributes to this ineffective use of the language.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Gass and Selinker (2008) stated that vocabulary learning can determine success in L2 acquisition. However, lexical errors were the most common errors committed by L2 learners based on the large corpora of errors. In the local context of Malaysia, learners need to have extensive vocabulary in order to be proficient in English. The Ministry of Education of Malaysia has incorporated the learning of vocabulary in the syllabus and also the KBSM English textbook. Although vocabulary has become one of the elements to be included in the lesson, vocabulary learning is only incorporated in the teaching of the four skills.

Oxford and Crookall (1990, as cited in Sanaoui, 1995) have pointed out that very few vocabulary courses are available even though courses on reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and culture are common in L2 programmes. Thus, vocabulary learning is a minor focus in

L2 programmes although it plays a vital role in improving learner proficiency. It is very important for the learner to grab any chance of learning new words especially during English lessons in school. According to Dunmore (1989), vocabulary learning involves the use of different exercise types and context is important in comprehending the connotation of unfamiliar words. This will help learners to acquire new words and retain them in their long-term memory. The use of English textbooks and exercise books can be applied in order to increase vocabulary knowledge as it is designed to help L2 learners regardless of their proficiency level.

The outcome of vocabulary exercises in promoting vocabulary knowledge was also emphasised by Llach (2009). According to Min and Hsu (2008), learners will focus on a specific word via vocabulary enhancement tasks and activities that allow them to understand the meaning and function of the word. Therefore, as Hashemzadeh (2012) has stated, using different exercises is essential and beneficial for vocabulary learning and retention.

According to Paribakht and Wesche (1994, as cited in Hashemzadeh, 2012), there are five hierarchies of vocabulary exercises:

*Selective Attention:* Learners are presented with a list of words before a text and asked to read the words and search for them in the text.

*Recognition:* Learners need to relate the word form and its meaning.



*Manipulation:* Learners are required to rearrange the elements of phrases by referring to their morphological and grammatical knowledge.

*Interpretation:* Learners are required to create a connection between vocabulary items and other words that appear in the text.

*Production:* Learners must recall, reconstruct and retrieve the vocabulary items.

In relation to the importance of memory and recall, the processing theory by Anderson et al. (2006) helps to describe the effects of levels of processing on remembering and knowing. This study considered the reasons why some items were recalled more easily than others. Craik and Lockhart (1972) have proposed the level of processing theory that stated the more analysis an item receives the better it will be recalled. A later study by Craik and Tulving (1975, as cited in Anderson et al., 2006) gave further evidence for the validity of the depths of processing theory. Their results showed that shallow and deep encoding resulted in differences in memory trace strength when subject performed an unexpected recall test.

Gardiner (1988, as mentioned in Anderson et al., 2006), carried out an experiment that combined the levels of processing theory with the 'remember' and 'know' paradigm. 'Remembering' appears to depend on deep processing while 'knowing' entails shallow processing (Anderson et al., 2006). This indicated that memory should

be seen, at least in part, as a by-product of other perceptual processes. Semantic processing provided a significantly higher recall and generated significantly more 'remember' responses. This phenomenon occurs even without having a conscious awareness of the information in memory. Thus, by semantically (deeply) processing information, a stronger, specific trace and resulting memory of presented stimuli is formed.

A study by Chih et al. (2011) indicated that vocabulary exercises assisted participants in acquiring vocabulary as evident in pre-test scores ( $F(2,75)=0.531$ ,  $p=0.590$ ), immediate post-test scores ( $F(2,75)=1.094$ ,  $p=0.340$ ) and delayed post-test scores ( $F(2,75)=0.288$ ,  $p=0.751$ ). This is also in line with the study by Tsae and Jia (2010), which demonstrated that the technique that helped students most in vocabulary learning was using visual aids as it provided the highest mean score ( $M=90.5435$ ).

Vocabulary is important as it does not only establish cognitive systems of knowledge, but also assists the communicative and comprehensive interaction (Coady & Huckin, 1997). L2 learners have to grasp the threshold level of common words in the target language for their languages skills and linguistics knowledge to improve (Nation, 2001). The useful retrieval of receptive and productive knowledge reflected effective vocabulary learning, which leads to deep processing that boosts long-term retention of vocabulary (Craik & Lockhart, 1972). Hence, lexical tasks and instruction should

intend to trigger learners' ability to process in depth and to achieve a higher degree of involvement load (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001).

Nowadays, understanding the learning process from a participant's viewpoint is one of the main interests of researchers (Koschmann, 1996). Latest studies by Gomez et al. (2010) have found that motivation has an influence on the relationship between team interactions and perceived learning. Since learners' perceptions of learning environments are accountable in determining their approach to learning during instructional processes (Biggs, 1993), studies investigating learning effects or outcomes ought to take these mediating factors into consideration.

### **Previous Studies**

In a previous study, Hashemzadeh (2012) investigated whether Elementary EFL learners' vocabulary retention significantly varied by using recognition exercises and production exercises in immediate and delayed vocabulary tests. Forty-six Iranian Elementary learners who were studying English were selected for this study. The result of the study found that EFL learners' vocabulary retention significantly varied by using different exercise types. The most effective exercise type influencing EFL learners' vocabulary retention was fill-in-the-blanks (recognition exercise). The learners' recalled the words better in immediate tests than after two weeks.

On the other hand, a study administered by Yip and Kwan (2006) investigated the usefulness of online games in vocabulary

learning among undergraduate students. The results of the post-test indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group statistically. Students in the experimental group also preferred online learning supplemented with digital educational games to conventional activity-based lessons.

Finally, Luu (2012) investigated whether games influenced young learners' vocabulary recollection in 'Way Ahead' classes at Ngoi Nha Thong Thai Elementary School, Vietnam. Two classes were randomly selected as the experimental group and control group. The results indicated that the experimental group surpassed the control one in recollecting vocabulary during the immediate and delayed retention stage.

### **Research Questions**

The current study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of using vocabulary exercises to teach vocabulary to ESL/EFL learners. It is important to know whether learners will learn effectively with the use of an explicit method to teach vocabulary in the local context. In line with the objective, four research questions were presented:

1. How familiar are the Form Two learners with the vocabulary items listed in the English KBSM syllabus?
2. How effective is the incorporation of vocabulary exercises for the Form Two learners?
3. Which techniques or types of vocabulary exercises are preferred by the Form Two learners?

4. What are the Form Two learners' perceptions of learning vocabulary using English vocabulary exercises?

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design. According to Creswell (1994), an experiment is a highly controlled method. Experiments give the researcher valuable data for judging and comparing changes in scores of pre- and post-tests between the experimental group and the control group.

### Subjects

The sample of populations in this study consisted of 60 selected students from two classes of Form Two in a school located in the sub-urban area of Ipoh, Perak. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select the participants so that learners with particular characteristics could be selected. The participants selected were all Form Two learners and the English language was their second or foreign language. These two classes were then randomly selected as the experimental and control group.

### Research Instruments

**New word test.** A check list of 90 words was created for the new word test. The list of words was selected from the list of words to-be-learned in the Form Two KBSM English curriculum specification document by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (2003); the words were also listed in the index of the Form One and Form Two KBSM English textbooks. This test was conducted to pick

out 30 target words (words to be learnt) that were later tested in the pre-test and post-test.

**Pre-test and post-test.** In the pre-test, there were 11 short reading texts in which synonyms or same-meaning phrases of the target words were used in sentences. The reading texts were prepared by the researcher and verified by an appointed expert. The synonyms or same-meaning phrases were also underlined, highlighted and numbered so that the learners could choose the target words, which were the words to be learnt, in the multiple-choice answers. There were 30 multiple-choice questions created and participants were required to answer them within 45 minutes. The full score for the test was 30. On the other hand, the post-test was actually the same test used in the pre-test but changes were made in terms of the arrangement of the texts.

**Pictorial vocabulary handout.** The pictorial vocabulary handout consisted of the target words, pictures and annotations of words. This is underpinned by Nassaji's (2003) idea of the fallibility of inferring the meanings of unknown words from pictures. This handout was prepared by the researcher and verified by an appointed expert.

### Vocabulary Exercises

The vocabulary exercises were taken and adapted from the Form Two KBSM English textbook as well as from Form Two KBSM reference books.

**Matching.** Learners were required to match the words with the correct definition of the words.

**Fill-in-the-blanks.** Learners were asked to fill in the blanks with the appropriate answers. They had to choose the answers from given choices.

**Spelling.** Learners were requested to listen carefully and spell correctly on their own words from the list that were called out by the teacher. The definition and the use of word-in-context were read for each word.

**Unscramble letters.** Learners had to unscramble letters of the synonyms of the underlined and bold words in the sentences.

**Crossword puzzle.** Learners were given hints in the form of meaning of the words and a few letters of the answer for each word to solve the puzzle.

### **Student's Feedback Form**

The student's feedback form was created in the form of a 3-point Likert-scale questionnaire. The statements in the feedback form were divided into positive perceptions and negative perceptions.

### **Student's Evaluation Form**

The student's evaluation form was developed in the form of eight open-ended written questions to investigate the learners' overall perceptions towards their learning experience during the experiment and the factors influencing their perception, participation and performance.

### **Data Collection**

Prior to the experiment, all the participants took the new word test so that 30 to-be-learned words in the formal study could

be identified. After the researcher had identified the 30 to-be-learned words, all the participants sat a vocabulary test, which the researcher used as the pre-test in the formal study. In the formal study, the learners of the experimental group were introduced to seven sessions of vocabulary instructions using exercises taken and adapted from the Form Two KBSM English textbook and other resources by the teacher. A feedback form was distributed to the learners after each type of vocabulary exercise was used in the vocabulary instructions. Consequently, seven sessions of normal English lessons were conducted for the control group. After the vocabulary instructions, the learners of both groups sat an immediate recall test (post-test) consisting of 30 predetermined target words listed by the researcher. After the post-test, a follow-up open-ended evaluation form was administered to the experimental group. Before the formal experimental study, the researcher conducted a pilot study to investigate problems and errors that may occur.

### **Data Analysis**

The vocabulary scores of the pre-test and post-test were first analysed using the descriptive statistics, with mean scores, standard deviation and the total improvement score in percentage presented. This was implemented using SPSS software version 21. In addition, the data collected from the questionnaire (student's feedback form) was analysed descriptively in terms of frequency counts and percentage of responses for each statement. Regarding the qualitative

data, open-ended written responses in the student's evaluation form were analysed using content analysis, which involved categorising the data accordingly.

## RESULTS

Referring to Table 1, for the 'Don't Know' category, all the participants claimed that they did not know the meaning of the words 'Filthy' and 'Cope'. Twenty-nine students selected the words 'Annually' and 'Severe' for the 'Don't Know' category, indicating that they were unfamiliar with these words. Only 15 participants stated they did not understand the meaning of the word 'Talented' and another 16 students claimed that they were not familiar with the words 'Provide' and 'Irregular'. Generally, more than half of the participants were unfamiliar with 30 out of the 66 words listed in the new word test. The list of unfamiliar words or the target words selected for this study is presented in Table 2.

According to Table 3 and 4, in the pre-test, the mean score for the experimental group was  $M=13.9$ , but in the post-test, ( $M=26.5$ ). This indicated an improvement ( $M$  difference) of the pre- and post-tests of the experimental group, which was 12.6. Moreover, the total improvement score percentage was up to 90.6%. Meanwhile, the mean score for the pre-test of the control group was  $M=14.7$  and in the post-test, ( $M=16.1$ ). It was found that the improvement ( $M$  difference) for the post- and pre-test of the control group was 1.4 and its total improvement score percentage was only 9.5%. After the experimental treatment,

both groups demonstrated an increment of the mean scores in the post-test. However, the total improvement score percentage for the experimental group exceeded the control group by a staggering 81.1%.

Table 5 shows that 24 learners (80%) disagreed with the statement that they wished the teacher had given them a different type of exercise. Fourteen learners (about 47%) disagreed with the statement, "I dislike the exercise." Regarding the statements indicating positive perception, 40% of the participants agreed that they liked this kind of exercise. About 33% of the participants also agreed that they were familiar with the words in the exercise. These results indicated positive responses from the participants for the matching exercise. Thus, matching was a preferable exercise among the participants.

Table 6 indicates that 19 learners (about 63%) disagreed with the statement, "I dislike the exercise" and only about 3% of the participants wished the teacher had given them a different exercise. This indicated that the learners disagreed with the negative statements in the student's feedback form. The findings were further supported by more than half of the learners (about 57%) agreeing with the statement "I like this exercise" where the remaining 13 learners neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Besides that, 50% of the participants wanted to do more of this type of exercise as they preferred crossword puzzles. This shows that participants in this study preferred to do crossword puzzles.

Table 1  
*Results of the New Word Test*

List of Words	Number of Students	List of Words	Number of Students
Advise	4	Grateful	6
Annoy	21	Greenery	26
Annually	29	Hazardous	25
Apply	5	Dangerous	1
Balance	1	Deforestation	20
Busy	1	Deserted	20
Believe	2	Joyous	23
Challenging	1	Litter	10
Cheap	3	Manufacture	21
Cheerful	7	Migration	23
Common	17	Nutritious	14
Cope	30	Overcome	22
Costly	9	Peaceful	5
Creative	3	Pleasant	19
Crowded	13	Polite	11
Crushed	14	Reuse	14
Curious	27	Selfish	3
Daily	3	Severe	29
Design	3	Infectious	28
Destroy	5	Irregular	16
Difficult	3	Itchy	21
Disappointed	8	Preserve	23
Efficient	26	Provide	16
Encourage	21	Punish	5
Erosion	27	Reasonable	7
Estimate	9	Reduce	8
Excess	24	Refund	27
Explode	9	Refuse	13
Extremely	10	Reliable	25
Fade	25	Responsible	4
Filthy	30	Successful	3
Frequently	22	Talented	15
Friendly	3	Untidy	10

Table 2  
*Selected Target Words*

List of Unfamiliar Words	Number of Students	List of Unfamiliar Words	Number of Students
Filthy	30	Migration	23
Cope	30	Joyous	23
Annually	29	Frequently	22
Severe	29	Overcome	22
Infectious	28	Manufacture	21
Erosion	27	Itchy	21
Curious	27	Encourage	21
Refund	27	Annoy	21
Efficient	26	Deforestation	20
Greenery	26	Deserted	20
Reliable	25	Pleasant	19
Hazardous	25	Common	17
Fade	25	Provide	16
Excess	24	Irregular	16
Preserve	23	Talented	15

Table 3  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Pre- and Post-Tests of the Experimental Group*

Experimental Group	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	M Difference	SD Difference	Total Improvement Score (%)
Pre-Test	13.9	3.13	12.6	0.03	90.6
Post-Test	26.5	3.16			

Table 4  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Pre- and Post-Tests of the Control Group*

Control Group (2A3)	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	M Difference	SD Difference	Total Improvement Score (%)
Pre-Test	14.7	4.37	1.4	0.15	9.5
Post-Test	16.1	4.52			

Table 5  
*Analysis of the Student's Feedback Form*  
*Vocabulary Exercise Type: Matching*

Statement (Negative Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Most of the words in the exercise are not familiar.	9	30	18	60	3	10
I wish the teacher had given me a different exercise.	0	0	6	20	24	80
The exercise is difficult.	8	26.67	13	43.33	9	30
I dislike the exercise.	1	3.33	15	50	14	46.67

Statement (Positive Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am familiar with the words in the exercise.	10	33.33	15	50	5	16.67
I want to do more of this type of exercise.	9	30	13	43.33	8	26.67
It is easy to do this exercise.	8	26.67	13	43.33	9	30
I like this exercise.	12	40	13	43.33	5	16.67

Table 6  
*Analysis of the Student's Feedback Form*  
*Vocabulary Exercise Type: Crossword Puzzle*

Statement (Negative Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Most of the words in the exercise are not familiar.	9	30	11	36.67	10	33.33
I wish the teacher had given me a different exercise.	1	3.33	17	56.67	12	40
The exercise is difficult.	7	23.33	15	50	8	26.67
I dislike the exercise.	5	16.67	6	20	19	63.33

Statement (Positive Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am familiar with the words in the exercise.	11	36.67	15	50	4	13.33
I want to do more of this type of exercise.	15	50	10	33.33	5	16.67
It is easy to do this exercise.	9	30	17	56.67	4	13.33
I like this exercise.	17	56.67	13	43.33	0	0



Table 7 shows that 19 learners disliked the exercise. About 57% of the participants wished that the teacher had given them a different type of exercise. These findings were in line with more than half of the learners (16 learners) disliking the exercise as the other 12 learners (40%) decided that they disagreed with the statement, "I want to do more of this type of exercise." The results of the student's feedback form indicated negative perceptions among learners for the fill-in-the-blanks exercise as this exercise was not preferred by the participants of this study.

Table 8 shows that about 63% of the participants agreed that they liked this type of exercise. Moreover, 13 learners (about 43%) stated that they agreed with doing more of the same type of exercise. Referring to the statement indicating negative perception, 60% of the participants disagreed with the statement, "I dislike the exercise" as they preferred to do the exercise. Furthermore, 12 learners (40%) did not want the teacher to give them a different exercise. This demonstrated positive perception for the unscramble letters exercise among the participants in this study. They preferred to do this type of exercise.

Table 9 shows that 16 learners (about 53%) disagreed with the statement that they disliked the exercise. About 37% of the participants also disagreed with the statement, "The exercise is difficult." These findings were also supported by the statements indicating positive perception when 13 learners (about 43%) agreed that they wanted to do more of this type of

exercise. These learners also agreed with the fact that this exercise was easy for them to do and they liked this type of exercise.

### **Analysis of the Written Responses in the Student's Evaluation Form**

When the learners were asked what was easy about the vocabulary exercises, 11 of them stated that the questions were direct and easy to understand. The learners were also asked what was difficult about the vocabulary exercises. A high number, 10, stated that they had to comprehend the definition of the target words in order to answer the questions. Nine of them stated that some of the target words used were unfamiliar.

When they were asked what they liked about the vocabulary exercises, 10 learners stated that some of the questions in the exercises were easy to answer. Besides that, they were also asked what they disliked about the vocabulary exercises. Ten learners stated that some of the questions were difficult.

Furthermore, when the learners were asked which type of vocabulary exercise they liked the most, the majority, 17, indicated that the crossword puzzle exercise was their favourite. They had different opinions for liking it such as they preferred to do this type of exercise whereas others agreed it was easy and interesting.

Next, when they were asked which type of vocabulary exercise they needed more practice in and to give their reasons for saying so, 11 learners stated that spelling was what they needed to practise the most. This was because they preferred this type

Table 7  
*Analysis of the Student's Feedback Form*  
*Vocabulary Exercise Type: Fill-In-The-Blanks*

Statement (Negative Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Most of the words in the exercise are not familiar.	3	10	21	70	6	20
I wish the teacher had given me a different exercise.	17	56.67	8	26.67	5	16.67
The exercise is difficult.	11	36.67	14	46.67	5	16.67
I dislike the exercise.	19	63.33	7	23.33	4	13.33

Statement (Positive Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am familiar with the words in the exercise.	6	20	20	66.67	4	13.33
I want to do more of this type of exercise.	9	30	9	30	12	40
It is easy to do this exercise.	7	23.33	14	46.67	9	30
I like this exercise.	6	20	8	26.67	16	53.33

Table 8  
*Analysis of the Student's Feedback Form*  
*Vocabulary Exercise Type: Unscramble Letters*

Statement (Negative Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Most of the words in the exercise are not familiar.	3	10	19	63.33	7	23.33
I wish the teacher had given me a different exercise.	3	10	15	50	12	40
The exercise is difficult.	7	23.33	16	53.33	7	23.33
I dislike the exercise.	2	6.67	10	13.33	18	60

Statement (Positive Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am familiar with the words in the exercise.	7	23.33	22	73.33	1	3.33
I want to do more of this type of exercise.	13	43.33	9	30	8	26.67
It is easy to do this exercise.	11	36.67	14	46.67	5	16.67
I like this exercise.	19	63.33	9	30	2	6.67

Table 9  
*Analysis of the Student's Feedback Form*  
*Vocabulary Exercise Type: Spelling*

Statement (Negative Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Most of the words in the exercise are not familiar.	4	13.33	17	56.67	9	30
I wish the teacher had given me a different exercise.	13	43.33	14	46.67	3	10
The exercise is difficult.	4	13.33	15	50	11	36.67
I dislike the exercise.	2	6.67	12	40	16	53.33

Statement (Positive Perception)	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am familiar with the words in the exercise.	11	36.67	15	50	4	13.33
I want to do more of this type of exercise.	13	43.33	14	46.67	3	10
It is easy to do this exercise.	13	43.33	16	53.33	1	3.33
I like this exercise.	13	43.33	13	43.33	4	13.33

of exercise. Another 11 learners also chose the fill-in-the-blanks exercise as the type of vocabulary exercise that they needed the most and stated that it was difficult to do this type of exercise.

The learners were also asked what improvements they would suggest to improve the vocabulary exercises and their reasons for their suggestions. Nine of them, who had written responses for this question, suggested that more interesting exercises could be created in the future. Finally, the learners were also asked to suggest other vocabulary activities that they wanted to do in order to improve their vocabulary and the majority, 11 learners, suggested reading comprehension exercises.

**DISCUSSION**

This section summarises the data collected based on the questions in the survey.

**Question 1**

1. How familiar are the Form Two learners with the vocabulary items listed in the English KBSM syllabus?

Half of the learners (30 students) from both groups were unfamiliar with the target words. The list of words selected in the new-word test included the words that had to be learnt when the participants were in Form One. This shows that the common practice of implicit method of teaching the target words was less effective as some of the words were still unknown to the participants.

This might also have resulted because of the learners' low language proficiency in English (Read, 2004). The participants selected in this study used their mother tongue in their daily conversation and the use of English language was limited only to the classroom during English lessons.

Limited opportunities and resources of English language may also have been the contributing factor for the generally low level of English proficiency among the participants (Gass & Selinker, 2008). In the student's evaluation form, the learners disliked that they had to find the meaning of unknown words from the dictionary while answering the questions. This indicated a low level of interest in terms of learning new words. If the learners were interested, they would have been excited at the prospect of or at least committed to discovering the meaning of unknown words referring to the dictionary.

2. How effective is the incorporation of vocabulary exercises for the Form Two learners?

The experimental group indicated a significant improvement, with the difference in the mean score of the post-test compared to the pre-test being 12.6. Although both groups indicated an increment, the total improvement score percentage for the experimental group was exceeded by 81.1% compared to the control group. Nation (2001) states that a one-time encounter is not enough for learning a word as there is so much to discover about the word. Therefore, vocabulary items should be reiterated in different exercises so that they can be stored in long-term memory as well as be recalled easily (Sokmen, 1997). Therefore, teachers need to prepare more vocabulary tasks and offer more practice opportunities for learners. Webb (2007) stated that 10

repetitions are required to acquire a new item.

The features of the vocabulary exercises also contributed to its effectiveness as a tool to learning new words. Learners were exposed to a variety of questions where they had to use certain techniques or ways to answer the questions. When advanced knowledge is acquired, the flexible reassembly of pre-existing knowledge will adaptively fit the needs of a new situation (Spiro et al., 1991). Therefore, learners are able to remember target words better by using different types of vocabulary exercises.

3. Which techniques or types of vocabulary exercises are preferred by the Form Two learners?

The type of vocabulary exercise preferred was matching, crossword puzzle, unscramble letters and spelling. Nineteen learners did not like doing the fill-in-the-blanks exercise according to the student's feedback form. This finding is in contrast with Hashemzadeh (2012) and Folse's (2006) findings, both of which claimed that fill-in-the-blanks exercises were preferred and were effective. The contrast in terms of the findings could be due to difference in the participants' preference and interest.

The amount and type of practice influence the ability to recall new words learnt and the retention level (Chastain, 1988). In this study, the participants liked the use of matching, crossword puzzle, unscramble letters and spelling exercises.

Teachers should be aware of students' preference in terms of the type of vocabulary exercise so that effectiveness in acquiring the target words can be optimised. This is also to scaffold the learners' needs in order for them to learn the target words better.

There are nine intelligences in the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Gardner (2002): logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, linguistics, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and existential. In order for learners to acquire target words better, they should use the learning styles that suit them. In this study, learners were introduced to a pictorial vocabulary handout that required them to draw images related to the target words. This was in line with the findings of Tsae and Jia (2010), who concluded that visual aids help learners most in vocabulary learning.

#### 4. What are the Form Two learners' perceptions of learning vocabulary using English vocabulary exercises?

In the student's evaluation form, the participants mentioned that they liked the incorporation of vocabulary exercises because the questions were simple and easy to understand. Seventeen participants had chosen the crossword puzzle as their favourite vocabulary exercise. They mentioned that the crossword puzzle was an interesting and fun exercise to do. Participants felt this type of exercise was the most engaging activity as they could explore possible answers using the trial and error

method in order to find the correct answers. This activity also promotes cooperation and collaboration among the learners, and this leads to active participation (Luu, 2012). When learners are involved in active learning, the chances for meaningful learning to occur are high. As a result, learners acquire the target words.

This is supported by Luu (2012). According to the results of the pre-test and two post-tests in his study, the experimental group, which was exposed to vocabulary games in recollecting vocabulary, surpassed the control group, which was involved in exercises without games. Games create a fun learning environment, add motivation when students' motivation shrinks and promote team learning and collaborative skills.

In this study, 10 participants mentioned that they felt the vocabulary exercises were difficult because they had to know the meaning of the target words to answer the vocabulary questions. This was because some of the target words were unfamiliar and some questions were also at higher levels of difficulty. According to Craik and Lockhart (1972), in order for learners to acquire knowledge, they have to be exposed to questions a level higher than their current knowledge so that they can use their prior knowledge to solve the questions presented. In this matter, their cognitive ability will be challenged and improved. Thus, learners will acquire and retain the target words in their long-term memory as they can be remembered easily in the future.

Nine learners also suggested that teachers should create more interesting

exercises in the future. Luu (2012) stated that vocabulary games provide an enjoyable learning experience. Creating a fun and enjoyable learning environment is a large first step towards motivating students. Among the suggestions of the alternative vocabulary exercises were reading comprehension, synonym and antonym, sentence completion and essay writing.

### **Summary of the Discussion**

The findings from the present study suggest that the use of vocabulary exercises is effective in teaching unfamiliar words to Form Two learners. Learners' attention to particular vocabulary items can be drawn by using effective vocabulary tasks (Folse, 2006). Thus, teachers are advised to focus on teaching the target words utilising different exercise types as this results in better retention.

In line with some other studies (Nation, 2001; Hunt & Beglar, 2005; Schmitt, 2008; Yali, 2010), the current study affirms that the best method to teach vocabulary is by using the explicit vocabulary teaching method, which results in better retention and vocabulary learning. According to Paribakh and Wesche (2000), numerous encounters of the words in vocabulary exercises promote vocabulary acquisition to a greater degree. Thus, teachers are encouraged to offer many opportunities for learners to encounter the words via preferred vocabulary exercises for better retention and more depth of vocabulary learning of unfamiliar words.

The use of visual aids to help learners learn the target words is also recommended.

According to Gardner (2002), learners should be encouraged to use the learning styles that they prefer in order to maximise learning ability. Participants who were visual learners would have benefitted from the use of a pictorial vocabulary handout to learn the target words. This is because they were able to create mental images related to the target words that helped them to memorise the words and store them in their long-term memory.

### **Limitation of the Study**

One of the limitations of this study was that some of the words in the list of 30 target words selected from the new-word test might have been easier to learn using a certain technique while others might have been easier to learn using another.

### **CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded from the results of this study that the incorporation of vocabulary exercises was effective in helping these Form Two students learn the target words. The learners' retention level of the acquired words was also seen to be high, indicating meaningful learning occurred through the use of vocabulary exercises. The target words were stored in their long-term memory and they could recall the target words to answer the questions in the post-test successfully. Therefore, teachers and curriculum developers should consider incorporating appropriate vocabulary exercises explicitly or extrinsically to improve students' vocabulary knowledge.

## RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research should consider using a wider sample to investigate the effectiveness of using vocabulary exercises to teach vocabulary to ESL or EFL learners. This sample can be selected from schools around Malaysia so that more learners will have the opportunity to participate in such a study. Besides that, learners from a different form or age can also be included in the sample for future research. In terms of the characteristics of the sample selected, variation related to gender, family background and race can also be considered for further research.

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## **Paradigm Shifts for Community Health Development by Medical Professions: A Case Study of Health Promoting Hospitals Devolved to Local Government in Thailand**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Paradigm is important to determine people's ideas, beliefs, values, and life-style of the people and understanding their problems. The first paradigm that had influence over the ideas, beliefs, values and practices of most people in earlier times was called Normal Science until the scientific revolution era. Where prior knowledge cannot explain a phenomenon or a new discovery occurs, for people in the community to agree with a new practice for changing behaviour and making life better, it's called a paradigm shift. This research aims to study and offer a new paradigm for community health development that the medical profession currently practices as Thailand's community health development paradigms are both biological models and centralisation, these present limitations on promoting people's health achievement and well-being. This research is "ethnography" based. Participants were selected from the health promoting hospitals in two areas in Thailand. The interviewees consisted of 11 participants. This research indicated that community health development comprised the community-based, holistic health, and decentralisation methodologies. The medical profession has many paradigms for integrating knowledge, skills and ability; the research limitation being longer time-scale and higher budgets. Paradigm shifts for community health development by the medical profession found benefits in decentralisation, community based solutions and holistic health. This study suggested that these issues should be studied, in addition to the impacted paradigms on community health status,

within the next decade. The value of this study was to highlight the importance of initiating, implementing, and maintaining community health and to provide insights into the conditions that should be considered when planning and developing community health.

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## INTRODUCTION

Paradigms or paradigm shifts, such as those mentioned by Thomas Kuhn who presents the argument that the development of scientific theory is not evolutionary but rather a series of interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolution and as a result of those revolutions one conceptual world view is replaced by other. Kuhn is especially noted for the development and specialised use of the term “paradigm shift” where a paradigm is defined as “universally recognised scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to the community of practitioners”. Because of the fact that different scientists hold different world views and lenses through which they understand and even attempt to solve problems within that world view, Kuhn’s description of scientists as being not necessarily objective, free-thinking sceptics attempts to convey this general idea that scientists accept and live within certain given paradigms and consequently are able to understand and explain this phenomenon within this paradigm. However, when scientists within a given paradigm are no longer able to explain and solve problems within that paradigm, Kuhn purports that a crisis stage will be reached after which the emergence of a new paradigm arises and when this takes place, a paradigm shift is said to have occurred. Since paradigms are usually incommensurable, the phenomenon explained by one paradigm would usually

not be explained by another paradigm. This in some way creates a sense of advancement in moving from one paradigm to another. (Kuhn, 1970; Kinra et al., 2010).

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

Thailand’s health system has had many crises; First, the budget increases every year but the health service decreases. Second, the population is still becoming ill and dying from diseases that can be both controlled and prevented. Finally, the health system emphasises treatments more than it does health promotion. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Thailand, many people have health problems, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, AIDS, and older people with dependencies as well as social problems such as suicide, addiction and accidents. The current health crisis has arisen from the aforementioned. They have arisen from health knowledge and understanding with at least two paradigms: centralisation and biomedical paradigms. Centralisation paradigm has unique characteristics. (Frifjob, 1982). First, centralisation paradigm has been shown to decide and resolve problems because centralised bureaucracies have many hierarchies (Mills, 1994; Loraine et al., 2009). Second, centre bureaucracies tend to micro-control and regulate for the sub-organisations. Policy and activities from central bureaucracies are not responsive to people’s problems (Saltman et al., 2007). Third, the centralisation of bureaucracies obstructs the participation and will of people. Finally, health services are unequally distributed, contributing to

health inequalities across status groups, the structure and dynamics of health care organisation shape the quality, effectiveness, and outcomes of health service for different groups and community. The biomedical paradigm describes health, disease and illness as reductionist which is a tendency to reduce all explanations to the physical workings of the body and is absent mind, soul, values, and humanity (Porter, 1999). One major criticisms of the biomedical model stems from its apparent unwillingness to acknowledge that both social and psychological factors exist (Freidson, 1970; Illich, 1976; Barker et al., 2013).

The paradigms mentioned above present limitations. The medical profession must investigate in order to select the paradigms they fall under. From literature and research, the current available paradigms are decentralisation, community based, and holistic health (Gutmann & Dennis, 2004). First, decentralisation was used in Europe post War II with the objective of reforming the bureaucracies, politics, democracy, economics and the privatisation of resources. This decentralisation process brought the service closer to the population and gave the municipalities a greater role in budgets and provision. However, it also gave local government the authority to decide autonomously whether or not to fund health care, including the option to use the central government transfer for other purposes. Furthermore, power was devolved to different sectors to oversee production factors such as labour, capital, and inputs. This setup created difficulties for the local

government to implement national priorities such as the management of facilities and human resources as well as transparency and accountability. In Thailand, power had been devolved to local bureaucracies via decentralisation by King Rama V to local. The purpose was to promote local bureaucracies in order to strengthen and respond to the people who live in the community. Decentralisation became an obligation as enshrined in the 2009 Thai Constitution. Health promoting hospitals being devolved to local bureaucracies was one area of decentralisation. Second, another paradigm is community based and is called "participation". The concept of participation can be initiated at grassroots level without professional sponsorship such as voluntary/ bottom-up/community supportive, social participation, and imposed from above, with organisational components defined by professionals and state authorities such as top-down, community oppressive, and direct participation (Morgan, 1993). The community based paradigm aims to resolve many problems and support people's empowerment (Starfiel, 1994; Sadan, 1997). People's involvement in health refers to community cohesion that result from positive aspect of community life, particularly from high level of civil engagement as reflected in membership in local voluntary association. Finally, paradigm is holistic health. Holistic health is in contrast to the biological paradigm in that it treats the whole person and is an understanding of life and disease being more than just life's component parts as it also

includes the social determinants of health.

### **CONCEPTS USED IN THIS RESEARCH**

For this research, we chose three paradigms: community based, decentralisation, and holistic health which are used to understand the medical professions which alter the community health development paradigms. These paradigms will support data and create community health policy.

### **MAIN QUESTIONS**

These areas are determined by central bureaucracies and provide the biological paradigm to promote community health. This study seeks to answer the following research questions: What are the other paradigms that medical professions choose? What are the related problems and conditions? How do the medical professions manage the problems and conditions?

### **SUB-QUESTIONS**

1. How do the medical professions define "health"?
2. Do the medical professions have concepts to deal with what they regard as community health development? If so, what are they?
3. Do the medical professions have method to develop the community health? If so, How?
4. What are the problems or conditions in shifting the community health development paradigms? How are they tackled?

### **OBJECTIVE**

This research aims to study and alter the paradigms of community health development that the medical profession currently use.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To determine the conceptual sets of community health development used by the medical profession.
2. To explore practices of the medical profession in community health development.
3. To explain the process and conditions for changing the community health development paradigms in the medical profession.

### **DEFINITION**

1. Paradigm means both concept and method used by the medical profession in providing community health services and well-being.
2. Community health means the complete health of people; including mind, soul and equality in society.
3. The medical professionals are those who work at health promoting hospital as medics, nurses and public health officials.
4. Health decentralisation means the medical institution transferring power to communities, local bureaucracies and the public sectors.
5. The biomedical model describes health, disease, and illness in terms of the

- physical working of the body; absent mind, soul, values, and humanity.
6. Community based means many problems are resolved in the people community such as by participation and empowerment.
  7. Holistic health means understanding health and diseases are included in the social and psychological factors.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Study areas**

Study areas: the starting point of the study began when the researcher arrived at two health promoting hospitals, known as “Ban Prok” and “Buengyitho” in central region of Thailand. They are 166 km and 30 km from Bangkok respectively. The characteristics of the study areas were devolved to local government and received “Good governance awards” . The researcher resided in the community for 6 months.

### **Key Information**

This research used a case study approach in order to explain the paradigms that medical professionals choose to promote community health. The authors used qualitative research and select medical professionals who have experience and knowledge on community health development methodology called “information rich case”.

Key information: The authors started the field work without any problems. They were interested in the geography, economy and the people in those areas, especially medical professionals whom they

befriended. The author introduced themselves and briefed about the objectives of the study to key informants. The key informants were required to sign a consent form before being interviewed.

### **Instrument**

Two kinds of field notes were used: a diary to note appointments and used as a scratchpad, and a chronological record of important events that happened each day. These notes are taken on site during interviews or observations. They are rough drafts complete with diagrams and sketches. Furthermore, both pictorial, using a camera, and audio records were made. By the end of the field work, recordings had been made of 33 cases, together with 109 pictures. As the instrument for data collection, the authors collected data from the field by non-participant observation and by in-depth interviews with 11 medical professionals.

In-depth interview: some of the guidelines in the in-depth interviews were derived from approaches such as community based, decentralisation, holistic health, centralisation, and biological models. The guidelines were developed after the researcher had reviewed relevant literature, documents, and previous research so that the guideline would cover the content and objectives of the study. Some of the guidelines for the questions in the in-depth interviews were created before data collection. The authors created additional questions when available data indicated important and interesting issues related to community health development of

medical professionals. Data analysis and data collection in the field were done simultaneously. All questions were open-ended questions. In order to completely gather information from each in-depth interview, the author asked the informants permission for sound-recordings and written note-taking. The authors used an audio digital player to prevent any awkwardness on the part of the informants when answering questions or revealing details about their lives.

Aside from data collection through in-depth interviews, the authors used non-participant observation by accompanying the medical professionals on their rounds when they visited patients at home as well as when they rallied to control and prevent diseases.

This is not a quantitative research study, instead, the researcher used himself as the instrument to obtain data, using his own expertise as public health technical officer working at a health promoting hospital in Sisaket province.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is conducted immediately after the daily data collection in order to gather all the information related to the study items. When data reaches saturation point, the researcher stops and starts analysing the data using an inductive approach. The inductive approach has the following procedures: (1) Producing transcripts of the interview and reading through a small sample of the text (2) Identifying potential analytic

categories or potential themes that arise (3) As the categories emerge, data from those categories are gathered and compared (4) There is a brainstorming session on how to link the categories together (5) After that, the relationships among the categories are used to build a theoretical module by constantly checking the models against the data, particularly in negative cases (6) Final step is to present the results of the analysis using exemplars, such as quotes from interviews that explain and validate the theory (Bernard, 2006).

### **RESULTS**

Eleven medical professionals took part in the in-depth interviews detailing their demographic such as sex, age, life experiences, positions and areas. The minimum and maximum ages were 28 and 53 years respectively. The minimum and maximum in life experiences of the community health development were between 6 and 24 years. The positions of medical professions at health promoting hospital comprised medical physicians, 2 directors, 2 register nurses, 2 physical therapists, 1 public health technical officer, 1 dental nurse, 1 physical therapy specialist, 1 Thai traditional medicine practitioner, and a public health officer. The study areas were the health promoting hospitals known as "Ban Prok" in the Prok sub district Muang district of Samud Songkram province and "Buengyitho" in the Thanyabury district of Pathum Thani province, both in the central region of Thailand. (Appendix 1)



The health paradigms were defined as holistic health, community based and decentralisation respectively.

The most important question is: what is the community health view? Answer: “healthcare must promote prevention rather than treatment”, (Key informant B, C, F).

The concepts were proven in community health in areas such as community based, holistic health, and decentralization.

Principle question would be: which concept do you think should be used to improve community health? Answer; “all policy for health must include the people’s participation”. (Key informant A, D).

The practices required to increase the community health status were community based, holistic health, and decentralisation.

Significant question would be: what practice do you undertake to improve the community health status? Answer: “co-operate with agencies that may assist in problems relevant to their areas” (Key informant A, B).

The medical professionals outlined the conditions or problems, changing conceptions and methods present in community health development such as work load, complex problems, and better local government resolution. A simple question would be: what are the conditions or problems that change your conception and the methods used in community health development? Answer: “the organisation has too few officers and is micro-managed by the central bureaucracies” (Key informant B, C) (Appendix 2).

The most used paradigm in community health development was holistic health. A lesser used paradigm was decentralisation, with community based used the least. (Appendix 3)

The medical professional that used the most paradigms in community health development was the director.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

The research indicated that community health development comprised holistic health, decentralisation and community based paradigms respectively. These findings were derived from questions on defined health, methods, and concepts, and conditions in community health development in the central region of Thailand. To answer the specific objective of the study I) Medical professionals can understand illness and disease as not being necessarily inherent in any particular behaviours or conditions, but as constructed through human interaction or social determinant.

To answer the specific objective of the study II) what method is used in community health development: Community health development can improve by integrating with local government, health services and social care. The medical professionals mentioned above practise holistic health, decentralisation and community based healthcare. For example, holistic health is broadly defined as social, emotional mental and physical well-being. Medical professionals can apply a mixture of social behaviours and psychological and biological factors in health. This is consistent with

the findings of previous studies: (1) Harris found that an integrative approach bridges biomedical sciences with social and behavioural sciences by understanding the linkages between social, behavioural, psychological, and biological factors in health (Harris, 2010). (2) Keawanuchit and colleagues found that Thai farmers were psychosocially stressed with both Thai contract farmers and Thai farm workers due to globalisation (Keawanuchit et al., 2012; Keawanuchit et al., 2015a). A research about mental health among Thai immigrant employees in Pranakron Si Ayutthaya province by a path analysis found that job conditions and distance travelled between house and workplace had a direct effect on mental health (Kaewanuchit et al., 2015b). In addition, researchers found that university employees (Keawanuchit et al., 2015) and male academic university employees (Kaewanuchit, 2015) in Thailand were faced with occupational stress. These researches used the holistic health paradigms as bases for their explanation.

Many medical professionals have good skills mix; 1) integrated working provides the opportunity to consider staff and skill mix required to deliver health and social care service across traditional professional and organisational boundaries. 2) More staff enables more timely and appropriate communication concerning patients. 3) Medical professionals who made use of the resources improve information sharing and decision-making as well as risk management 4) improved their practices by avoiding repetition and frustration for the patient or

care user. A developing tradition among medical professionals has the discernment of unification in the heterogenetic of care (Coupe, 2013). This holistic health method involves gathering together individuals from different professions and specialists in order to provide good community health service. These medical professionals comprised physicians, nurses, physical therapists, amongst others (Dubois et al., 2009). Medical professionals can create interprofessional conflicts when developing a coherent treatment plan for patients. Community based and volunteer organisations such as self –help groups and learning together have ensured that community health development is more efficient and promotes equality. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies such as community health workers who are trained in family planning and refer clients to clinic-based services.

Furthermore, because community knowledge is organic, epistemological criticism that counters misunderstood characteristics of resource-poor settings has the potential for the making of healthful live it the world both now and in the future (Hoke et al., 2012). Community here is defined as the provider and recipient of health services as well as the clinical outcome (Blood, 2013). This result is in accord with previous research, such as training female community health volunteers, can outweigh the burden and challenges that arise, encompassing social engagement for healthy ageing in disadvantaged urban communities, and provide both a sense of community and

innovative health care endeavours to create a sustainable holistic health care model (Barbir, 2011; Beech et al., 2013). Health programmes are currently administered and implemented through a decentralised network of actors, organised by quasi-market relationship and charged with the task of bringing disciplines to the health of patients (Wright et al., 2010).

Decentralisation is related to public policy for health. The public policy for health has been almost totally directed and regulated by the central bureaucracies, with the exception of the medical policies practiced in the health promoting hospital called "Buengyitho". Decentralisation and the other paradigms benefit community health development in Thailand. These are paradigms that the famous academic "Putnam" applied in Italy. Decentralisation had been used in South Africa to provide relief for the "Rwanda genocide" by the Trauma Center for Victims of Violence and Torture (Putnam et al., 1993; Gutmann et al., 2004). The decentralised paradigm is consistent with findings from previous research in that health care reform was used to achieve increased coverage and access to high quality medical care, together with accountability to local government (Mechanic et al., 2010). When power was devolved to local bureaucracies and the public sector, it was found that local bureaucracies regulated health activities in order to protect the environment. To answer a special objective of the study (III), a condition of the 2009 Thai constitution

is that centralised bureaucracies devolve power to local bureaucracies and promote particular posts. Certain posts in the medical professionals such as the director use the most paradigms because persons in that position have more knowledge, skills and vision for community health development.

Thus, the authors recommend this research findings be applied in developing countries that aim for equality of health across humanity (Rondinelli et al., 1983). This research shows a strong preference for decentralised and local service provision, as opposed to central and bureaucratic systems stemming from a very different rationale and characteristics. Thus, it emphasises privatisation and the limitation of the state's role, and places the onus on decision making in a market setting (Collins et al., 1993). Decentralisation involves the transfer of resources, decision making, planning and management functions from the central government system to such bodies as field agencies, subordinate units of government, semi-autonomous public corporations, local government and specialised functional authorities. This reallocation of authority and resources is a major political issue affecting the internal power relationships within the public sector and the access of social groups to the decision-making process and state resources. This institutional transfer is, however, not an absolute virtue in itself. The researcher's appreciation of it will depend on how we interpret the redistribution of power and its effect on state allocation of resources.

The results of this research is consistent with the previous studies which found that decentralisation changes the vertical dimension of activation policies directed at social assistance recipients and challenges the distribution of responsibilities across policy areas, which are often located at different territorial levels (Williams, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Paradigm shifts for community health development by the medical profession found benefits in decentralisation, community based solutions and holistic health. In the past, centralised bureaucracies took on the community health development role and that must be changed to include more particular people and local government. Public policies for health influence the promotion of cooperation among people as a consumer group and also protects the environment for conservative tourism. Being community based, many problems are solved by the community itself, because the community is more understanding of the problems and has more resources.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research began when the researchers sent the qualitative questionnaire to the Ethics committee for Human research at Mahidol University to approve ethics of research. Human ethics code is COA. No.2014/395.2912, accepted on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2014.

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**APPENDIX 1****Basic Information Related to Key Informants**

Case	Sex	Age(years)	Experience (years)	Positions	Areas
A	Men	53	10	Medical physician	Buengyitho
B	Female	45	27	Director	Ban Prok
C	Men	43	23	Director	Buengyitho
D	Men	42	24	Public health technical officer	Ban Prok
E	Men	38	19	Thai traditional medicine	Buengyitho
F	Men	36	16	Public health officer	Ban Prok
G	Female	35	15	Registered nurse	Ban Prok
H	Female	33	6	Registered nurse	Buengyitho
I	Female	30	8	Physical therapy	Buengyitho
G	Female	30	12	Dental nurse	Ban Prok
K	Female	28	10	Physical therapy	Buengyitho

**APPENDIX 2****Shows the Paradigms**

Case	Question and answer	Paradigms		
		Community based	Holistic health	Decentralisation
	1. What is community health in your view?			
B,C,G,J	1.1 "everyone can promote basic health and treat the common disease themselves."	yes	yes	
C,F,G	1.2 "People are happy and not suffering"		yes	
B,D,F	1.3 "Lay people want good homes and improved well-being"	Yes	yes	yes
B,C,D	1.4 " People need not only an understanding of the treatment but also knowledge of the source of disease such as Dengue haemorrhagic fever"	yes	yes	yes
B,C,F	1.5 Healthcare professionals must promote prevention more than treatment"	yes	yes	yes
	Total used paradigm	4	5	3
	2. Which concept do your use to improve the community health?			
B,K	2.1 " <i>Policies must be significant and continuous</i> "(is this correct)	yes	yes	Yes
B,D	2.2 "All policy for health must have people's participation"	yes	yes	Yes
G,H	2.3 "people can resolve many problems by themselves"	yes	yes	yes
	Total used paradigm	3	3	3

**APPENDIX 2**

**Example Shows the Paradigms (Continuous)**

Case	Question and answer	Paradigms		
		Community based	Holistic health	Decentralization
	3. What are the practices you use to increase the community health status?			
B,C,D	3.1“Supported to build the field sport as futsal field”	yes	yes	yes
C,F,G,K	3.2“Volunteers empowerment help aging and disabled patients including children.	yes	yes	yes
A,B	3.3“co-operation with many agencies with similar problems”	yes	yes	yes
	Total used paradigm	3	3	3
	4. What are the conditions or problems that changed your conception and method used by the community health development?			
C,G,F	“Current work load”		yes	yes
B,C,D	4.1“Problems are complex and the way to resolve them involve related multi agencies.		yes	yes
B,C	4.2“Organisations have fewer officers and micro-controlled by central bureaucracies.”		yes	y
B,C	4.3“Local administrative organisations are penetration, understanding, and solution problems better the central bureaucracies.	yes	yes	yes
	Total used paradigm	1	4	4
Total		9	15	12

**APPENDIX 3**

**Positions and Paradigms**

Positions	Paradigms			Total of paradigms
	Community Based	Holistic health	Decentralisation	
Director	yes	yes	yes	3
Dental nurse	yes	yes		2
Registered nurse	yes	yes		2
Public health technical officer	yes	yes		2
Thai traditional medicine.	yes	yes		2
Medical physician	yes	yes		2
Physical therapy	yes	yes		2
	7	7	1	





*Figure 1.* Patient being helped using physical therapy by volunteers



*Figure 2.* A patient using a pillar as a tool for exercise and rehabilitation



*Figure 3.* A medical professional visiting a patient at home

## **Fake Emotions: Impediments to Bigger Thomas's Ontological Transcendence in Richard Wright's *Native Son***

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article examines Richard Wright's (1940) *Native Son*, as one of the most effective works in modern African American literary history, in the light of Jean Paul Sartre's conception of transcendence. This article draws upon Sartre's existential views on the concept of transcendence in *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1936/1960) and *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory* (1939/1948). The concept means that, through the power of imagination, one can envisage some projects for oneself so as to leave one's present state behind or to transcend it. In *Being and Nothingness* (1943/1950), Sartre clarified that consciousness was transcendence. This study focuses on two groups of critics opposing on the possibility of transcendence in Bigger Thomas, the protagonist of the novel, asserting that the first group ceased to acknowledge Bigger's transcendence, whereas the second group highlighted his transcendence, yet, ceased to delve into Bigger's psychological plight and the function of emotions, either enabling or paralysing Bigger before his execution. In our view, Bigger does have the capability to transcend as a distinguished human being. However, we argue that Bigger's emotions, inauthentic and fake, hinder his path to transcendence. Therefore, this study restricts itself to the selected pieces from the novel before Mary's accidental murder and her subsequent decapitation by Bigger, to stress the role of the protagonist's emotions and their consequential effects on his transcendence as an existentially distinguished individual. Our findings suggest that it is Bigger's resort to fake emotions that bereaves him of transcendence as an existentially autonomous being.

*Keywords:* Jean-Paul Sartre, Transcendence, Richard Wright, Fake Emotions, Bigger Thomas, *Native Son*

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## INTRODUCTION

Being called the father of African American literature (Fabre, 1985, p. 34), Richard Wright is a towering figure in the literary history of the United States; impressive enough to make Henry Louis Gates (1997) affirm: "if one had to identify the single most influential shaping force in modern Black literary history, one would probably have to point to Wright and the publication of *Native Son*" (p. xi). In his essay entitled "Black Boys and Native Sons", Irving Howe (1963) highlighted that: "The day *Native Son* appeared, American culture was changed forever... Wright's novel brought out into the open, as no one ever had before, the hatred, fear, and violence that have crippled and may not yet destroy our culture" (p. 41)

*Native Son* is the story of a 20-year-old black American youth named Bigger Thomas who was living in utter poverty on Chicago's South Side in the 1930s. The novel's treatment of Bigger and his motivations is an example of literary naturalism and existentialism. Bigger inadvertently murders his white employer's daughter named Mary which results in his imprisonment in a state prison cell awaiting imminent execution where his dull future appears to degenerate into a bleaker one than before. Bigger's position in the novel regarding his oeuvre is that of rejection of a racist society which withholds primary rights from him, depriving him of the chance to live as an autonomous human being. This deprivation stimulates Bigger's emotional reactions, making it worthwhile to us to evaluate to what extent Bigger

enjoys any freedom or transcendence and what the psychological ramifications of such transcendence might be in terms of his emotional states; all of which can be elaborated with the help of Jean-Paul Sartre's existential views.

According to Nina Kressner Cobb (1960), Wright had met Sartre in the United States in 1946 for the first time and later saw him when the former visited France the same year. Accordingly, Wright's association with Sartre and other French existentialists is undeniable. Wright had a personal friendship with Sartre. Wright's initial, negative view of Sartre changed after meeting him. Fabre, quoting from Wright, says, "Sartre is quite of my opinion regarding the possibility of human action today, that it is up to the individual to do what he can to uphold the concept of what it means to be human" (Fabre, 1978, p.42). In his conversation with Sartre, as Fabre quotes from Wright, the black writer reveals: "The great danger, I told him, in the world today is that the very feeling and conception of what is a human being might well be lost. He agreed. I feel very close to Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir..." (p. 42). Wright proceeded to state: "Sartre is the only Frenchman I've met who had voluntarily made this identification of the French experience with that of the rest of mankind. How rare a man is this Sartre!" (p. 42).

While Sartre's philosophy can be traced in Wright's works, it cannot be claimed that Wright had written his works under the shadow of the Frenchman's philosophy. We should bear in our mind that Wright

had written most of his novels before his acquaintance with Sartre. However, we can apply Sartre's existentialism to Wright's famous work *Native Son* because it aptly deals with human psyche and the way it can be distorted.

One of the important existentialist concepts that Sartre focused on is transcendence. In *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre (1936/1960) argued that the ego is "a synthesis of interiority and transcendence" (p. 83). By the concept of "transcendence" Sartre meant that through the power of imagination, one envisages some projects for oneself so as to leave one's present state behind or transcend oneself. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre (1943/1950) clarified that consciousness was transcendence and that "consciousness can transcend towards transphenomenal being because it is not being, it is nothingness" (Daigle & Landry, 2013, p. 95). What Sartre meant by "nothingness" is a very human reality from which it is impossible to flee unless one devises some absurd techniques to convince oneself that there is no such thing as transcendence. It might be asked how Sartre defines "nothingness". To find the answer one might refer to Sartre's (1946/2007) perspective in *Existentialism Is a Humanism*: a human being "materializes in the world, encounters himself, and only afterward defines himself. If man as existentialists conceive of him cannot be defined, it is because to begin with he is nothing" (p.22). It can be claimed that nothingness breeds responsibility and such commitment is accompanied by consciousness.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Putting Bigger's responsibility aside, critics such as Sam Bluefarb (1972) and Charles E. Wilson (2005) found Bigger's transcendence to be insignificant when it came to his consciousness. However, researchers such as Donald B. Gibson (1970) and Benjamin D. Carson (2008) believe transcendence is an important element in shaping Bigger's very autonomy as an existential being. A glance at the related literature classifying the above-mentioned critics sheds more light on those attitudes.

Research on the probability of Bigger's transcendence suggests that there are two groups of critics. The first group, having a naturalistic standpoint, presume it is impossible for Bigger to transcend his circumstance and rise above it. They bound the protagonist to a pre-determined condition of Jim Crow America with no freedom of choice. Critics and scholars such as Sam Bluefarb (1972), Yoshinobu Hakutani (1988, 1991), Jeffery Atteberrey (2009), and Charles E. Wilson (2005) are among those who belong to this group. The second group, however, having existentialist viewpoints, are those who maintain it is possible for Bigger to achieve transcendence through free will. Katherine Fishburn (1977), W. Laurence Hogue (2009), Donald B. Gibson (1970), Gregory Alan Jones (2000) and Benjamin D. Carson (2008) adhere to the latter.

Having a pessimistic, naturalistic view regarding Bigger's fate, in *The Escape Motif in the American Novel: Mark Twain to Richard Wright*, Bluefarb (1972) asserts that

Bigger's life is like a labyrinth in which he is entrapped either from within or without. Any transcendence is thwarted because "his escape has been blocked; it is doomed to failure even before it begins" (p. 135). Thus, Bigger had neither a realistic expectation of life nor the capability to escape the situation. By the same token, in his essay entitled "Richard Wright and American Naturalism", Hakutani (1988) contends that Wright's use of crime as a thematic device in *Native Son* bears witness to the novel being a naturalist one. He asserts that any violent action committed by Bigger is inevitable because of the external forces. In "Two on Wright," Hakutani (1991) expands his ideas to incorporate existential philosophy, asserting: "Richard Wright criticism since its inception has been saturated with references to literary naturalism and existentialist philosophy" (p. 491). Thus, to Hakutani, *Native Son* is a mingling of the two literary schools. Interestingly, Atteberrey (2009) delineates his moderate naturalistic position in reading the novel by highlighting the fact that Wright's interpretation of existentialism, despite being almost at odds with that of Sartre, is an authentic one. Atteberrey thinks that Wright has paid much attention to the dominance of external forces, a point which has been often disregarded by Sartre. This scholar conceives that the pitfall of existentialism is paying excessive attention to "inside" and ignoring "outside" (p.173). Last of all, Wilson (2005) renders any existential interpretation almost ineffectual and implausible, arguing that since the novel is to explore race and racism, Wright

employs the literary school of naturalism where no transcendence can be envisaged on the side of the protagonist. Wilson insists that Bigger is "trapped in a world where he can exercise few, if any, choices" (p.22).

However, as belonging to the second group, Fishburn (1977) affirms that "Bigger, using sheer will, manages to transcend his world, to accept himself for what he is and to accept the consequences of what he has done" (p. 71). That is, Bigger can be indubitably considered a fully existentially developed character. Nevertheless, Hogue (2009) in "Can Subaltern Speak?, Existential Reading of Richard Wright's *Native Son*" articulates that, throughout the novel, Bigger desperately wants to express himself, but since "language fails him and he is unable to speak, to be heard" (p. 25), his attempts to transcend his inferior situation are all thwarted. The psychological freedom is postponed until Bigger perpetrates murder, that is, ironically, redemption from inferiority is granted upon him when he resorts to violence through which his very individuality starts to bloom. Having an approximately different view, Gibson (1970) argues that due to an overemphasis on social aspect of Bigger Thomas's being, critics have neglected his individuality. He stresses: "The emphasis is upon a problem that he faces as an isolated, solitary human whose problem is compounded by race though absolutely not defined by racial considerations" (p. 10). Gibson implies that Bigger's ontological transcendence should not be disregarded when interpreting Bigger. Focusing on the Sartrean concept of

“bad faith” in his dissertation entitled “Bad Faith and Racism”, Jones (2000) states that Bigger in *Native Son* is the victim of white people’s dehumanising racism. Making Bigger’s transcendence limited, the only relationship which is detectable in the novel is that of “I-It” one (p. 61); where whites are considered as human beings and blacks as objects. Lastly, Carson (2008) argues that: “while Bigger unquestionably makes murderous choices, Bigger’s life, wrought from the alembic of indifferent ‘sociological pressures’ and ‘multiple compulsions’ was never his own to live” (p. 29). So, Carson thinks it is not Bigger who transcends society; it is society which transcends him instead. However, Bigger can partially transcend himself after murdering and decapitating Mary. Carson also asserts that Bigger cannot be called an existential hero because he fails to come to terms with the limitations of existence.

Our analysis of the ideas of both groups show that all the critics of the first group, namely Bluefarb, Hakutani, Atteberrey, and Wilson, commonly claim that Bigger has little or no choice in his life, that he is a victim of a racist society trampled by the white folks and that he is destined to be miserable and have an unfortunate death. As evident above, the arguments of the former group neglect a highly salient human attribute: agency. Although they provide the reader with a proper portrayal of Bigger’s milieu and the way he is affected by his situation and its brutality, they turn a blind eye to another dimension of his very existence: transcendence. We assert

that all critics of the second group namely, Fishburn, Hogue, Gibson, Jones and Carson, share one commonality in the presence of transcendence in Bigger. However, they, for instance, differ in the opinion whether it is the society that transcends Bigger, or Bigger transcends society. This second group of scholars who regard the novel as a work replete with existential themes cease to delve into Bigger’s psychological plight and the function of emotions, either enabling or paralysing him before his execution. While our study restricts itself to the selected pieces from the novel before Mary’s accidental murder and the subsequent decapitation by Bigger, it aims to fill the above-mentioned gaps by focusing on the protagonist’s emotions and their effect on his transcendence, regarding him as an existentially distinguished individual.

As far as Bigger’s emotions bared in his interaction with Gus are concerned, our position in this paper is closer to the second group of the scholars who employed existential tenets in interpreting his transcendence. In our view, Bigger, as a distinguished human being, does have the capability to transcend. However, we argue that Bigger’s emotions, inauthentic and fake, hinder his path to transcendence.

We limit our study to Bigger’s interactions with Gus that reach their zenith in their dramatic fight. The reason for this restriction is twofold: first, Bigger’s transcendence, as we indicated in the review of the related literature, has often been investigated in relation to Mary’s murder and the significance of other sections of the

novel has been mysteriously overlooked. Second, since in his communication with Gus, Bigger better speaks his heart with him as a fellow black friend, his emotions are outspokenly and transparently expressed in comparison to those with white characters. In addition, Bigger's fight with Gus is where his emotions are stripped off and displayed more candidly. That is why we suggest it can be an appropriate section to concentrate on.

### **SARTRE'S VIEWS ON EMOTIONS (CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK)**

In *Emotions: Outline of a Theory*, Sartre (1939/1948) distinguishes two types of consciousness: "pre-reflective" and "reflective"; the former of which is oriented toward the world and the latter of which is concerned with oneself. In his view, emotions can be transformed to one another in reflective level and any effort to deny one's consciousness in one's emotions such as anger, fear, delight are nothing but masks to hide one's transcendence and agency in choosing a particular way of feeling and thinking. In his way, the origin of emotions becomes clear: "the origin of emotion is a spontaneous and lived degradation of consciousness in the face of the world. What it cannot endure in one way it tries to grasp in another by going to sleep, by approaching the consciousness of sleep, dream, and hysteria" (p.77).

It is crucial to notify what happens during an emotive behaviour from Sartre's (1939/1948) perspective: "In short, in emotion it is the body which, directed by consciousness, changes its relations with the

world in order that the world may change its qualities. If emotion is a joke, it is a joke we believe in (p. 61). It is important to stress that Sartre had "fake emotions" in his mind; however, there is another type of emotion on which Sartre puts his finger: "True emotion is quite otherwise; it is accompanied by belief" (p. 73).

Now, it seems evident that what emotion means to Sartre (1939/1948): an emotion is regarded as the "transformation of the world" (p. 58), thus when facing a world which is too difficult and insurmountable, "we can no longer live in so urgent and difficult a world. All the ways are barred. However, we must act..." (p. 58). Confronting an unpleasant situation, one tries to change the world, an enterprise which in Sartre's way of thinking is impossible to be acquired. To shed light on his definition of emotion and the way one is engaged in it, Sartre provides a tangible example: "I extend my hand to take a bunch of grapes. I can't get it; it's beyond my reach. I shrug my shoulders..." then in order for the person to eliminate any trouble to pick them, he starts to describe them as "too green". Doing so, a given individual assumes this "will resolve the conflict and eliminate the tension" (p. 61).

Sartre (1939/1948) also delineates specific kinds of emotion and their connotations including fear, sadness, anger and joy. The first emotion Sartre attempts to inspect is fear: "Thus, the true meaning of fear is apparent; it is a consciousness which, through magical behavior, intends to deny an object of the external world, and which will go so far as to annihilate itself in order



to annihilate the object with it" (p. 64). This escape from an object in the world which seems to be obliterated via running away is of no use; because, the fear and the object feared are so intermingled with each other that one lives one's fear even if the object feared does not exist externally.

Moreover, Sartre delineates that "passive sadness" aims "at eliminating the obligation to seek new ways" (1939/1948, p.65). From Sartre's perspective, this type of sadness insists upon transforming the world's structure ascribing a "neutral reality" to it. He asserts that we shun our subjectivity by pretending to be not functioning in fulfilling our plans and projects. Thinking so, "we behave in such a way that the universe no longer requires anything of us" (p.65).

On the other hand, Sartre demonstrates what active sadness is: an individual with this sort of sadness endeavours to replace some problems with some other, through which the world seems to be too strong and hostile to allow us to do actions, in other words, it "demands too much of us" (p. 67). In this case, one may pretend that one is eager and resolute to exert one's power upon difficulties and obstacles, but due to having an invincible rival, namely the world, one's every effort proves to be futile appearing as a "comedy of impotence" (p. 67) which is accompanied by anger, unlike passive sadness that is associated with indifference.

## DISCUSSION

### Application of Sartre's Views on Emotions to *Native Son*

In this section, we apply Sartre's theories on emotion to *Native Son* to disclose Bigger's behaviour throughout the novel which oscillates between fear, anger and sadness. His early behaviour in the novel before killing Mary is a true example of a character stricken by intense fear. Taking Bigger's behaviour when quarrelling with Gus, his friend, over robbing a white delicatessen's store can shed light on our argument that he is overwhelmed by fake emotions. Firstly, instead of acknowledging his fear of undergoing such a daunting task, he tries to accuse Gus of cowardice due to his delay in coming on time based on their appointment; however, by projecting his fear upon Gus, he craves, according to Sartre's definition stated above, to make his consciousness sleep: "He hated Gus because he knew that Gus was afraid, as even he was; he feared Gus because he felt that Gus would consent and then he would be compelled to go through with the robbery" (Wright, 1940, p.34). The way Bigger becomes hysterical and transforms his fear to anger is clear in his quarrel with Gus: "'You yellow!' Bigger said. 'You scared to rob a white man'" (p. 35). But, Bigger is ignorant of the fact that even by running away from the object he feared, here a white man, he will not succeed to expunge that from his inside and the unity between inside and outside cannot be integrated unless he faces that fear, rather than escaping from it.

The scene where Bigger threatens Gus with a knife is of utmost significance symbolically. Employing a psychological approach in interpreting the scene, Yvonne Robinson Jones (2007) argues that the hand-held knife, “a phallic symbol” (p.44), represents Bigger’s masculinity which intends to subjugate Gus, a weak black companion, through which Bigger can unleash his repressed anger against the white community. Jones continues to mention that Gus’s being forced to kneel before Bigger is a technique that provides Bigger with manhood and constitutes a binary of Bigger as a man and Gus, being emasculated, as a “bitch” (p.45).

We assume that Jones’s analysis of the above scene based on sexual images is precious since it highlights the symbolic implications which uncover Bigger’s inner stimulus to take action. However, we assert that the scene provided above can be probed in terms of other symbolic connotations as well: the pointed knife in Bigger’s hand can demonstrate his emotions are keen (like the blade of the knife itself) and dangerously impulsive (like his inappropriate use of knife, that is, a tool to threaten others). His emotions have lost their primary function to help him be sincere to himself; rather, they confine him in fallacy and self-deception.

Similarly, regardless of the sexual images which Bigger’s rage and his use of knife might symbolise, as Jones states, Bigger’s fight with Gus can unveil an existential emblem as well. When Bigger notices that he is impotent to rob a white man, he acts as the man in Sartre’s example

did: shrugging his shoulders when the grapes were out of reach. Since Bigger recognises that the white people are hard to be defeated, as the grapes being far symbolise one’s reluctance to take any trouble and pick them, he feigns having transcended by directing all his power against a feeble, defenceless black, Gus. Hence, all Bigger does is to pretend to be furious so as to refuse to truly achieve transcendence.

On the other hand, in the scene which Bigger is talking with Gus, he vacillates between active and passive forms of sadness. As stated above, Sartre argues that in passive sadness people act as if the world required nothing of them and stopped acting as though there was nothing to do, but in active sadness people act as if the world, too hostile and strong, required too much of them. When talking to Gus about the superiority of whites, Bigger displays a passive gesture in front of a world which requires action: “In the sky above him a few big white clouds drifted. He puffed silently, relaxed, his mind pleasantly vacant of purpose” (Wright, 1940, p. 28). Bigger pretends that he has no power in changing the status quo, so he plays the role of an infirm creature having no choice of action in a world which expects nothing from him. On the other hand, Bigger imagines that the world is too strong and expects much from him, say, he is engrossed in active sadness later in his conversation with Gus:

*“Nothing ever happens”, he complained.*

*“What do you want to happen?”*

*"Anything", Bigger said with a wide sweep of his dingy palm, a sweep that included all the possible activities in the world.*

(Wright, 1940, p. 31)

Bigger involves himself in active sadness, which is transformed into anger, due to being forced to act in a strong and harsh world which expects a lot of courage from him. That is to say, he pretends to be furious in a world that every single action is doomed to fail because of its strength and invincibility. This rage against the world is actually embedded in Bigger's intense fear. Bigger directs this active sadness to Gus in a sadistic scene that is probably the acme of this type of sadness in the novel. This way, Bigger's placing the knife on Gus's throat and then on his lips, being subsequently accompanied with his sadistic elation, can be an appropriate demonstration of Bigger's fake emotions.

Likewise, Bigger and Gus are also engaged in fake happiness. In a scene where Bigger and Gus start playing white, Bigger exemplifies an individual whose happiness and contentment are the emblematic of an emotionally depthless person. Bigger and Gus embark on playing the roles of white men of power and wealth through which Bigger unveils what he fantasises about when his imagination is to be disentangled. Their mimics of white people make them burst into laughter. However, the boys' unfulfilled fantasies, initially filling them with joy and elation, fade away when Bigger and Gus return to reality:

*They hung up imaginary receivers and leaned against the wall and laughed. A street car rattled by. Bigger sighed and swore.*

*"Goddammit!"*

*"What's the matter?"*

*"They don't let us do nothing."*

*"Who?"*

*"The white folks."*

*"You talk like you just now finding that out," Gus said...*

*... It's just like living in jail. Half the time I feel like I'm on the outside of the world peeping in through a knothole in the fence...."*

(Wright, 1940, p. 29)

Again as it is evident, emotions abruptly are replaced; that is, happiness gives its place to envy, anger and gloom. It is important for us to know that such erratic behaviour could give rise to Bigger's anger.

It is obvious that Bigger's emotions are transformed into one another in a way that one might become baffled with the emotions one confront. The essence of Bigger's rather unpredictable behaviour in the excerpts chosen above lies in the fact that his emotions replace one another with an approximately high rapidity. This wavering probably arises from Bigger's lack of unity in terms of his feelings. His superficial emotions are apparently compartmentalised and seemingly signify what they are supposed to do; that is, for instance, when Bigger is furious, it seems that he is filled with anger. However, there is no such unity between the signifier and

the signified. Bigger's anger with Gus is a transformed form of fear; as Joyce Ann Joyce (1986) declares: "Bigger's sullen treatment of his family and the violent display of emotions that instigates the fight with Gus spring from his fear" (p. 61).

Joyce ceases to examine the role of fake and original emotions in Bigger's behaviours; however, we claim that Bigger is well aware of the fact that if he displays his fears overtly, he will be disparaged and humiliated by his fellow black friends; hence, observing Bigger's behaviour, we easily discern that he is employing what psychiatrists call the gaslighting technique, that is to say, a technique through which a person denies one's own psychological inconsistencies on the one hand, and projects them on another individual in order to relieve oneself of psychic pressures, on the other.

A noteworthy point to make is that the excerpts from the novel indicate that Bigger's emotions in those scenes are, arguably, fake. In effect, it is Bigger rather than Gus who is extremely afraid of the outcomes of robbery. But instead of having a fair analysis of his and others' emotions, he accuses Gus of being a coward about robbing the white man's store. He does not come to terms with the fact that he fabricates some false emotions including sadness, fear and anger to lessen the pain of his passiveness facing the world. Thus, to put it in Sartre's terms, Bigger's emotions are not accompanied with genuine "beliefs". Deep down, Bigger knows that he himself is the true coward, but self-deceptively, he ascribes his negative feelings to people like Gus.

It is no wonder that one might inquire where the chief and overriding determinants of Bigger's anguish lie. Bigger's internalisation of white omnipresence and almightiness is so intense that the interior function of imagination which Sartre talks about in order for him to transcend is all buried. In a scene conversing with Gus, Bigger discloses his obsessive thinking of white people, divulging that white people live in his stomach (Wright, 1940, p. 32).

We assert that when it comes to Bigger's interiority, he is a petrified being who cannot imagine projects by which he might attain transcendence. If we refer to Sartre's definition of transcendence according to which imagination is the building block of transcendence (because it is through the faculty of imagination that one can improvise one's would-be existence in the world), we can clearly understand the adverse condition in which Bigger's imagination is trapped. While Bigger's interiority is turbulent, he cannot envision any transcendence for himself which is the exterior manifestation of his imagination. Had Bigger enjoyed a unified and uninjured imagination, he would probably have gained transcendence.

This incapability affects his emotions. Not having true emotions, Bigger remains in "pre-reflective" level of consciousness which in his case is a distorted one. As stated before, in pre-reflective consciousness, people are conscious of the world and not themselves. The protagonist is not conscious of himself as an agent who can have true emotions in order to transcend himself. To transcend himself and go beyond

his status quo, Bigger needs to reach the reflective level of consciousness, but he limits himself to pre-reflective mode and as a consequence fails to attain transcendence as an existentially autonomous individual. It is worth mentioning that, apparently, the concepts of "pre-reflective" and "reflective" consciousness have not been studied in *Native Son* before the present article.

## CONCLUSION

The main conclusion to be drawn from this article is that every human being, regardless of social status, skin colour, and inherited situation, to name a few, cannot elude ontological transcendence. To relate this statement to the novel, Bigger is doomed to acknowledge his transcendence as an autonomous human being; however, clinging to some unexpressed but acted out pretexts, he negates the existence of a very human fact named transcendence. In order to overcome the psychological dilemma with which he was grappling, he invoked the aid of his emotions. We indicated how his emotions lacked consistence throughout the selected pieces, one transforming into another incessantly. His inauthentic, fake emotions compelled him to live at pre-reflective level and did not allow him to experience the reflective phase in terms of his consciousness. When it is said Bigger neglected his autonomy, it is not to say that he was not surrounded by hostile circumscribers; rather, it means that no matter how harsh the situation was, Bigger could have transcended it ontologically. In other words, Bigger could have exercised

ontological transcendence to some extent, but this potentiality was shut off by his ubiquitous dishonest, artificial emotions.

Sartre modified his theories on transcendence throughout his career. There is an additional area for further research that has not been highlighted by the studies undertaken for this article. It is related to the huge obstacles such as economic conditions, violent relations and racial problems in one's path to transcendence. In fact, Sartre investigated these obstacles in his later works. Sartre, for instance, wrote prefaces to some books by colonial intellectuals such as Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon in which he asserted that violence could affect the black man's transcendence. In our article, we drew upon Sartre's early theories on transcendence in which only internal determinants such as Bigger's fake emotions affected his transcendence. Since external determinants can provide the reader with a better and more realistic understanding of Bigger's transcendence, further research could evaluate Bigger's non-ontological transcendence by regarding him not only as a human being with unique individuality but also as a social being who grapples with a plethora of hindrances.

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## **The Place of Memory in John Burnside's *The Locust Room***

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article explores the interdisciplinary ecocriticism in John Burnside's novel *The Locust Room* (2001). The article's main focus will be on ecocriticism and psychoanalysis as a conceptual framework. Using ecocriticism, the concepts of dwelling and ecoconsciousness will be applied as ecocritical concepts to analyse the environmental nature depicted in the novel. On the other hand, the concept of anxiety will be utilized to explore the psychological anxious feelings of the novel's protagonist, Paul. The protagonist's psychological anxiety develops throughout the plot. The cause of his anxious sufferings is the male-rape phenomenon which is common at his university campus. To get rid of his anxiety, the protagonist tends to live in alienation to escape rape, and he decides to live in natural settings alone with animals and insects. Accordingly, the study follows a textual analysis of the environmental settings to argue nature as an exit for the protagonist's anxiety. The interdisciplinary interconnection between ecocriticism and psychoanalysis will be elaborated by citing Cheryll Glotfelty's concept of ecoconsciousness, Greg Garrard's concept of dwelling, and Sigmund Freud's concept of anxiety.

*Keywords:* Alienation, anxiety, dwelling, ecoconsciousness, ecocriticism

### **INTRODUCTION**

Burnside's *The Locust Room* (2001) is a series of narrative episodes telling the story of Paul. He is considered the main

protagonist of the novel throughout the events. Paul leads a peaceful life with his parents. He seems to be very close to his father. He loves his father because of the natural and wise characteristics that distinguish his father from other people. Yet, Paul does not have a good relationship with his mother because she is strict with his absences from the house. Gradually, Paul develops a strong affection for and

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interest in nature, especially environmental surroundings. Throughout the novel, he states that he learnt to love nature from his father. Paul's father becomes interested in sending Paul to the University of Cambridge for study, and Paul agrees to go. At the university hostel, he befriends many students, among whom is Clive. Afterward, Paul develops strange feelings. He becomes anxious when he hears of rape rumours at the university.

Paul's anxiety intensifies when he learns that his university friends have been raped. As the story unfolds, the real cause of his anxiety comes to be the feelings of guilt. Such feelings prove his repentance because he is the real rapist. In the course of the events, nobody knows who the real rapist is except for Paul, though there are serious investigations into the rapist's identity. Then, he is summoned to study practical courses in a locust room. He enjoys living with the locust room's animals, especially rabbits. When he finishes his courses, he returns to his home to find his father dead. Accordingly, his anxiety intensifies. He decides to return to the locust room to live in isolation and to enjoy staying in the gardens with the locust room's animals.

*The Locust Room* is primarily about Paul's anxiety. Accordingly, the novel could be classified as a psychological story situated in a psychic past that haunts a "social present, predominantly fantastic narratives" that "suggest that desire is structured and deformed within the family. Saturated with incestuous longings, these stories expose intrafamilial relations as

psychologically determining" (Moglen, 2001, p.7). Furthermore, the novel places a social emphasis on the realistic mode, and fantastic "narratives" that "had an intrapsychic focus. They (the novel fantastic narratives) mapped interior states produced by possessive and affective forms of individualism, and they exposed the anxious melancholy that the modern order of social differences induced" (p.7).

The psychological attributes of *The Locust Room* provide a vivid picture of how human beings can be affected by external realities that help or harm their psychological state. The novel's successive events provide sufficient examples of the protagonist's developing anxiety. The most important turning point in the protagonist character is his predilection to natural scenes, which he learned from his father. The events continue in different episodes, reaching a point where the protagonist recognizes his anxiety and realizes how he feels relieved when he is in environmental settings. The protagonist's encounter with other people makes him more anxious. Such anxiety could be "employed as a descriptive, informative, often explanatory way of tracing and communicating developments, processes or changes without necessarily raising expectations of interesting, surprising or unpredictable turns" (Hühn, 2010, p.2).

In *The Locust Room*, the apparent escape from anxiety is living in isolation. Paul grows to love staying close to natural settings, such as gardens, locust rooms with animals, and forests. The fictional expression of this alienation is solitude at



the novel's narrative level. A life of solitude refers to living without other human beings. This life is quiet and preferred by people who tend to be isolated by nature. Similarly, Paul prefers living in such isolation to avoid living with other people. In this manner, Burnside offers a story "grounded in real life and fashioned with a view that is "not the only kind we like to write and consume" (Swirski, 2007, p.2).

Therefore, the current article studies the protagonist's anxiety. It will first scrutinize the gradual revelation of the reasons behind his anxiety and how he becomes psychologically disturbed. For studying anxiety, this article will focus on two aspects. The first one is the problem of rape, in which the protagonist participates as a rapist. Second, the death of the protagonist's father will be studied as another reason behind his growing anxiety. However, the problem of rape will be highlighted as the main cause of anxiety. The theoretical application of anxiety will be explicated out of Sigmund Freud's concept of anxiety and some related psychological anxiety disorders.

Then, the article will turn to a discussion of the interdisciplinary relationship between psychoanalysis and ecocriticism. As such, two ecocritical concepts will be applied, i.e., Cheryll Glotfelty's concept of ecoconsciousness and Greg Garrard's concept of dwelling. The concept of ecoconsciousness will serve as a link between the concept of anxiety and dwelling. In this manner, ecoconsciousness will reveal the function of nature in *The Locust Room*.

On the other hand, the function of nature will be elaborated by using the concept of dwelling. This concept unveils the significance of the environmental setting of the novel. Furthermore, the application of the concept of dwelling will be further detailed by explaining the roles of ancestry, work, death, and ritual in the light of Garrard's concept of dwelling.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANXIETY

The protagonist's anxiety does not arise suddenly. It develops as he comes to realize that he is not at ease in his family life. At the beginning of the novel, he suffers from sleeplessness. He feels that he is somewhat upset, but he does not recognize the real cause of his anxiety: "By the light from the window, he [Paul] could tell that she [his mother] was dreaming; he had seen enough sleeping women to recognise the look of the dreamer on her face, and the faint blue tremors of attention that flickered beneath her eyelids" (p.1). In addition, he sleeps well in his room because he is still not psychologically "anxious". This is because of the negative relationship with his mother: "He had been in her room for some time, excited by the thought of what was to come, but comfortable and easy in himself, in no way anxious or troubled, in no way afraid" (p.1).

Paul's agitated feelings are quite related to a number of experiences he had undergone at some point in his life. Because of that experience, he develops a psychological disorder. In *Anxiety Disorders*, Stephen Stahl (2013) discusses the catastrophic

implications of anxiety. Stahl argues that “[A] basic assumption in the management of anxiety is the need for the patient to tolerate and accept the experience of anxiety, without catastrophizing about improbable dire outcomes, and without using avoidance as an escape strategy” (p.5). To complicate matters further, there is increasing evidence that there are critical periods during a “life span when we are vulnerable to the development of anxiety disorders” (Freud, 1979, p.21).

Similarly, in *The Locust Room*, the protagonist’s anxiety is connected to his family life. The family constitutes a basic refuge for his safe, happy life. This becomes more conspicuous when his father dies later in the story. Nevertheless, his present state is still influenced by his dependence on his parents, specifically when he was a child. Therefore, he remembers his perfect childhood to escape from thinking about the problem of rape in which he is involved: “and it was there in his memories of childhood, in the grey, early morning cool of his paper round, or the long drives with his father, out on the weekend, when they escaped from the suspended animation of the house, on their contrived fishing trips” (p.5). In addition, Paul’s close relationship with his family appears in his mother’s care for him: “His mother would stand watching him a moment, in her slippers and dressing gown, with that sceptical, careworn look on her face. She would wait a long time – maybe a minute or more – before she spoke, always quiet, but always with a note of suppressed annoyance, always on the verge of an accusation” (p.7).

Paul’s developing anxiety uncovers his agitated psychology. His childhood life is full of exuberant situations when he used to live peacefully with his parents. In this case, he recounts these beautiful moments as he remembers his previous life. Anxiety studies relate some causes of anxiety to the memories through which anxious characters recall their past experience. In this way, anxious characters may develop traumatic symptoms. This is because the “implicit memories are memories recorded without conscious awareness of the experiences behind them. Whether the memories of trauma are implicit or explicit, the trauma itself has a drastic pruning effect on neural networks of the brain, closing off pathways of security and reinforcing pathways of anxiety” (Freud, 1979, p.27). In addition, anxiety has symptomatic effects that play an important role in developing anxiety, whereby “in exploring what’s behind symptoms of anxiety, it’s important to remember the intricate connection between the physical body and emotions. Not all individuals who have physical symptoms of panic or anxiety have anxiety disorder” (p.27). Moreover, the symptoms of anxiety may refer to some aspects of psychological depression and “conceptualizations of pathogenesis of anxiety and depression may have a strong bearing on issues concerning the classification of emotional disorder” (Stein et al., 2010, p.27). The symptomatic indications of anxiety, moreover, are chronic (lasting for a long time), and they need much time to be overcome because “anxiety disorders tend to be chronic conditions” (Emilien, 2002, p.17).

The description of an anxiety disorder is similar to Paul's position in *The Locust Room*. He lives the early periods of his life with his family. When he grows up, however, he leaves them to go to university. In this case, he just remembers his beautiful life with his parents: "For a long time now, he had understood that he was immune to their world – that, unless he allowed himself to be caught, they [his parents] would never find him out" (p.4). When his parents lose him, they search for him to ensure that he is safe from any harm: "Naturally, they were afraid – and he came to see, as he learned to enjoy it more, to relax into it, that he even had a right to their fear" (p.3).

Paul's parents consider the value of their son. In this sense, Paul is strongly connected to his family: "he was a character they would have recognised on film, or in a book, but would never acknowledge in real life: a vivid creature, part man, part animal, but also something more, something indescribable" (p.4). Paul's parents' care absence would result in anxiety because "anxious" persons may have vulnerable characteristics that predate the onset of their anxiety "and play a part in its development" (Freud, 1979, p.14). For example, the relationship between Paul and his parents is strong enough. His happy life "predates" his anxious life at the university. As long as he stays with them, he develops his skills as a human being: "He was so good at this now, so skilled at his trade. He could cross a cluttered room in the dark and make no sound. There were times when he was sure he could stop breathing if he had to" (p.3).

The anonymity of the rapist is a main factor of Paul's anxiety. This is because anxiety appears in the form of "acute physical symptoms" (Stossel, 2013, p.2). In fact, he is the rapist but he hides this fact to avoid being summoned and trialled by the police. However, he appears anxious when he talks about the rape declaration in the newspaper. He discusses this problem with his housemate, Clive. This is the physical symptom of his anxiety: "He may have been afraid of Clive, and perhaps with good reason, which partly explained why he kept to himself so much. In fact, the shyness, the fondness for sweets, the way he talked put Paul in mind of a displaced schoolboy; in spite of his sallow skin and balding pate, it was hard not to think of Steve as an overgrown child" (p.17).

Similarly, Paul suffers from "negative thoughts" and holds certain negative beliefs because of his fear of rape. He is afraid of the notion of rape itself: "he had almost trusted in the notion – that what he was looking for might not exist, and even if it did, it might be wholly meaningless to other people" (p.27). His thoughts haunt him when he is alone: "when he was alone, he caught glimpses of that reality (rape reality); when he was with other people, it vanished. Together people constructed a narrative that did not include the fundamental, but made of the world what was needed for social life to continue. Paul wanted to go beyond that" (p.27).

In anxiety studies, fear is a psychological implication of anxiety because "fear is a normal healthy part of human experience.

It is an appropriate response to threats, challenges, and potential loss” (Freud, 1979, p.4). Furthermore, it develops “when anxiety persists and interferes with daily life, anxiety disorder may be diagnosed” (p.4). Therefore, anxiety interference goes through “panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, social phobia, substance abuse, and suicidal tendencies” (p.44). Anxiety disorder also develops because “anxiety is too intense” and “it can interfere with [physical] performance” (Antony, 2008, p.7).

Anticipating danger is normal in Paul’s life. He suffers from living alone after his father’s death: “Paul would be dispatched, alone, on the ghost train while his father waited, mock-anxious” (p.227). He recalls all this in memory: “But then, everything had shifted now. It was as if the solitude Paul had begun to learn out at the field station had quietly taken over his life” (p.250). He still remembers the good days at home with his father, and thus, he becomes sorrowful: “He felt an odd sinking, a shiver of something that came close to grief, as she turned and headed for the door, and the impulse to jump up” (p.260). After his father’s death, “his whole life changed” (p.264). In addition, he recalls all of what happened to him through a nostalgic memory: “he never stopped thinking about what happened” (p.264). Paul’s grievous state is neurotic, and he wants to live in nature to obtain some psychological calmness. The following section will describe the natural atmosphere in which he tries to live.

## ECOCONSCIOUSNESS

Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) argues that ecoconsciousness is used by writers to “induce elevated states of consciousness within themselves, he suspects, and in their accounts of the phenomenon of awareness they are as much literary psychologists as they are natural historians” (p.xxxii). This state of consciousness had a psychological dimension “of alienation from nature” (p.xxvii).

The close affinity between nature and psychology is influenced by the environmental setting. In *The Locust Room*, Paul’s tries to find alleviation for his anxiousness in the surrounding settings. However, because he was previously alienated from nature, he could not cure his anxiety. Yet, he decides to go outside “where he could slip in and wait, for hours if need be, as still and silent as a hunting cat” (p.2). He also contemplates the surrounding “geography” to get rid of his disturbed inner feelings:

*and he had assumed that every country had two geographies: a clear, weather-beaten coast-line, where things were constantly changing, the endless motion of the sea eroding and cleansing whatever it touched, the wind honing everything down to the bone or the bare wood, and that dark, still interior, where things lay still and rotted, like the fallen trees in the Den woods, that lay for years turning black in the rain and finally*

*flaking into great rancid pieces, or the huge tips of slurry and straw in the farmer's yards, that appeared never to diminish.* (p.61)

Here, Paul begins to realize the necessity of psychological alleviation. The psychological needs for rest and alleviation reflected in "the facile sense of harmony, even identity, with one's surroundings" (Slovic, 1992, p.4). This harmony is found "only by testing the boundaries of self against an outside medium" (p.4). The self and the medium thus provide a "sense of correspondence with the natural world in general, or with particular landscapes", and the sense of correspondence with nature "does fluctuate, sometimes seeming secure and other times tenuous" (p.5). The landscape includes different natural settings where "there are many other environmental features that can also be related to quality of life" (Childs, 1983, p.210). These environmental features provide benefits when the "environmental quality continues to increase as a valued component of quality of life" (p.210). Such environmental quality is "relatively free of the distressing social disturbances" (p.210). It also has "a fair degree of plausibility and attractiveness" (Wilson, 1999, p.70). Environmental attractiveness, therefore, is "a form of dispute resolution and a basis in accordance with which people determine their behaviour" (p.72).

In the case of Paul, the environmental quality is relevant to his agitating psyche. This agitation is caused by both rape and

his father's death. He remembers the natural places where his father used to take him: "The Den proper was an old Pictish site – or so his father had told him, though there was nothing to mark the place as historically important – and consisted of a series of odd-shaped rocks with what seemed to be narrow steps cut into the stone and a few bleared carvings on the walls of the narrow passage that ran between the two largest outcrops" (p.61). For this reason, he prefers being alone with the environment to withdraw to this imagination:

*Nobody knew what the purpose of the site had been, but there was something compelling about the place. Paul could easily imagine it as a place of sacrifice or pagan ritual, and – though he would have been hard pressed to say if it was a sense of sin that drew him in, or the possibility of something quite other, some sacramental moment, some dark and holy vision – he gravitated towards that central spot, which was always damp and moss-green, even in high summer.* (pp. 61-62)

When, Paul goes through the woods, he notices the trails of other people who left the place. This is the notion of psychological consciousness: "Out there, you could find the ashes of a stranger's fire, still warm sometimes, amongst the autumn leaves, or sodden with two day's rain; out there, you might find a strange bone hidden amongst the bedsprings in a midden" (p.62). Being

in this place, he is “somewhere across a summer’s afternoon – somewhere close by, but not so close that you could trace it to its source – you might hear the small cry of a wounded animal that could just as easily have been a child; at such times, you would stop dead in your tracks, all of a sudden, and you would be aware that you were being watched, though no one else was visible” (p.62). Paul, in this regard, is conscious of nature’s blessing. Such blessing is great, even when there are no “relationships and interactions with other people” (Mustol, 2012, p.230).

As a result, the concept of ecoconsciousness is applied to analyse the sense of alienation in nature. To illustrate, ecoconsciousness provides a remedial insight into nature i.e., natural environment heals human anxiety (Mustol, 2012, p.230). In this sense, presumably, understanding the remedial function of nature helps people to appreciate nature and its integral presence in our life. Just so, my critical usages of the concept of ecoconsciousness encompass the awareness of nature as a remedial exit for Paul’s anxiety in Burnside’s *The Locust Room*.

In *The Locust Room*, Paul’s life necessities are gained from nature. Nature saturates his individual experience with the environmental surroundings. He remembers these surroundings in the following passage: “All his life, Paul had lived a street away from the shore and he had spent most of his time on the beach. He felt safe there, in that world of light and weather, and boats in the harbour, crowding against the walls, red and blue and yellow hulls with friendly names

– Shirley, Margaret-Ann, *Morning Star*” (p.60). He goes to environmental places to enjoy nature: “Inland, though, crossing the wide fields, or entering the darkness of the woods around the Den, it was different. It was only a three-mile walk – five miles on his bike if he followed the road – but inland was a whole other territory” (p.60). He also likes living in the woods alone: “When you were within their bounds, the woods seemed to go on forever. Paul was aware of the points at which they stopped: the old kilns, on one side, which had belonged to the estate, back in the old days, but were ramshackle and empty now, and the border where the wood met farmland on the other, towards the north” (p.62). He also loves being alone: “Now he enjoys solitude: “It was as if the solitude Paul had begun to learn out at the field station had quietly taken over his life” (p.250).

In the same manner, environmental places produce a sense of place. The sense of place is an ecocritical representation of ecoconsciousness. In this way, “it is not man who dominates nature, who shapes it according to his own needs” (Geyer, 1976, p.10); rather, it is nature that participates in shaping the spatial sense of place. The human needs for nature are the “manifestations of alienation and what place they should be assigned” (p.10). Here, nature is “purifying, innocent yet wise, the only real touchstone of what is good and right and beautiful” (Turner, 1996, p.42). The beautiful aspects of nature produce ecoconscious meanings that “seem powerfully to imply anticipation and preparation for future changes” (p.44).

Such future changes present “nature as the unreflexive, the unpremeditated, and thus distinguish it from human activity” (p.44). Psychological emotions, consequently, reveal “how the environment impacts upon the senses” (p.69). The individual sense of place has a fair relation with the “experience [of] the environment” through the senses (p.70). It is a compromising “relationship between symptoms such as nervousness, depression, sleeplessness, undue irritability...” (Cassidy, 1997, p.72).

These psychological feelings are experienced by Paul in *The Locust Room*: “when he was approaching a new place, he always knew the best way in, as if he belonged to that borderline of cool air at the window, to the half-life of greenery and rain in the almost imperceptible gap between the frame and the sash” (p.1). He is still close to silence and pure nature: “Silence. Stealth. That quality hunting animals possess, of moving silently in the night, aware of everything – aware, even before it happened, of the sudden rush of wings, or the quick magnetic glide of skin and bone through water or undergrowth”(p.3). In so doing, he wants to get rid of his anxious feelings caused by rape in his previous experience. Therefore, he compensates for these feelings by going back to his job as a photographer: “What he wanted was a photograph, not of the darkness itself – which he knew was impossible – but of the colours that darkness revealed: the gardenia of a lit street sign; the egg-yolk gold of a Belisha beacon: the shell-pink of street lamps, still burning in the milk-and-ash grey of the dawn” (p.9).

Paul’s life is a continuity between nature and the perfect life, which is “a pure place because humans live in harmony with a tamed version of nature, the wild becomes either the apex of purity because it is devoid of humans or the pit of terror because it is untamed by humans” (Van, 2008, p.34). In this regard, environmental places can be “viewed in terms of place/setting, and/or environment, all of which have taken on richer meaning” (Johnson, 2009, p.623). Such settings are “by nature interdisciplinary” (p.623). This interdisciplinary nature refers to “the relationship between culture and nature” (p.623). It also refers to “the relationships between living organisms and their environment” (p.623). This interdisciplinary nature will be discussed in the following section. It will focus on Paul as a human element and *The Locust Room*’s setting as a physical “organism” of nature. The analysis of dwelling, furthermore, will be pursued in terms of Garrard’s concept of dwelling.

### THE SENSE OF DWELLING

The special feature of a dwelling is that it is the place where individuals tend to live. In *The Locust Room*, dark woods are the place where Paul loves to live: “It was the best part of his day; he was happiest in those first couple of hours, from the last of the darkness to the first of the light: in the faint, ice-blue intimation of a spring dawn, or the lime-coloured wash of a summer’s morning over fields and meadows, a light with no trace of white in it, no glare, no ordinary brightness” (p.10). In addition, he

wants to be secluded from other people and to live with animals: “Paul shook his head. He’d noticed a thin odour on the landing outside the new man’s room, reminiscent of animal pens, or damp straw” (p.14). He does not want to live with Clive and the other roommates because they remind him of the rape experience: “Paul walked to the door and knocked – he wondered if Steve could ever hear the conversations he had with Clive, sitting up here, directly above the kitchen – but there was no answer and reassured that he was alone in the house, Paul crossed the landing to his own room and lay down” (p.25).

Paul’s wandering state is the implication of the concept of dwelling. He longs for a calm place to dwell. He wants to be psychologically alleviated. In this regard, Garrard (2004) claims that dwelling “implies the long-term imbrication of humans in a landscape of memory, ancestry and death, of ritual, life and work” (p.108). Furthermore, dwelling is “a distraction from a necessary confrontation with the undiminished realities of suffering and injustice” (Thom, 1984, p.36). It is an “alienation from the natural world” (p.36). Such alienation “expresses a real need for protection from avoidable anxieties and therefore constitutes an oblique protest against the status quo” (p.37). The “craving” for relieved anxiety “must be satisfied through practical reforms that put an end to the real causes of terror and insecurity” (p.37). Consequently, the environmental implication of nature is that “the idea and idiom of ‘dwelling’” is “freighted

unavoidably with such connotations, which inevitably appeal to those who lack such subtlety and are not prepared to make such efforts” (p.39). These connotations are “measured in wild animals and birdsong, meditation and instruction” (Garrard, 2004, p.110).

Similarly, Paul’s life is an example of environmental dwelling. He longs to live in nature with animals to get rid of his anxiety: “It takes him a moment to realise where he is: instead of the usual sounds and smells – birdsong, a certain freshness of the air, the scent of cut grass – there is a city outside: a whole aching city, just beyond the tiny, high window of the cell” (p.147). He enjoys living in the glasshouse near the locust room to avoid the dangers of life caused by the rape. So, he decides to live close to environmental places: “Paul would keep the cases clean, tend the gardens, damp down the glasshouses where the special food crops were grown, and sow fresh seed when required” (p.162).

According to Garrard, ritual is one imbrication (elaboration) of the concept of dwelling (p.108). In *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, Catherine Bell (1997) argues that personal rituals are “reconciliation (penance)” for restricting sins (p.98). Persons with repentant feelings tend to get rid of their sadness by interacting with other people (p.98). Yet, these people may be a cause of sadness which sad persons try to avoid (Cole, 2004, p.125). These persons are prone to sadness and self-reprimanding because they commit certain sins which upset them (Schechner, 1993, p.228).



Hence, personal rituals relate to persons' behaviours. In *The Locust Room*, Paul tries to interact with other people, like Steve and Clive though he knows that he may rape them. Rape, here, is a sin which causes his sadness.

Other than personal rituals, Paul's psychological state is related to the environmental dwelling surroundings. The concept of dwelling requires psychological degrees that "have not simply added extra limbs to an unchanged critical core; rather, they have profoundly complicated and nuanced the core itself" (Mackenzie, 2012, p.16). Louisa Mackenzie adds that "the notion of the radical separateness of non-human nature and human culture continues to haunt some ecocritical practice and environmental activism" (p.16). Nature and its landscape "can continue to powerfully complicate a binary mode of thinking about nature" (p.20). Thus, dwelling is "a temporal landscape of long inhabitation" that coincides "with a known physical landscape" (Garrard, 2004, p.111).

*The Locust Room* abounds with dwelling scenes. It presents Paul's predilection to dwell in isolation and loneliness: "For now, at least, he was happy to be left alone" (p.163). This is because he has developed good relationships with the insects: "these huge, soft insects, unlike any Paul had ever seen, were lovingly tended by Tony [the locust room's owner], who was even more protective of their lit sanctuary than he was of the locust pods" (p.168). He spends all his time in the locust room and the surrounding garden: "On his second day at the insect

station, however, Paul was allowed to see them and, after an interminable lecture from Tony on procedures, and what to do if a single one of the creatures escaped" (p.168). Accordingly, he enjoys this style of living through remembering his past experience: "Paul was surprised at how strong and clear the memory was, how it tapped down to something deep in his mind, some area of separation and stillness that he had not been aware of till now, a sense, not of pride, but of something deeper and purer, a kind of aseity, a reservoir of affection, not only for Tony and his father, but also, more surprisingly, for himself" (p.170).

Therefore, nature is the key factor in the environmental implications of dwelling. Paul, for example, spends all his time in the locust room's garden: "after a few minutes of this nonsense, Paul got up and went out into the garden" (p.186). The garden is a reference to dwelling in a stable and calm setting. He walks around to look at the surrounding animals and landscapes: "And with a nod, Paul had gone, back out into the sunshine, past the tool shed, past the locked room where the rabbits lay, and away into the noise and heat and bustle of the city" (p.194). He wants to leave the cacophonous city life and enjoy nature. He loves the wind and the garden, which remind him of his childhood: "there was a cool sweetness under branches that always took him back to childhood, to afternoons he had spent in one of his hiding places, under a stand of sycamores out along the coast path" (pp.194-95). Here, Paul enjoys remaining isolated in the garden's surroundings

because he finds it suitable to mitigate his anxiety. His pleasure also becomes complete when he is alone with them: “truly happy when he was alone... not a hiding place, but dwelling, a refuge, a place of safe keeping for what Paul could only think of as the spirit” (p.211). So, the natural garden is a “refuge” from his anxious feelings.

The implication of dwelling is a refuge for psychological disorders because “every human being has an innate need to build and define place. These basic needs shape the relationships all people have with their place. These actions all come together in the term dwell” (Wolford, 2008, p.1). In addition, dwelling is evoked “to mark territory, and create a physical relationship with the environment” (p.1). In this regard, the place is a refuge in which the “environment accredits one’s ability to dwell with concrete elements” (p.1). Here, the environment is significant to him because “even when man has a physical place to rest and stay, there remains a need to leave or continue on a way, to journey, to search and find new interactions, a state that requires one leave a state of rest and enter into a state of unrest” (p.1).

It is the woods’ path that Paul often takes: “Now, as he followed the old familiar path along the railway line out into the woods, it began to snow. It had been cold in the night, the grass was streaked with hoar-frost, the puddles along the line were fretted and starred with ice, but this was the first real snow he had seen all year” (p.271). Paul enjoys walking through the path, which makes him happy because he does not feel

the fear of rape any more: “It made Paul want to laugh out loud, knowing that what really mattered was this fear [fear of rape], and the grace that came with it, when he surrendered himself to the world” (p.275). Now, he also feels happier, especially when he sees a fox in the woods. This is the notion of place dwelling that incorporates both place and animality in “harmony and balance” (Garrard, 2004, p.134). Harmony and balance represent Paul’s interaction with the woods, which is the spatial dimension of dwelling, and its animals, like the fox: “As he [Paul] stood quite still, gazing along the tracks to where the fox stood watching him, there was nothing to which he could truthfully say he belonged, other than to this world of silence and light, and this dangerous nostalgia for the other animals” (p.275). Now, the fox’s world (the woods) is Paul’s favourite place to dwell. It provokes the psychological nostalgia for rest: “The only way to inhabit this fox’s world was to become invisible in his own” (p.276). That is because “he was beginning to see that this quality – of estrangement, rather than alienation – was the best asset he had” (p.276). Thus, the woods, which is the natural environment, is Paul’s psychological escape from his anxiety.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has explored Burnside’s *The Locust Room* (2001). The study mainly focuses on the use of the protagonist’s memory. The protagonist goes through different stages during his lifetime. As he grows up, he becomes alienated from

his family, which represents a place of psychological stability for him. This psychological rest is disturbed when he leaves his family and goes to study. He develops anxious feelings because he commits rape. This protagonist's anxiety, thus, has been analysed in light of his growing unstable psychology. Accordingly, Freud's concept of anxiety has been applied to explore the protagonist's anxiety. Anxiety branches out of the protagonist's neurotic feelings caused by the problem of rape, which haunts him throughout the novel.

The protagonist's anxiety culminates in anxious feelings, which need to be alleviated. To argue for the proper alleviation of the protagonist's anxiety, two ecocritical concepts have been utilized. Glotfelty's concept of ecoconsciousness is used to determine the psychological dimension of ecocriticism available in *The Locust Room*. On the other hand, Garrard's concept of dwelling is used to analyse the novel's setting and its environmental function. These concepts are used to uncover the way in which the natural environment plays an important role in decreasing the protagonist's anxiety. Therefore, the novel's setting is analysed as a fictional representation of this natural environment. The setting's function, accordingly, has been emphasized as a proper escape from the protagonist's anxiety resulting from the problem of rape.

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## **Parental Attachment as the Predictor of Emerging Adulthood Experiences**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the predictor of parental attachment towards emerging adulthood (EA) experiences among 548 undergraduate students (202 males, 346 females, and mean age of 20.8 years) aged between 18 and 25 in East Malaysia. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) was used to measure the components of parental attachment (Trust, Communication, and Alienation), and the Inventory of Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) was used to measure five experiences of EA (identity exploration, self-focus, feeling “in-between”, possibilities, and instability). This study used variance-based structural equation modelling via partial least squares (PLS) to test the hypotheses. The results revealed that parental trust is the most significant predictor of EA experiences of identity exploration, self-focus and possibilities, whereas parental communication is the most significant predictor of EA experience feeling “in-between”, and parental alienation is the most significant predictor of EA experience of instability.

*Keywords:* Emerging adulthood, parental attachment, college students, identity exploration, reflective measurement model

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the emergence of the theory of emerging adulthood (EA) by Arnett (2000), the concept has been examined intensively throughout the globe. Several researches have been conducted to interpret this new phenomenon which later became known as a new developmental stage in a life trajectory. The dimensions of emerging

adulthood could be identified by a measure developed by Reifman et al. (2007), namely the Inventory of Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA). The use of IDEA is mainly to assess five dimensions of emerging adulthood experiences (identity exploration, possibilities, instability, other-focused, self-focused and feeling “in-between”). All five dimensions were highlighted as a distinct developmental stage of emerging adults. Reifman et al. (2007) included the sixth dimension which is the “other-focused”, as a counterpoint to the “self-focus” dimension. It was hypothesised that individuals older than emerging adults would score higher on “other-focused” dimension compared with emerging adults.

Since its introduction in 2007, IDEA has been well studied in studies which have mostly focused on demographic correlates of emerging adults’ views (Nelson et al., 2015). Moreover, researchers used IDEA to explore the psychometric characteristics, conceptions and perceptions of EA dimensions among countries and culture. For example, Atak and Çok (2008) evaluated IDEA among students in Turkey; Sirsch, Dreher, Mayr, and Willinger (2009) examined IDEA in Austria; Arias and Hernández (2007) examined IDEA among Mexicans and Spaniards; Hill et al. (2015) examined EA among the Dutch; Zorotovich (2014) examined EA among the Americans; Pérez, Cumsille and Martínez (2008) evaluated IDEA among Chileans; and Dutra-Thomé (2013) examined IDEA among Southern Brazilians. Although all studies reported that emerging adulthood existed in their sample, it is by no means a universal

experience. The subjective experience of emerging adults can be different based on country, culture, or socioeconomic backgrounds.

Currently, there is a growing number of research that attempts to examine the predictive factors of IDEA and several researchers have investigated the relationships of its sub-scales with other outcomes. For instance, Luyckx et al. (2011) in their research used only the sub-scale of instability to examine the link between instability, self-esteem, depressive symptoms as well as employment-associated outcomes, such as work engagement and burnout; Allem et al. (2013) examined IDEA with substance use; Allem et al. (2015) examined IDEA with e-cigarettes use; Nelson et al. (2015) evaluated and examined IDEA with adjustment and maladjustment; Huismann et al. (2012) examined IDEA with quality of life; Walker and Iverson (2015) examined IDEA with political behaviours and attitudes; Peer and McAuslan (2015) examined the relationship between EA experiences and self-doubt using IDEA, and the effect of mindfulness as the mediator; and last but not least, Negru (2012) evaluated IDEA with life satisfaction.

According to Schnyders (2012), research is lacking in identifying if and how the dimensions of emerging adulthood can be predicted by other factors that have been shown by studies to be important to the developmental process. Skulborstad and Hermann (2015) advocated for more empirical research to be conducted in order to examine the degree to which

EA experiences are uniquely linked with the stage of life and the time course of development. Schnyders (2012) was the first researcher who examined the predictors of parental and peer attachment towards emerging adulthood experiences. This study is aimed at replicating Schnyders' study in exploring the association of secure parental attachment and emerging adulthood experiences. Since the publication of Schnyders's research, only a few studies have been conducted to investigate the link between the attachment theory and emerging adulthood theory. The latest research was done by Trapani (2015) who reported that identity could be influenced by parental attachment.

From a developmental perspective, Howes and Spieker (2008) mentioned that attachment theory and emerging adult theory converge as an alternate attachment bond which begins to develop in emerging adulthood. According to Ainsworth et al. (1978), attachment during infancy and childhood is observed by assessing a child separation and reunion behaviours. She studied how babies balance their needs for attachment and exploration under different levels of stress based on an experiment that later came to be known as the "strange situation". Unlike infants and children, the assessment of attachment among adults is different, whereby an individual attachment towards his or her parents is assessed by looking into the cognitive-affective dimension of attachment. Three dimensions of attachment between an adult and parents have been proposed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987), involving

the degree of mutual trust, quality of communication and the degree of alienation. Adults' perceived quality of attachment has been found to influence their development and adjustment during transitional periods (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). In addition, development tasks, such as achieving autonomy, competence of coping with conflicts that arise due to independence, and identity exploration are possibly influenced by parental trust and mutual respect aside from good parental relationships (Bloom, 1980). Though adolescents may not always acknowledge it, parents serve as "essential allies" to them as they cope with the challenges of adulthood (Weiss, 1982).

Seidman and French (2004) argued that transitions can be either discrete or clear-cut, as in the transition from one state or place to another (e.g.: college enrolment), or slow and gradual, as in development or evolution from one form or stage to another (developmental phase between childhood and adulthood). From this perspective, they concluded that transition in life could be identified by two meanings - the ecological transition and the individual developmental transition. These transitions serve as challenges to emerging adults. According to Arnett (2006b), emerging adulthood is a period of unsettledness, exploration, and instability. Individuals in this particular age group would experience changes in cognition, biology, emotions, identity, perspective, affiliation, achievement, roles, responsibilities, and context (Musante, 2010). Therefore, from a developmental perspective, the life transitions in emerging adulthood is often perceived as unstable,

exciting and liberating. As majority of emerging adults is attending college or university (Arnett, 2004), higher education is perhaps the most suitable example of any institutional structure that can provide developmentally appropriate challenges and opportunities for emerging adults (Rarick, 2011). Furthermore, Arnett (2004) asserted that college is a “social island” set off from the rest of society, a “temporary safe haven” where emerging adults can explore possibilities in love, work, and worldviews. Transition to college is an example of ecological transition which emerging adults need to encounter in adapting and taking on new roles ahead.

Arnett (2000) argued that the features of emerging adults are different from one culture to another. However, in some cultures there could be similarities. The EA experience in the Malaysian context is expected to be similar with China (see Nelson et al., 2004) and India (see Seiter & Nelson, 2010). Non-Western countries such as Malaysia, China and India holds strong a collectivistic value in the criteria of adulthood, in which adulthood is marked by responsibility towards others and the society. As research on the concept of EA is still lacking, and the concept is originally developed and mostly studied in industrialised and individualistic cultures, the question arises whether or not the concept can be applied to emerging adults in Malaysia who are collective in nature (Baptist et al., 2012). Perceived as a non-western, traditional and collectivistic culture like China, EA in Malaysia emphasises

solidarity, concern for others, and integration with other people (Nelson & Chen, 2007); family relationship thus, plays a major role in the social and cultural life of Malaysians. Although generally a family relationship changes during adulthood, the relationship between parents and adults continues to be profoundly significant. The shifts that occur in the relationship between parents and their emerging adult children may impact their emerging adulthood experience (Tanner et al., 2009).

Past studies have argued that the experience of entering a university is a stressful transition among first year students due to the changing social networks, separation from parents, building new acquaintances and adjusting in a new community (Berdadi et al., 2012). In addition, identity development is the main challenge for emerging adults in the university (Madigan, 2008; Arnett, 2014). As stated by Arnett (2014), identity exploration is the main characteristic in the emerging adulthood experience because it comprises all dimensions. Thus, the transition to university and the emerging adulthood experiences can be perceived as two alternate processes. Although the issues of attachment and identity have been widely discussed in the literature (see Mattanah et al., 2011; Trapani, 2015), the more recent literature did not consider identity exploration as a separate construct that comprises different categories which consist of positive and negative meanings. Schynders's (2012) study investigated specifically the dimensions in the parental attachment



(trust, communication, alienation) effect on the emerging adulthood experience which consists of the positive dimensions (identity exploration, possibilities, and self-focused) and negative dimensions (feeling “in-between” and instability).

Therefore, this study aims to replicate Schynders’s (2012) study. The main objective of this research is to examine the effect of parental attachment towards emerging adulthood experiences among first year undergraduates. Specifically, the research objective is to identify which sub-scales of parental attachment (trust, communication, alienation) are the predictors of five dimensions of emerging adulthood experiences (identity exploration, instability, possibilities, feeling “in-between”, self-focused).

## **RESEARCH CONTEXT AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

The current theoretical framework of attachment theory emphasises the influence of parental attachment towards EA experiences among first year undergraduate students in Malaysia.

### **EA Experiences**

According to Arnett (2006b), EA experiences are characterised by five main experiences. The first dimension is identity exploration. Although the exploration of identity is believed to mainly begin during adolescence as proposed by Erikson’s psychosocial theory, Arnett (2014) argued that the degree of identity exploration is even deeper during the EA. During this period of time, emerging

adults are actively seeking ways to resolve their identity conflicts by finding out their true selves by making enduring choices in love, work and ideology; thus, making identity exploration the most focal feature of EA. But some researchers did not seem to agree with the statement. Nelson and Chen (2007) for example, argued that cultural values may limit the opportunities for young people in exploring their identities. Specific social and cultural practices could be a hindrance for emerging adults to engage in identity exploration. For instance, Malaysian culture perceives cohabiting as an immoral practice, and parents prefer their emerging adult children to stay with them until they are married or have a stable career.

Another dimension of EA experiences is instability. Due to active engagement in identity exploration, the life of an emerging adult is frequently changing. Changes may distress relationships, educational pursuits, living situations and job or career choices (Tanner et al., 2009), which makes life unstable. Once emerging adults have clarified his or her identity, the instability will likely to be resolved (Arnett, 2014). The third dimension of EA experiences is self-focused. Emerging adults during this period of time have the opportunity to shape their own life by making decisions independently (Arnett, 2004). Furthermore, this dimension explains that emerging adults during this period of time have less obligation towards their family and friends. Nevertheless, in a traditional and non-western country, filial piety is considered as one of the characteristic of maturity.

Emerging adults are considered to be mature if they are capable of supporting their family financially and physically. Next, the fourth dimension of EA experience is the age of possibilities. Emerging adults embrace the freedom that they attain by making choices in life without feeling burdened by the heavy responsibilities adulthood can offer. Although the road seems obscure, they are optimistic about their future and believe that things will eventually get better compared with their parents (Arnett & Schwab, 2012).

The fifth experience is perceived as the least complex of the five pillars of EA experience (Syed & Mitchell, 2013) which is the feeling of “in-between”. Arnett (2004) explained that during the EA period, emerging adults no longer feel they are adolescents nor adults; rather, they are in transition to attain adulthood. When asked the question, “Do you feel that you have reached adulthood?” majority of the emerging adults in Western countries answered “in some respect yes, in some respect no” (see Nelson & Barry, 2005; Facio et al., 2007; Nelson et al., 2007; Sirsch et al., 2009). Cross-cultural studies have reported that in some cultures, emerging adults perceived they have already reached adulthood. Badger et al. (2006) reported that students in China had less feeling of “in-between” compared with American students. Seiter and Nelson (2010) also reported that the majority of the students and nonstudents in India did not feel “in-between”. On the contrary, a preliminary study by Wider et al. (2015) showed that majority of university students in Malaysia

experienced “in-between” feeling regarding their adult status. Although Malaysia shares the same collectivist culture with China, India and other Asian countries, there are still differences in terms of importance of extended family, shame and face-saving reactions, pressure of academic achievement as well as authoritarian and patriarchal family structures (Manery, 2000). According to Dutra-Thome (2013), EA is best understood when contemplating the characteristics of cultures rather than countries. In the same vein, Arnett (2000) proposed that investigation of the EA should be made by comparing groups of the minorities and majorities, low and high SES, urban or rural areas and traditional cultures or post-industrialised cultures. For a culturally diversified country like Malaysia, criteria for an adult status may not be easily or straightforwardly explained by Arnett’s EA theory. Therefore, a research on this issue in such country is warranted.

As suggested by Arnett, emerging adulthood is culturally constructed and not all cultures support this theory. Emerging adulthood is most likely found in industrialised countries as well as post-industrial (Arnett, 2000). The period of emerging adulthood cannot be regarded as universal in human development. It is a stage that occurs in a particular situation that happened recently and only in some cultures (Arnett, 2004). Thus, Arnett welcomes research across the country, particularly in a different culture, to enhance the diversity of data in this theory that he proposed. One of the most exciting horizons of emerging

adulthood research in the decades to come will be to explore the cultural diversity of experiences, both across and within countries (Arnett, 2014).

Therefore, this paper examines EA experiences in a sample of youngsters in Malaysia by using Arnett's key dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (Identity Exploration, Instability, Self-Focus, Other-Focus, Possibilities and Feeling "In-between") and provides a useful addition and contribution to the existing theory of Emerging Adulthood.

### **Parental Attachment**

According to Bowlby (1969), attachment is conceptualised as an enduring affectional bond of an individual to an attachment figure that provides comfort and protection to that individual. The presence of the attachment figures will determine the attachment behaviour of a child. A secure attachment relationship is achieved when the attachment figure provides safety and serves as a secure base (Bowlby, 1969). The term "secure base" is the main concern in the present study in explaining EA experiences. Bowlby (1988) postulated that the secure base of attachment could encourage children to explore their environment, engage in relationships with the significant others, and have decreased psychological distress in the future. Attachment pattern for a person may change when he or she enters adulthood due to the increased autonomy from parents. Emerging adulthood is considered a prolonged period of dependency on parents; thus, parents still serve as important

attachment figures for them (Umemura et al., 2014; Selby, 2000). As pointed out by Marcia (1983), just like children, feelings of security must be felt by emerging adults in order to perform the tasks of exploring identity and making identity commitments. Syed and Mitchell (2013) reported that there are four pillars of EA experiences underlying identity development process which are, instability, possibilities, self-focus, and feeling "in-between". Thus, during the process of transitioning to university, emerging adults may need a secure parental attachment in order to explore the new university environment.

In the present study, the attachment model measured by the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) is used in examining attachment behaviours among emerging adults. In this model, attachment styles is divided into high and low security by characterising a person into three categories, namely Trust, Communication and Alienation. A person is highly secured if his or her relationship with parents is characterised by respect (trust) and involvement (communication), with minimal anger or detachment (alienation). According to Trinke and Bartholomew (1997), emerging adults rely on their parents because of their ability to provide a secure base. Thus, a desire for security (trust and communication) forms the rationale as to why emerging adults maintain their attachment relationship with their parents. Secure attachment is important for emerging adults because it provides them with a sense

of safety that could enhance their freedom in exploring their identity, and engage them with the outside world (Schnyders, 2012). Moreover, a secure parental attachment has the effect on the overall sense of well-being and adjustment in life of emerging adults (see Rice & Whaley, 1994)

Given that only one study, to the best of the authors' knowledge, that has been done on the association between parental attachment and EA experiences (see Schnyders, 2012), a solid conclusion of directional effects of the variables are difficult. Before the construction of the hypothesis, it is important to recognise that both IPPA and IDEA consist of positive and negative components. The IPPA consists of positive components of trust and communication, whereby alienation is the negative component. Meanwhile, the EA experiences measured by IDEA consists of positive components of identity exploration, possibilities, self-focus and other focus, whereby the negative components are the feeling in-between and instability. The construction of hypothesis is based on these qualities of positive and negative components in both measures. Hence, it is hypothesised that:

- H1 Parental Trust has a direct positive effect on identity exploration.
- H2 Parental Trust has a direct positive effect on self-focus.
- H3 Parental Trust has a direct positive effect on the possibilities.
- H4 Parental Trust has a direct negative effect on feeling "in-between".
- H5 Parental Trust has a direct negative

effect of instability.

- H6 Parental Communication has a direct positive effect on identity exploration,
- H7 Parental Communication has a direct positive effect on self-focus.
- H8 Parental Communication has a direct positive effect on possibilities.
- H9 Parental Communication has a direct negative effect on feeling "in-between".
- H10 Parental Communication has a direct negative effect on instability.
- H11 Parental Alienation has a direct negative effect on identity exploration.
- H12 Parental Alienation has a direct negative effect on self-focus.
- H13 Parental Alienation has a direct negative effect on possibilities.
- H14 Parental Alienation has a direct positive effect on feeling "in-between".
- H15 Parental Alienation has a direct positive effect on instability.

Based on the review of relevant literatures, the formulation of the research framework for examining the relationship between parental attachment (trust, communication, and alienation) and EA experiences (identity exploration, self-focus, possibilities, feeling "in-between", and instability) is supported. Thus, the research framework is demonstrated in Figure 1.

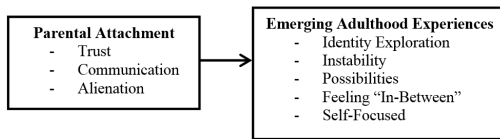


Figure 1. Research framework

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The present study employs a quantitative research approach. The population of the study comprises first year undergraduates aged between 18 and 25 years old, currently studying on a full-time basis. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were female (63.1%), with majority obtaining Malaysian Higher School Certificate (STPM) (66.4%) and were successful in being admitted to undergraduate degree studies. Most of them were 21 years old (54.4%) with the mean age of 20.8 (SD = 0.87), of Malay ethnic background (23.7%), living in the dorm/hostel (86.5%) and from the Humanities and Social Science (66.7%) courses.

### Procedure

A total of 700 set of questionnaire were distributed to first year students through purposive sampling technique. Specifically, there were two stages of sampling (Bataglia, 2008). In the first stage, the key dimensions of the sample were identified, which in the context of this study were students currently in their first year, in full-time study mode and aged between 18 to 25 years old. After the particular group was identified, the

researcher distributed the questionnaire randomly. The two stage sampling is appropriate because it could reduce the sampling bias by using multiple sampling method. A total of 548 (36.9% males, 63.1% females) students were selected to participate in the final study but 103 sets of questionnaire were not returned while 49 of the questionnaires were rejected due to errors in completing the questionnaire; thus, giving a high response rate of 79.3 percent.

### Measure

A questionnaire booklet that comprised measurement for each variable was used in this study. The independent variables which are the parental attachment was measured by using the Inventory of Parent and Peers Attachment (IPPA) by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) using five-point Likert type of scale. The IPPA seeks to examine the current relationship of parent-adolescent and peers-adolescent by using three scales comprising trust, communication and alienation. For the purpose of this research, only the revised 25 items of parental attachment were used. Meanwhile, the dependent variable of the emerging adulthood experiences was measured using the Inventory of Dimension of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) by Reifman et al. (2007) using four-point Likert type of scale. The IDEA has a total of 28 items which comprises five dimensions of emerging adulthood experiences, namely feeling in between, identity exploration, self-focus, instability, and possibilities. The

sixth dimension, other-focus, which served as the counterpart of self-focus dimension was excluded from this study.

**Statistical Analysis**

The current research considered using IBM SPSS version 21.0 and SmartPLS M3 2.0 (Ringle, Wende & Will, 2005) as tools of analysis. SmartPLS involved two different assessments which are the measurement model, followed by the structural model. The first step in the measurement model will determine whether the constructs are

represented by the measures by assessing the confirmation of reliability and validity. If it is adequate, then the assessment of structural model estimates will be carried out.

**Assessment of Measurement Model**

The measurement model is evaluated by conducting the convergent validity analysis, reliability analysis, and discriminant validity test. The first step of assessing the measurement model is by determining the validity and reliability of the scales.

Table 1  
*Demographic Profile*

Variables	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	202	36.9
	Female	346	63.1
Highest Education	Malaysian Higher School Certificate (STPM)	364	66.4
	Diploma	31	5.7
	Matriculation	149	27.2
	Foundation in Science	4	0.7
Age (in years)	18	1	0.2
	19	23	4.2
	20	159	29.0
	21	301	54.9
	22	36	6.6
	23	23	4.2
	24	4	0.7
	25	1	0.2
Race	Malay	130	23.7
	Chinese	99	18.1
	Indian	10	1.8
	Indigenous of Sabah	263	48.0
	Indigenous of Sarawak	23	4.2
	Non-Citizens	23	4.2
Current residence	Living in parent's house	51	9.3
	Living in dorm/hostel	474	86.5
	Living in a rented house	21	3.8
	Others (village house)	2	0.4
Field of study	Humanities and social sciences	358	66.7
	Sciences	179	33.3

### Convergent Validity

The convergent validity test was conducted to test the degree to which multiple items measuring the same concept are in agreement. In order to assess the convergent validity, factor loadings, composite reliability and the average variance extracted are used. Table 2 shows the results of measurement

model. By following the suggestion of Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson (2010), we used the factor loadings, composite reliability and the average variance extracted (AVE) to assess convergent validity. The item loadings should exceed the threshold value of 0.5 and loaded appropriately on their constructs. Note that all of the items

Table 2  
*Results of Measurement Model*

Model Construct	Measurement item	Loading	CR <sup>a</sup>	AVE
PT (Trust)	PA_TRUST1	0.836	0.906	0.616
	PA_TRUST2	0.832		
	PA_TRUST4	0.786		
	PA_TRUST6	0.706		
	PA_TRUST7	0.764		
	PA_TRUST10	0.779		
PC (Communication)	PA_COMM1	0.799	0.876	0.638
	PA_COMM3	0.799		
	PA_COMM8	0.815		
	PA_COMM9	0.782		
PA (Alienation)	PA_ALI4	0.862	0.852	0.742
	PA_ALI5	0.861		
FIB (Feeling in between)	FIB1	0.877	0.884	0.792
	FIB2	0.902		
INS (Instability)	INSTA1	0.719	0.850	0.586
	INSTA3	0.770		
	INSTA4	0.761		
	INSTA5	0.810		
IDE (Identity exploration)	IE4	0.848	0.884	0.657
	IE5	0.758		
	IE6	0.840		
	IE7	0.793		
SF (Self-focus)	SF2	0.787	0.849	0.586
	SF4	0.816		
	SF5	0.725		
	SF6	0.730		
POS (Possibilities)	POSS1	0.828	0.865	0.681
	POSS2	0.847		
	POSS3	0.799		

loadings have ranged from 0.706 to 0.902, referring to Table 3, and all the items loaded highly on their own constructs than on other constructs. Meanwhile, the composite reliability values depict the degree to which the construct indicators indicate the latent, construct ranged from 0.829 to 0.906 which has exceeded the recommended value of 0.7. The AVE value should be at least 0.50, present study of AVE value reported in the range of 0.555 and 0.6541 which exceeded the threshold value.

**Discriminant Validity**

Next, we tested the discriminant validity of the measure by examining correlations between measures to confirm whether there is a potential overlapping constructs. Table 3 shows the square root of the AVE represented by the bolded figures (diagonals) that demonstrate higher values than the equival row and column values. Thus, showing that all constructs were distinct

with each other. The overall measurement model showed adequate convergent validity and discriminant validity.

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

Table 4 shows the final items used in this study after undergoing the CFA. Thirteen items was removed from the IPPA; four items were removed from the trust construct, five items from the communication construct, and four items from the alienation construct. For IDEA, 12 items were removed with three items removed from the identity exploration construct, one item in the feeling in between construct, two items in the self-focused construct, three items in the instabilities construct, two items in the possibilities construct and one item in the other-focused construct. To determine inter-item consistency of the entire measurement items, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated.

Table 3  
*Discriminant Validity of Constructs*

	FIB	IDE	INS	PA	PC	POS	PT	SF
FIB	<b>0.890</b>							
IDE	0.646	<b>0.811</b>						
INS	0.220	0.179	<b>0.766</b>					
PA	-0.160	-0.200	0.164	<b>0.861</b>				
PC	0.271	0.283	0.042	-0.390	<b>0.799</b>			
POS	0.419	0.516	0.404	0.010	0.239	<b>0.766</b>		
PT	0.271	0.298	0.008	-0.434	0.698	0.275	<b>0.785</b>	
SF	0.575	0.697	0.198	-0.204	0.297	0.568	0.349	<b>0.825</b>

Note: Diagonals (in bold) are the AVE while the off-diagonals are correlations among constructs. PA=Parental Alienation; PC=Parental Communication; PT=Parental Trust; IDE=Identity Exploration; SF=Self-Focused; INS=Instability; FIB=Feeling “In-Between”; POS=Possibilities



Table 4  
Final Items Numbers

Constructs	Measurement items	Statement	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Number of items
PT (Trust)	PA_TRUST1	My parents respect my feeling.	0.875	6 (10)
	PA_TRUST2	I feel my parents do a good job as a father and a mother.		
	PA_TRUST4	My parents accept me as I am.		
	PA_TRUST6	When we discuss things, my parents care about my point of view.		
	PA_TRUST7	My parents trust my judgement.		
	PA_TRUST10	I trust my parents.		
PC (Communication)	PA_COMM1	I like to get my parents point of view on things I'm concerned about.	0.812	5 (9)
	PA_COMM3	My parents can tell when I'm upset about something.		
	PA_COMM8	I can count on my parents when I need to get something of my chest.		
	PA_COMM9	If my parents know something is bothering me, they ask me about it.		
PA (alienation)	PA_ALI4	I feel angry with my parents.	0.652	2 (6)
	PA_ALI5	I don't get much attention from my parents.		
IDE (Identity Exploration)	IE4	Time of planning for the future?	0.828	4 (7)
	IE5	Time of seeking a sense of meaning?		
	IE6	Time of deciding on your own beliefs and values?		
	IE7	Time of learning to think for yourself?		
FIB (Feeling "in-between")	FIB1	Time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?	0.738	2(3)
	FIB2	Time of gradually becoming an adult?		
SF (Self-focus)	SF2	Time of responsibility of yourself?	0.766	4 (6)
	SF4	Time of independence?		
	SF5	Time of self-sufficiency?		
	SF6	Time of focusing on yourself?		
INS (Instability)	INSTA1	Time of confusion?	0.767	4 (7)
	INSTA3	Time of feeling stressed out?		
	INSTA4	Time of instability?		
	INSTA5	Time of high pressure?		
POS (Possibilities)	POSS1	Time of many possibilities?	0.765	3 (5)
	POSS2	Time of exploration?		
	POSS3	Time of experimentation?		

Note: <sup>a</sup> final items numbers (initial numbers)

## RESULT

Path analysis was performed to test the 15 hypotheses generated. Table 5 presents results of the hypotheses testing. Because the hypotheses are stated in a directional form, one-tail test was used.

### Parental Attachment and Possibilities

The  $R^2$  value for POS is 0.104 suggesting that 10.4% of the variance in possibilities can be explained by trust, communication and alienation. For that, only trust ( $\beta = 0.265, p < 0.01$ ), and alienation ( $\beta = 0.172, p < 0.01$ ) was positively related to possibilities, whereas communication was not a significant predictor of possibilities. Thus, H3 was supported, while H8 and H13 were not supported. For H13, alienation was hypothesised to negatively relate to possibilities in this study, but the results showed the opposite.

### Parental Attachment and Identity Exploration

The  $R^2$  value for IDE is 0.104 suggesting that 10.4% of the variance in identity exploration can be explained by trust, communication and alienation. Further analysis showed that trust ( $\beta = 0.173, p < 0.05$ ) and communication ( $\beta = 0.135, p < 0.05$ ) were positively related to identity exploration, whereas alienation was not a significant predictor of identity exploration. Thus, H1 and H6 was supported, whereas H11 was not supported in this study.

### Parental Attachment and Instabilities

Next, the  $R^2$  value for INS is 0.040 suggesting that 4.0% of the variance in instability can be explained by trust, communication and alienation. Further analysis shows that only alienation ( $\beta = 0.218, p < 0.01$ ) was positively related with instability, whereas trust and communication is not a significant predictor of instability. Thus, H6 and H12 were not supported, whereas H18 was supported.

### Parental Attachment and Feeling “In-Between”

The  $R^2$  value for FIB is 0.087 suggesting that 8.7% of the variance in feeling “in-between” can be explained by trust, communication and alienation. Further analyses show that trust ( $\beta = 0.148, p < 0.05$ ) and communication ( $\beta = 0.153, p < 0.05$ ) were positively related with feeling “in-between”, whereas alienation was not a significant predictor of feeling “in-between”. Thus, H5 and H9 was not supported because trust and communication was hypothesised to negatively relate to feeling “in-between” and H17 was also not supported.

### Parental Attachment and Self-Focused

Last but not least, the  $R^2$  value for SF is 0.129 suggesting that 12.9% of the variance in self-focus can be explained by trust, communication and alienation. Further analysis shows that only trust ( $\beta = 0.258, p < 0.01$ ) was positively related to self-focus, whereas communication and alienation was not a significant predictor of self-focus.

Table 5  
*Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing*

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	Supported
H1	PT → IDE	0.173**	YES
H2	PT → SF	0.258**	YES
H3	PT → POS	0.265**	YES
H4	PT → FIB	0.148*	YES
H5	PT → INS	0.027	NO
H6	PC → IDE	0.135*	YES
H7	PC → SF	0.095	NO
H8	PC → POS	0.121	NO
H9	PC → FIB	0.153**	YES
H10	PC → INS	0.108	NO
H11	PA → IDE	-0.072	NO
H12	PA → SF	-0.054	NO
H13	PA → POS	0.172**	YES
H14	PA → FIB	-0.036	NO
H15	PA → INS	0.218**	YES

Note: \*95% significance *t* value = 1.64; \*\*99% significance *t* value = 1.96

PA=Parental Alienation; PC=Parental Communication; PT=Parental Trust; IDE=Identity Exploration; SF=Self-Focused; INS=Instability; FIB=Feeling “In-Between”; POS=Possibilities

Thus, the H2 was supported, whereas H7 and H12 were not supported in this study.

In this study, it was found that trust was the most significant predictor of identity exploration, self-focus, and possibilities. Communication was the most significant predictor of feeling “in-between”. Meanwhile, alienation was the most significant predictor of instability.

## DISCUSSION

Through the testing of hypothesis by using partial least square (PLS) technique, the present study supports the dynamic relationship that exists between parental attachment and EA experiences. The measures employed in this study has been examined through the validity and reliability

procedure, the presented analysis results have confirmed the discriminant validity and convergent validity is sufficient. Meanwhile, the Cronbach alpha and composite reliability showed an adequate range of values. Through the assessment of the goodness of measure, it is confirmed that the model was reliable to be used for further analyses.

## Parental Attachment and Possibilities

Current findings show a corroboration with some findings from Schnyders (2012). Both Schnyders’s and present findings reported that parental trust, parental communication and parental alienation are positively related to EA experience of possibilities. The emerging adult life is perceived as full of possibilities yet they remained optimistic

about their future. According to Moreira and Telzer (2015), relationship with a parent during transition to university may bolster optimism and subsequently influence their mental health. Interestingly, it was also found that parental alienation was positively related with possibilities. EA is a period of full of stressful and struggles for some emerging adults. Although their current condition (e.g. family cohesion) is somehow unpromising, they remain optimistic about everything will be fine in a long run (Arnett, 2014). The present findings are important to corroborate with important key dimensions of possibilities which, according to Arnett (2006b), is a crucial period of emerging adults who experience difficulties in the family as an opportunity to change their ways for a betterment. Moreover, parental trust showed the most significant predictor of EA experience of possibilities, this can be assumed that when emerging adults trust their parents to be understandable and respect their needs and desires, they will eventually become more optimistic towards the future.

### **Parental Attachment and Identity Exploration**

Although Schnyders (2012) did not report any significant relationship between parental attachment components towards EA experience of identity exploration, present findings found that, parental trust and communication is positively related to identity exploration. Kenny and Rice (1995) postulated that the transition to university is a concept of the “strange

situation” among emerging adults, which convey a new environmental experience to explore and master. This makes sense as students must have a secure relationship with their parents to be able to engage in the alternative exploration during the ecological and developmental transitions. Parents not only served as a “secure base” by providing support and comforts, but the contribution of the internal working models of self and other may influence. As stated by Bowlby (1973), internal working models are mental representations of the self and other that the child develops through early experiences with attachment figures. The availability of the attachment figures will determine the internal model of self and others of a particular child. If the attachment figure is available, the child will develop and maintain an internal model of self as good, worthy and lovable, whereas for others as trustworthy and responsive. This internal working model, although constructed with early caregivers, could impact through ongoing interpersonal relationship, as such, it will influence future psychological well-being of an individual. As one’s internal working model has been developed, it will become persistent throughout life, and it is hard to be altered (Sager, 2015). According to Sheng (2014), a positive internal model of self and others refers to a secure parent attachment that have been found to be related to exploring different alternatives and eventually commit to an identity, whereas insecure parental attachment did not have the secure base to explore freely. The current findings are an important corroboration of

the “strange situation” experiment which like infants, emerging adults also need to have a secure parental attachment in order to engage in exploring. Given that parental trust is the most significant predictor of EA experience of identity exploration, this can be assumed that mutual understanding and respects are important in the relationship of parent-emerging adult towards a healthy and positive identity exploration.

There are several reasons why the current findings are different than Schnyders (2012). In this study, several measurement items in the parental attachment and emerging adulthood experience constructs were deleted due to low factor loadings. Whereas, Schnyders (2012) used the full scale for both parental attachment and emerging adulthood experience constructs. In addition, the current findings corroborated Nelson et al. (2004) study, which emerging adults in Malaysia are similar to emerging adults in China emphasized on the collectivist goals and express a greater commitment towards other people. In a similar way to the other Asian countries, emerging adults in Malaysia is perceived to possess several main characteristics such as interdependence and obedience to the parents authority (Ishak, 2000; Song et al., 2009). Schnyders’s (2012) study was conducted in the US, where the culture emphasises individualistic values. Because of that, on the basis of strong family ties and cultural aspect among emerging adults in Malaysia, parents are expected to have a large impact on the EA experience in the current study.

### **Parental Attachment and Instability**

Other key findings in this study are the positive relationship between parental alienation and EA experience of instability. Although Schnyders (2012) showed a non-significant positive relationship between alienation and instability, she reported that parental trust and communication are negatively correlated with instability. By looking at the effect direction of parental attachment as a whole towards instability, it can be concluded that the higher the parental attachment is, the lower the instability among emerging adults is. As mentioned earlier, when emerging adults are engaged in identity exploration such as love, career and worldview actively, their lives become unstable. Sager (2015) reported that identity exploration could also be perceived as a negative process which can actually bring about psychological instability due to insecure parental attachment. In view of the fact that parental alienation is the most significant predictor of instability, emerging adults who experience the feelings of isolation, anger and detachment in the attachment with parents are vulnerable and potentially psychologically unstable.

As postulated by Zulkefly and Wilkinson (2014), “the understanding of attachment concept among youth in Malaysia is somehow different. The nature of attachment in Asian culture is generally emphasized on greater interdependence, socialization, and in-group harmony in which causing youth to suppress their personal feelings and thoughts, thus acting upon their behaviour based on thinking,

attitude, feeling, and action towards others. In addition, Asian culture promotes the interdependence towards parents as the main attachment figure. Unlike the youth in the Western culture, the nature of attachment context is more independent, they could easily expressed their feelings without fear of rejection or left by their primary attachment figure” (p. 18). Based on the above argument, the alienation towards parents among emerging adults in the current study can be assumed by the refusal of sharing their personal feelings towards parents because of fear and concerned upon the future reaction by their parents; this in turn will influence their psychological stability.

#### **Parental Attachment and Feeling “In-Between”**

Current findings also reported that parent trust and parent communication are both positively related to feeling “in-between”, although the relationship were hypothesised to be in contrast. Due to a dearth of studies in this area, the author constructed the hypothesis based on the negative and positive quality of the constructs. Arnett (2014) relates the sense of feeling “in-between” with self-sufficiency. He postulated that the sense of being in between occurs when emerging adults continue to rely on their parents in some way so that their attainment of self-sufficiency is incomplete. Although emerging adults achieved autonomy with less supervision from their parents, they somehow still depend on their parents on certain things and constantly seek their

advice. This is in line with the current findings of parent communication being the most significant predictor of EA experience of feeling “in-between”. When parents are sensitive and responsive towards emerging adult’s emotional state by involving verbal communication it will influence their sense of self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, once emerging adults attain a full range of adulthood in the sense of independence, autonomy and freedom, the attainment of self-sufficiency is complete (Arnett, 2014).

#### **Parental Attachment and Self-Focused**

Among the three components of parental attachment, only trust correlated significantly with EA experience of self-focus. Arnett (2007) postulated that the period of emerging adulthood is less structured compared with adolescence and adulthood. For adolescent, although they are too engaged in an active exploration of identity, they are highly structured by parents or school teachers. For those who have already attained adult roles, such as parent or full-time employee, they are highly structured by obligation towards the other. On the other hand, emerging adults during this time have less obligations towards others and only focus on their self-development and achieve self-sufficiency (Arnett, 2006). Furthermore, Labouvie-Vief (2006) mentioned that emerging adulthood is a period where young people could develop their own identity without being influenced by their parents. However, the theory of emerging adulthood is culturally constructed (Arnett, 2000) and the interpretation of it needs to be done cautiously. In Asia, family

obligation is a part of cultural tradition that focuses on the filial bond and the authority of the family (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). Through the current findings of the positive relationship between parental trust and self-focus, it could be assumed that the period of EA among Malaysian emerging adults are not entirely a “self-focus” but rather a period of negotiating or renegotiating delicate family relationships and social responsibility (Katsiaficas et al., 2014). Thus, instead of being less committed and having lack of autonomy in their lives, emerging adulthood is a period where they assume responsibility for themselves and others. A mutual understanding must be achieved so that parents could understand and respect emerging adults’ decisions to run their own lives without having too much responsibilities towards the others and at the same time maintaining their obligation towards the family.

## CONCLUSION

This study is an attempt to explore the association between Bolwby’s attachment theory and Arnett’s emerging adulthood theory. By adopting three factors of attachment proposed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) and Reifman et. Al’s (2007) five dimensions of EA, this study has shown that the theoretical framework is partially supported. The results of the present study revealed that parental trust is the most significant predictor of EA experiences in the sense of identity exploration, self-focus, and possibilities, whereas parental communication is the most significant

predictor of EA experience of feeling “in-between”. Meanwhile, parental alienation is the most significant predictor of EA experience of instability.

Current findings have important implications on university counsellors and academicians particularly. Life in the university offers a great deal of both developmental transitions and ecological transitions that could affect emerging adult’s personal development. Since the results of this study reported that secure parental attachment promotes a positive experience of EA, it demonstrates that parents continuously serve as an important entity in an emerging adult’s life in the university. As such, trust between parents and emerging adults is the central issue in this study. As pointed out by Armsden and Greenberg (1987), trust is a “felt security” which perceived by emerging adults as provided by their attachment figures. Failure to have a mutual response will lead to a failure of self-disclosure which is a fundamental element in relationship building. As such, emerging adults need to receive a sense of respect and understanding from their parents in order to perform necessary developmental tasks at the university. As a counsellor seeks to understand the problems faced by the clients, it may be helpful to explore the quality of trust between the clients and their attachment figures.

Other key findings in the study are the predictors of parental communication towards an EA experience of feeling “in-between”. Munsey (2006) referred Emerging adulthood as the “in-between age” which is

full of special risks and opportunities towards achieving self-sufficiency of adulthood that lasts until late 20s. Current findings suggest that good verbal and non-verbal communications between emerging adults and parents is essential in the experience of “in-betweenness”. In the process of attaining self-sufficiency, emerging adults entail a great amount of symbolic communications from their parents. This symbolic form can be delivered through instant messaging, telephone calls or emails. The majority of the university students are not staying with their parents. Therefore, a direct contact communication is lacking and parents could not monitor their emerging adult children all the time. To maintain a good attachment towards parents, university students must maintain a symbolic communication. This is an important information to the university counsellor who work with emerging adult clients, especially those who are using a developmentally-informed framework in their clinical practices.

A crucial evidence of the EA experiences shift as a function of parental attachment provides a new and important valuable addition towards the theory of emerging adulthood. This study is an attempt to bridge the gap to identify how the dimensions of EA could be predicted by other developmental factors especially attachment towards parents. Past researchers have only explored the impacts of attachment towards specific aspects of well-being among university students. Thus, more research is needed to identify the relationship between attachment and emerging adulthood. This study has

used SEM-PLS to empirically examine the interrelationships among study variables which is also a significant contribution to knowledge in this area. The use of SEM-PLS (second-generation method) as the statistical method could overcome the weakness of first-generation method such as regression-based approach (multiple regression) (Hair et al., 2014). Among the limitations of the first generation technique is it assumes all variables that being measured are free from errors (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004). Moreover, it only analyses one relationship at a time between the independent and dependent constructs that could increase the possibility of measurement error when considering all relationships. Meanwhile, PLS could estimate the relationships among multiple independent and dependent constructs and the measurement errors (Chin & Newsted, 1999). Hence, it is recommended that future studies should consider the use of PLS as a statistical tool. Another important recommendation is to explore the relationship of each of the parental attachment styles, namely “secure”, “avoidant”, and “ambivalent” with EA experiences among students as well as non-students.

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## **Potential Threats to Social Harmony in Johor, Malaysia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the potential threats or conflicts shadowing social harmony in Johor Malaysia. The State of Johor is inhabited by plural, yet, segregated ethnic groups, thus making them prone to communal conflicts. The process of data collection was conducted between 2010 and 2012 through interviews with 1,000 respondents from 10 regions as well as extensive field observations. The study shows that notwithstanding the conflict potential is confined to low-intensity and sporadic quarrel, the impact of tension which has frequently occurred within families and relatives can lead to clashes in a larger community. In turn, this incites various kinds of prejudice among the fragmented communities. Worse still, the individual perception about tolerance in respect to religious aspects is quite concerning, albeit not demonstrable in the context of inter-ethnic relations. Nonetheless, two most sensitive issues perpetrating social incompatibilities are detected as to the construction of worship places and defamation against different religious identities.

*Keywords:* Conflict, tolerance, social harmony, ethnic, prejudice

### **INTRODUCTION**

This research discusses social harmony and potential conflicts in Johor, a state in Malaysia. As a developing industrialised state (Spybey, 1992; McQuarrie, 1995; Ishiyama, 2004), inhabited by a plural, yet, segregated society, Johor shows a degree of conflict vulnerability which may turn into an

open conflict (manifest conflicts), especially due to the multi-ethnic, inter-religious, and conflicts among ideological-political parties (Lee, 1980; Horowitz, 1985; Brass, 1991; Brown, 1993; Bowen, 1996; Mitsuo et al., 2001; Farouk, 2005).

Johor, or officially called Johor Darul Takzim, is a state located in the Malaysian Peninsular with an area of 19219 square kilometers. Johor is divided into 10 regions with Johor Baru being the capital city. As a state which has the second largest population in Malaysia, Johor is famous for its ethnic

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diversity. However, rather than having a developed sense of unity and national spirit in their everyday life, current happenings indicate Johoreans are fragmented and segregated along the lines of ethnicity, social class, political ideology, school, culture, and even residential area and lifestyle.

In Johor, it can be observed that ethnic groups such as Malays, Chinese, Indians, and others are communally divided, living in separate enclaves. They seem to be more segregated than ever before. According to Department of Statistics (Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia), in Johor, the Malays are the largest ethnic group accounting for 51.1% of the total population there with most of them being Muslims. The Chinese form the second largest group accounting for 35.4% of the population in Johor. They are mainly Taoists and Confucianist. The Indians make up about 6.9 % of the population while the rest are categorised as the other having Middle Eastern ancestry. Despite the fact the Malays form the largest ethnic group, economic activities are dominated by the Chinese and those of Middle Eastern descent belonging to the middle class; the majority of Malays belong to the lower class. Thus, it is likely that the root of social conflict lies in the economic discrepancy among the three ethnic groups.

Over the last five years it can be witnessed that trivial incidents involving individuals from different ethnic background can easily spark social tensions. Literature reveals that small issues as accidental body contact on the road, quarrels among children and dispute between people escalate into

manifest conflict among ethnic groups (Baron, 1977). Indeed, this is contrary to the spirit of the nation-building project in Malaysia which expects that all ethnic groups live in peace and harmony (Seah, 2000).

With a population of 3,385,200, Johor has fragile social relations among members of its society. The context is similar to that of Ambon, Indonesia (Susan, 2009) which opens up the possibility of dissension and violent conflict causing damages and casualties. The fragile social relations form a weak foundation to establish a safe, comfortable and peaceful society. This is illustrated in incidents such as the destruction of places of worship, inter-ethnic fights, and exchange of insults between religious groups. In the unchanging and closed social structure inherited from the Mahathir era until now, conflict has been heavily suppressed in order not to destabilise the state (Himes, 1980; Hilley, 2001).

According to Singh (2010, p. 43), ethnic conflict is basically a group phenomenon. It arises when social collectives express fundamental differences over the authoritative allocation of values. Here, the cause of the conflict goes beyond the gap among social classes. The root of the problem is closely related to cultural, political, and interest factors, as well as prejudices that have been passed down from generation to generation. In a conflict triggered only by economic factors, disputes will undoubtedly be resolved quickly when the available sources of production are fairly distributed or when social relations

are based on mutualism, that is when a mutually beneficial relationship without being initiated by cultural acculturation are established. However, it is different from the conflict caused by differences in ideology, interests, cultures, revenge and long term feuds which have never been completely resolved (Dugan, 1982; Singh, 2010; Saad et al., 2012).

In addition to exploring the problems revolving around social harmony in Johor, this research is intended to explore a number of potential factors leading to social conflicts. Why are the problematic situations causing such kinds of conflict is present in Johor? What are the root causes of problems and what are the latent causes triggering manifest social-politic conflicts in Johor? What is the tolerance level among the population of Johor in negotiating these differences and conflicts? The objective of this research is to describe existing conditions and explain how Johor people perceive differences among them as well as the causes which trigger the conflict among the local community. The outcome of this research is expected to help the local government and related institutions to observe social practices and cultures in Johor in light of preventing ethnic and religious based conflicts.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study employed a survey method aimed at describing the issue of harmony and social conflicts in Johor. This research also employed a number of methods to collect information and data in each stage. The first

step involved reviewing a number of related studies as well as theories relevant to socio-political conflicts. The review is pivotal to gain explanation and understanding about the potential root problem of the conflicts. The problem and the theoretical factors are seen to have great influence on social dynamics and socio-political conflicts in society, particularly those related to historical aspects of social, cultural, and religious activities of Johoreans.

The second step was collecting primary data regarding the potentials and the roots causes of socio-political conflicts from a number of respondents and key informants in Johor. This research involved 1,000 respondents from various regions in Johor. The interview was conducted with the guidance of prepared questionnaire. Most respondents were from Johor Baru (525 respondents). The rest were from Muar (120 respondents), Segamat (103 respondents), Kluang (72 respondents), Pontian (50 respondents), Kulaijaya (47 respondents), Mesing (42 respondents), and from Batu Pahat, Kota Tinggi and Ledang (41 respondents). The survey was necessary to obtain data relating to several variables including local people's opinions and attitudes towards the causes of the conflict, and the limit to which people can tolerate differences and emerging potential conflicts.

In order to obtain more detailed data, the study also conducted Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involving a number of key informants including informal community leaders, religious leaders, government officials and youth leaders.

Information unearthed in the FGD not only discussed the root causes of conflicts, but also models of conflict management that evolved and was being developed in the community.

In this study, data was processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Data tabulation and its process are shown in a form of tables to help the reader understand the issues discussed.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Several studies have shown that a nation composed of various ethnic groups, religions, races, and ideologies and characterised by a rigid class structure, will undoubtedly suffer a great potential for conflict if all the differences and gaps that exist are not well managed (Susetian, 2000; Sihbudi & Nurhasim (Eds.), 2001; Santoso, 2002). It is not impossible for a society characterised by a number of differences witnesses sudden manifest conflict which is triggered by a trivial matter (Barrash & Webel, 2001).

Conflict can be defined as an interaction between at least two individuals or groups who have different goals (Nicholson, 1972). Conflict is also widely understood as a situation where there is a competition to meet the objectives between different groups (Miall, 1999) Conflicts can occur at any time when thoughts, words, and deeds are clashed and individuals or groups are unable to find a solution.

Conflicts can be theoretically explained from different analytical approaches. Broadly speaking, there are three most

common approaches on the sociology of conflict. The first is primordial approach to conflict analysis. Conflicts are deemed as implications of group identities and their various interests in the social structure (Giddens 1992, p. 162). This approach is called the primordial approach as it observes the conflict as a result of conflict of interest and friction between ethnic-based and religious-based identities.

The second approach, instrumental approach, puts forward the notion that the presence of a strong impetus from political interests and the emergence of a provocateur in a society have specific purposes in a chaotic society. Communal identity is manipulatively utilised to achieve hidden political agenda. This perspective sees cultural identity as result of manipulation and mobilisation by political elites to achieve their interests and agenda (Brass, 1991). Socio-ethnic values, cultural forms, and ethnic traits become important political sources for the elites in the competition for political power and economic gain. The elites exploit ethnic sentiment and mobilise people to benefit from the chaotic situation created.

Social construction approach is the third approach commonly used in analysing the sociology of conflicts. This approach views conflict as dialectical reality within society. Individuals and social groups recognise that conflicts exist in their daily lives and thus, conflicts become a social process to change or maintain the social order. This approach is involved in the discussion of social process of



par excellence daily experience, interaction, and actions emerging as the imperative form of the structure of consciousness .

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As a state populated by various groups and social classes, Johor is not only prone to conflicts, but also to social disintegration. In the last few years, Johor experienced potential conflicts triggered by trivial matters, which did not happen only once or twice. Horizontal and vertical conflicts, as the present study found, occurred in various regions on a limited scale. However, it is not impossible that one day it could burst into an explosive conflict if not properly managed (Steger & Lind, 1999; Kalyvas & Mosoud, 2008).

Horizontal conflict is a conflict triggered by differences in ethnicity, religion, profession, race, custom and region. On the other hand, vertical conflict is due to differences in social class and social polarisation which are quite sharp (Nasikun, 1984, p.30). As a matter of fact, it is not uncommon that conflicts which are triggered by differences in class and economic interests become more profound as they are aggravated by differences in ethnic background, religion as well as social differentiation.

**Potential, Form, and Trigger of Conflict**

In Johor, it is quite easy for social harmony to be shaken as people are not ready to accept unity in diversity or minor differences; some trivial disputes often spark ugly incidents. Manifest conflicts involving two different ethnic groups such as between Malays and Chinese are not sporadic events. It starts with minor disagreements between individuals such as children or adults arguing but however it often leads to a massive altercation that involves not only individuals abut also their in-group.

Based on data gathered, there are a number of factors which cause friction, disturbance, and even conflict between communities in different regions of Johor. In the last two years, it was reported that in the areas where the respondents were surveyed, manifest conflicts happened at least once or twice (81%). In fact, in certain areas, the intensity of the conflict in the last two years was up between 3 and 5 times (17%) and even 6 or 9 times (2%). The series of conflicts indicate that they are more likely to happen when political and economic interests as well as interference of groups aggravate the situation.

Forms of conflict in Johor include arguments, insults or yelling at each other to express displeasure or offending people

Table 1  
*Forms and Intensity of Conflicts Occurring in the Community (n= 606 Respondents)*

Forms of Conflicts	Often	Sometimes	Never
Arguments and insults	53.0%	26.0%	21.0%
Physical fight	17.0%	46.0%	37.0%
Violence, threats and lawsuits	10.0%	46.0%	44.0%
Others	2.0%	0.0%	98.0%

when faced with other people's attitudes and behaviour considered as disturbing. More than half (53%) of the respondents said arguments and insults often occurred in their neighbourhood. The more violent forms of conflict, such as physical fights (17%) or other violence (10%), were less likely to happen. Only a small number of respondents observed physical fights or other acts of violence in their neighbourhood. Small-scale conflicts, such as berating each other, in reality, do not always result in an increased intensity in clashes. Conflicts at this elementary level are still present, and sometimes help to prevent the conflict from becoming uncontrollable.

In some cases, verbal conflicts in the form of arguments and insults could ignite a riots on a bigger scale. On the other hand, verbal conflicts between individuals in the form of invective seem functional in preventing conflicts from becoming more prevalent because it is the most popular mode as well as a means for people to vent pent-up frustrations and anger in a way which does not damage the balance of the overall system (Coser, 1995). By expressing dissatisfaction through verbal conflicts, emotion and the potential latent conflicts, more or less, obtain an outlet channel, without having to fall into conflicts which damage the overall system. One Malay informant claimed to have had a dispute with a Chinese because they were involved in a traffic accident. Because he pleaded not guilty, he then asked for compensation. However, the Chinese person involved in the dispute with him did not want to admit

guilt or pay the damage incurred. He became angry and curse the Chinese who grazed his car. The informant admitted he was upset and cursed because at least he had expressed his anger without having to engage in fisticuffs. Unlike the physical conflicts that cause injury and death, conflicts in the form of spewing invectives are often seen as more effective in preventing smouldering conflict because at that level, reconciliation can be rebuilt immediately between parties involved without prolonged resentment (Kalyvas et al., 2008).

Causes of the conflict in the respondents' neighbourhood varied. However, the conflicts were generally triggered by the disruption of social order (37%) and fights among children (21%). In some areas, the conflict was partly triggered by disagreement regarding the location of the construction of places of worship (16%). Although the proportion is not too large compared with factors involving political ideology or ethnic differences, conflicts triggered by religious differences have a higher tendency to trigger manifest conflicts which involve a greater number of citizens. A number of informants stated that in Johor, tolerance limits on matters related to religious life differences, such as the establishment of places of worship considered too flashy, often triggered conflicts manifest. One Malay informant admitted as follows:

*“In my neighbourhood, local people protested and forced to shut down a place of worship of Chinese people because of no permit. There was already a place of worship*

*nearby, but they just kept building a new one. Who would visit the place of worship? You can't just, because you have abundant fund, then build places of worship without restraint..."*

Based on the 1,000 respondents interviewed, the study found that the category of conflicts that often occurred in the respondents' neighbourhood was caused by religious differences (32%). Compared to conflicts triggered by ethnic differences (24%) and differences in political ideology (24%), conflicts due to religious differences were more sensitive and more likely to happen because the tolerance limit of people towards different religions are still relatively low. Although in some areas inter-religious relations seemed quite harmoniously intertwined, when the boundary demarcation between religious communities reached an intolerable point, the conflict can no longer be avoided. From the result of FGD, it was found that of religion is a very sensitive matter which often triggers conflicts among people. A number of religious figures who were invited to participate in focus group reported that they often received complaints about cases where people were considered being overly aggressive in disseminating their religious beliefs and building overly big or fancy religious symbols or buildings.

Although the majority of respondents claimed not being disturbed (48%) when there was an establishment of other faiths' place of worship, this research found that quite a lot of respondents (26%) openly

admitted that they actually felt disturbed, and even 9% of respondents stated unequivocally that they felt disturbed if there are other houses of worship built in their neighbourhood. For some respondents, the construction of other religious communities' worship houses, in some cases, is sometimes understood as a form of threat and a violation toward their space and privacy because that establishment is considered as a form of intervention or media propaganda that threatens the integrity of their religion.

At an individual or personal level, in various regions of Johor, the respondents said they could accept anyone who is different from them as part of their diverse community. Yet, it is different when prejudice against different groups, in terms of ethnicity or religion, thrives in the community. Past experience in various areas in Johor tended to show how friction and conflict were more likely to explode because there was a sense of in-group and attitudes reluctant to accept differences in the mind of each group. The present study found that there was a Chinese who personally had good relations with people of other ethnic groups, whether Malay, Indian or others. However, as part of a larger community, he often behaved differently because he had racial prejudices that had settled for years in his mind. In Johor Baru, for example, the study found just because of a Chinese fighting Malay, the interpersonal conflict grew into a mass conflict because of strong in-group feelings.

In Johor, this study found that some Chinese do not have a problem living in

a Malay dominated environment as they have been able to live there peacefully. As long as they know each other well, then they would not be so much affected by prejudice and conflicts that occur in other places. However, when someone from Chinese background is travelling to another area where the others do not know them, while at the same time conflict is happening there, then it is likely for each of them to label people based on their background and despise them as they represent the ethnic background that they despise.

Theoretically, in a community where people live separately on the basis of ethnicity, religion and economic status, undoubtedly a latent potential for conflict will get stronger, and when there is a small trigger, the greater the likelihood of conflict be ignited (Haque, 2003; Susan, 2009). Differences and prejudice between Chinese and Malay, for example, are one of the social problems that have not been resolved in Johor and Malaysia in general. It can be a time bomb which will explode into a manifest conflict if not managed well. As told by a number of informants, in today's Malaysia, Chinese supremacy is not only in economics, but also has started to extend to politics, so that their power and wealth caused Malay to be resistant and become increasingly distant from them. In terms of numbers, the conflicts between economic classes (10%) and political conflicts between people against the state (21%) in Johor were generally much smaller than horizontal conflicts, such as inter-ethnic conflicts (36%), conflicts between religious

communities (18%) or conflict between followers of political parties (15%). When the conflicts among classes and conflicts with horizontal nature overlap, it is not impossible that conflicts that arise will be greater, especially when there is a third party taking part to exploit the situation.

In Johor, the potential or likelihood of conflicts is more likely to occur among people who are poor or low in economy. Compared to horizontal conflicts, potential conflicts of class-based distinctions is less likely to occur. However, the data showed that the low-economic class people were generally the most vulnerable to be manipulated by third parties for the benefit of their political and economic interests because poverty condition makes their tolerance tend to be low.

From the FGD, it was found that ethnic and religious conflicts are often volatile and unresolved because there are some who use the situation to exploit others for their own political and economic interests. The issue which is initially appeared trivial and frivolous will likely be used as an ammunition for a particular group as an attempt to project their political interest against the State or the establishment. Similarly, racial and religious conflicts are exploited by those who also attempt to secure their economic interests. In Johor, according to the focus group participants, there is a group of 'secret society' that take advantage of the chaotic situation to achieve economic benefits for themselves and exploit mass sentiments. These "pragmatic" groups in reality are the ones who feast

on exaggerating the reality of the conflict itself (*hyper reality*) and thus, trapping the community to live in the shadow of potentially never-ending conflicts.

Among Johor citizens, the potential for individual conflicts are not severe. Conflicts among them do occur, but if resolved immediately, a conflict is more likely not get bigger. Out of 1,000 respondents surveyed, 44% of respondents said that in their hearts, no feelings of resentment were exacerbated after the conflict. Only 15% of respondents claimed they had an increasing resentment to the counterparty after a conflict. Meanwhile, almost half of respondents (41%) stated that they became even more familiar and understood one another after the conflict, which was later resolved through reconciliation.

Most residents interviewed generally realised that the conflict, in any form, will be detrimental to all parties. Thus, as long as each side could resist, they hoped the conflict would not last long and be immediately resolved by all parties. Though conflict is an inherent phenomenon which always occurs in the community, the majority of the respondents actually admitted that they always attempted to avoid a conflict because any conflict would undoubtedly be detrimental to their lives. One informant said:

*“Actually we don’t like being involved in a conflict. [Both parties] will surely equally lose. But, when I’m out of control, yeah, we just fight to defend our interests which are disturbed. Yes, if it’s possible to*

*resolve it amicably, we definitely choose that. We just get into conflict if we have to ....”*

Generally, all respondents surveyed stated that they always sought to avoid conflict. However, when their privacy is disturbed, or the family or a member of their group become victims of other ethnic groups, and so forth, then the awareness of the social status would normally fade. This even raises the feeling of solidarity to defend their group, especially when the trigger is related to their religion and beliefs. Among the communities in Johor, religious issues are often recognised as a trigger for conflict because of conservatism of ideological values embraced by each individual.

### **Demarcation and Tolerance**

For short term, trying to stop the conflict and negate the differences in the pursuit of harmony may be justified and seem to be an effective way to create a peaceful situation. However, being overly allergic to conflict and the real difference is also not a wise attitude because every society actually has the potential and the durability of its own to face differences and hidden future conflicts.

Many previous studies have proven that conflict is a reality that is inherent in society. Conflict is a social reality that will always be present as long as there are differences in social identity, distribution of resources, interests, and ideologies. However, conflicts that occur in society do not always have significant negative impacts that break the existing social system.

When conflicts are properly managed, they can be seen from their functional aspect, namely as a mechanism to enhance the social integration process. Achieving such an understanding would enable a conflict been seen from a more optimistic angle, i.e., as a way to eliminate the disintegration of various elements in order to form a solid community. In this sense, conflict should not be avoided but rather managed in order to find a solution.

At various research sites, the present study found that despite the potential for conflict and growing prejudices in society in addressing the differences, institutions and local wisdoms proved to be functional and effective to make the differences and the potential of conflicts managed properly and not explode into a manifest conflict. To some communities, it may be true that differences on the basis of religion or ethnicity can make the two sides constantly have prejudices and suspicions of each other. To some others, however, the differences are often treated wisely, full of tolerance, and they have lived together for a long time without being disturbed by a conflict (Lederach, 1996).

Theoretically, deterrent factors which have a significant role in reducing conflict are the power of tolerance and the need to live peacefully. Despite different demarcation boundaries of public tolerance, each side still needs a separate space for exclusive living with their own community (Susan, 2009). However, for the majority of respondents, the most important thing is to realise that the conditions of the community or social environment around them are diverse, and,

inevitably, they have to accept the fact that there are others who are different from them, in terms of ethnicity, religion, political ideology, and socio-economy.

Most respondents accepted that Johor consists of a multi-ethnic society, and that there are many people around them who are different in many aspects. Some respondents even claimed that they could accept the difference in a more personal scale: being part of a family. The majority of respondents claimed that people from different ethnic groups (93%), religion (91%), political ideology (77%) and economic class (84%), are an inescapable reality of life in such a multi-ethnic society.

Johoreans in general can accept people from different groups not only as fellow citizens or residents of Malaysia . Moreover, not a few respondents admitted that in everyday life they also had a close friend from different groups. Of the 1,000 respondents surveyed, most (60%) claimed to have a close friend, either from different ethnic group or religion -although not many. As many as 31% of the respondents even claimed to have many close friends from different ethnic group while 22% of the respondents claimed to have many close friends from different religious groups. Only 7% of the respondents admitted having no close friends from different ethnicities and 9% of respondents claimed to have no close friend of different religion. In everyday life, playing and spending leisure time with people from different ethnic group or religion, according to most respondents, was not uncommon.

In an era where awareness of democracy and multiculturalism has grown, hanging out or making friends with people from different ethnic group or religion does not seem to be a problem in Johor. An in-depth interview noted that most respondents basically were not troubled by the origin of or from which groups their friends were from as similarity in lifestyle was deemed more important than group basis. In addition, in choosing their in-group, shared interests seem to be more important than similarity in religious or ethnic sentiments. Among those from different religions, there is in fact a potential for conflict. However, in real life, when those of different ethnic groups and religions have mutual lifestyle and economic class, the potential for conflict at the group level can often be mitigated or even set aside. A Malay informant said:

*“In business, yes, we are not picky. I myself also have no problem with anyone I hang out. I have many friends of Chinese, Indian or other ethnic groups. It doesn’t matter. I happen to do exercise. My exercise mates are from various ethnic groups. Nowadays, there is no point of fighting ...”*

Compared with barriers emerging from ethnic and religious differences, the study found that the society in Johor seemed to be shaped and divided by economic class rather than horizontal segregation. Participants appeared to have faced more difficulty in picking their friends based on differences in economic class rather than along ethnic and religious lines. Compared with choosing a friend on the basis of ethnic differences (31%), differences in political ideology (38%), differences in religion (22%), and differences in the area of origin (39%), the study found only 17.7% of participants claimed to have allies from different economic classes. It means economic barriers are far more difficult to break compared with cultural and ethnic boundaries.

How is the family’s attitude when the respondent has a close friend from different group of ethnicity, religion, political party, or economic class? The majority of respondents admitted that their family never questioned them about it. Of the 1,000 respondents surveyed, no more than 10% of families questioned who the respondents’ friends were and where they were from. Approximately 14% of the respondents admitted that sometimes family questioned

Table 2  
*Respondents’ Close Friends of Different Ethnic Groups, Religions, Economic Classes, Political Ideologies*

Close friends	Yes, I have many close friends	Yes, I have few close friends	I don’t have any close friends
Different ethnic groups	31.0%	62.0%	7.0%
Different religions	22.0%	69.0%	9.0%
Different political ideologies	38.0%	39.0%	23.0%
Different regions/states	39.0%	56.0%	5.0%
Different economic classes	17.7%	66.0%	16.0%

if they had friends of different ethnic groups, and 16% of the respondents admitted to be questioned for having close friends of different religions. However, the majority of respondents claimed that in everyday life their family usually never questioned about their friends. The respondents said in the eyes of their family, whether the social environment of the respondents had a negative impact or not was deemed more important. Resistant attitude towards and questioning the differences usually occurred when conflicts between ethnic groups or religions took place. Among the respondents' families, issues related to ethnicity were hardly discussed but it did not mean it was never discussed. Most respondents (68%) admitted that their family sometimes or even often discussed issues related to ethnicity. However, the discussion was limited to mundane conversation to fill spare time in response to news in the media, not leading to a prolonged dispute in everyday life outside the family. As many as 19% of the respondents admitted that their family "often" discussed issues of ethnicity while 6% of the respondents admitted "very often".

Among people in Johor, talking about or gossiping about issues of ethnicity, religion, and other sensitive topics in private sphere (family), in some ways, are still a common practice. However, many respondents said they had no interest to further engage in various activities that express "distance" or their dislike-ness against other ethnic groups or followers of other religions in the rallies and so forth. Essentially, although

they expressed their displeasure against a particular ethnic group, they tend to discuss it within the family only, without being overly reactive and express their dislike in practical actions such as joining demonstrations against the other ethnic, religious, or political party. Of the 1,000 respondents surveyed, only 9% admitted that within the past two years they were frequently involved in demonstrations against different groups. Most respondents (79%) claimed that during the last two years they had never been involved in rallies that opposed other ethnic groups, religions, political parties, or other different groups. One Malay participant said:

*"In my family, I often discussed about the Chinese who dominate the economy of Malaysia. They are rich, and sometimes they keep their heads high since they got a lot of financial support as well as political parties. However, we only talk about this matter among family and friends. I never participated in any riot or demonstration against the Chinese. Not every Chinese are bad. Some are nice people. Not all Malays are good fellow, some might be very displeasing..."*

In Johor, when talking about natural instincts regarding choosing friends and which habitat is considered the most secure and comfortable, the people choose a group or a place that has many things in common with them. However, in practice, the choice



of where they live is influenced by many other variables. The main factors taken into consideration in choosing a place of living is not the location that is surrounded by the same ethnic group, but rather on whether their financial condition enables them to afford a house in the desired location. As many as 62% of the respondents said that house price is the main consideration in choosing the location of residence. Only 37% considered the same ethnic group residing in the neighbourhood as the main factor in influencing the choice of residence. Other major factors highly considered by respondents, in addition to the price, are quality of property (47%), infrastructure (52%) and safety of the neighbourhood (55%).

Certain ethnic groups, especially Chinese (32%) and Indian (47%), in the eyes of most respondents, tend to live exclusively in a particular location. Both ethnic groups were also seen to have tendency to restrict interaction with other ethnic groups. However, according to information obtained from the field, as long as it did not interfere with each other, and all interactions could still occur in other zones, such as in the workplace, the marketplace, or other public zones, it was not considered an issue. According to some informants, in addition to issues of neighbourhood and possibly segregated schools, there are other zones that allow citizens to develop social interaction which is functional to neutralise differences. Doing sports activities together or spending leisure time with people sharing similar hobbies regardless of ethnicity

or religion, according to a number of respondents, is a good medium for them to meet people from different groups.

In a rigid community where the members are alienated from each other and, thus, never greet their fellows, establishing multicultural life may not be easy (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). However, this study shows that people in Johor are getting used to differences. Furthermore, in some regions, zones or forum allowing people to meet each other have been established, thus helping conflicts in general to be mitigated or kept to minimum. Though, at group level, such thing as prejudices against other groups remained, to some extent, the study found that in many areas in Johor, common lifestyle and economic class as well as the presence of neutral zones which allow people to interact with each other were the key to the development of multicultural life that is dynamic, yet, functional and effective to maintain harmonious relations among the residents (Crouch, 2001; Jeong, 2003; Munusamy, 2012).

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that conflicts in Johor is a complex issue. This article has discussed the situation and also the root of the problem that triggers those conflicts. In addition, this article has mapped out how people in Johor tolerate differences that trigger conflicts.

This study that involved 1.000 participants across 10 regions in Johor found that the intensity of conflict is generally quite manifest, and often disturbing. It found that manifest conflict often take place in the

form of verbal conflicts or insults. However, such invective at the level of individual or family often triggers manifest conflicts at the level of larger groups because of their solidarity with fellow members in the group and group prejudices being strongly internalised in the minds of the public.

The study also found that residents of Johor have “vulnerable tolerance” toward religious differences compared with that of ethnic differences. Issues such as construction of places of worship and defaming a particular religion can be manipulated as source and trigger a larger conflict, especially when in a conflictual situation, there are third parties who use it for their own benefits.

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## **Determinants of Information Technology Adoption among Malaysian Farm-based Enterprises**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Information technologies (ITs) have been employed in various fields of human endeavour especially to engender socio-economic development. One key sub-sector in which the adoption of ITs is increasingly becoming critical in Malaysia is the farm-based (agri-based) enterprises. However, previous studies have suggested that a number of factors influences the adoption of ICT by enterprises, especially small and medium firms. This study was prompted by the need to determine the factors that influence the adoption of IT among farm-based enterprises. A pre-test study was conducted with 50 IT-using entrepreneurs selected from five farm-based firms that were selected using systematic random sampling from a population of 500 farm-based entrepreneurs (selected from 50 farm-based firms) in Selangor, Malaysia. The study applied modified Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) theory with System Support and Readiness and Perceived Benefits as independent variables, while IT Adoption was the dependent variable. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics and factor analyses. The findings revealed that System support and readiness and Perceived benefits are the critical factors that determine IT adoption and that most of the enterprises ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) adopted basic entrepreneurial ITs while a number of them ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ) adopted advanced entrepreneurial ITs. The limitations of the study include the size of the sample.

Recommendations for effective application of IT into practical usage for farm-based enterprises development were included.

*Keywords:* Determinants of IT adoption, farm-based enterprises, information technologies (IT), IT and farm-based enterprises development

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## INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial ability is a wide term that refers to the ability of individuals to 'perceive,' and 'exploit', business opportunities (Urbig et al., 2012; Ngah et al., 2016). Entrepreneurial perception deals with alertness, imagination as well as experience and knowledge of the market (Urbig, et al. 2012; Martiarena, 2013; Edwards-Schachter et al., 2015). Entrepreneurial perception is also heightened by greater access to information and an ability to analyse information. This may highlight the role IT adoption can play in small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), especially farm-based SMEs. Therefore, business contacts and entrepreneurial skills, or education could become important attributes (Iglesias-Sanchez et al., 2016).

The ability to exploit profit opportunities is influenced by many of the same forms of human capital. In general, one would expect an individual with greater business contacts, or networks, work experience, education, knowledge of the entrepreneurial market and business practice to be more productive (Ngugi et al., 2012). The extent to which an individual is motivated (Mazzel et al., 2016) should also influence performance (Gleinik et al., 2014; Ngah et al., 2016). Ngah et al. (2016) also reconsidered the role of non-pecuniary motivation as a determinant of the performance of the entrepreneur. Non-pecuniary motivation can include factors such as the desire to be independent (one-person business), specific non-profit objectives for the organisation (for example, to benefit the environment or help others) and enjoyment of the work

involved in the enterprise (e.g. working in a particular business sector, being creative, securing a specific form of recognition or notoriety, etc.).

The traditional view in small and medium-scale entrepreneurial or self-employment studies (Arend, 2014; Etemad & Keen, 2014) is that non-pecuniary motives may reduce conventional success in terms of wealth creation (Ngah et al., 2016). However, when one considers the role of effort, specifically, disutility from entrepreneurial effort (Ngah et al., 2016) in determining entrepreneurial performance, another possibility emerges.

An entrepreneur who is highly motivated by non-profit objectives involving job satisfaction may have low disutility of effort and, as a result, may exert greater (entrepreneurial) effort in the business venture (Ngugi, et al., 2012). The self-employed individual's efforts thus may have the consequence of boosting the firm's financial performance. If, however, an entrepreneur has high non-pecuniary motivation for 'unprofitable' self-employed activity, he/she confronts a trade-off; and presumably, will choose an optimal mix of profit and non-pecuniary satisfaction (Sonawane, 2014).

## FARM-BASED ENTERPRISES AND IT ADOPTION

The adoption of information technologies (ITs) to boost small and medium-scale businesses, improve the socio-economic status of people and improve the gross domestic products (GDP) of nations is

progressively being demonstrated by research and upheld by development communication and IT intellectuals. Hence, applying IT to farm-based businesses for entrepreneurial development is seen as an interesting area of research (Sonawane, 2014). Moreover, many case studies have indicated that as a toll, IT can have very reliable potentials to boost farm-based SMEs and bring about positive improvements in people's standard of living (Moghaddam & Khatoon-Abadi, 2013).

Previous studies have found a myriad of factors that influence IT Adoption by farm-based enterprises. Venkatesh et al. (2003) found that performance expectations, effort expectations, social influence and facilitating conditions influence IT adoption. In addition to these four factors, Venkatesh, Thong and Xu (2012) found that hedonic motivation, price value and (IT usage) habit affect IT adoption. In addition, management strategy, management creativity and firms' size (population of employees and capital-base) have also been linked with IT adoption by firms (Idota et al., 2014). While Davis et al. (1989) found that perceived benefits and perceived usefulness influence IT adoption.

Most farm-based SMEs in Malaysia have adopted IT in their businesses. However, the level of (advanced) IT adoption by a majority of them is found to be low (Nawi & Luen, 2014), and moderately low (Ramli et al., 2015). Moreover, the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) (2013) survey shows that in 2011, the household broadband penetration rate had

reached 62.3% of homes and other buildings in the country. The mobile phone penetration rate was 127.7%, which indicates that that Malaysians have multiple subscriptions on cellular phone plans. In 2013, Malaysia was ranked 30th in terms of network readiness and usage (MCMC 2013), was the highest ranking among developing countries in the world, and it is seen as having a relatively high level of IT infrastructure development (MCMC, 2013).

However, results of a study by Ismail, Nawi, Kamarulzaman and Abdullah (2014) support the findings of Nawi and Luen (2014), that the usage of advanced entrepreneurial IT by small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) was low, where three-quarters (73%) of SMEs did not use advanced IT in their businesses. Whereas, Ismail et al. (2014) found that many (67%) SMEs used the Internet in their businesses, with only 12% of them having their own websites. The adoption of Internet and mobile phones in business has been categorised as basic (low) (Ramayah et al., 2016), while website is categorised as advanced (Saleh & Burgess, 2009) and moderately advanced (Ramayah et al., 2016).

Ismail et al. (2011) argued that this phenomenon affects most of the SMEs in the country, stressing that the phenomenon is even more prevalent among SMEs in urban areas like Kuala Lumpur. Furthermore, Ismail et al.'s (2011) findings highlight the level of adoption of advanced entrepreneurial ITs such as e-commerce, entrepreneurial resource planning software and websites by most SMEs, whereas Nawi

and Luen's (2014) results stress the adoption of non-advanced ITs such as mobile phones, telephones and personal computers by most SMEs in the country.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Organisations and individuals have distinctive expectations of IT adoption, which may either permit or limit change, innovation and performance (Fink & Disterer, 2006). Therefore, it is important to investigate whether these factors affect organisational adoption of technology by farm-based enterprises. This study investigated the farm-based firms' IT adoption behaviour using the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM), which was developed by Shapero and Skolo (1982). The scholars suggest that desirability, feasibility and propensity to act are the critical factors that affect individual's intention to start an enterprise. They identified entrepreneurial intentions (EI) as the expected entrepreneurial behaviour of the entrepreneurs, which is the dependent variable of the model.

The need to deepen empirical investigation into those phenomena and contribute more knowledge to the literature (by focusing on enterprises rather than employees that many of the above-cited literature adopted) prompted this study. The study was conducted with the aim of achieving two specific objectives: to identify the entrepreneurial IT adoption indices among the farm-based enterprises and to determine the critical factors that affect IT adoption by the enterprises.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The 50 respondents in this study were selected using systematic random sampling from 500 farm-based entrepreneurs in Selangor. The Small and Medium-scale Enterprises Corporation (SMECORP) of Malaysia and the SME Bank of Malaysia provided the lists of the SMEs. The sample was drawn in-line with the suggestion in the literature that for a pre-test study, 10% of the population suffices (Babbie 2007; Levy & Lemeshow 2013). Hence, 50 farm-based entrepreneurs were selected from a table of samples that was drawn, where all the 500 entrepreneurs were listed serially, by assigning numbers from 1 to 500. The sample fraction was calculated using this formula (see Babbie, 2007; Levy & Lemeshow, 2013).

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sampling fraction} \\ = \frac{n}{N} = \frac{50}{500} = \frac{1}{10} \text{ (i.e., 1 in 10)} \end{aligned}$$

where n = Sample size,  
N = Population

Therefore, one farm-based entrepreneur from every 10 enterprises was selected from the population. The first enterprise was selected using the online sampling software, Randomizer, which automatically selected 007 (i.e., 7). Since this number fits between one and 10, the first enterprise that was selected was the seventh on the list. Since the researcher needed to select 10 enterprises from the list, the seventh enterprise therefore was used as the starting point and then every 10th enterprise was selected from this point.



To obtain the primary data, a 30-item structured survey questionnaire was administered face-to-face with the respondents at their premises after approval was obtained from the organisation's administrators. The Chronbach alpha scores of the pre-tested scale (before performing factor analysis) ranged from 0.75 to 0.90, indicating high internal consistency (see Hair et al., 2010) of the scale.

Since this study focused on enterprises (organisations), the questionnaire was administered to the managers/chief executive officers (CEOs) of the sampled organisations. Descriptive analysis was used to interpret the data in terms of frequency distributions and percentages while factor analysis was used to determine the most important items that determined the adoption of IT among the farm-based enterprises. Moreover, in this study, the Eigenvalue of the factors that loaded strongly in the factor analysis was used to indicate the ability of those factors to predict IT adoption. The further analysis of the factor-analysed data will be performed in the main study, in future research.

Since this study focused on determining factors that influence IT adoption and identifying the entrepreneurial IT adoption indices among farm-based entrepreneurs, the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) (Shapero & Sokol 1982) was modified and adopted. The model's three key predictors (independent variables): Perceived Desirability (PD), Perceived Propensity (PP) and Perceived Feasibility (PF) were replaced with Perceived Benefits (PB),

System Support and Readiness (SSR) and Perceived Usefulness (PU) respectively. The PB and PU constructs were adapted from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis et al. (1989) while the SSR construct was derived from the work of Shapero and Sokol (1982).

Furthermore, the dependent variable, Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), was modified and replaced with IT Adoption (IA), which was derived from the work of Venkatesh et al. (2003). As used in this study, IT adoption refers to the actual usage of a particular entrepreneurial technology (system) in business by a farm-based enterprise for entrepreneurial development (Higon, 2011; Saleh & Burgess, 2009). The use of a personal computer to make up a grocery sales invoice and the use of a website to place an order for raw beef and cows milk from a Dutch farm in Holland are good examples of IT use in agribusiness.

## RESULTS

The findings show that most of the enterprises fell under the individual or partnership-owned companies category, and they accounted for 50% (n = 25) of the respondents. Family-owned enterprises accounted for 32% (n = 16) while group-owned companies accounted for 18% (n = 9) of the SMEs. Most (66%, n = 33) of the enterprises had been established for more than nine years, 28% (n = 14) had been doing business for five to nine years, while only 6% (n = 3) of the enterprises had been doing business for less than five years. Nearly half (48%, n = 24) of the enterprises

belonged in the crop-based category while most 32% (n = 16) of them were food-based. Furthermore, most (62%, n = 31) of the enterprises were within the annual sales turnover range of RM250,000 (USD58,775) to RM10 million (USD2,351,000), while 24% (n = 12) of them had a turnover of RM10 million (USD2,351,000) to RM25 million (USD5,877,500). Whereas only 8% (n = 4) of the enterprises earned above RM25 million annually, fewer (6%, n = 3) of them earned an annual turnover of less than RM250, 000<sup>1</sup> (USD58, 775<sup>2</sup>).

Many (48%, n = 24) of the enterprises had between five and 50 employees. Those that had 51 to 150 employees were 38% (n = 19), while those that had more than 150 employees were only 8% (n = 4). Only 6% (n = 3) of the enterprises had less than five employees.

Table 1 shows the survey items that were used to identify the indices of IT adoption by the respondents. The mean and standard deviation analyses of each item is clearly outlined, which was obtained after running a descriptive analysis of the data based on a five-point Likert scale. This scale was adopted so that the higher the mean value of an item for a particular IT adoption index, the higher its adoption rate; and that identifies the particular category (basic or advanced) of entrepreneurial ITs that the entrepreneurs adopted mostly.

<sup>1</sup> RM = Malaysian currency (the Ringgit Malaysia)

<sup>2</sup> USD = United States Dollar  
(All values reflected in US Dollar are estimated equivalents of the sum in the Ringgit Malaysia, which depends on existing exchange rates.)

Table 1 shows that the cumulative mean value (M = 4.29, SD = 0.99) of IT adoption index number one achieved by the enterprises (which represents the basic and essential functions of IT adoption) was very high. Similarly, IT Adoption Index number two (which is single departmental IT usage) recorded a very high cumulative mean value (M = 4.04, SD = 0.99), suggesting that the achievement of IT adoption index number two by the enterprises was good; although it was slightly lower than IT Adoption Index number one. IT adoption index number three, (which represents cross-department/multi-department IT integration) recorded a high cumulative mean value (M = 3.10, SD = 1.04). Similarly, the achievement of IT adoption indices numbers four and five (enterprise integration process (EIP) and IT for B2B collaborative commerce) by the farm-based SMEs scored high cumulative mean values (M = 3.59, SD = 1.32) and (M = 3.77, SD = 1.14) respectively. Generally however, the overall cumulative mean value of the IT Adoption Indices (M = 3.69, SD = 1.12) was high.

Factor analysis of the data revealed two main determinants (factors) that influence the adoption of IT among the selected farm-based enterprises, namely, 'System Support' and 'Readiness and Perceived Benefits'. Each factor was reduced to five items. Under the System support construct, five items loaded below the cut-off point of 0.50 while under the Readiness and perceived benefits construct, 10 items loaded poorly and (all) were therefore, eliminated from further analysis, as suggested by Hair, et al. (2010). In addition, the perceived usefulness

construct had five items, and all of them loaded weakly (below the 0.50 cut-off mark), hence the construct was eliminated from further analysis. Collectively however, both factors could account for 70.670% of the variation in IT adoption/usage as shown in Table 2.

The first factor, System Support and Readiness consists of five items, and this factor emerged as the leading determinant of IT adoption among the farm-based enterprises. This factor accounted for 37.535 of the variance. The item "In my enterprise, IT department provides IT system support"

Table 1  
*Indices of IT Adoption among Farm-based Enterprises (n = 50)*

S/No	IT Adoption Index	Item	Mean	SD
1	*Essential Function	Computers in my enterprise are equipped with basic software such as Microsoft Office.	4.34	0.95
		In my enterprise, IT tools are used for their basic functions.	4.29	1.05
		Computers in my enterprise are used to archive basic documentation.	4.23	0.96
Cumulative Mean			4.29	0.99
2	*Single Department	In my enterprise, there are computer-based information systems for one type of operation process (e.g., personnel management system and accounting information system).	4.04	0.98
Cumulative Mean			4.04	0.99
3	*Cross Department/ Multi Processes Integration	In my enterprise, Intranet is used for flow of information across several departments.	3.97	1.14
		In my enterprise, other IT tools are used to improve internal communication across departments.	3.89	0.99
Cumulative Mean			3.10	1.04
4	**Enterprise Integration Process (EIP)	In my enterprise, enterprise resource planning software (ERP) is used to support organisation-wide business activities.	3.65	1.28
		In my enterprise, customer relation management software is used to manage interaction with current and future customers.	3.53	1.36
Cumulative Mean			3.59	1.32
5	**B2B Integration / Collaborative Commerce	In my enterprise, system that has inter-firm links with other collaborative manufacturers, designer, suppliers and customers are used.	3.89	0.99
		In my enterprise, inter-organisational system (IOS) has been used to conduct Inter-firm communication and transactions.	3.65	1.28
Cumulative Mean			3.77	1.14
Overall Cumulative Mean			3.69	1.12

Note: B2B: Business to business; n = Sample size; \* Basic IT; \*\* Advanced IT

recorded the highest factor loading value of 0.913. It was followed by “In my enterprise, there are adequate skilled IT personnel to solve IT-related problems”, which had a factor loading value of 0.875. The next item was “In my enterprise, the top management provides support for IT usage in business activities”.

Furthermore, “In my enterprise, there are adequate skilled IT personnel to solve IT-related problems” recorded a factor loading of 0.743. This was followed by “In my enterprise, the top management provides support for IT usage in business activities”, which recorded a factor loading of value of 0.739. That item was followed by “My

organisation has enough human capital for IT adoption” that recorded a factor loading value of 0.739. Importantly furthermore, IT system support and organisational IT adoption readiness was the factor that this study discovered to have influenced IT adoption among the farm-based enterprises to a greater degree.

Perceived benefits of IT adoption in running a farm-based enterprise was the second factor that affected the adoption of IT by the selected farm-based enterprises and, similarly, the construct loaded five items. The loading of the items arranged in descending order is as follows: “IT enhances my enterprise’s access to market information

Table 2  
*Factors Affecting IT Adoption among Farm-based Enterprises*

Items	Component 1	Component 2
System support and Readiness		
In my enterprise, IT department provide IT system support.	0.913	
In my enterprise, employees have the required skills/knowledge to use IT in their work.	0.875	
In my enterprise, there are adequate skilled IT personnel to solve IT-related problems.	0.743	
In my enterprise, the top management provides support for IT usage in business activities.	0.739	
My organisation has enough human capital for IT adoption.	0.739	
Perceived Benefits		
IT enhances my enterprise’s access to market information and knowledge.		0.862
I believe IT can ease communication constraints.		0.814
IT helps to facilitate new ways of managing and enterprise’s business.		0.717
IT enables my enterprise to increase speed and reliability of business services and production.		0.685
IT makes it easier to coordinate communication between firms/business partners.		0.641
Eigen values	7.925	1.583
Percentage of total variance	37.525	33.145
Cumulative variance	37.525	70.670
Cronbach’s alpha	0.903	0.854

and knowledge” recorded a factor loading value of 0.862. That was followed by “I believe IT can ease communication constraints”, which recorded a factor loading of value of 0.814. “IT helps to facilitate new ways of managing an enterprise’s business” which recorded a factor loading value of 0.717 factor loading. The next item, which scored a factor loading value of 0.685, was “IT enables my enterprise to increase speed and reliability of business services and production”. Lastly, “IT makes it easier to coordinate communication between firms/business partners” recorded a factor loading value of 0.641.

The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha coefficient) of the factors, which ranged between 0.8 and 0.9, was very high. This indicates that there was high internal consistency among the items that predicted IT adoption (as indicated in the factor analysis matrix in Table 2).

## DISCUSSION

Considering the trend of the mean scores, the mean values of items for each of the indices of IT usage by the farm-based enterprises are decreasing progressively from the top to the bottom of the table (as shown in Table 1), especially from IT Adoption Index number one to number three. This suggests that the use of ITs for basic operations in the organisations was progressively becoming low, giving a prelude about the readiness of the firms to use ITs in higher business operations. Then, suddenly, the mean values of the two advanced IT indices (numbers four and five)

rose slightly, signalling a new shift in the category as well as operations of ITs being used by the firms, from predominantly basic to moderately advanced technologies.

The farm-based enterprises achieved the medium category of IT adoption index (IT adoption index number three), which is the usage of IT as information-sharing tools across several departments within an enterprise, with a high mean score ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). Interestingly, however, the enterprises had managed to achieve IT Adoption Indices numbers four and five, which are grouped under advanced ITs in this study, with slightly higher mean scores ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) and ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) respectively. Although the result indicates that the enterprises had ventured into the adoption of moderately higher technologies slightly, the most frequently used entrepreneurial ITs by the farm-based enterprises belonged to the basic entrepreneurial IT category such mobile phone, e-mail and document processing. This can be understood better when the total cumulative mean score ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) of the basic ITs (which was higher) was compared with that of the advanced ITs ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ). Hence, IT is yet to become a source of competitive advantage to a majority of the farm-based enterprises in Selangor since most of them rarely used advanced ITs such as e-commerce, enterprise resource management (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) applications in their businesses. Most of them did not have the capital, required skills and knowledge to adopt advanced ITs

in their businesses. Collectively, however, the overall mean value of the IT Adoption Indices as achieved by the enterprises was also high ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) as shown in Table 1.

Furthermore, the results of the study indicate that the farm-based enterprises were unable to adopt advanced IT due to the lack of skilled employees. However, most of the enterprises had realised that IT is capable of enhancing speed and reliability in business as well as easing communication constraints between them and their business partners and employees. In addition, they had realised that IT could enhance their access to market information and knowledge. Therefore, in order to boost farm-based enterprises in the Malaysian market and food security, more effort needs to be made towards providing them easier and cheaper access to advanced and latest ITs such as e-commerce, free and open-source software (FOSS) and cloud technology, IT usage skills (e.g., through training) and provision of soft loans.

## **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Malaysian farm-based sector is facing many challenges, which include adoption of advanced entrepreneurial ITs, capital and IT usage skills. However, those challenges could be overcome with successful IT adoption. The challenges include the need to increase food production in order to feed the growing population in a situation where natural resources are depleting. However, the role of IT to enhance food security is increasingly being recognised. For example,

the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2003-2005, endorsed the role of IT in food security.

The adoption of IT in agriculture could alleviate some of the major problems faced by agro-based enterprises. IT plays an increasing role as an enabler of change and transformation especially in the farm-based sector, for instance production/processing of improved seed varieties, farm produce processing, storage and marketing. The potential of ITs in ensuring food production and food security is limitless. In addition, ITs have been identified as having the potential of being used as a tool for risk management by farm-based entrepreneurs. In short, IT adoption in farm-based enterprises could enhance food security (Higon, 2011) by increasing the rates and reducing the production/processing duration of agro-food and other farm-based produces, which could ensure adequate food supply during unforeseen natural disasters, for instance.

This study concludes that the of IT system support and system readiness in addition to perceived benefits will continue to influence IT adoption for business purposes among farm-based enterprises in the country. Furthermore, most farm-based SMEs in the country have not been able to adopt advanced entrepreneurial ITs in their businesses due to financial constraint, lack of skilled labour and risks associated with system crash, cyber security, and entrepreneurial sustainability. However, this study outlines three key implications of these outcomes. Most of the enterprises will continue to be reluctant to adopt advanced

ITs in their businesses so long as one or all of the following persist:

- i. if the (long-run) perceived benefits of adopting advanced ITs remained elusive due to capital and operational risks that loom over the market;
- ii. if IT systems support and readiness software with their related accessories are exorbitant to procure, install, service and maintain; and
- iii. the indices of IT adoption by the enterprises will continue to remain basic if the farm-based sub-sector is left to be dominated by semi-literate and semi-skilled labour and if most of the farm-based enterprises continued to deal in semi-processed or unprocessed, direct consumables (rather than processed/manufactured products).

Therefore, this study recommends that the government should firstly develop pro-active entrepreneurial IT policy that is capable of turning around the agricultural (farm-based) sub-sector and secondly, declare a state of emergency in the sub-sector in order to bring a comprehensive and lasting solution to the myriad of challenges that face it.

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## **New Evidence on Natural Resource Curse for OIC and Non OIC Countries**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper looks deeper into the resource curse hypothesis and focuses on the types of natural resources such as minerals, oil, natural gas, forestry and coal. This study argues that natural resources are not a curse to real income but that the type of natural resources and human capital that a country is endowed with are the reason why some resource-rich countries are successful while others are not. Unlike most of the previous studies which emphasize growth, this study emphasizes real income. This study also aimed to determine the type of natural resource that may act as a driving force or as an obstacle to a country. Additionally, human capital and institutions are examined as key factors in determining whether a country's rich natural resources are a "blessing" or a "curse". This study provided an empirical analysis of the period between 1981 and 2010 by using panel data which was analyzed using GMM (Generalized Method of Moments), a technique that has not been widely used in research related to natural resources. In order to measure the wealth of natural resources, this study employed the data of natural resource rents in relation to the type of natural resources. The data were collected from the World Bank. The study also used a number of control variables to measure human capital. The findings showed that natural resource wealth in OIC and non-OIC countries can be a curse or a blessing depending on the type of natural resource assets. This is evident from the findings that

showed that the correlation between the type of natural resources and incomes is mixed; i.e. there are some positive and some negative correlations. Interestingly, the findings consistently demonstrated that human capital and quality of institution both encourages the increase in real income. The

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abundance of natural resource is indeed a blessing for high quality human capital.

*Keywords:* Natural Resource, human capital, economic growth

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## INTRODUCTION

The negative relationship between natural resources and economic growth is still widely debated. Countries with the fastest economic growth in the last few decades like Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Korea have limited natural resources compared to Angola, Sierra Leone and Democratic Republic of the Congo which have an abundance of resources (Boschini et al., 2007). Many past studies related to natural resources have demonstrated a negative correlation between natural resource and economic growth and have coined this relationship as the ‘curse of resources’ or the ‘resource curse’. Countries with a greater endowment of natural resources relative to the rest of the world are subjected to the “winner’s curse”. While Norway has become the world’s richest economy through its oil endowment, oil appears to be the cause of recurring problems in countries like Venezuela and Ecuador. Meanwhile, being endowed with diamonds has arguably been disastrous for the development of Liberia. In the case of Nigeria, despite being the eighth largest producer of oil in the world, the sixth country with the largest reserve of natural gas and the largest bitumen deposit in the world, the country remains poor (Ploeg, 2011).

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between types of natural resources, human capital and real income in the countries of OIC (Organization of Islamic Country) and non-OIC. In addition, the quality of institutions as a factor affecting natural resource curse is considered. More precisely, this study attempts to demonstrate that the effect of resources is not determined by resource endowment alone, but rather by the types of resources, human capital and the quality of institutions of a country. The issue of this study is that there are countries that are rich in natural resources and have a steady economic growth, such as Australia, Botswana, Chile, Norway, the United States, and Canada but there are also countries that are not doing well despite having an abundance of natural resources such as Nigeria, Venezuela, Syria, and Libya. The key question addressed in this study is why resource-rich economies, such as Botswana or Norway are more successful, while others perform badly despite their immense natural wealth. This study is particularly interested in exploring this question by emphasizing that countries which are rich in natural resources cannot directly be classified as cursed, as is done in most past studies of natural resources. Instead, this study emphasizes that natural resources, such as oil, minerals, natural gas, coal and forests, should be individually identified and considered along with human capital for their impact on the real income of a country. Human capital and corruption are jointly determined and depend on the endowment of natural resources. Natural

resources affect the incentives to invest in education and rent-seeking that in turn affect growth. Whether natural resources stimulate growth or induce a poverty-trap crucially depends on inequality in access to education and political participation (Wadho, 2011). Furthermore, this study also attempts to avoid the results of ongoing studies that are insignificant and confusing. This is because there are studies that have included various kinds of natural resources and resulted in mixed and inaccurate results (see Pendergast, Clarke, et al., 2008).

More interestingly, this research is conducted on OIC and non OIC countries. Most of the OIC countries are among the least developed countries, despite being major oil producers. In fact, the OIC countries are yet to discover ways to reduce poverty and hunger (Abdulai & Sivar, 2011). According to the World Bank report in 2007, OIC countries were extremely weak in terms of economic growth compared to non-OIC countries. The OIC countries recorded a GDP totaling US\$7,748 billion, while the United States recorded a GDP of US\$14,582 billion, i.e. three times the performance of the OIC countries combined. Meanwhile, China recorded a GDP of US\$7,055 billion, which is equivalent to the GDP of OIC countries combined, Japan recorded a GDP of US\$4,283 billion, Germany a GDP of US\$3,317 billion and France a GDP of US\$2,772 billion (Jirsah & Sarmidi, 2015). This is a major issue for the OIC countries and is the focus of this study. Furthermore, as seen from many previous studies, most of the countries which are rich in natural

resources but poor in economic growth are of OIC countries, even if this is not directly mentioned. The study by Omodadepo (2013) stated that natural resources are 'meat' in Norway, but 'poison' in Nigeria. Furthermore, research shows that most countries with low economic growth in 1970-1998 were of the Middle East and North Africa (Murshed, 2004). Indirectly it shows that the OIC countries are more exposed to the curse of resources compared to non-OIC countries. As such, this has motivated this study to focus on OIC and non-OIC countries; moreover, this has not been studied by previous studies of natural resources.

The contentious issue in this study is human capital. The presence of natural resources itself may not be a determining factor for real income, rather as the transmission channel. This study focused on human capital and institutions as the transmission channel of natural resources for real income. Human capital is a key issue of economic development in resource-rich countries and resource-scarce countries. Education can increase the effectiveness of the labor force to foster democracy and facilitate the adoption of essential technologies of leading countries. The effects of technological adoption are important in secondary and higher education (Barro, 1997). Stinjs (2004) stressed that human capital is essential to the creation of good government in improving the health and quality of governance and institutions. Although it has been proven that a country can be developed by having quality human

capital, education has not been given a priority in the OIC countries. Tunisia is one of the countries that has a total education spending of 7.2% of GDP, higher than the spending on education by Israel (6.3%), France (5.7%) and the United Kingdom (5.5%). Meanwhile, the majority of other OIC countries spend lesser than the non-Muslim countries such as Pakistan (2.6%), Bangladesh (2.5%), Niger (3.4%), Egypt (3.6%) and Iran (5.1%). Tunisia spent 7.2% of its GDP for education which is equivalent to USD5.9 billion. Meanwhile, France spent 22 times more on education in comparison to Tunisia and other OIC countries. Statistics show that the OIC countries are seen as not giving priority to education spending and educational investment. The situation is more deleterious in OIC countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Niger and others (Amjad Ali, 2012). There are also OIC countries which are rich in natural resources and have achieved commendable economic growth such as Malaysia, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain (Driouchi, 2014). Could these countries successfully distribute their income to education and escape from the curse of resources?

This study is divided into five sections. The section two of the discussion focuses on literature review on the relationship between natural resources, human capital, Institution and economic growth. The next section discusses on model specification and methodology. Section four is related to the findings obtained; and the final section focuses on the formulation and policy implications.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to consider the issue of natural resource wealth in economic development. There is strong evidence that countries which are rich in natural resources have low economic growth and this phenomenon is called “natural resource curse”. Many studies have tried to understand why natural resources, which are a “blessing” can turn into a “curse” for a country. Many observers have their own opinions regarding the factors that lead to the deterioration of natural resource wealth in stimulating economic growth and this starts with the study by Sachs and Warner(1995). Generally, everyone has a similar opinion but there is a conflict due to differences in economic background, different approaches and indicators in their studies.

Boschini et al. (2007) examined whether natural resources are a curse or a blessing to a country’s economic growth. Their study highlights the importance of a country’s institutions and various types of natural resource wealth in determining the curse of natural resources for economic growth. This study used the interaction between natural resources and institutions to identify the types of natural resources and whether they are a blessing or a curse for economic growth. The study found that a good institution can change a country’s natural resource wealth into an asset, i.e. from a curse to a blessing. The negative effects of poor institutions are much more severe in countries that are rich in problematic resources, as compared to those rich in other natural resources. The results also showed that mineral resources

have a positive impact on economic growth. Another study that examined the relationship between natural resources and economic growth was conducted by Murshed (2004). This study is similar to the above study whereby it also emphasized that natural resource wealth can be a blessing or a curse depending on the country's type of natural resource wealth and power of the country's institutions. Data were analyzed using a random effects model and FGLS. The study found that a point source type natural resource endowment retards democratic and institutional development, which in turn hampers economic growth. Institutions and institutional functioning are the crucial link between resource endowment, geography and policies, as well as economic outcomes. The study also found that the manufacturing sector is the best in stimulating the economy.

In addition, there are studies questioning why some countries which are rich in natural resources are successful, while others are not. A study by Torvik (2009) also emphasized that success is not due to the natural resource wealth but the type of natural resources of the country. This study used panel data that was analysed using a fixed effect. The study found several factors that affect natural resources in economic growth. Among these factors was the type of state-owned natural resources, savings of natural resource revenues, quality of institutions, administration, industry and politics of the country. A study by Mavrotas (2011) examined the type of dependence on natural resources (resource dependence) and economic growth in developing

countries. The study investigated a total of 56 developing countries between 1970 and 2000. For each country, two types of exports of UNCTAD were identified and categorized as a point source, diffuse source, coffee or cocoa and manufacturing. Data were analyzed using FGLS and GMM. Mavrotas' study also looked at the importance of institutions in a country. The results showed that both point source and diffuse source negatively affect economic growth.

There are also studies that have examined the relationship between natural resources, human capital and economic growth. A study by Adebisi (2013) compared Nigeria (which is among the eight largest producers of oil in the world, the sixth country rich in natural gas and the richest country in the world for bitumen) with Norway (which is one of the richest countries in the world and the third largest exporter of oil after Saudi Arabia and Russia). This study used data from the years 1970-2007 and analyses were conducted using a VAR model. The study found that the relationship between natural resources, namely oil, and economic growth in Nigeria and Norway is positive. Oil wealth leads to improvement in human capital in Norway but to negative human capital in Nigeria. Although economic growth in Nigeria is positively correlated (this suggests that the resource curse does not really exist), human capital development stands as the transmission channel. In Norway, all the variables are positively signed, suggesting that the country has escaped the curse. A study by Stijns (2004) also examined the relationship between natural resources,

human capital and growth. Stijns found that previous studies have failed to accurately measure the natural resources and human capital before concluding that a country's wealth of natural resources of the country rewind. This study suggests that researchers need to isolate the specific sectors in natural resources before concluding that the natural resources are negatively related to natural resources and growth. The classification category of natural resources is an important natural such as minerals and oil have a different relationship with human capital as compared to other sectors. However, this study still uses OLS method as in other previous studies. Another study similar to the studies by Stijns (2004) is the study by Philipot (2010) which examined the relationship between natural resource wealth of human capital, where this research used some researchers like Gylfason (2001) and Stinjs (2006) to get strong results. Philippot (2010) also isolated the types of natural resources to examine their effect on natural resources and growth. The study uses empirical studies for the year 1990-2003 period using the fixed effects. The most important results obtained in the study of natural resource wealth was tat it was negatively related to government spending on education and school participation rates. This negative effect is more pronounced for mining than farming, followed by natural resources such as wheat and corn. This study used natural resource rent to assess natural resource wealth where the resource rent is better used to measure the wealth of

natural resources compared to the export of natural resources such as proxy found in most studies of natural resources.

## **SPECIFICATIONS MODEL AND METHODOLOGY**

This section discusses the types of data used in analyzing the relationship between natural resource wealth, human capital and real income. The selected countries in this study were 149 countries consisting of 35 Muslim countries and 114 non-Muslim countries. The data period was from 1981 to 2010, that is, after the increase in the oil cartel (OPEC) in 1970, the beginning of the history of the resource market (Amr & Marshall, 2008). The variables used were similar to the ones used by Behbudi et al. (2010). The data used in this study were obtained from the World Development Indicators (WDI), Penn World Tables, International Country Risk Guide (ICRG), and the data market.

The model in this study is based on models used in previous studies in the field of growth (growth) which includes studies (cross country) by Barro (1991), Barro and Sala I Martin (1995), as well as studies on the economic and natural resources by Auty (1990, 2001). The model is very useful in empirical studies as carried out by Sachs and Warner (1995), Gylfason (2001), Sala-i-Martin and Subramanian (2003), Ortego and Gregorio (2005) and Behbudi, Mamipour and Karami (2010).

$$git = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \ln(GDP_0) + \beta_3 Z + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$



In this study, the growth model is as follows:

$$g_{it} = \beta_1 g_{i,t-1} + \beta_2 LNIGDP_{i0} + \beta_3 OPEN_{it} + \beta_4 H_{it} + \beta_5 N_{it} + \beta_6 TOT_{it} + \beta_7 KG_{it} + \beta_8 INST_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

$g_{it}$  : GDP per capita

$\beta_1 g_{i,t-1}$ : Lagged GDP per capita

$\beta_2 LNIGDP_{i0}$ : Initial GDP per capita

$\beta_3 OPEN_{it}$ : Openness (measured by the difference in the export and import / GDP)

$\beta_4 H_{it}$ : Human capital

$\beta_5 N_{it}$ : Type of natural resource rent

$\beta_6 TOT_{it}$ : Term of Trade

$\beta_7 KG_{it}$ : Government expenses

$\beta_8 INST_{it}$ : Institution

i = Country

t = Time

There are several control variables for human capital in excess of the H1 model as the number of physicians representing the professional work force in a country, H2 as life expectancy at birth represent health indicator and H3 as Gross Intake Ratio In First Grade Primary Education represent education. Control variables used to see the changes in dependent variable and may see which controls may be changing the result in this model. The institutions dataset employed is from the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG), a monthly publication

of Political Risk Services (PRS). In this study, a PRS indicator of corruption was used to measure the institution. Lower score indicates high corruption. The comprehensive good governance indicators provided by the World Bank (Kaufmann et al. 2009) are available only since 1996, which is hardly sufficient for a panel analysis over time. The most detailed set of governance indicators for a longer period of time is compiled by Political Risk Services Group. It is considered to be of high quality and is often used in the empirical literature. ICRG components that are highly relevant for an assessment of the influence of natural resource on governance.

This study used the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita as a proxy for real income by using panel data with an observation period of six years. The use of GDP per capita as the dependent variable in measuring real income is supported by numerous studies on natural resources such as the study by Isham, Pritchett and Woolcock (2004). GDP per capita is the real measurement of welfare compared to growth, as used in a study conducted by Bravo and Gregario (2005).

This study used the data of rents of natural resources (resource rent) to measure the wealth of natural resources. It differs from previous studies by Sachs and Warner (1995) and other researchers such as Behbudi, Mamipour and Karami (2010), which previously used natural resource exports in GDP as a measure of natural resources. However, researchers such as Brunnschweiler (2008) and Philipot (2010)

argued that the export of natural resources is the indicator of dependence on natural resources (resource dependence), which is different from resource abundant. As such, this study used the resource rent (resource rent) as a measure of a country's wealth in natural resources in which the data were obtained from the World Bank. Resource rent is the difference between world prices and domestic production costs (cost of local production/extraction) and the estimated share of the country's GDP. Rental of natural resources is a more accurate measurement compared to exports of natural resources in measuring a country's natural resource wealth for the accrued rent, which is the rent received by the government, political elite and the lobby members (Philipot, 2010). This study used oil, mineral, natural gas, forestry and coal as the natural resource wealth. All the data were obtained from World Bank.

The independent variables for human capital were obtained from World Development Indicators (World Bank). They encompass the number of physicians, the gross intake ratio in first grade of secondary education and life expectancy at birth. The indicators are commonly used in the studies of human capital, for example in the study conducted by Jerry, Hassan and Ismail (2011). The human capital variables are control variables.

In analyzing the relationship between these variables, GMM (generalized method of moments) was used. In recent years, ordinary least square (OLS) has been the most common estimation technique for both time series and panel data. However, this

technique has been considered to exhibit bias behaviour and endogeneity problems, thus, recent empirical analysts tend not to base their policy recommendations on OLS results only. Hence, this research employed a more sophisticated technique: the generalised method of moments which was initially proposed by Holtz-Eakin et al. (1988) and later developed by Arellano and Bover (1995) and Blundell and Bond (1998). Based on previous studies, issues such as independent variables endogeneity in human capital should be considered in order to avoid the issue of simultaneity bias. The trained dependent variables were used as independent variables in establishing a correlation between the variables with the term error (Roodman, 2006). There is a probability of the presence of specific effects of each of the countries; in which there is heteroskedasticity between countries. Based on the above characteristics, GMM is suitable for overcoming these problems (Mileva, 2009). The first-differenced GMM estimators applied to panel data models address the problem of the potential endogeneity of all explanatory variables, measurement errors and omitted variables. The basic idea of the first-differenced GMM is to take first differences to remove unobserved time invariant country specific effects, and then apply instruments to the right hand-side variables in the first-differenced equations using levels of the series lagged one period or more, under the assumption that the time varying disturbances in the original levels equations are not serially correlated (Bond et al., 2001)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study is divided into two parts, namely the relationship of natural resource wealth, human capital, and real income in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Non Organization of Islamic Cooperation (non- OIC) countries. Tables 3-7 show the estimated model for OIC countries using the Generalized System Method of Moments (GMM). Table 3 shows the correlation between oil and real income. For Table 3, the P value of AR (2) and the P value of the Sargan and Hansen's test for all models (1) to (3) are very high, exceeding the 10% significance level. The model (1) and model (3) of the variables N (oil rent) are significant at confidence levels of 1%. Model (1) and (2) are positively correlated to real income. This suggests that oil is positively correlated with real income in OIC countries; that is, when oil rent increased by 1 percent, the real income will increase by 0.012 percent when combined with human capital variables, namely H1. This positive correlation remains despite the changes in the variables of human capital, i.e. replaced with H2. The coefficient of natural resources remains positive to real income even when replaced with other human capital variables, with an improvement from 0.012 to 0.013 percent. In the models (1), the variables of human capital are significant at confidence level 10% and the coefficient shows a positive effect on real income. INST which is an important variable in this studies has a negative coefficient from -0.045 to -0.025. Other independent variables such as GDP (-) has positive coefficients of between

0.156 to 0.361 and significant at confident level 1%. OPEN has a positive coefficient from 0.136 to 0.210 with 1% of confident level. TOT also has positive coefficients of between 0.455 and 0.372. Meanwhile, KG also has positive coefficients of between 0.032 and 0.074.

Table 4 shows the correlation between mineral resources, human capital and real income in OIC countries. Models (1) and (2) show that the relationship of minerals to real income is positive except for Model (3) which is between 0.012 to -0.001. It is significant at confidence levels of 5%. Thus, it shows that there is a positive relationship between mineral and real income. However, human capital is also significant at confidence level 10% and positive in relation to real income, i.e. between 0.055 and 0.838 except in model (3) which has a negative coefficient of -0.093. For the other variables, INST has negative coefficients between -0.070 and -0.045 and is significant at a confidence level of 5% in model (1) while a negative correlation in model (3) at 0.004, GDP(-1) has positive coefficients between 0.130 and 0.349, OPEN also has positive coefficients ranging between 0.033 and 0.082, KG has negative coefficients of between -0.030 and -0.066 and TOT has positive coefficients of between 0.626 and 0.548. Table 5 shows the relationship between forestry resources and human capital to real income in OIC countries. Models (1) to (3) show that the relationship between forestry and economic growth has a negative coefficient ranging between -0.026 and -0.019. Thus, it shows

that forestry is negatively correlated to real income in OIC countries. Meanwhile, human capital is correlated positively in Models (2) and (3) at 0.365 and 0.052, respectively; while Model (1) is negatively correlated at -0.001. For other variables, INST has correlated negatively between -0.041 to -0.073. GDP(-1) has a positive coefficient in Models (1) to (3) ranging from 0.206 to 0.419. The KG has negative coefficients ranging from -0.031 to -0.029. OPEN has coefficients ranging between 0.097 and 0.133. TOT has positive coefficients ranging between 0.065 to 0.351.

Table 6 shows the correlation of coal with human capital and real income in OIC countries. Models (1) to (3) show that the correlation to real income is positive and between 0.001 and 0.004. Human capital also has a positive coefficient in Models (1) to (3) ranging between 0.030 to 0.115. INST also has positive coefficients in model (1) to (3) ranging between 0.043 to 0.069. GDP(-1) is positive between 0.113 and 0.095. , OPEN and KG also have positive coefficients. Table 7 shows the correlation between the natural resource rent of natural gas on human capital and real income in OIC countries. Models (1) and (2) show that the relationship of natural gas to real income is negative, i.e. -0.087 and -0.034 respectively, meanwhile positively correlated in model (3), i.e. 0.073. Human capital has positive coefficients of 0.091 and 0.089 in model (1) and (2) respectively, while negatively correlated in model (3) which is -0.485. INST is negatively correlated for model (1) to (3) ranging from -0.107 to -0.077. In

addition, TOT, OPEN, KG and GDP(-) also have positive correlations.

Tables 8 to 12 show the estimates for non-OIC countries. Table 8 shows the relationship between oil, and human capital and real income in non-OIC countries beside looking at the relation of Institution also. Models (1) to (3) found that the relationship between oil is negative to real income in non-OIC countries, with coefficients ranging between -0.002 and -0.006. Meanwhile, the human capital relationship, H1 and H3 have positive coefficients with real income of 0.014 and 0.100. As for the model (2), the H2 has a negative coefficient of -0.364. INST has a negative coefficient for model (1) to (3) ranging from -0.111 to -0.007. Other variables such as GDP(1), OPEN and TOT are positive, but KG is negatively correlated to real income. Table 9 shows the relationship between the type of mineral, human capital and real income in non-OIC countries. For Models (1) to (3), the mineral resource is negatively correlated to real income in non-OIC countries, ranging between -0.003 and -0.004 and significant at a confidence level of 1% in model (2). Meanwhile, the relationship of H1 and H3 of human capital to real income is positive, i.e. 0.019 and 0.035 while the H2 is negatively correlated to real income which is -0.438. Other variables such as INST is positively correlated to real income in model (1) and model (2) ranging between 0.088 and 0.033 while negatively correlated in model (3) which is - 0.009. GDP(-1), OPEN and TOT have positive coefficients, while KG has negative coefficients in model (2) and

(3) except for model (1) it has a positive correlation.

Table 10 shows the relationship of forestry resources with human capital, Institution and real income in non-OIC countries. For Models (1) and (3), there is a positive relationship between forestry and real income in non-OIC countries of 0.019 and 0.004 respectively, and is significant at a confidence level of 1% in model (1) while it has a negative correlation in model (2) of -0.001. The relationship for H1 and H3 is also positive for Models (1) and (3), with coefficients of 0.026 and 0.005 respectively while negative correlation is seen in model (2) which is -0.483. INST has positive correlations for model (1) to model (3) ranging from 0.005 and 0.001. Other variables such as GDP(-1), OPEN and TOT have positive coefficients for real income, while KG is negatively correlated. Table 11 shows the relationship between natural resource rents (coal) on human capital and real income in non-OIC countries. For Models (1) and (2), the relationship between natural resources is positive with the real income in non-OIC countries, with coefficients ranging between 0.001 and 0.002 while negative in model (3) of -0.001. Meanwhile, the relationship between human capital H1 to H3 is negative, with coefficients of -0.008 and -0.040 and significant at a confidence level of 1% in model (1) and also model (2). INST has positive correlations in model (1) and (2) which range between 0.001 and 0.023 while negative in model (3) which is -0.035. GDP(-1), TOT and OPEN are similar to

Tables 8 to 10 with positive coefficients. Meanwhile, KG is negatively correlated. In Table 12, the relationship between natural gas is positive to the economic growth in non-OIC countries, ranging between 0.004 and 0.012 with a confidence level of 1% for models (1) to (3). Meanwhile, human capital is also negatively correlated for H2 and H3 at -0.982 and -0.018, respectively and H1 has a positive coefficient of 0.002. INST has positive coefficients for models (2) and (3) at 0.013 and 0.022 at a significance level of 5% in model (3) while being correlated negatively in model (1) at -0.007. Other variables such as TOT, OPEN and GDP(-1) are positively correlated and significant at a confidence level of 1%, while KG is negatively correlated to real income.

In general, this study found that oil is a blessing in OIC countries inconcordance with the study by Alaxeev and Conrad (2009) and Brooks and Kurtz (2013). Human capital in OIC countries is positively correlated to real income and oil. However, the Institution is negatively correlated to the real income and oil or in other words, corruption is still high in OIC countries but the oil sector is not affected because human capital is positively correlated. These findings are the same as those found in the study conducted by Omodadepo (2013) which found that oil is positively related to real income in Nigeria, which is also an OIC country and the development of human capital is a channel of the growth. Meanwhile, this study found that oil is a curse in non-OIC countries, a result that is the same as that reported in previous studies

which found oil to be a curse (Althammer & Schneider, 2013, Hong, 2014). Human capital in non-OIC countries are positively correlated to real income and oil, while Institution is negatively correlated to real income as was found in OIC countries. Oil in non-OIC countries are negatively correlated to the real income compared to OIC countries because non-OIC countries do not rely entirely on natural resources as compared to OIC countries. OIC countries are concentrated with the natural resource sector mainly for point source such as oil and mineral. Therefore, non-OIC countries devote their resources to manufacturing and services. Manufacturing demands the development of human capital, which in turn, benefits the entire economy, whereas primary production does not require high levels of human capital (Behbudi, Mamipour & Karami, 2010). This situation differs in OIC countries where there is a lack of skilled workers at diversifying these natural resource sectors to other income generating sectors like in non-OIC countries. The oil sector in non- OIC countries is also affected because of the weak institution in non-OIC showing that corruption is high in non-OIC. This is due to the rent-seeking activities from the oil sector as has been shown in previous studies (e.g. Wadho, 2011).

Minerals are a blessing in OIC countries while a curse in non OIC countries. Human capital in both OIC and non-OIC countries are positively correlated to real income and minerals. Institutions are negatively correlated in OIC countries while positively correlated to the real income in non-OIC countries. Minerals have been found in many

previous studies to be a curse for economic growth.. In their study, Butkiewicz and Yanikkaya (2010) found that the owner of mineral resources will use their political power to minimize the country's investment in education in order to reduce labor costs. If the country practices openness in foreign trade, institutional weaknesses will lead to a decline in real income. Furthermore, certain resources are more likely to invoke certain behavior due to their physical and economic characteristics. Resources that are highly valuable, such as minerals (e.g. diamond and precious metal), are easily stored, transported (or smuggled) and sold and thus, are more attractive to anyone interested in illegitimate gains (Boschini, Pettersson, et al., 2007).

Oil and minerals in non-OIC countries negatively correlated to real income, but in terms of growth, non-OIC countries have higher growth compared to OIC countries has been shown in many previous studies. Economic growth is derived from the combined contributions of the natural resources sector and other sectors, while real income is derived fully from the contribution of natural resources. This is because non-OIC countries are not entirely dependent on the natural resource sectors such as in the case for OIC countries. Non-OIC countries diversify the sector to manufacturing and services sectors. The process of converting raw materials to automobile extract more value added from the raw material solely (Brunnscheiler, 2006).

Forestry is a blessing to non-OIC countries, while a curse to OIC countries. Human capital in OIC countries is positively

related to real income in both OIC and non-OIC countries. Meanwhile, the institution is negatively related in OIC and positively related in non-OIC countries. This suggests that the weak institutions in OIC countries negatively impact on real income in OIC countries. The Forestry rent is a curse to OIC countries because the source of forestry may be given to the rent seekers. The income from forestry rent is very small after considering the cost of planting and the maturity period of the plants. Furthermore, deforestation occurs after considering the rental incurred in harvesting. That is, the land is more valuable for agricultural activities compared to forestry. These situations can result in devastation, as in widespread illegal logging in some countries due to the large profit gained; for example in countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Ukraine (Pendergast, Clarke, et al., 2008). This condition is more prevalent in OIC countries compared to non-OIC countries and is due to the lack of democracy, corruption and weak institutions compared to non-OIC countries (Aras et al., 2012).

Looking at the wealth of natural gas, it is found that natural gas in the OIC countries is a curse and a blessing in the non-OIC countries. This is because in the non-OIC countries, they are more advanced in exploring natural gas resources, while the OIC countries derived their income from the rental of this gas. This is evident when looking at the institutions in the OIC countries where Institutions are negatively correlated while Institutions in non-OIC countries are positively related to real

income and natural gas rent. Human capital in non-OIC countries is low or negatively correlated with real income and natural gas. This might be due to the overspending of non-OIC countries of their income derived from the rental of gas on social spending rather than managing it properly for human capital investments and financial assets. This is clear in the study by Althammer and Schneider (2013) in which they also found that many countries such as Kuwait, Oman, Algeria and another eight OIC countries which are rich in natural gas have lower economic growth than countries with natural gas, namely good economic growth in Trinidad, Tobago and Ecuador, i.e. the non-OIC countries.

Coal rent positively correlated to real income and institution in OIC countries while human capital in OIC countries is positive compared to human capital in non-OIC which is negatively related to real income and coal. Coal mining has a long legacy of providing needed jobs in isolated communities but it is also associated with places that suffer from high poverty and weaker long term economic growth, such in OIC countries in this study while the industry has greatly changed in recent decades. Technological change has reduced labor demand and has led to relatively new mining practices and perhaps this technological change affected the human capital in non-OIC countries having negatively related to the coal rent and real income (Betz, Farren et.al, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

The study examines in detail the impact of the different types of rich natural resources such as oil, minerals, coal, forestry and natural gas on human capital and institution and real income in OIC and non-OIC countries using the generalized method of moments (GMM), which is not widely used in the study of natural resources.. Many questions have been asked regarding natural resources being a curse to those countries with rich natural resources in past studies. The question is why is it that for some countries, their natural resource wealth is a blessing, while for other countries it is a curse. In this study, there are many OIC countries that are being blessed with natural resources but do not have good real income compared to non-OIC countries.

However, there are also OIC countries that are rich in natural resources with high economic growth, such as Kuwait, Qatar, Malaysia and Brunei. As such, the purpose of this study was to examine the various types of natural resources that affect a country's economic growth. This is necessary in order to avoid the results reported in ongoing studies that are insignificant and confusing. This can happen if all kinds of natural resources are lumped and studied together leading to mixed results and inaccurate conclusions.

The results of the present study showed that oil and minerals are a blessing to OIC countries and a curse in non-OIC countries. Meanwhile, Natural gas and forestry are a curse to the OIC countries and a blessing to non-OIC countries. Coal is a blessing

to both OIC and non-OIC countries. This study found that different types of resources impact both the OIC and non-OIC countries differently, including natural gas and forestry. It can be concluded that this effect varies according to how a country manages the assets of their natural resources in ways that are efficient, especially in terms of human capital investment. This is because human capital is the foundation and the main wealth of a country. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production. Human capital is the agency that collects the capital, explores natural resources and creates social, political, economic and national development (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). If a country's human capital is stronger than the problem of corruption, and institutional weaknesses could be addressed, these could help the countries to generate state revenue through natural resources. However, developing growth factors such as education alone would not be successful without the stable institutional environment. Institutions and human capital investments are equally important and, when pursued together, it leads to economic prosperity (Mamoon & Murshed (2009).

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## APPENDIX

Table 1

*List of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)*

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Countries N: 35		
Albania	Egypt	Maldives
Bahrain	Oman	Mauritania
Bangladesh	Suriname	Morocco
Algeria	Saudi Arabia	Niger
Brunei Darussalam	Gambia	Nigeria
Burkina Faso	Indonesia	Syrian
Kuwait	Turkey	Pakistan
Chad	United Arab Emirates	Tunisia
Djibouti	Guinea	Senegal
Malaysia	Iran	Sierra Leone
Qatar	Jordan	Sudan
Comoros	Mali	

Table 2

*List of Non-Organization Islamic Countries (NON OIC)*

Non Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Countries N: 114		
Angola	Ghana	Panama
Antigua and Barbuda	Greece	Papua New Guinea
Argentina	Greenland	Paraguay
Australia	Guatemala	Peru
Austria	Guinea-Bissau	Philippines
Bahamas, The	Guyana	Poland
Barbados	Haiti	Portugal
Belgium	Honduras	Puerto Rico
Belize	Hong Kong SAR, China	Romania
Benin	Hungary	Rwanda
Bermuda	Iceland	Sao Tome and Principe
Bhutan	India	Seychelles
Bolivia	Ireland	Singapore
Botswana	Israel	South Africa
Brazil	Italy	Spain
Bulgaria	Jamaica	Sri Lanka
Burundi	Japan	St. Kitts and Nevis
Cameroon	Kenya	St. Lucia
Canada	Kiribati	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Cape Verde	Korea, Rep.	Ethiopia
Central African Republic	Lesotho	Swaziland
Chile	Liberia	Sweden
China	Luxembourg	Switzerland
Colombia	Macao SAR, China	Tanzania
Congo, Rep.	Madagascar	Thailand
Costa Rica	Malawi	Togo
Cote d'Ivoire	Malta	Tonga
Cyprus	Marshall Islands	Trinidad and Tobago
Denmark	Mauritius	Uganda

Table 2 (continue)

Non Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Countries N: 114		
Dominica	Mexico	United Kingdom
Dominican Republic	Mongolia	United States
Ecuador	Mozambique	Uruguay
El Salvador	Namibia	Venezuela, RB
Equatorial Guinea	Nepal	Vietnam
Fiji	Netherlands	Zambia
Finland	New Zealand	Zimbabwe
France	Nicaragua	Cuba
Gabon	Norway	Germany

Table 3  
*Oil rent OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.156*** (4.57)	0.633*** (5.08)	0.361*** (4.62)
OPEN	0.136*** (4.56)	0.176** (3.11)	0.210*** (4.21)
TOT	0.455*** (5.76)	0.342** (3.72)	0.372*** (5.61)
KG	0.032 (1.47)	0.107*** (4.30)	0.074 (2.31)
INST	-0.045 (-1.74)	-0.053* (-3.38)	-0.025 (-1.53)
N	0.012*** (4.18)	0.013 (1.11)	-0.109*** (-4.26)
H1	0.078* (2.90)		
H2		-1.234 (-2.07)	
H3			0.091 (0.63)
AR(1): p-value	0.416	0.476	0.904
AR(2): p-value	0.779	0.427	0.012
Hansen Test: p value	0.902	0.307	0.371
No of Observation	74	77	58
No of Countries	22	22	21

\*Significant 10%; \*\*significant 5%; \*\*\*significant 1%. Value in () referred to t-statistic

Table 4  
*Mineral rent OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.130 (2.65)	0.107 (1.28)	0.349 (2.47)
OPEN	0.033* (2.96)	-0.019 (-1.08)	0.082 (1.10)
TOT	0.626*** (15.56)	0.632*** (15.10)	0.548** (3.85)
KG	-0.030 (-2.27)	-0.066** (-3.72)	0.016 (0.43)
INST	-0.070** (-3.75)	-0.045 (-2.84)	0.004 (0.10)
N	0.012** (3.79)	0.010** (4.08)	-0.001 (-0.02)
H1	0.055* (3.10)		
H2		0.838*** (5.73)	
H3			-0.093 (-0.99)
AR(1): p-value	0.112	0.072	0.214
AR(2): p-value	0.049	0.386	0.011
Hansen Test: p value	0.191	0.242	0.574
No of Observation	65	67	50
No of Countries	20	20	19

\*Significant 10%; \*\*significant 5%; \*\*\*significant 1%. Value in () referred to t-statistic

Table 5  
*Forest Rent OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.206 (1.40)	0.328*** (4.71)	0.419*** (4.28)
OPEN	0.097 (2.00)	0.068** (3.93)	0.133** (3.29)
TOT	0.605** (2.89)	0.563*** (10.44)	0.351** (3.39)
KG	-0.031 (-0.62)	-0.031 (-1.00)	-0.029 (-1.05)
INST	-0.041 (-0.71)	-0.025 (-1.65)	-0.073 (-2.32)
N	-0.026 (-0.70)	-0.011 (-1.42)	-0.019 (-0.92)
H1	-0.001 (-0.02)		
H2		0.365** (3.35)	
H3			0.052 (2.08)
AR(1): p-value	0.172	0.684	0.603
AR(2): p-value	0.055	0.014	0.015
Hansen Test: p value	0.944	0.982	0.972
No of Observation	77	82	62
No of Countries	22	22	20

\*Significant 10%; \*\*significant 5%; \*\*\*significant 1%. Value in () referred to t-statistic

Table 6  
*Coal Rent OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.113 (2.27)	0.048 (1.09)	0.095 (2.89)
OPEN	0.075 (2.79)	0.052 (1.48)	0.069 (1.20)
TOT	0.794*** (11.12)	0.812*** (18.59)	0.819*** (9.33)
KG	0.027 (2.14)	0.026 (2.05)	0.059** (4.90)
INST	0.043 (1.60)	0.042 (1.70)	0.069 (2.49)

Table 6 (*continue*)

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
N	0.001 (0.18)	0.003 (1.72)	0.004 (0.69)
H1	0.030 (0.71)		
H2		0.418 (1.77)	
H3			0.115 (1.35)
AR(1): p-value	0.959	0.586	0.901
AR(2): p-value	0.190	0.154	0.189
Hansen Test: p value	0.990	1.000	0.976
No of Observation	34	34	23
No of Countries	11	11	10

\*Significant 10%; \*\*significant 5%; \*\*\*significant 1%. Value in () referred to t-statistic

Table 7  
*Natural Gas Rent OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.375 (10.41)	0.392*** (6.18)	0.222*** (4.22)
OPEN	0.141** (3.45)	0.134 (2.41)	0.049*** (0.67)
TOT	0.377*** (5.88)	0.420*** (6.80)	0.401*** (5.63)
KG	0.158** (3.23)	0.067 (2.67)	0.085 (0.014)
N	-0.087*** (-5.68)	-0.034** (-3.49)	0.073*** (4.50)
COR	-0.107* (0.004)	-0.047** (-3.19)	-0.077 (-2.29)
H1	0.091* (2.92)		
H2		0.089 (0.27)	
H3			-0.485** (-3.04)
AR(1): p-value	0.866	0.903	0.475
AR(2): p-value	0.430	0.625	0.108
Hansen Test: p value	1.000	0.965	0.854



Table 7 (continue)

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
No of Observation	73	76	58
No of Countries	21	21	20

Table 8  
*Oil rent non OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.148*** (11.34)	0.341*** (12.72)	0.301*** (12.57)
OPEN	0.018*** (4.20)	0.012 (1.26)	0.030** (0.002)
TOT	0.806*** (80.93)	0.678*** (39.34)	0.677*** (38.91)
KG	-0.035*** (-4.51)	-0.115*** (-5.94)	-0.097*** (-6.23)
INST	-0.011*** (-3.95)	-0.006 (-0.93)	-0.007 (-0.87)
N	-0.002 (-2.40)	-0.008** (-3.02)	-0.006** (-3.32)
H1	0.014 (3.98)		
H2		-0.364 (-2.22)	
H3			0.100*** (6.65)
AR(1): p-value	0.869	0.155	0.158
AR(2): p-value	0.058	0.768	0.635
Hansen Test: p value	0.371	0.288	0.151
No of Observation	155	170	127
No of Countries	45	45	42

\*Significant 10%; \*\*significant 5%; \*\*\*significant 1%. Value in () referred to t-statistic

Table 9  
*Mineral rent NON OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.055 (1.31)	0.190*** (5.15)	0.124*** (4.06)
OPEN	0.208* (2.71)	0.050*** (3.77)	0.041** (3.40)
TOT	0.905*** (22.02)	0.830 (22.85)	0.828*** (35.12)
KG	0.001 (0.04)	-0.052 (-4.58)	-0.018 (-1.38)
INST	0.008 (1.09)	0.033*** (5.49)	-0.009 (-0.90)
N	-0.003 (-1.75)	-0.001*** (-0.50)	-0.004 (-2.26)
H1	0.019 (0.98)		
H2		-0.438** (-3.16)	
H3			0.035 (1.93)
AR(1): p-value	0.935	0.180	0.506
AR(2): p-value	0.034	0.981	0.995
Hansen Test: p value	0.448	0.214	0.578
No of Observation	198	230	177
No of Countries	61	61	57

\*Significant 10%; \*\*significant 5%; \*\*\*significant 1%. Value in () referred to t-statistic

Table 10  
*Forest Rent NON OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.061*** (3.03)	0.112*** (4.28)	0.143 (2.04)
OPEN	0.007 (0.61)	0.048*** (4.26)	0.028 (1.63)
TOT	0.925*** (36.22)	0.882*** (42.71)	0.828*** (14.35)
KG	-0.032* (-2.80)	-0.046** (-2.96)	-0.047 (-1.75)
INST	0.005 (1.29)	0.012 (1.53)	0.001 (0.08)

Table 10 (*continue*)

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
N	0.019** (3.23)	-0.001 (-0.79)	0.004 (0.26)
H1	0.026 (1.66)		
H2		-0.483** (-3.31)	
H3			0.005 (0.07)
AR(1): p-value	0.999	0.467	0.751
AR(2): p-value	0.067	0.668	0.964
Hansen Test: p value	0.513	0.547	0.278
No of Observation	252	292	224
No of Countries	74	74	70

\*Significant 10%; \*\*significant 5%; \*\*\*significant 1%. Value in () referred to t-statistic

Table 11  
*Coal Rent NON OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.024*** (12.64)	0.185*** (18.12)	0.181*** (17.72)
OPEN	0.045*** (14.29)	0.056*** (22.91)	0.082*** (12.03)
TOT	0.931*** (257.64)	0.820*** (103.38)	0.732*** (150.20)
KG	0.044*** (15.12)	-0.006 (-0.73)	-0.027*** (-10.00)
INST	0.001 (0.28)	0.023*** (16.53)	-0.035*** (-10.14)
N	0.001 (1.98)	0.002 (0.89)	-0.001*** (-4.40)
H1	-0.008*** (-4.22)		
H2		-0.414*** (-5.53)	
H3			-0.040 (-2.40)
AR(1): p-value	0.341	0.266	0.410
AR(2): p-value	0.353	0.199	0.624
Hansen Test: p value	0.372	0.204	0.345

Table 11 (*continue*)

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
No of Observation	120	130	89
No of Countries	40	40	34

\*Significant 10%; \*\*significant 5%; \*\*\*significant 1%. Value in () referred to t-statistic

Table 12  
*Natural Gas Rent NON OIC*

Dependent variable: Per capita GDP			
Independent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP(-1)	0.213*** (11.18)	0.008*** (35.90)	0.255*** (12.22)
OPEN	0.018* (2.76)	0.035** (3.26)	0.028*** (3.89)
TOT	0.757*** (61.86)	0.675*** (49.16)	0.715*** (36.84)
KG	-0.064*** (-4.94)	-0.145*** (-10.83)	-0.098*** (-7.15)
N	0.004** (3.32)	0.008*** (5.99)	0.012*** (8.32)
INST	-0.007 (-0.92)	0.013 (1.86)	0.022** (3.64)
H1	0.002 (0.36)		
H2		-0.982*** (-7.77)	
H3			-0.018 (-1.40)
AR(1): p-value	0.594	0.251	0.272
AR(2): p-value	0.119	0.606	0.985
Hansen Test: p value	0.368	0.481	0.521
No of Observation	147	162	120
No of Countries	44	44	42

## **Civilian to Officer: Threshold Concepts in Military Officers Education**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper discusses threshold concepts in Military Officers Education (MOE) at military institutions that also provide tertiary level education. In this study, threshold concept theory provides a helpful analytical tool to examine the process deemed necessary for transformation from civilian status to thinking and practising as a soldier and consequently a military officer. Combined with phenomenography as the research methodology, the research involved seven higher ranking officers, 24 military trainers, and 29 officer cadets from two reputable military education institutions in Europe. The findings show that there are two ontological shifts that transform a civilian to become an officer. During Phase I, the first ontological shift in becoming a soldier involves the acceptance of discipline and obedience, recognition of a framework of related ethics and values, loyalty to the unit (collective above individual needs) and a sense of obligation. Meanwhile, Phase II will require a soldier to understand the concept of personal responsibility for the execution of mission, putting others before self, and the 'power to command' to complete the transformation in becoming a military officer.

*Keywords:* Military officer's education, ontological shifts, phenomenography, threshold concepts

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper is derived from an empirical doctoral research study based on threshold concepts in Military Education (ME). Data

for the study were collected from two major higher military education institutions from two countries in Europe. The research seeks to find out the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets at military higher education institution. As the dual nature of the education includes both academic and professional military education, the research involves a diverse *community of practice*

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(Wenger, 1998) which includes the cadets, military trainers, educators and policy makers of the two institutions.

Threshold Concepts Framework (TCF) has a distinct way of identifying crucial concepts in a subject “without which the learner cannot progress” (Meyer & Land, 2003, 2006; Land et al., 2008). The framework has been described as a “portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something” (Meyer & Land, 2003, p.1), thus it provides a useful perspective in identifying and providing some insight into the challenges of transforming an ordinary civilian into a soldier and subsequently a military leader. Lambert (2002) point out that one particular problem with ME is the absence of practical experience made available for these *students of war*. Unlike any other profession, war is not an everyday event, thus making the professional development of a soldier almost unrealistic (Lambert, 2002, p.85). In ME settings, the curriculum requires a transformation process, which can be seen as being “protracted over a considerable period of time,” (Lambert, 2002, p.24) in order to achieve its purpose. Furthermore, identifying such threshold concepts in ME can assist the curriculum designer on the ‘jewels in the curriculum’ (Land et al., 2005, p.57) which are usually discipline-specific in nature which students must master. Henceforth, the present research attempts to articulate clearly the transformation processes and particular forms of troublesomeness in the “ways of thinking and practising” (Meyer & Land,

2003, p.10) within military disciplines. In addition, Meyer and Land further assert that wherever threshold concepts exist within a curriculum, they are likely to be troublesome for some students, putting them in a state of liminality – “a suspended state in which understanding approximates to a kind of mimicry or lack of authenticity” (p.10). Thus, understanding the concepts involved in educating officer cadets and supporting them more effectively through this suspended state is likely to assist the production of better military officers for the future.

Moving forward towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most European military education institutions have operationalised a form of Officer Development Programme (ODP) in order to develop cadets’ intellectual capacities, military professionalism and leadership capabilities (Foot, 2002; Caforio, 2007; Dasseville, 2008). This programme is an important process in order to transform a civilian to become an officer cadet which will help “them to identify themselves with a new role, and thus change their self-conception” (Dornbusch, 1955, p.321). However, the ODP itself may prove to be problematic as the cadet’s participation has somehow being marginalised and the importance of cadets’ very own learning experience is ignored. For example, Erikson (2010) in his research has problematized the military training method which he later concluded that there is a need to get a better understanding of the ‘how to’ in optimising the soldier’s ability to function in real situations. Erikson’s view is understandable

as Luoma and Mälkki (2009) assert that the transformation of soldiership is still missing an understanding of the transformation itself, that is to say, the pedagogies has goals and guidelines of the transformation, but the logic and process of the transformation itself is unexplored. In other words, there is a gap in understanding the ‘cadets’ experience’ to (1) become a soldier and (2) become an officer. The difficulties may be a result from tacit knowledge – the unwritten knowledge of a particular community of practice – which restrict a cadet from moving on and complete their transformation. Therefore, the involved TCF presents an alternative to investigate the core concepts needed to be undergone by the cadets to progress as military personnel well-prepared for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **MILITARY EDUCATION IN A BRIEF**

The basic aim of military education is to provide customised schooling for the army personnel to acquire the essential traits as a soldier and a desire to exhibit such conduct as a military man and woman (Franke, 1999, p.68). As with any other professional communities of practice, the intended military education must be able to transform an ordinary civilian into a distinct man and woman of arms. Furthermore, the level of education used at the institution usually mirrors its civilian counterparts to produce academically trained military officers who can face the future security challenges of the nation in regional and global contexts (Watson, 2007; Juhary, 2008). It means that the officer cadets are not only required to be

transformed to suit a community of practice, but they must also be calibre leaders among those in the community. It resonates what Clausewitz termed as military ‘geniuses’ – leaders of character whose lives and conducts are governed by the military and able to produce outstanding achievement while performing their duties. This is in line with the idea that can be traced since Plato’s time, where military organisations were considered as the ‘guardians’ of the public, thus granting them access to the best education and training (Patton, 1937; Juhary, 2012).

At present, according to Watson (2007), the professional military education (PME) is a product of a nation’s needs to produce men and women into “an effective fighting force” (41). Due to this, it has now become a norm to find higher military education institution that combines both military training and civilian higher education for officer cadets. As an example, institutions like the National Defence University Finland, Belgium Royal Military Academy, Norwegian Military Academy, National Defence University Warsaw, U.S. Military Academy West Point and Royal Military College of Canada are now commissioning officers upon their graduation in their studies. Apart from completing academic requirement, be it in engineering, computer science, medicine and others, the officer cadets are also required to learn military subjects like military arts, military science and military theory.

Schneider (2005) in his article *Transforming Advanced Military Education*

*for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* provided good thorough accounts of the evolution of military education from the time of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Archimedes until the present day. Presently, more emphasis is being given to military leadership due to its “strong element of identification, where the superior officer acts as a role model for his subordinates” (Schneider, 2005, p.22). This emphasis can be interpreted as a development of professionalism for the cadet officer’s officership and military ethics. For example, Eriksen (2010) noted that the “recurrent challenges that soldiers and commanders face within military operations concern the discrimination between combatants and non-combatants” (p.195). Under such condition, a soldier or commander must be able to respond “quickly, yet wisely, sensitively and in an ethically legitimate manner.” Consequently, most military education institutions have now adopted an experience-based learning system where “rule-based behaviour, deliberate decision-making, and consequence analysis are a prerequisite” (Eriksen, 2010, p. 196).

In the context of military education, engaging cadets as active participants on their own may be a problem. As, the nature of the institution promotes dual entity of identity to the cadet officers: (1) to become a soldier and (2) to become an officer. Hence, they may experience difficulties in negotiating these two roles collectively or individually. However, these difficulties are the result of tacit knowledge – the unwritten knowledge of a particular community of practice – which restricts cadets from

moving on and transforming themselves. Therefore, the threshold concepts, which are further explained in the following sections of this study, present a new alternative to examine the core concepts needed to be implemented by the cadets that would be helpful for them to progress as military personnel and are well prepared to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## THE STUDY

The study adopted a phenomenographic methodology which was conducted at two military institutions (Institution A (*Ia*), and Institution B (*Ib*)) in Europe. A total of seven (n=7) policy makers (*PM*), 24 (n=24) military trainers (*MT*), and 29 (n=29) cadets (*S*) were included in in-depth semi structured interviews. Phenomenography began as an experiment with first-year university students at Gothenburg University, Sweden by Ference Marton and his colleagues who explored different levels of understanding (Entwistle, 1997, p.27). In one of his papers, Marton described phenomenography as “a research method for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in the world around them” (1986, p.31). In other words, this method does not give a special emphasis on the individuals’ experience, but rather on describing the collective meaning and variations in meaning related to people’s experience of a phenomenon (Skär, 2010; Paakkari et al., 2010; Conwill, 2012; Stenfors-Hayes, Hult & Dahlgren, 2013).



According to Säljö (1997), the prime interest of phenomenographic research is in finding and defining the “variation in ways of experiencing reality” through the *categories of description* – a “way of describing a way of experiencing something” (p.175). Thus, adopting phenomenography as an approach to this study allows the interaction between the student, the military trainers and those policy makers that have the influence over “the content of learning material, and the overall learning environment” (Entwistle, 1997, p.129).

It is important at this point of discussion to spell out the epistemological aspect of phenomenographic approach used in the present research. To begin with, this study is a complicated undertaking as it tries to identify the nature of transformation going through the curriculum and the experiences of having done with it. According to Walsham (1995, p.77), such an endeavour requires a difficult task of “accessing other people’s interpretations, filtering them through their own conceptual apparatus, and feeding a version of events back to others, including in some cases both their interviewees and other audiences.” Hence, I was required to talk with people to engaged them about their ‘stuck places’ as they described the feelings of being in such a conundrum. Such engagement would be very hard especially in an institution where being ‘weak’ and having problems is considered as an undesirable trait. This almost automatic social conception among the military personnel may hinder the research from getting an honest and the

real-world experience of the matter under study. For this reason, the present research would not be doing the classic typology of phenomenographic research. Instead, the phenomenographic approach is used to gain participants’ views of the experiences and combining them with threshold concepts as lenses to analyse and understand the data. In other words, the interest of the research is to investigate the ‘nature of the transformation’ rather than the personal experiences of the individuals. In addition, the approach also enables me to tap in rich personal views from the specialists, military instructors, current and former cadets, which enables me to identify the crucial concepts in becoming a military officer.

#### **FROM A CIVILIAN TO AN OFFICER**

As depicted in Figure 1, the data collected gives the impression that there are two poignant and crucial stages in transforming a civilian to an officer. The first shift is labelled as “Soldiership”; a crucial stage where the newly admitted cadets learn and accommodate military’s values, culture and ethics as a part of their new identities as officers. After this comes the second shift – best viewed as the ultimate goal in the institutions under study, where cadet officers are given university level education with military training that prepares them as military officers, thus labelling this shift as “Officership”. At each phase, there will be important concepts needs to be understood by the cadets in order to complete their transformation to become an officer at the said institutions. These concepts, as it will

be presented in the following sections are in actual the “jewels” in military officer’s education.

This argument, however, must be interpreted cautiously as this does not mean or in any way trying to suggest that the learning trajectory in becoming an officer at these institutions happens in a singular, linear line, going from left to right as depicted in Figure 1. Rather, described by one of the officers included in the research, the process in becoming an officer is;

*“...sort of going hand-in-hand. I don’t see it as the two different things. [When] I was being trained as a soldier, getting all the military skills, the training as an officer is going on all the time. Even though, we are doing other things, it never stops. You are all the time being*

*trained as an officer... So, it is a whole package sort of thing”* (MT81a).

In other words, the discussion of findings included in the coming sections will only describe the “jewels” in MOE that an individual must undergo to become a soldier and then to become an officer.

### SOLDIERSHIP

The first ontological shift in becoming a soldier involves the acceptance of discipline and obedience, recognition of a framework of related ethics and values, loyalty to the unit (collective above individual needs) and a sense of obligation. I would like to exemplify this through the ‘military initiation’ phase, where prospective candidates will be subjected to a certain period of “communal character of life in

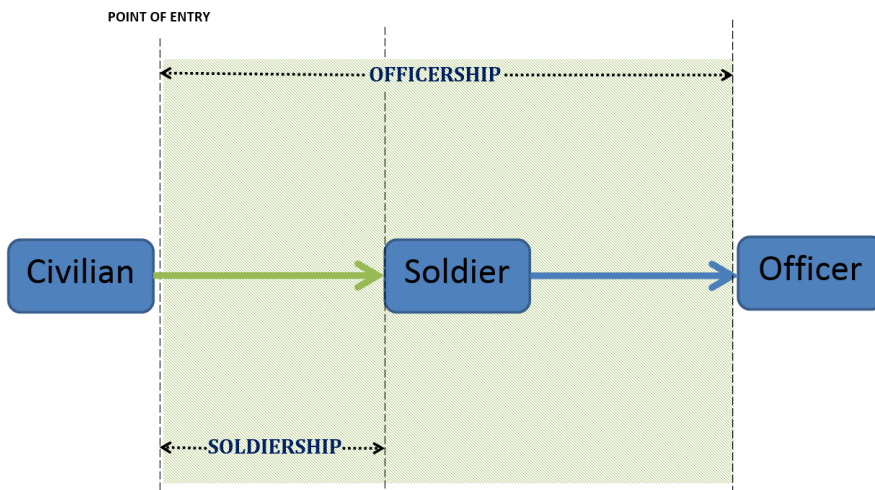


Figure 1. Shift from Civilian to Officer

uniform, bureaucratic character of military life” and the “compliance with rules, the acceptance of orders and authority, and the way the organisation deals with disobedience through overt punishment” (Soeters, Winslow & Weibull, 2006, p.240-242). This finding corroborates the ideas brought upon by Wood and Solomonides (2008) who portrayed this as a *transition period*, if successful, “includes the later transition to professional work, while potentially inspiring deep learning along the journey” (p. 132). One of the officers who is responsible for the initiation phase reasoned that “[the] real reason for this is to see whether you can accept that it (being a military personnel) is not always easy [and] to break from the civilian attitude” (MT4Ib) by pushing them to “start *acting like military*” (PM4Ib). The phrase “*acting like military*” is a strong indication that the military is a practice that “requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context” (Wenger, 1998, p.149). This initial stage can also be troublesome as it introduces the individual to unfamiliar territory. One of the respondents mentioned that prior to his admittance to the institution, he:

*“...didn’t have a clear idea what the real Army was like... I hardly knew what was there... I didn’t know the Air Force, the Army or the Navy. For me, Army was like digging holes, marching around... like infantry. That was the basic idea that I had*

*about the Army... shooting, digging holes and marching... something like that”* (MT5Ib).

“Didn’t have a clear idea” and “hardly knew what was there” are strong views that suggest the importance of an ‘initiation’ phase, whose sole purpose is to introduce the newly admitted members of the public to the military communities of practice. This made the stage as an important one to the newly admitted young civilians who may find the military environment as an ‘alien’ one. Apart from that, my observation of this ‘initiation’ period has led me to conclude that the phase is a crucial one in eliminating those who did not fit the organisation’s ideals. Caforio (2007) describes this phase as *anticipatory socialisation* where a candidate’s compatibility with the military is measured through an initial period of actual military life or service (257).

Hence, in order for the phase to be *transformative*, the research establishes that there are three threshold crossings; the preparedness to use legitimised violence, *Esprit de Corps* and prompt and unquestioned execution of the mission command. A further discussion of these three thresholds is as follows.

### **Preparedness to Use Legitimised Violence**

According to Huntington, “[not] all officers are professional military officers. The professional military officer is distinguished from other officers by his skill to manage violence” (1963:785). This suggests that

one key difference that separates the military professionals from the others would be the subscription to violence in performing their professional duties. Being asked to define what the definition of a soldier is, an officer noted that;

*... for me a soldier is somebody who has skills in applying violence legally, and you act in accordance to the interest of the nation and for me a soldier has three roles - he's a skilful expert in what he does; he's a person of character because he has to have certain values; and thirdly for me a public servant. He has always to serve the public interest (PM5Ib)*

This finding support those observed by Tsygan (2013) who established that in order to become a soldier, one must adapt to military activities especially those related to combat conditions – “to the threat of death, severe injury, and capture, to the need to perform combat missions under fire” (p.813). Recalling his experience while being trained at Institution B, an interviewee recollected that;

*“There is this one person... as we start to work with weaponry that said; “Oh... this is not for me. I cannot handle weapons.” She was afraid of the violence... yeah... those things” (MT9Ib).*

The officer’s description of his former colleague who “could not handle weapons”

because “she was afraid of the violence” is a clear example how troublesome this threshold would be. In this instance, the person could not go over the idea that ‘a soldier must kill people’. This, thus suggest that there are those new young cadets, especially those whose belief system contradict the military’s subscription to such legitimised violence may find themselves in a liminal state which will lead them to mimicry or leaving the defence forces all together.

### ***Esprit de Corps***

The second threshold for soldiership would be *Esprit de Corps* – “the emergence of shared beliefs and values among the individuals within a group and their desire to achieve a common goal” (Juncos & Pomorska, 2014, p. 302). In one of the interviews, an officer responded that;

*...in the military there is the group thing... Yes, we have to work as a group, you have to look as a group... in French it is Esprit de Corps... the corps spirit (PM3Ib).*

Reisel et al. (2005) further explain that esprit de corps “should help teams to deliver effective performance” – which in the military context is the fulfilment of missions given by the mission command. A newly admitted cadet would have to understand that even though a soldier is on his/her own an expert, he/she will still need to function in a unit comprises of different people with different expertise in order to

accomplish a certain goal. However, this proves to be troublesome experience based on a conversation with one of the officers included in this research. According to him, embedding esprit de corps within the military context;

*“...is more difficult for the people nowadays; staying in one room with 12 other youngsters, some people are for the first time sleeping away from home. Especially in today’s world you want to have your own privacy...but suddenly you have a row of beds that you have to sleep ...and suddenly he has to live with 10 or 11 other people”* (PM21a).

In other words, the young cadets in these two institutions are becoming more and more removed from physical socialisation that affect their ability to work as a group. This condition could further be explained through the culture of maintaining a smaller number of family members. As the number of people in a family reduces, it empowers the parents to provide better living conditions and could now afford luxuries that the previous generation could not. These blessings may now be a nuisance to the military as it makes the training for *Esprit de Corps* a bit more complex.

### **Prompt and Unquestioned Execution of the Mission Command**

The third threshold in becoming a soldier would be following orders given by higher ranking officers which can simply be defined

as “doing *what* are told, *when* you are told”. In term of obedience, an interviewee mentioned that to be a soldier, one should know that they will face things which are not ‘fun’ but they still have to do it. An officer responded that this is;

*“...a big transformation from a civilian to the military... I would say... to obey orders... sharply being put. It all goes down to that. You are not your master anymore. You are in ‘a system”* (PM31b).

A critical point noted here is the impact of the total military organisation men and how it manages the men. As compared to civilian institutions, the ability to adhere and obey orders is an utmost important quality of a soldier as without it the fundamental structure of the organisation could collapse. An interviewee mentioned that;

*Well... the military life it’s a... it’s quite different from the civilian life... what the young people is used to before the military service. There are certain schedules, it’s physically very demanding and you have to follow the orders. And in the first phase we concentrate on that... that you follow the orders* (PM11a).

Based on the interviews, one of the interviewee mentioned that most of the candidate who failed the initiation phase were mostly those who were reluctant to receive and obey orders. This is a significant finding as new cadets may face severe

conceptual difficulty in becoming a soldier if they reject the idea that they are now 'in a system' that they must obey. On a different note, one of the officers accounted that;

*"I think it is difficult to compare what I had experienced to what the youngsters are living right now because they have different mentality throughout the year. For instance, when I came to the military academy... and they told us "Jump", everybody jumps because that is what we were told to do. Right now if you tell a young guy "Jump," he will ask you "Ok... how high do I have to jump... how long do I have to jump... why do I have to jump..." (PM4Ib).*

What the account would suggest is that there is now a social generation gap that makes 'obedience' a threshold that the new generation of cadets need to understand. This finding corroborates Shamir and Ben-Ari's (2008, p.8) idea that the contemporary military forces nowadays are facing problems of legitimising their credibility and legitimacy in the use of force in the current society.

## **OFFICERSHIP**

The second ontological shift involves assuming the mantle of responsibility and acceptance of leadership role. Analysis from this research offers that this stage involves a necessary psychological distancing from the troops and a preparedness to

impose sanctions and punishment which are necessary for mission completion and to achieve 'the greater good.' To begin with, based on an interview with one of the officers, a key to this ontological shift would be to transform yourself "from being told what to do to thinking on your own and telling others" (PM3Ib) by "learn[ing] the work of the soldiers from the lowest level" (PM2Ib). The two comments made by two policy makers at Institution B thus suggest that the shift from a soldier to an officer requires a psychological transference while still maintaining the soldiering points mentioned previously. Comments made was also apparent at Institution A where their policy makers had made a comment that being an officer and a soldier;

*"...in principle they are the same. In our system, all of our officers have been a soldier or a private once in their life. In our system you can't just, if you have a military rank, you can't just come to an officer's rank. You start from the bottom. We all had been a private once and then we had been trained and we come higher and higher. So we can say actually that an officer is always a soldier but a soldier is not an officer. So an officer has to be both" (PM2Ia).*

Thus, a cadet who has a good grasp on soldiership may now move on to the next shift which requires the following thresholds. As we now move on to officership, the research

has established another three thresholds for the ontological shifts which are;

- a. Personal responsibility for the execution of mission
- b. Others before self; and
- c. The “power to command”

The task of identifying the troublesome knowledge within this phase proves to be a complex attempt. It was considered during the analysis stage that the available data would demonstrate a certain degree of troublesomeness, but this is not the case as; there was an absence of sufficient data, which indicates the troublesomeness encountered during this experience. Thus, this absence of evidence perhaps portrays a less difficult transformation compared to the Soldiership phase. The author disagreed with this point of the study, as, according to him, this stage involved a lesser degree of troublesomeness because the cadets – who have made the transformation to become a soldier – possess strong background knowledge and experience that assist them hugely for the next phase of transformation. It is also likely that they might develop a strong degree of commitment to Officership by the end of the Soldiership phase and *prior to* entering the Officership stage. Therefore, this is a better explanation as to why evidence of troublesomeness is hard to find – they (the present officers included in the present study) have already made the ontological shift to a great degree that it is impossible for them to recall what has become ‘a second nature’ to them.

Nevertheless, there are still interesting junctures at this Officership phase that can present a degree of troublesomeness.

### **Personal Responsibility for Execution of Mission**

It is important to begin the discussion of the Officership’s thresholds with the notion of ‘responsibility.’ According to Ulmer (2010, p.137), “the purpose of ‘leadership’ within the Army is to get the job done” and in order to get ‘the job done’ someone must shoulder and bear the responsibility for making things happen. A policy maker at Institution B described his transformation from Soldiership to Officership as follows:

*“...[f]rom soldier becoming an officer... I might exaggerate this but anyone can become a soldier but not everybody can become an officer. There is a big difference as I mentioned in the beginning. An officer is a soldier plus all the aspects. In my case... it is accepting responsibility. As a soldier... even as a cadet... it was easy. They told us what to do, we execute it and we get our points. But when I came to my unit, I was made responsible for my unit. Suddenly I have 30 people... I was responsible. I never learned this aspect at the Academy except during the winter and summer camps. But this was also happening to my colleagues...”*  
(PM11b).

This notion of being ‘responsible’ is seen to be unanimous among the officers from both institutions. One might argue that it is generally accepted that all other professions – no matter in what field – involve the appointment of managers who manage other personnel to achieve the organisation’s goal. However, it is the military’s structural essence of being strongly hierarchal that gives the organisation an extra façade on their notion of ‘responsibility’ hence making it both unique and distinctive. To begin with, the officer will be required to make instantaneous decisions that may involve human lives. According to a policy maker from Institution B;

*“An officer for me is someone who [feels] responsible, who is able to take initiatives, who is able to perform his duty after receiving even the smallest amount of information. He has to think about the situation and he has to make up his mind and find a solution and give his orders to his soldiers”* (PM1Ib).

The excerpt suggests that the officer, once entrusted with a mission, will not just be in control, but also accountable for the outcome of the mission which ultimately would involve human lives. Furthermore, to think about the situation, making decisions, finding solutions, and giving out orders the officer is required to;

*“...[have] the right mentality. Do what is needed to be done, whether if you are qualified or*

*not... just do the job first then come and complain. And the work must be done no matter what is the circumstance. You have to respect the safety regulation but on the other hand the job must be done”* (MT3Ib).

It is this sense of ‘having the right mentality’ of being responsible that differentiates the officers from the other professions. This enables them to commit themselves intimately to their undertaking.

#### **Obligation to Put Needs of Troops Before Personal Needs**

The second threshold in becoming an officer involves a degree of empathy where the officer must put his/her troop’s needs ahead of theirs. In one of the interviews, one of the policy makers at Institution A emphasised how important it is for a cadet not to “just come to an officer’s rank” (i.e. entering the Service as a Graduate Officer<sup>1</sup>). A reason for this is so that the officers;

*“...know the life somewhere down there... if I can put it in this way... how they feel, how they do and how their life goes on. So you have to have the understanding and plan and give the orders away. You can do this in a more proper way”* (PM2Ia).

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<sup>1</sup> A graduate officer is a civilian who holds a university degree and successfully complete a rigorous military training lasting for about 12-week and assume the rank of an officer. See <http://www.goarmy.com/ocs.html> for example.



This feeling of ‘empathy’ is an aspect highly regarded among the cadets who are currently being educated and trained at the institutions under study. One of the military trainers at Institution B explained that the institution’s curriculum gives a particular emphasis on;

*“...[knowing] the position of a soldier. Because if you are later an officer, you can’t imagine what... you don’t know that, it’s very difficult to have an image of what soldier feels, think, what is the message of a soldier and so on and so on... That is very important that you start as a soldier and you... in a way of graduation, you evolve as an officer” (MT7Ib).*

As it has been mentioned in the previous section, this concept is particularly important because:

*“...the levels of violence [in the profession may someday require us (the officers) to ask our men and women to put their lives] in physical danger or even losing our lives” (MT1Ib).*

In other words, in order to have the ability to ‘ask’ and ‘demand’ others to put their lives on the line, an officer must display the will to do the same.

### **The “Power to Command”**

The third and final threshold for Officership would not only entail the traits and quality

but also the ‘persona’ – described in this research as having the ‘power’ to command others – of the desired officer. As established through interviews with the officers from both institutions, one of the reasons for the formation of such establishment is to impart and train military officers with high standards of leadership qualities. One of the interviewee mentioned that an officer;

*...is up in the hierarchy so he has responsibilities over personnel, over equipment. He must have that leadership quality (MT5Ib)*

This quality is so important that one of the officers at Institution A strongly believes that;

*“You have to have that BEFORE you go to the military school... it should be inside you... you have to be strong, you have to know how to lead humans. But I think, to become an officer you have to have this leadership skills and commitment... the things that you are doing” (MT7Ia).*

Among all the other concepts mentioned above, this authority to command has proven to be the hardest to develop. For this reason, both institutions have employed a systematic education and training curriculum that develops the cadet’s intellectual strength and to imbed in them a certain manner and conduct that properly represents their elevated position. One example is by adhering to the standards of being an

officer as mentioned by a policy maker at Institution A who stated that as an officer:

*“...you are not supposed to swear or you have to talk using proper language with the youngsters so that you have... you are looked upon as an example. In every sense you should... look like an officer, talk like an officer, and behave like an officer” (PM2Ia).*

This quality of “looking like an officer, talking like an officer, and behaving like an officer” in essence are the qualities that will differentiate a soldier from an officer. For this reason, the education system adopted by these two institutions is basically customised to train the cadets to progress gradually to a leader. One of the policymakers mentioned that;

*“...they will be trained as future platoon leaders. Leader, leadership... the main focus there is not only getting trained in tactics but also leadership... dealing with people, ‘how can I make sure that the orders that I am giving to my platoon, to my squad... that people understand what I expect them to do... how can I control this and how can I even interfere if I see that the execution is not going right’?... ‘How can I correct some mistakes of my people’? That’s leadership. So, that is an important part which, I call military education” (PM4Ib).*

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to disseminate some findings on a study in TCF of military officers’ education in two European institutions. A significant finding of the present research is that the preparation to develop soldiers and military leaders often involves difficult shifts both conceptually and personally for officer cadets and little is known about this process. This paper, thus, contributes to new knowledge by providing compelling discoveries on the establishment of the important concepts deemed crucial to transform a civilian to become a soldier. Through interviews with policy makers, military instructors, and the cadets themselves, the present research establishes that there are two crucial ontological shifts needed that a cadet must go through in order to become an officer through the PME system. This knowledge is fundamentally important, especially to those interested in elevating military education through this age of uncertainty. In addition, the research has also identified the ‘jewels’ in the curriculum in order to understand the fundamental concepts for soldiership and officership. This has confirmed the validity of using the threshold concept in investigating military education as “it focuses on difficulties of mastering in the subject” (Cousin, 2008, p.201). As it has been presented in this paper, those ‘jewels’ in becoming an officer lay within the present research’s attempt to understand the ‘how’ and ‘what’ in officer’s education, which had led the author to conclude that the education and training of officers is

hugely influenced by the task of acquiring the identity of military practice which can be a multifaceted and a troublesome process. Even though, it could be argued that the present study did not look into the structure of the curriculum, still, the findings over the crucial concepts in transforming a cadet to become an officer are of great significance. As the study of threshold concepts tends to 'focus on difficulties in mastering a subject', the present study offers an understanding of the troublesome knowledge that may be useful in promoting better education and training methods for future cadets. Furthermore, the ontological shifts will be helpful in informing curriculum developers to reconstruct the present curriculum's structure to accommodate the future cadets in a much better way.

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## Peer Assisted Learning in Higher Education: Roles, Perceptions and Efficacy

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### ABSTRACT

Universities are increasingly examining alternative means of teaching and learning, and supplemental instruction in the form of peer tutoring is progressively used to support learning in selected courses. This small scale ethnographic study investigates the roles and relationships between the peer tutors and tutees to uncover their perceptions of peer tutoring and their perceived effects. Semi-structured focus group discussions of ten tutors and ten tutees and two participant group observations were employed. The findings suggest that perceptions of the success of this programme were attributed to low power distance of the tutors and tutees, the development of friendships and the metacognitive learning strategies that were explicitly taught. Implications arising from this study suggest a greater focus on roles and expectations in the design of peer tutoring programmes.

*Keywords:* Peer-assisted learning, peer tutoring, efficacy, roles, perceptions, power distance, friendships

### INTRODUCTION

Peer assisted learning (PAL) has a long and rich history as collaborative or community learning and is usually defined as “the

acquisition of knowledge and skill through active help and support among status equals or matched companions” (Topping, 2005, p.631). The term has been used to describe a selection of approaches that involve students teaching other students (Kirkham & Ringelstein, 2008). It is also known as ‘peer tutoring’, an instructional or learning support strategy which utilises students to provide academic support to struggling peers. Students from the same classes or older students are paired with

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younger struggling students. The tutoring is in small groups or through one-on-one interactions and in some cases, students rotate between the role of tutor and tutee (Higgins et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015). In this paper, the terms 'tutor and 'tutee' will be used throughout the text.

Studies have shown that PAL and peer tutoring programmes have a positive correlation with examination performance and have led to a reduction of stress and enhancement of course satisfaction among students (Glynn et al., 2006). The benefits of PAL do not appear to be limited to the tutees as findings affirmed the benefits to peer tutors, particularly in terms of skills enhancement and reinforcement of positive attitudes towards future social responsibilities (Hodgson et al., 2014). It is in the context of the positive outcomes reported from many major studies (Jun et al., 2010) that UCSI University implemented its PAL programme for students in high risk modules (courses which have failure rates of more than 30%) in 2014 so as to provide academic support and to enhance academic performance. Tutors are volunteer students who are academically advanced in the selected courses and meet their tutees at least once a week.

The theoretical underpinning of this programme is drawn from Topping (2005)'s theoretical model of peer assisted learning and socio-cultural theories of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). These theories conceptualise learning through participation in social interaction and activity, and are situated in cultural and historical contexts.

It is these contexts that shape the learning that takes place among communities of practice and give rise to their meanings (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Utilising the socio-cultural lens to investigate peer-assisted learning enables this study to uncover learning in context, identify unexpected significances and provide rich descriptions of the activities under investigation.

As such, this paper examines the efficacy of the PAL programme by investigating the roles and relationships between tutors, tutees and their intended outcomes. Through the perspectives of tutors and tutees, this small scale inquiry investigates the following research questions:

1. What are the participants' perceptions of peer tutoring?
2. What are their goals/intended outcomes of peer tutoring?
3. What are the perceptions of their relationships to their tutors (or tutees)?

## **RELATED WORK**

Many of the peer assisted learning programmes in higher education are derived from the Supplemental Instruction Approach (SI) pioneered by Deanna Martin at the University of Missouri (Arendale, 2007; Hilsdon, 2013). The SI discourse focuses on developmental education and the provision of essential learning strategies to enhance academic achievement. SI recognises 'high risk classes' rather than 'high risk students', thus avoiding the stigma of traditional, remedial programmes (Arendale, 2007). Peer Assisted Learning using the learning



strategies approach thus, has many names in many countries: Peer Learning (PL), Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) and Supported Learning Groups (SLGS) (Hilsdon, 2013).

There is compelling evidence that peer tutoring or peer learning results in improvements in learning (Lee et al., 2015). Benefits of PAL include significant gains in intellectual and social awareness and empathy (Rubin & Herbert, 1998), and positive consequences on student self-esteem (Ginsburg-Block et al., 2006). Higgins et al. (2014) found in a systematic review and meta-analysis of existing literature that peer tutoring in schools appears to have a positive effect on learning, with an estimation of an average positive effect of five additional months' progress. Their conclusion was that peer tutoring for a wide range of age groups was most effective when it is used as supplemental instruction rather than to replace normal teaching. Additionally, it was found based on extensive evidence, that peer tutoring programmes had moderate impact for very low cost of delivery (Lee et al., 2015). In the systematic review done by Zepke and Leach (2010) on student engagement, they acknowledge that student-student relationships are important in improving student engagement: peer relationships are important in engaging learners. If the distance in relationship between the peers is low, then the interaction is more casual and friendly. If the distance is high, the interaction is more formal and rigid. Power distance as defined by Hofstede (2001) is the

extent to which a less powerful individual (e.g. tutee) expects and accepts unequal distribution of power in a social context.

In the Malaysian context, there has been a paucity of empirical studies on peer tutoring and its effects. Many investigations were focused on programme evaluations which may not have taken into consideration the socio-cultural contexts of South-east Asia in general and Malaysia in particular (Sultan et al., 2013). This empirical study of six months aims to offer new insights into how peer tutoring takes place in a private university in Malaysia and the participants' perceptions of the outcomes and learning processes.

## METHODOLOGY

This is an ethnographic study of a small sampling of peer tutors and tutees. Ethnography is dedicated to the uncovering of "social realities as they are lived, experienced, understood and familiar to the people studied" (Katz, 1997, p.394). The ethnographic methods used in this study (focus group discussions and participant observations) are aligned with the theoretical underpinning of this study as these research methods would be able to yield findings that are grounded in contextual details, nuanced, and are meaningful to participants (Katz, 1997). Socio-cultural theories of learning emphasize contexts and situated learning where communities are brought together by shared practices and research methods used must be able to uncover the density of textured data with the richness of participants' experiences.

### **UCSI University in Context**

PAL was implemented in UCSI University in 2014. Student tutors and tutees are from 17 to 21 years old from various nationalities (Malaysian, Nigerian, Iranian, Chinese, etc.). The tutors are recruited at the beginning of the semester and they will be asked to state the subjects that they want to teach. The subjects will then be advertised and students will start to register as tutees. Students who are weak in certain subjects will also get the chance to request for a tutor and the University will match the students with suitable tutors. As this is a private university, students come mostly from middle class to upper middle class backgrounds and their motivation to achieve is usually high due to the higher university fees that they pay. The language of instruction in UCSI University is the English language.

### **Research Methods**

Two research methods: focus group interviews and participant observations were used for the purposes of data comparison in order to validate reliable sources of interpretation (Hammersley, 2008). To ensure rigour in qualitative data collection and analysis, the researchers in this study practised reflexivity, that is, to reflect on the method of data collection and analysis in order to avoid biases and preconceived notions.

**Focus Groups.** Two focus group interviews were conducted with ten undergraduate peer tutors and ten undergraduate/foundation tutees in order

to elicit different and similar perspectives of the peer tutoring sessions. Purposive sampling strategies were used to determine the selection of participants. The criteria for the selection were based on experience in the PAL programme. Peer tutors had to have experience conducting peer assisted study sessions at least for a semester (14 weeks). The tutees had to have also attended at least a semester of PAL study sessions which was equivalent to 21 hours (1.5 hour/week with 14 weeks in total). The high risk courses investigated in this study were Accounting and Algebra, Macroeconomics, Accounting Practise, Chemistry 1 and 2, Statistics, and Physics.

Ethnographic interviewing methods (Bernard, 2002) were used to draw out the participants' experiences and perceptions. Informed consent was sought from every participant for the interviews and field observation. Each focus group was facilitated by trained moderators for approximately 1 hour, and interviews were audio-taped. Discussions were conducted in English. Following verbatim transcription, data were collected and analysed according to the principles of framework analysis (Carter et al., 1999).

**Field Observation.** For the purposes of triangulation (Hammersley, 2008), two field observations were conducted: one study session on Fundamental Mathematics with one tutor and three tutees, and another session on Chemistry with a tutor and nine tutees. Informed consent was sought and detailed field notes were taken with the sessions audio-taped.

**Data Analysis.** The transcripts and field notes were read three times for emerging themes according to the principles of framework analysis (Smith & Firth, 2011). From the refining of emerging themes and categories, a whole picture eventually emerged with associations and concepts clarified and grounded in participants' data. The reflections of the researchers were a necessary process and a continual checking back to interview transcripts and field notes was a fundamental premise of the rigorous data analysis.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This study resulted in the uncovering of two major themes: *Informality and Power Distance*, and, *Intended Outcomes and Learning Strategies* that answer the three research questions.

### Informality and Power Distance

PAL sessions are perceived as informal learning sessions where the peer tutors are viewed more as "seniors" and "friends". Peer tutees clearly made a distinction between their lecturers and tutors:

*The lecture time is limited. The lecturers provide us the consultation hour but there will be many students, so I won't get the time to sit and discuss with the lecturer. We get to study face to face with the tutors.*

[P6\_Tutee Interview]

*(Peer tutor)...is a friend who can help us to um.. to do better in the subjects. I mean like, um..., if I*

*study alone, I sometimes.. I cannot understand some of the concepts so I need someone to teach me.*

[P9\_Tutee Interview]

In Southeast Asian culture in general and Malaysian culture in particular, there is respect for elders and people of higher, social positions with an emphasis on group orientation and face-saving (Zawawi, 2008; Talib, 2010). The power distance between Malaysian lecturers and students is considered as high, that is, there is the acceptance that one is superior and the other is inferior (Hofstede, 2001; Sanderson, 2007). Hence, the tutees would not often question the lecturers in class even when they did not understand the concepts taught as persistent questioning would be seen as challenging the lecturers and also, showing ignorance on the part of the students and hence, displaying a "face loss."

Conversely, as tutors were perceived as their peers and friends, the power distance between them is low, leading to both groups behaving in an informal manner, free of the usual constraints of the normal classroom. This behaviour was observed in Field Observation 2 where the participant, P1, continually asked questions and interrupted the tutor. If she was not satisfied with the answers, she would ask for further clarification, "slow down, slow, down, I don't understand." Such behaviour is seldom seen in Malaysian classrooms. P1 was asked after the observation for the reasons for her persistent questions and clarifications and she explained that unlike

in the classroom, where her questions could lead to a delay in the classroom teaching, in the small, intimate learning session, she was on friendly terms with the tutor and “felt at ease.” Her peer tutor, Sam (an alias), was observed to be friendly and supportive of P1’s questions and continually smiling with encouraging body language. The other eight participants in the observation group were accommodating of P1’s questions with tutee P8 asking an extension of P1’s question.

The low power distance (between tutors and tutees) thus bred an informality in these learning sessions and could probably be a significant factor for tutees to learn better with many expressing that they were able to learn “comfortably” with the term suggesting more informal learning practices in a group setting.

For the peer tutors, the low power distance enabled them to position themselves as “friends” and they were thus able to communicate more effectively:

*They (the tutees) might not be comfortable at the beginning so as a tutor and as a friend I tried some other way to guide.*

[P7\_Tutor Interview]

The usual classroom rules do not apply in such learning sessions:

*I don’t have any rules to restrict them so they can do anything they want they can ask anything.*

[P3\_Tutor Interview]

While the tutors positioned themselves as “friends” of the tutees, they also expected their juniors to accord them with respect given to seniors. Generally, respect was observed by tutees who knew the tutors as “seniors who passed their subjects with good grades.” When the power distance became too low, as in one instance, tutor P8 expressed his concern:

*....this bunch of students they were like really really acting friendly they don’t care about being a senior junior relationship.*

[P8\_Tutor Interview]

Among the peers, there was the perception of power distance, with the peer tutors expecting to be accorded the respect due to their senior, social position. This appears in accordance with Malaysian societal norms and beliefs (Zawawi, 2008; Talib, 2010).

### **Intended Outcomes and Learning Strategies**

It was evident that peer tutors and tutees had similar goals for their learning sessions and that was for the tutees to improve their academic performance in the courses they were tutored:

*...they know where’s the difficult part for the subjects and then they teach us the tips, how to score in the subject, and then they like sum all the important points in the subject and they just tell us the main point.*

[P6\_Tutee Interview]

Peer tutors drew on their own learning experiences and strategies to share with the tutees. As they were supplementary to the lecturers in terms of delivering knowledge, tutors concentrated on explicit metacognitive learning strategies such as below:

*I used strategy like how I used to learn...I used mind map and suggested them (the tutees) to memorise some of the Mathematical formula. I asked them to go back and do their own notes.*

[P8\_Tutor Interview]

*I found my very own techniques of way to study and I transferred (the skill) to them (the tutees) and make it (the learning process) more interesting.*

[P7\_Tutor Interview]

Mind-maps, diagrams, charts, exercises and the writing of notes were used to clarify tutees' understanding of concepts. The tutors did not believe in "spoon-feeding" and expected tutees to read on topics they assigned and to discuss and ask questions:

*For example, in a peer learning session we have to let the students to communicate (with) each other.. if someone don't know anything, we should let the others participants... to answer the questions that a person do not know. So we are just facilitate in case there are something wrong or misunderstand*

*from I mean the answer from other student, will try to correct them.*

[P6\_Tutor Interview]

In the two field observations, tutors shared their strategies (use of mind maps, charts, symbols, notes) on how to understand the concepts taught. References were made to how these strategies achieved success for them in their examinations. Participants were told of these "tips" as derived from tutors' "trial and error experiences." Thus, peer tutors were more likely the strategic learners who "have metacognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches, a good understanding of what a task entails, and the ability to orchestrate the strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own learning strengths" (Rahimi & Katal, 2012, p.74). Consequently, in these communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), tutees learnt from their tutors and peers metacognitive strategies such as the selection, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the thinking processes in order to change their learning behaviours and produce better academic learning (Ridley et al., 1992; Oxford, 2003).

Peer tutors were aware that their role was to provide supplemental instruction as they provided explanations and exercises based on the lecturers' pace of delivery in class:

*yeah of course because for me I usually go to the lecturer and asking them where asking the students of like, where did your lecturer stop*

*so that I can follow like go on with the lecturer, so that I will not go too fast or too slow behind the lecturer so I will also go back to the lecturer whether to ask the lecturer of how like whether did she know about this student or not.*

[P1\_Tutor Interview]

Higgins et al. (2014) found that peer tutoring is most effective when it is in the form of supplemental instruction. In this study, peer tutors provided academic support to lecturers as they were aware that their content knowledge was not comparable to their lecturers. In the focus group interviews, some tutors mentioned that there were occasions when they could not answer some of the questions asked. Their strategy to manage this issue was either to read up and explain in the next lesson or to check with the lecturer in charge. In Field Observation 2, Sam (an alias), the peer tutor, was observed explaining in a segment of the class that she did not know the answer to one question posed by P1. She would, however, check on this topic and provide a reply later. The tutees accepted her answer easily, suggesting that they probably had limited expectations of the peer tutors' content knowledge.

According to the tutors and tutees, their intended learning outcomes of improving academic performance in the selected courses were generally met. As attendance in the peer learning sessions was voluntary, the peer tutors estimated that they were able to help around 60-75% of each of

their learning groups. Some tutees would not be present for some of the sessions or they would not do the exercises assigned or participate actively in these sessions. Some comments on the positive outcomes include:

*I can know better the subject. The way the mentor teaches us. Like sometimes I don't know what to do the exercise, but after a few days of that session, I can do that exercise.*

[P8\_Tutee Interview]

*I got 4.5/5 for my test, I can say it is not bad.*

[P1\_Tutee Interview]

Aside from improved academic performance, the tutees gained unexpected outcomes like "friendship" and experienced attitude and behaviour changes:

*Communication. I started to ask a lot of questions, yeah, in lecture too. Last time, I scared to ask question in the lecture because the lecture will be a lot of people.*

[P6\_Tutee Interview]

Peer tutors also achieved their intended outcomes: they reported satisfaction from their tutees' improved results and enhanced time management, planning and communication skills as consequences of their participation:

*After the semester ends, they (the tutees) texted me and told me their*

*results were good...So I think I helped them.*

[P4\_Tutor Interview]

Greater self-confidence and satisfaction with themselves was also reported by both the tutors and tutees.

## DISCUSSION

The findings in this study are consistent with the results of major studies conducted on peer assisted learning: there was improved academic achievement (Glynn et al., 2006; Higgins et al., 2014); enhanced social and self-concept outcomes (Ginsburg-Block et al., 2006); skills enhancement and reinforcement of positive attitudes towards future social responsibilities (Buckley & Zamora, 2007).

This study yielded two interesting and relevant findings which may have implications for the development and implementation of PAL in higher education. The informality observed and reported by participants suggested that the low power distance between tutors and tutees enabled more co-operative learning styles to be adopted, where meanings derived from knowledge were shared and negotiated (Sanderson, 2007). These resulted in changes in attitudes and learning behaviours such as greater ownership of the learning process and the ability to ask more questions.

The low power distance between peer tutors and tutees interestingly in the context of Malaysia can lead to the problem of some tutees not according some tutors with the respect the latter expect as seniors. In a

hierarchical society such as Malaysia, there is some power distance perceived among peers (Zawawi, 2008; Talib, 2010).

The second major finding in this study concerns the explicit use of metacognitive learning strategies to facilitate the learning. These strategies appear to be instrumental in making the learning easier and more effective for the tutees. This is consistent with Arendale (2007)'s finding that, for peer learning programmes to be successful, there must be intentional embedding of learning strategy practice with review of academic content. The contribution of this study, in terms of new knowledge, lies in its rich and textured descriptions of these practices and their relationships to the intended outcomes in the Malaysian context in general and UCSI University in particular.

The expectation of the peer tutors was more to "guide, facilitate, help, and teach". On the contrary, the peer tutees came to the PAL program with the expectation to learn and to "get to know the subject better". However, as similar to recent findings of Hodgson et al. (2014) which reported a "reciprocal fashion" of peer mediated learning, the roles of tutors and tutees can potentially be interchangeable (Buckley & Zamora, 2007).

From the perspectives of peer tutors and tutees, the PAL study sessions has had successful extrinsic outcomes which directly impacted the enhanced examination scores of tutees. Some of the successful intrinsic outcomes were increased confidence, happiness, and satisfaction. It was apparent that both parties did not expect to improve

their skills (listening and speaking) and self confidence. Enhanced social interaction and engagement led to the development of *friendships*, a recurring theme of this study. Friendships thus become the *social glue* that connects the members in these communities of practice. In this informal and “safe” learning environment, tutees could control their own learning more effectively (Parkinson, 2009). The degree of confidence and trust that are developed through these friendships create a better learning environment (Longfellow et al., 2008).

A concern that has been expressed is that the quality of tutors in PAL can in fact lead to a decline in the effectiveness of PAL (McMaster et al., 2006). Tutors were generally chosen as they were proficient and adept in the courses they taught. As such, tutees would perceive the information provided by the tutee as “immediate and useful” and “believable and relevant.”

Thus, inexperienced or new tutors faced difficulty in managing big groups of tutees (8-10 tutees). In Field Observation 2, a skewed group dynamic was observed as one participant was actively asking questions while the rest of the group kept quiet. It is therefore recommended that training in managing group dynamics for tutors and tutees is necessary as this would result in a more effective peer mediated learning (Ning & Downing, 2010).

## CONCLUSION

This study provides preliminary yet important evidence to support intentional

PAL in higher education. The contribution of this study lies in its layered and dense descriptions of participants’ experiences and views on peer learning. It opens for the reader a window into how peers learn from one another in order to achieve their intended outcomes. The limitation of this study is its small sample size and the qualitative methodology used would not enable its findings to be generalizable across other contexts. However as attention has been given to the quality and rigour of the design, conduct and analysis of the study, the findings here may be able to reveal its validity and trustworthiness and be transferred to other contexts in higher education.

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## **Beliefs of Teacher Candidates' Parents towards Teaching as a Profession**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted to explore parents' beliefs towards the teaching profession. The sample consists of 51 parents of teacher candidates in a teacher training institute. A research instrument, using questionnaires, adapted from FIT-Choice scale, was used to collect data from the population. Although the results of this study must be interpreted with caution, the findings indicated that parents, in general, have positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. They perceived teaching as a career highly valued by society. Though the teaching job was viewed as difficult and requiring high expertise, the salary received was commensurate with their hard work and heavy workload. In terms of gender, male and female parents did not differ in their beliefs about the teaching profession. However, results indicated that educational attainment and income level had significant effect on parents' beliefs on teaching as a profession. The findings of the study implied that teaching is still perceived as a well respected profession.

*Keywords:* Beliefs, teaching profession, parents, teacher candidates

### **INTRODUCTION**

Maintaining high quality educational programmes for school children is a joint responsibility of both teachers and parents. The roles of teachers in schools and the role of parents at home need to be recognized as crucial in supporting the child's education.

Many teachers seem to want parents to have a positive attitude towards school and support the teachers' work (Lareau, 2000). This positive attitude can develop into a good parent-teacher partnership, which can bring beneficial outcomes to the children's education. Although every child has a legal right to an education, there should be cooperation with and in agreement between home and school. When parents work closely with teachers in school, school children tend to achieve more, stay in school

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longer and engage more completely (Anwar, 1998; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sulaiman et al., 2004; Zakaria, 2011). Parents who are involved in the children's learning environment also have a greater influence on the child's education (Johnsen & Bele, 2013).

In order to ensure greater parental involvement in schools, parents need to identify themselves with the job specifications of teachers as well as to develop positive attitude towards the teaching job (Lee & Chen, 2013). If parents have positive attitudes towards the children's teachers, children are likely to think likewise as most of the time, children tend to adopt attitudes held by the adults they respect. So, if children sense parents consider teaching as a well-respected profession, they are likely to view it in a more positive manner themselves. By promoting a positive attitude towards the teachers, parents can help children gain enthusiasm for their scholastic journey and acquire a passion for knowledge and ultimately become life-long learners

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Parents, regardless of social class, gender and ethnic origin want their children to succeed in school and achieve good results (Epstein, 2001). Therefore, there is a need to build a bridge between home and school. According to Moulton (2014), building a positive bridge between home and school is a win-win situation. The bridge between home and school would also enable teachers to utilize the knowledge and

experience children learnt from home into the actual teaching and learning process in the classroom. However, for effective teaching and learning to take place, parents would need to agree that teachers play an important role during the transition process. The beliefs that parents hold on the teaching role is important.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the beliefs of parents of Sarawak origin towards the teaching profession. Numerous studies have investigated the perceptions of various parties such as students, teachers, student teachers towards teaching but very few explored the views of parents. As parents are one of the main clients benefiting from the educational services rendered to their children, it is important to explore their views and obtain their feedback. Their views on the attitudes towards the profession can greatly influence their view about the quality of education provided by local teacher training institutes in Malaysia.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study was conducted to examine the parents' views regarding the teaching profession. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the beliefs of parents of teacher candidates regarding the teaching profession?
2. Is there a significant difference in beliefs between male and female parents of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession?

3. Is there a relationship between beliefs towards the teaching profession and parents' educational attainment?
4. Is there a relationship between beliefs towards the teaching profession and parents' income?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous past studies have been conducted on beliefs about the teaching profession on students, pre-service teachers, teacher candidates and teachers (Hamdan et al., 2006; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Ozbek et al., 2007; Dogan & Coban, 2009; Ozsoy et al., 2010; Dundar, 2014). Most of studies revealed that teaching was perceived as a career that did not command high respect or high status in society. Parents too, do not regard teaching as a high status profession. In a study conducted by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2015) on perceptions of the status of teachers, parents accorded high status, not to teaching but to doctors, lawyers, diplomats, pilots and architects. In fact, teaching was not featured as a high status profession or occupation in all the 12 focus groups ranging from 12 year old students intending to go into tertiary study, through to parents of tertiary students, and business career influencers.

However, many agreed that teaching requires a high level of expert, technical and specialized knowledge (Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2007; Lin et al., 2012; Dundar, 2014). These studies also perceived teaching as hard work, with heavy workload and is an emotionally demanding

and challenging career. In terms of salary, teaching was considered a career that was not well-paid (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Dundar, 2014). According to Richardson and Watt (2006, p.46), teaching is 'high in demand but low in return.'

In relation to differences between male and female's beliefs towards teaching, past studies have revealed that female respondents held more positive attitudes towards teaching than their male counterparts (Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Dogan & Coban, 2009). Females are often perceived as more closely aligned to the teaching profession due to the common perception that teaching is typically perceived as a female profession (Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). However, in the study conducted by Dundar (2014), there is no significant difference in perceptions between male and female respondents towards the teaching profession. The findings of the study revealed that male and female respondents did not differ in their beliefs pertaining to expertise needed in the profession, social status of the profession and salary received. On the contrary, the same study reported that there was a significant difference in gender in terms of perception towards difficulty of the teaching job. In the study, female respondents perceived the job to be more difficult than their male respondents.

The socioeconomic status of parents is an important variable to consider when investigating perceptions towards the teaching profession. Studies have reported that parental income was related to attitudes

towards teaching. Ozbek et al. (2007) found that low income earners held a more positive attitude towards teaching than high income earners. On the contrary, in the study conducted by Dogan and Coban (2009), Eren and Tezel (2010) and Dundar (2014), there is no significant relationship between parental income and perceptions towards the teaching profession. The perceptions of parents who have low income were found to be similar to those whose parents earned a higher income

Past studies revealed that parental education attainment also has no impact on their perceptions towards the teaching profession (Dogan & Coban, 2009; Eren & Tezel, 2010; Dundar, 2014). Maternal and paternal education attainment has similar beliefs towards the teaching job.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study aimed to investigate parents' beliefs towards the teaching profession. The researcher employed a quantitative research methodology to address the predetermined research questions of the study. Among the quantitative methodologies available, a survey method was used to obtain responses from the parents who participated in the study.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of the study is comprised of parents of teacher candidates who accompanied their children to sit for a pre-requisite examination held at one of the

teacher training institutes in Sarawak. Out of the total number of 250 parents, a sample of 51 respondents was randomly picked to take part in the survey. Based on this sample of 51 parents, 49% were males ( $n=25$ ) and the remaining 51%, females ( $n=26$ ) with ages ranging from 37 to 60 years (mean = 47 years;  $SD = 5.61$ ). The majority of them (71.4%) had at least secondary education while 4% have some primary education or none at all. The educational attainment for the remaining population has either completed a college diploma (6.1%) or a university degree (18.4%). In relation to income earned, there was a wide range from zero income to a high income of RM6000 per month (mean = 2889.60;  $SD = 2100$ ).

### **Instrument**

The research instrument used to collect data for this study was adapted from FIT-Choice scale originally developed by Richardson and Watt (2006) which is comprised of 14 statements to investigate parents' beliefs towards the teaching profession. Each statement is scored on a seven-point Likert-type scale with a score of 1 indicating complete disagreement with the statement and a score of 7 to indicate complete agreement. To determine the internal reliability of the 14 statements used to measure beliefs towards the teaching profession as well as to determine the suitability of the research instrument for use in the Malaysian education setting, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of reliability were derived. The result of the reliability test indicated the items achieved an overall

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .89 indicating that the scale used was highly reliable for use in the Malaysian setting.

### **Procedure**

Before the research instrument was administered, the parents were briefed on the purpose of the study and informed consent to participate in the study was sought. After receiving their verbal consent, the research instrument, which was designed using structured self-administered questionnaires, were distributed to the target population of the study. During that period, the researcher was present to clarify doubts or difficulties in responding to the items in the questionnaires. The completion of the questionnaire took about 10-15 minutes and a total of 51 answered questionnaires were received.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was analysed quantitatively using SPSS for Windows. Statistical analyses such as descriptive statistics, were used to analyse the data. Among the descriptive statistics used were frequency distribution, measures of central tendency and measures of variability. Mean scores were calculated and standard deviation was used to measure variability. Inferential statistics such as independent samples *t*-test was used to determine if there was any statistically significant differences in beliefs between male and female parents towards the teaching profession whereas Pearson Coefficient Correlation were used to determine relationships between

beliefs and parental income and educational attainment investigated in the study.

## **RESULTS**

This study was conducted to investigate the beliefs of the parents of teacher candidates' towards the teaching profession. It should be emphasized that the results of the study must be interpreted with caution due the inherent bias in investigating the views of parents whose children aspire to become teachers.

### **Beliefs of Parents towards the Teaching Profession**

The results of the analysis of parental beliefs towards the teaching profession are displayed in Table 1. Among the four categories of beliefs, parents strongly agree that the teaching profession has high social status ( $M = 6.02$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ). They believed that teachers are professionals, have high morale and are valued by society. Based on the data received, parents also perceived teaching as a well respected career or a high status occupation. However, this finding seems to contradict past studies where, generally, teaching was not considered a high status and well-respected career (Ozsoy et al., 2010; Dundar, 2014).

Next, the highest degree of agreement was seen in the expertise needed in the teaching profession. Parents of these teacher candidates agreed that teaching requires a high level of expert knowledge ( $M = 5.84$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ). In order to perform effectively as teachers in this profession, they need not only high expert knowledge but high technical and high specialized knowledge

as well. The findings were found to be consistent with numerous related studies in the past (Hamdan, et al., 2006; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2007; Lin et al., 2012; Dundar, 2014).

Table 1  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Beliefs on the Teaching Profession*

Beliefs on the teaching profession	Mean	Std. Deviation
Expertise	5.84	0.90
Difficulty	5.34	1.31
Social Status	6.02	0.77
Salary	5.28	1.43
Overall	5.73	0.77

In terms of difficulty faced by teachers in the teaching profession, parents viewed that teaching is hard work ( $M = 5.34$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ). They agreed that teachers have a heavy workload and the teaching job is emotionally demanding. Similar findings were also reported in studies conducted by Hamdan et al. (2006), Manuel and Hughes (2006), Watt and Richardson (2007), Lin et al. (2012) and Dundar (2014).

Although parents also agreed that teaching is a well-paid job and that teachers earn a good salary ( $M = 5.28$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ), the degree of agreement was given the lowest ranking compared to the other three categories on belief. However, a review of literature indicated that teaching was considered a career that is not well-paid (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Dundar, 2014). According to Richardson and Watt (2006), teaching is 'high in demand but low in return' (p.46).

It is a positive finding that parents in the study considered teaching as a career highly valued by the society. Though the teaching job is viewed as difficult and requiring high expertise, the salary received commensurated with their hard work and heavy workload. The social standing of teachers is also not an issue with parents as teaching is still perceived to be a well-respected career.

### **Differences in between Male and Female Parents Beliefs towards the Teaching Profession**

Table 2 displays the independent sample *t*-test results of male and female parents' beliefs towards the teaching profession. In comparison, female parents hold a more positive attitude towards the teaching profession than their male counterparts. Female parents perceived that teaching required high expert knowledge, has high status and is a well paid career. Past studies also revealed that female respondents held more positive attitudes towards teaching than males (Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Dogan & Coban, 2009). However, the findings of this study could not be established as the *t*-test results showed that there was no significant differences in beliefs between male and female parents towards the teaching profession. In a study on elementary school teachers, there was also no significant difference between male and female teachers' beliefs pertaining to expertise, social status and salary (Dundar, 2014). Hence, the findings of Dundar's study was partially confirmed by the findings of the present study.



### Relationships between Parents' Beliefs towards the Teaching Profession with Educational Attainment

Table 3 displays the Pearson Correlation Coefficients between parents' beliefs towards the teaching profession with their educational attainment. Based on the data received, there is a significant negative relationship between parents' educational attainment with parents' belief that teaching is a difficult job at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that parents who possessed high educational attainment tend to perceive the teaching job as less difficult compared to those parents who did not achieve a high level of education. The fact that less educated parents found the teaching job

to be more difficult is an expected finding as they might not have the expertise and knowledge to help their children with the school work. Parents having difficulty helping their school-going children might perceive the teaching job as difficult.

The relationship between parents' educational attainment with beliefs pertaining to expertise, social status and salary were not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ). This finding is compatible with the results of previous related studies which revealed that parents' educational attainment also has no impact on perception towards the teaching profession (Dogan & Coban, 2009; Eren & Tezel, 2010; Dundar, 2014).

Table 2  
Independent Sample *t*-test of Beliefs on the Teaching Profession by Gender

Beliefs about the teaching profession	Male (n=25)		Female (N=26)		t	df	Sig
	M	SD	M	SD			
Expertise	5.65	1.01	6.01	0.76	1.437	49	.309
Difficulty	4.97	1.38	5.69	1.15	2.026	49	.306
Social Status	5.89	0.85	6.15	0.68	1.239	49	.221
Salary	5.22	1.38	5.35	1.50	.312	49	.828
Overall	5.55	0.89	5.91	0.60	1.712	49	.087

Table 3  
*Pearson Correlation Coefficient between parental beliefs towards teaching profession with educational attainment and income*

Beliefs towards teaching profession	Educational Attainment	Income
Expertise	.105	.061
Difficulty	.387*	.261
Social Status	-.125	-.329*
Salary	-.183	-.069
overall	.064	-.049

\* correlation is significant at .05 level (2-tailed)

### **Relationships between Parental Beliefs towards the Teaching Profession with Income Level**

Table 3 also shows that there is a significant negative relationship between income level and parental beliefs towards the teaching profession. Parents who earned a lower income perceived teaching as a high status profession. On the contrary, parents who earned a higher income tend to disagree that teaching is a well-respected career. This is also another expected finding because, generally, parents do not regard teaching as a high status profession. In a study conducted by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2015) on perceptions of the status of teachers, parents accorded high status, not to teaching but to doctors, lawyers, diplomats, pilots and architects. In fact, teaching was not featured as a high status profession or occupation in all the 12 focus groups ranging from 12 year old students intending to go into tertiary study, through to parents of tertiary students, and business career influencers.

No significant relationship can be concluded in parents' income level with their beliefs on expertise, difficulty and salary ( $p > .05$ ). Consistent to this finding were studies conducted by Dogan and Coban (2009), Eren and Tezel (2010), Dundar (2014). It was reported that there was no significant relationship between parents' income and perceptions towards the teaching profession. The perceptions of parents who have low income are similar to those whose parents earn a higher income. On the contrary, past studies have reported

that parental income was related to attitudes towards teaching. Ozbek et al. (2007) found that low income earners held a more positive attitude towards teaching than those from high income earners.

### **DISCUSSION**

This study was conducted to explore the beliefs of parents of teacher candidates on teaching as a profession. It also aimed to find out if parents' gender, educational attainment and income level have any significant influence on their beliefs on the teaching profession. It is important to note that the conclusion drawn from this study must be interpreted with caution due the inherent limitation of investigating the views of parents of children who aspire to become teachers. This study did not look at parental involvement in children's career decisions although past studies have revealed that parents did exert some influence on the career decisions of their children (Downing & d'Andrea, 1994; Baykal & Altuntas, 2011). However the findings were found to be non-conclusive as past studies have also reported that parents did abstain or take a neutral stand with regard to the children's career decisions (Taylor et al., 2004). In view of the inconclusive findings, the conclusion drawn from the study should be of interest and concern to all stakeholders in the educational profession.

Several implications can be deduced from these findings. Stereotypical perceptions of the teaching profession as a whole and of the roles of the teachers must be corrected through existing channels

provided by the Education Ministry and the availability and accessibility of the social media today. Parents perceived teachers as professionals who possessed high expert knowledge and skills to educate their children. The social standing of teachers is also not an issue with parents as teaching is still perceived to be a well-respected career. It is important to acknowledge that despite the low level of status accorded to teachers from previous studies (Ozsoy et al., 2010; Dundar, 2014), parents in this study do respect and admire teachers and the teaching job.

As parents possess positive beliefs towards the teaching profession, it also implies that they have positive attitudes towards their children's teachers. Consequently, children are likely to develop positive attitudes towards their own teachers too as children tend to adopt attitudes held by the adults (parents) they look up to. Hence, children of parents who considered teaching as a well-respected profession are likely to view it in a positive manner too. By promoting a positive attitude towards their school teachers, parents have indirectly helped children to gain enthusiasm and passion in their quest for knowledge for their scholastic journey.

In considering the positive beliefs of parents about the teaching profession, recruitment of future teachers would not be a major problem. This is because parents are often viewed as the determining factor in influencing the children's career decisions (Baykal & Altuntas, 2011). If the views of parents remained positive about the teaching

profession, they would be able to promote teaching as a positive career choice to their children in order to encourage them to take up this valued and respected profession.

Studies on parental views on the teaching profession are sparse. The limited and unavailability of national and international studies on this issue posed some limitations in the discussion of the findings. Nevertheless, this study has added new knowledge on the perceptions of teaching and teachers from parents' of teacher candidates. Consequently, this study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge in this area.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the beliefs of teacher candidates' parents regarding the teaching profession and data were collected from a small sample in one of the teacher training institutes in Sarawak. Thus, as the sample size is small, the findings of this study need to be confirmed by future research involving a larger or different samples of parents of teacher candidates. Additionally, instead of investigating only parents of teacher candidates' beliefs, future researchers can also examine the views of parents of children from various professions. Nevertheless, in view of the constant revision of educational policies as well as changes in people's beliefs, similar studies need to be conducted repeatedly to better understand the parents' views of the teaching profession. As one of the stakeholders in education, parental views and feedback can provide reliable and useful information to improve future educational

programmes and to strengthen the quality of education in the country.

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## **L1 Influence on Writing in L2 among UCSI Chinese Students: A Case Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Approximately one-third of the students of the English Language and Communication (ELC) Department at UCSI University come from mainland China. As English is the medium of instruction in almost all courses in the university, these students are exposed to various situations where the English language is used. They do not encounter major difficulties with the spoken language, but problems emerge when they write paragraphs, reports, or term papers. This study aims to investigate the common errors in the paragraphs written by ELC Chinese students and suggest ways to address this problem. Paragraphs written by the 30 Chinese students who registered between January and May semesters 2015 were analyzed and categorized into types of errors. Moreover, 10 students (from the May semester) were interviewed to solicit their ideas on what aspects of writing in English they found difficult, and how these problems could be solved. The results showed that the most common errors were on word choice and word form, spelling, tenses, use of articles and determiners, number, and agreement of subject and verb. The interview further revealed that students were aware of the interference of their first language (L1) on their writing in English, and of their tendency to translate from their L1 to English when writing in English.

*Keywords:* Writing errors, L1 interference, mother tongue, L2, Chinese students

### **INTRODUCTION**

Each year, students from various parts of China come to Malaysia to pursue their degrees from various tertiary institutions in the country. Many of them enroll in private higher education institutions like UCSI University. As English is the medium of instruction in almost all courses in the

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university, these students are exposed to various situations where the English language is used. Class discussions, presentations, written and oral reports, assignments, and term/project papers, to mention a few, are all conducted in the English language. Generally, Chinese students handle fairly well the oral communication activities in English. However, problems emerge when they write in English. One of the common complaints among writing teachers is the number of errors students make when they write in English. Moreover, they tend to commit the same mistakes repeatedly. Very often they use the rules and structures of Mandarin Chinese or their dialect in their communication in English (Timina, 2013). This automatic transfer, due to ingrained linguistic habits, of the surface structure of the mother tongue onto the surface structure of the target language is defined by Dulay et al. (1982) as the mother tongue (L1) interference. This interference results in ungrammatical or broken English. The errors caused by the influence of the L1 are referred to as L1 interference or L1 transfer errors. The term L1 interference is not new in L2 acquisition; however, it is an important factor to be considered in English instruction, particularly in the case when the instructor's knowledge of the students' native language is limited or insufficient.

Although English language is a required foreign language in China, students rarely use it outside the classrooms. According to Ye (2013), Chinese traditional English teaching methods put emphasis primarily on grammar, vocabulary and reading

skills. English writing is either ignored or given less emphasis. In language learning classrooms, most often the focus is on memorizing grammatical rules and vocabulary, translating texts from Chinese to English, and doing textbook exercises (Ye, 2013). The emphasis of the L2 activities is not on using the English language in communication but in mastering the English language forms and functions. Students lack the experience of using the English language in real life communication situations outside the classroom, where the memorized phrases and expressions may not be applicable at all.

Various studies on the writing of Chinese students have argued that there is an interference or transfer of their L1 to their writing in L2 and revealed that grammatical, lexical, syntactic and semantic errors appear in their writings in English (Wang & Wen, 2002; Liu, 2008; Wang, P., 2008; Darus & Ching, 2009; Darus & Subramaniam, 2009; Smerdov, 2011; Wang, H., 2011; Timina, 2013; Ye, 2013; Zou, 2013).

Making errors is inevitable in second language acquisition, and, according to Dulay et al. (1982), these errors are analyzable by comparing the language systems between L1 and L2. Corder (1983) defined language transfer as a term referring to speakers' or writers' application of knowledge from their L1 to the L2. Odlin (1989) explained that language transfer occurs due partly to the similarities and/or differences between the L2 and any L1 that the learner has previously acquired. He further stressed that language transfer impacts on the writing of L2 learners.



This small qualitative case study aims to (1) identify the common errors found in the paragraphs written by ELC Chinese students, (2) examine what aspects of the English language they find difficult, and (3) explore possible strategies to help students improve their writing.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on the interference of the L1 on the L2 acquisition have pointed out that the more dissimilarities there are between the L1 and L2 structures the more learning difficulties would appear for the learner to handle (Timina, 2013). Hence, when the learner is in a quandary when writing in L2 s/he would resort to his/her L1 forms and structures for help. Dechert (1983, cited in Timina, 2013) states that the greater the structural differences between the L1 and L2, the greater the number of transfer errors made in L2 by the learner.

Liu (2008) reviewed the development of the use and effect of L1 in L2 writing from three areas: traditions of Chinese and English writing, language switch in the writing process and language transfer. Liu explained that in Chinese writing traditions, “rhetorical indirectness” is the “goal to maintain harmony and avoid impoliteness so that their L2 writing appears vague and indirect to create solidarity between the speaker and the hearer” (p, 50). According to Timina (2013), the traditional English writing structure is different from the Chinese writing style. In Chinese writing, the writer “leaves it to readers to interpret the content, understand the deeper meanings

and appreciate the artistic beauty” of the composition (Timina, 2013, p.3). Moreover, the level of originality and creativity of many Chinese learners of English is minimal as they often borrow patterns from textbooks and express few opinions in the compositions (Smerdov, 2011). Chinese writers tend to use proverbs, maxims and fixed expressions in their writing while English writers tend to use their own words and ideas (Chen, 2006, cited in Timina, 2013).

It is needless to say that the Chinese students have already developed a systematic L1 knowledge before they begin to learn English, and that they most often use and apply their L1 knowledge (language rules, word forms, sentence structures and habits) in their writing. Wang and Wen’s (2002) study on the effects of L1 literacy capabilities on L2 writing ability of Chinese EFL learners revealed that Chinese writers are more likely to rely on their L1 when they are managing their writing processes.

L2 writers switch to L1 frequently in the process of writing, which is a fairly common strategy among L2 writers. Numerous studies of L2 other than English (Ecuadorian Spanish, Arabic, Thai, Tamil, Amharic) have revealed that L2 learners used their L1 and L2 for various purposes while composing in L2 (Bhela, 1999; Bennui, 2008; Hussein & Mohammad, 2011; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013; Yigzaw, 2013; Solano et al, 2014).

In the same way, various studies showed that Chinese students utilize their L1 when they write in English (Wang & Wen, 2002;

Lo & Hyland, 2007; Liu, 2008; Wang, P., 2008; Darus & Ching, 2009; Darus & Subramaniam, 2009; Wang, H., 2011; Timina, 2013; Ye, 2013; Zou, 2013).

Zhang (2003, cited in Ye, 2013) stated that linguistic errors in China's college students' L2 writing arise from the mother tongue interference, while Jiang (2001, cited in Ye, 2013) pointed out that the L1 negative transfer does not only occur in such aspects as grammar and vocabulary but also "in culture and thinking modes" (p, 36). These researchers investigated the specific types of mistakes in Chinese students' English writing caused by the mother tongue culture. Ye (2013) who did a survey of 200 English compositions found that 73% of the mistakes in the students' compositions are linked to the influence of their native culture. Ye divided the mistakes caused by the influence of the mother culture into four categories: poor diction; Chinese thinking patterns; mixture of sentence structures; incoherence in statements. Timina (2013), on the other hand, explored two aspects of the interference of Chinese language elements in students' writing in English including the rhetorical patterns and grammatical and lexical usage.

When students whose L1 is Mandarin Chinese (or any of the Chinese dialects) write in English, a lot of their L1 characteristics are revealed due to direct translation from Chinese into English. The result is the so-called Chinglish, a mixture of Chinese and English, which is ungrammatical and unintelligible to foreign teachers (Timina, 2013).

## METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire and interview were the methods employed to collect the data for this small qualitative case study. The questionnaire was used to collect socio-demographic information while the one-on-one interview was used to solicit the students' thoughts on why they found writing in English difficult and how their writing teacher could help them improve their writing. The discussion was based on the analysis of the students written paragraphs and on their answers to the interview questions.

The 30 ELC students from mainland China who registered between January and May semesters 2015 were asked to complete the questionnaire which contained two parts: Part 1 asked personal information questions and Part 2 was the paragraph writing. In Part 2, they were asked to write a 150-word paragraph on the topic 'My experiences while studying at UCSI University'. They were allowed to take the questionnaire home and to return it within a week. The paragraphs were analyzed for lexical, grammatical and syntactic errors.

Furthermore, 10 students from the May semester were interviewed to solicit their opinions on what aspects of writing in English they found difficult or challenging, and how they thought these problems could be solved. These 10 student-interviewees were conveniently selected from the 30 Chinese ELC students. Year 1 students were purposely not chosen because of their timidity and shyness in sharing their thoughts. The questions asked during the

interview were 1) Do you find writing in English easy or difficult, and why?, 2) Which aspects of the writing in English do you find easy or difficult, grammar, vocabulary, or mechanics, and why?, 3) How can the ELC writing teachers help you improve your writing in English?

Table 1  
*Interviewees' Profile*

Age	Below 25 years old	Above 25 years old
	8	2
Gender	Male	Female
	2	8
Marital Status	Single	Married
	9	1
Year Level	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year
	2	8

Table 1 shows the profile of the 10 interviewees selected from the 30 Chinese ELC students from mainland China. Year 1 Chinese students were purposely not selected as they were still adjusting to their university life and being asked to be interviewed would be an additional stress to them. The majority of the interviewees were female and in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the university.

Table 2 shows that the L1 of 9 out the 10 students is not Mandarin (or Mandarin

Chinese) but their dialect. This somehow adds pressure on the students who have to organize their ideas in their L1 and then, if necessary, translate them first to Mandarin before writing in English.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the 30 paragraphs revealed errors that included wrong tenses, wrong word choice and form, no agreement between subject and verb, absence or wrong use of articles and determiners, misspellings, fragmented structures and run-on and/or comma spliced sentences, among others.

### Grammatical and Lexical Errors

The analysis revealed that most often there were multiple errors in a sentence. For instance, errors in tense, word form, and spelling may all appear in a sentence, like in the following examples:

*If I haven't study in Malaysia, may I will never know and respeat it.*

Errors: tense; spelling

*I need to make more different countries people*

Errors: word choice; word form; number

Table 2  
*Linguistic Repertoire of the 10 Interviewees*

	1 <sup>st</sup> Language (L1)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Language (L2)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Language (L3)
Mandarin/Chinese	1	9	0
Chinese Dialect	9	0	1
English/French	0	1	9
TOTAL	10	10	10

*my writing skills is still depends on the teacher taught me in high school*

Errors: subject-verb agreement; verb tense; word choice and form

*language logical are quite difference with my mother tongue; vocabulary using different*

Errors: word choice and form; missing words; subject-verb agreement

Table 3 shows some of the errors found in the compositions of the 30 ELC students. The errors include wrong use of verb tense and form of verb, wrong word choice and word form, no agreement between subject and verb, wrong use or absence of articles/determiners, and misspelling.

**Tense.** The most common error is in tense and this reflects the most significant difference between the Chinese and English language systems. The system of English

Table 3  
Some Examples of Grammatical and Lexical Errors according to Types

Grammatical and Lexical Errors	Some examples from the students' paragraphs
Tense (including double verbs, omission of the verb 'be', voice)	it <i>was</i> really <i>taught</i> me a lot I <i>must to meet</i> my head of department I'm really <i>feel</i> our teachers' kindly heart <i>all of the people willing</i> to contribute money my words <i>were confuse</i> listeners <i>there wasn't allow</i> the dogs swimming in the beach I <i>can feel</i> guilty <i>my writing skills is still depends</i>
Choice of Words (including missing words and word forms)	[She] is very <i>kindly</i> I need to <i>make</i> more different <i>countries people</i> they also <i>dedication</i> towards their work my lonely life <i>oversea</i> <i>your speaking is giving to better</i> but <i>can learning</i> more knowledge I <i>entered</i> my course I am <i>interesting</i> in it it is not means that my English has <i>improvement</i> money <i>let</i> me very touched
Agreement between subject and Verb	<i>That's are</i> all experiences <i>One of the most precious thing is</i> <i>It make</i> me feel good <i>my writing skills is still depends</i> on the teacher taught me in high school
Number: Plural/ Singular Forms of Nouns/Pronouns	<i>one of my dog</i> Interesting <i>lecturer, not much</i> students for <i>a Chinese students</i> who doesn't read or write English <i>for Chinese student</i>
Absence/Use of Articles and Determiners	I have studied <i>in</i> here make <i>a</i> exhibition area <i>A</i> Malaysia people
Spelling and Capitalization	relationships; indepence; english; eign country; studied; begining

verb tenses seems to be one of the biggest problems for Chinese students. This is probably due to the fact that there are no verb tenses in the Chinese language. In the Chinese language system, time adverbs inserted in phrases are used to represent the action. So, irrespective of whether the action takes place in the past, present or future time, the Chinese base form of the verb is the same. Thus, one can argue that the students' L1 habit in tense choice and use interferes with their choice and use of tense when they write in L2. Brown (2006) claimed that the difficulties for students with L1 to learn L2 depend to a large extent on the differences between L1 and L2. As stated earlier, the more differences there are between the two languages, the more the L1 would interfere in the L2 learning. Thus, the errors in tense that the students committed can be the result of the differences in structures and forms between their L1 (Chinese) and L2 (English).

**Word Choice and Word Form.** Another typical error is wrong word choice and wrong use of word form (parts of speech). Students are possibly not aware that the English word and its Chinese equivalent may not share the same semantic denotation. Also, in the Chinese language, parts of speech are not marked explicitly (Timina, 2013; Zou, 2013). One word can be used as different parts of speech in different contexts. There is no morphological marker to differentiate between nouns and verbs, nouns and adjectives, or adjectives and adverbs. Errors in word form intertwine with errors in choice of word (and spelling).

Due to limited vocabulary, the choice of appropriate word (and its form and spelling) becomes a big challenge to them.

**Number.** Another common error is the number of the noun or verb. In English language system, *number* relates to the notion of singularity and plurality of nouns or verbs. The students' sentences reveal errors of the use (or not use) of plural nouns, despite the presence of modifiers that require them. In the Chinese language system, nouns are not pluralized, and morphemes *-s* or *-es* are not added after nouns; instead, the use of numerals is the way to denote plural number. The Chinese language does not use inflections to mark the number and person of a noun or verb. It does not use inflectional morphemes to mark the plurality of a noun or the singularity of a verb. Thus, most students do not add the morpheme (*-s*) in the plural forms of nouns and in the singular forms of verbs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular simple present tense. Darus and Ching (2009) who analysed the common errors made by Chinese students in the English essay identified errors in tenses and errors in word forms as the two of the four most common errors found in the essays they analyzed.

**Subject-Verb Agreement.** Closely linked to the error in number is the error in the agreement between subject and verb. In English, the subject and verb must agree in number. That is, if the subject of the sentence is singular then the verb must take the singular form, with *-s* or *-es*, and if the subject is plural then the verb form must not have an *-s* or *-es*. However, in the

Chinese language, there are no inflectional morphemes such as *-s* or *-es* to indicate the singularity of a verb or the plurality of a subject, so there are no singular or plural subjects (or nouns) in the Chinese language. In this instance, the L1 interference may be the reason for the errors found in the students' sentences.

**Articles/ Determiners.** In English grammar, articles (indefinite article 'a' and 'an'; indefinite article 'the') and determiners (possessive pronouns; demonstratives) are obligatory elements in a noun phrase. The analysis showed that the students have a problem in identifying and deciding what and when to use articles and/or determiners. This is probably because in the Chinese language bank, there are some article characters like 一只, 一个, which have the same functions as articles in the English language (Zou, 2013). The Chinese articles can be used in front of any singular nouns, which is quite different from the English articles ('a', 'an' and 'the') whose usage depends on the number of the noun and on whether the noun's first sound is a consonant or a vowel.

### **Syntactic and Structural Errors**

Furthermore, not only grammatical and lexical mistakes but also syntactic and structural errors were found in the paragraphs. There were fragmented structures, comma splices, and run-on sentences. Below are some examples.

When writing, the worst mistake students could commit is to produce fragmented and comma spliced or run-on sentences. Table 4

shows that the fragments are prepositional phrases, dependent or subordinate clauses or v-ing phrases. In English, a subject-verb pair is a must in all sentences, whereas the Chinese writing system does not require a subject-verb combination in every Chinese sentence (Timina, 2013). In a number of instances, students treat the fragments as independent clauses and put a period after them. In addition, some students use a comma to splice two independent clauses instead of using conjunctions, while others string together a series of independent clauses using conjunctions resulting in run-on or "kilometre-long" sentences.

The analysis further revealed that L1 interference errors were caused by the differences in the linguistic and organizational structures between the two languages. Lo and Hyland's study (2007), reveals that numerous expressions in students' essays are direct and inappropriate translations from Chinese to English. Likewise, a study of EFL Chinese students composing in L2 conducted by Wang and Wen (2002) revealed that L1 influences were very crucial in L2 writing: when the students had both their L1 and L2 at their disposal when composing they relied more on L1 "when undertaking task-examining and text-generating activities" (p, 231). The errors are like indicators or signals; they show which aspects in L2 the students may struggle with in their writing and therefore, writing teachers have to pay more attention to these aspects.

Table 4  
Some Examples of Syntactic and Structural Errors according to Types

Types of Error	Some examples extracted from the students' paragraphs
Fragments	<p><i>In every grateful them.</i></p> <p><i>When I first time went to eign country.</i></p> <p><i>Doing more assignments, listening lecturier; etc.</i></p> <p><i>No matter speaking or writing.</i></p> <p><i>Because we are limited by our vocabulary and speaking skills.</i></p> <p><i>because the metaphor will caus reader be confused.</i></p> <p><i>First, which is group(s) work sometimes.</i></p> <p><i>So sad and disappointed.</i></p>
Comma Splice and/or Run-On Sentences	<p><i>I remember clearly that we introduce the object is Nick Vujicic, and the topic is "life without lamb", we hand made the publicity board, and we have collected a serious of his information and picture on the internet hand made brochure, we also applied for a donation, we get all of the money will be sent to an organization that can help the disabled people, and all donations will get a free chocolate cake which we handmade, and finally we get 322 RM of money, I think it's a meaningful event, although the money was not much, but all of the people willing to contribute money let me very touched.</i></p> <p><i>It's not only enough that you just know how to speak English, but also you must know how to talk to others with skills, this means that you need to know how to get along with different people and deal with contradictions with them.</i></p> <p><i>We study in different majors, we get busy for doing our assignments, we get busy for our university life.</i></p> <p><i>But, one day, when I bring my article to meet my supervisor; she said she can't understand what I am talking about, and what is my point and meaning.</i></p> <p><i>At the beginning, I used to think and speak in my L1, then my words were confuse listeners, I was experienced hard time to communicate with others.</i></p>

### Students' Views and Suggestions

When asked whether they found writing in English difficult, all the ten students replied "yes". As to the reasons why it is difficult, some of their answers are:

When I was writing in English, I had to organize the structure in Chinese, and then translate it to English, it['s] complex for me.

Because, for Chinese student[s], we often mix Chinese grammar with English grammar together. But, the rule of English is different with Chinese, it will [result in] grammatical mistake[s].

[Because of] lack of vocabulary, when express[ing] the meaning [I] always use the same expression. The Chinese thinking affect[s] my expression in English.

[When] writing in English [we] need to consider grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects; that is a complex process.

[When] writing in English [we] must consider the tense, like future tense, past tense. Besides, I have to get the initial Chinese sentence in mind then translate [it] into English then write [it] down. In addition, [I have to] pay attention to word spelling.

Indeed, the Chinese students used “the mode of thinking and reasoning process” based on their L1 habits and thus produce Chinese-style sentences that were understandable to them but not to their writing teachers.

The interview also revealed that students were aware of the interference of their first language (L1) on their writing in English, and of their tendency to translate from their first language to English when writing in English. Faced with the daunting job of writing in a foreign language whose linguistic and syntactic structures differ from their first language, they resort to depending on the structures available in their L1 and “transfer” them to the L2.

When asked whether they think that their mother tongue interferes in their writing in English, all the ten students answered “yes”. When students were asked to comment on what aspect of the English language they found difficult, all except one identified grammar as the most difficult aspect of the English language that would affect their writing, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Aspects of the English Language Interviewees found Difficult or Easy*

	Grammar	Vocabulary	Mechanics
Easy	1	5	5
Difficult	9	4	3
Both	0	1	2
TOTAL	10	10	10

When asked how their writing teachers could help them improve their writing in English, they gave a number of suggestions,

which could be categorized into four ‘requests’:

1. Increase their vocabulary by assigning them to read excellent articles /journals /reading materials with follow up activities on vocabulary building.
2. Improve their grammar through tasks, exercises and extra classes focusing on the differences between their L1 and L2 structures.
3. Improve their writing by teaching them how to write “in a professional way”, by giving them excellent examples which they can imitate, by teaching them useful writing skills, by giving extra lectures to students who want to improve their writing (one-on-one tutorials).
4. Point out their mistakes and provide valuable suggestions on how to correct these mistakes.

Interestingly, one student’s request is patience and understanding from the teachers:

*“[Teachers] should respect students’ writing. Don’t tease or laugh at students’ mistakes [even if] these mistakes look very fool[ish] in the opinion of [the teachers]. Most of [the] Chinese students from China fear English writing, and they are afraid of making mistakes and being criticized by lecturers. Lecturers should be patient and encourage them to practice more.”*



## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The analysis revealed that the most common errors were in word choice and form, spelling, tenses, use of articles and determiners, number and agreement of subject and verb. These errors are due in part to students' unfamiliarity with the various grammatical rules and syntactic structures of the English language, which differ from their L1. During the interview, they stressed that being taught the correct grammar rules in English is an important step towards improving their writing in English. The implication is that writing teachers should also correct grammar errors in their students' writing (e.g. identifying and correcting subject-verb errors in the paragraphs).

Another possible reason for these errors is the interference of linguistic habits from their L1 (either Mandarin Chinese or their regional dialect). To address this L1 interference, teachers should try to engage students in classroom activities that integrate writing with other language skills (e.g. storytelling using various tenses, debating or dialoguing with emphasis on subject-verb agreement, describing using prepositions and determiners, etc.). More importantly, teachers must put their heart into it: assume multiple roles for these students as teacher, tutor, editor and adviser with no expectations of pay increase or praise from colleagues.

Writing teachers should also urge and cultivate in the students an awareness of English culture, explain the differences between English and Chinese thinking patterns and organizing process habits, and

stress avoiding the interference of L1 in their L2 writing by thinking in English. Ye (2013) stressed:

*It is important to help our Chinese students to develop a sense of the nature of writing assignment, raising their awareness of English language and culture, to overcome the negative influence or negative transfer of Chinese language and culture in their writing in English.*  
(p. 37)

Grammatical and lexical structures when writing in English are greatly influenced by their L1, so it is imperative that English writing teachers be aware of the difficulties students face in the process of writing in order to help them overcome these difficulties and make progress in their learning of the English language.

It is hoped that this qualitative case study would help fellow writing teachers in English in some small way to be aware of the most frequently occurring errors in our Chinese students' writings and the reasons why those errors are committed, and to help them decide on what appropriate teaching strategies to adopt to assist Chinese students to improve their writing in our classes.

The major limitation of the study is its small sample size. Future studies may include all the Chinese students across the seven faculties of the university. With a larger sample, a clearer and more reliable conclusion on language errors and L1 interference among Chinese students from mainland China can be drawn.

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## **The Impact of the Role of Teacher and Balance of Power in Transforming Conventional Teaching to Learner-Centered Teaching in Malaysian Institution of Higher Education**

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### **ABSTRACT**

There have been many efforts in Malaysian institutions of higher education to move from curriculum-based education to outcome-based education. However, the readiness and acceptance level of teaching with ICT in Malaysian education is also still a challenge, and the confidence in developing effective learning materials and implementing more learner-centred teaching environments is still lacking. Due to this, there is an urge to investigate and propose guidelines for educators teaching in Malaysian institutions of higher education in order to have an easier transition from conventional teaching to a more learner-centred teaching environment. Weimer (2002) proposed five key strategies of learner-centred teaching to be incorporated into the instructional process, four of which were investigated. This research investigates the influence of implementing Weimer's key changes in three learning environments (face-to-face teaching with PowerPoint, learning with multimedia application and online learning with multimedia application) on students' learning outcomes. Data from pre- and post-tests, survey questionnaires and students' comments were triangulated and ANOVA analyses were performed. The results indicate that students showed better appreciation of the balance of power given in the class and they accepted the change of the role of lecturer to a facilitator. The changes have resulted in better learner understanding and learner motivation. The positive results contributed in the form of a framework for tertiary education to implement Learner-Centred Teaching. Future

research could be conducted involving different programmes of study.

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## INTRODUCTION

There was an urge in many Malaysian universities to re-examine courses and programmes to ensure the programme outcomes and students' learning outcomes were aligned with Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA)'s requirement when there was an alarming increase in the unemployment rate among our graduates from 2006 – 2008 (Kaliannan & Chandran, 2012). The Ministry of Higher Education has been emphasizing the implementation of outcome-based education (OBE) ever since then. In fact, OBE was developed in Malaysia in the 1950s and currently many universities have already started to implement this at all levels (Mohayidin et al., 2008). There have been significant scholarly research projects conducted by a few established Malaysian universities, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris which focus on how OBE has contributed in improving students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and attitudes besides the fundamental knowledge gain from the education system (Karim & Khoo, 2013). However, Malaysian education is still slow to change from the conventional education system to OBE (Malaysian National Education Policy, 2012).

In spite of the rapid progress of technologies for the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom, many education systems are still predominantly constrained and limited by conventional teaching and learning methods (Oliver, 2002), where instructors are still teaching their students in the same manner as they were taught and how their

own instructors were taught, with little progress in teaching perspectives (Anglin & Anglin, 2008). In the conventional teaching environment, students become passive receivers of information and merely reiterate the information memorized when sitting for exams (McCarthy & Anderson, 2000). Transformation to less conventional methods of teaching results in fear and reluctance from educators, who find the change hard and risky (Chiang et al., 2010). Many educators have realized the limitation of conventional teaching where the students are always not trained to be more mature in their thinking process (Zakaria & Iksan, 2007; Wright, 2011). The learning process is always in one direction: students will just listen to the teachers and no feedback or response is given to the teachers.

The growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the way teachers teach and students learn and it has had a significant influence on education. The use of technology in education has given options for the teachers to introduce innovative teaching to students by facilitating learner-centred teaching. Students who are taught in learner-centred teaching environments will be able to plan and engage more actively in their own learning process and have the opportunity to develop deeper thinking (Hunter, 2012; Weimer, 2013). Use of technology in education is able to further enhance the learning experience. Besides the focus on helping students to learn using technology, teachers can also improve their teaching skills through the

use of technology (Murugaiah et al., 2010). Another encouraging fact is students are ready for the technology uses when they further their studies in colleges, university colleges or universities. In fact they expect to see the use of technology in education (Chen et al., 2010). Through the usage of technology, the students have the chance to improve communication skills, learn to manage data, be creative and be problem solvers. All these skills sets are critical and can lead the students to be successful in their careers (Moeller & Reitzes, 2011). The assistance of technology in teaching and learning promotes active learning where it helps to pass the responsibility of learning to the students. Hence, they become active learners who can enjoy the flexibility in planning the learning progress (Moeller & Reitzes, 2011).

There have been on-going studies conducted in Malaysian universities to assess if students are ready and could accept e-learning or technology in their education. These studies have given positive feedback that students are ready to be taught in technology driven environments (Hong et al., 2003; Lim et al., 2008; Hong & Tan, 2011) However, teachers face challenges in using the technology in teaching because there is a lack of ICT training on the tools and an absence of suitable understanding of the advantages of ICT-based classrooms, resulting in slow progress or change towards learner-centred teaching and teacher reluctance and resistance (Wong, 2009). Thus, students in colleges and universities in

Malaysia are still taught in curriculum-based teaching environments (Malaysian National Education Policy, 2012).

In order to bridge the gap in the transition from curriculum-based teaching to OBE for teachers who have challenges in implementing OBE, a learner-centred teaching model is recommended. Learner-centred learning is where the learning process makes students the focus because the students have the right to arrange the content for learning: they can plan when they want to learn and also the methods they want to adopt for learning (Baeten et al., 2010). When students are allowed to have control over their own learning materials and learning pace at the same time, they experience a change in the learning process (Hunter, 2012). In student-centred learning, the emphasis is on empowering students and placing the student in the centre of the learning process (Blumberg, 2004). Teacher-centred teaching also focuses on engaging students in their learning, but places the critical role on the teacher (Blumberg, 2004) as the “engine of innovators” – designing, testing, and sharing their best pedagogical ideas (Laurillard, 2013). In order to improve students’ learning process, Weimer (2002) proposed to the academics and educators to consider five key changes to take place which can promote learner-centred teaching at the same time where the focus or responsibility is on the students. Educators can consider incorporating the following five key changes (Yap, 2016) into their instructional practices, which are:

- i. The role of the teacher  
Instead of having the teacher covering the syllabus from a-z in the classroom, the teacher should encourage students to become active learners so their role changes from “teacher” to “facilitator”.
  - ii. The balance of power  
In learner-centred teaching, teachers can share the decision making with the students. In such situations, students are involved more in the learning process rather than having teachers decide everything for them.
  - iii. The function of content  
The content used in the classroom delivery should be able to promote critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, develop their learning skills and increase self-learning awareness besides the ordinary function which is to deliver knowledge to students.
  - iv. The responsibility for learning  
In learner-centred teaching environments, students are encouraged to play an active role in learning where they will be aware of their learning responsibility. Students do not feel “forced” to look at the study materials and in fact they will be motivated to be more independent and have control on how they want to study. As such, students will take the initiative to explore the subjects’ contents without waiting for the teachers’ instructions. Hence, this would reduce the “spoon-feeding” situation in the teaching process.
  - v. The process and purpose of evaluation  
The evaluation adopted in coursework should be able to promote learning and help students to develop their learning skills. Learner-centred teaching promotes the use of self-assessment or peer assessment because this can prevent the courses from being grade-oriented and evaluated by teachers only. (Yap, 2016)
- In this paper, findings on the impact of the role of the teacher on learner understanding and the balance of power on learner motivation are reported.
- The implementation of the above learner-centred teaching strategies could be assisted with the use of multimedia technology. Multimedia technology has had an impact on learning and teaching, with research showing that multimedia has been effective in education (Wang, 2010; Smith et al., 2011). The importance of multimedia technology in education cannot be denied as it plays an important role in transforming the traditional chalk and talk environment into a blended learning environment or student centered learning environment (Demirer & Sahin, 2012). Multimedia learning is reported in many research studies which suggest that it is significant in improving learning and somewhat aids in forming learner-centred teaching. The use of multimedia learning modules would provide a platform for independent learning. Besides that, the careful combination of multimedia elements in the multimedia learning modules would create a better



learning experience. Multimedia technology is seen to be one of the significant factors driving the creation of the current education framework. Smith et al. (2011) posited the following:

*Advantages of instructional multimedia include increased availability and repetition of instructional content, improved ability of students to learn at their own pace, increased student control of material, less demand on instructor time, and the provision of an alternative approach to describe complex topics or three-dimensional relationships (p. 1).*

The involvement of multimedia in education is getting more important as it is able to improve the students' learning outcome. Much research has been done on the impact of multimedia learning and also online learning applications on the student learning process (Oncu & Cakir, 2009; Yerby & Floyd, 2013). According to Mukti and Siew (2004), interactive multimedia application was found to be an interesting and exciting tool in teaching children moral values. Similar positive results were found in another research project where road safety education was delivered to children using multimedia technology (Rawi et al., 2015). Malaysian university students were motivated and able to gain better understanding while at the same time improve their problem-solving and collaboration skills through the use of interactive multimedia applications in the web environment (Neo et al., 2016) or

virtual simulation applications (Ziden & Rahman, 2013).

### **Statement of Problem**

The above discussion leads to the following research issues: Malaysian institutions still practice curriculum based teaching, and therefore, the change has been slow. As such, the Malaysian Education Policy 2012 has called for institutions of higher education to step forward and introduce learner-centred teaching in order to increase students' creativity and thinking skills. However, in order for educators to accept and move towards such change, these learner-centred teaching methods have to be investigated and tested (Blumberg, 2004; Weimer, 2013). For Malaysian universities which are still at the beginning stages in moving towards learner-centred learning, there may not be clear proposed guidelines for reference. Therefore, there is a need to develop a proper learner-centred teaching framework to help Malaysian educators transition from conventional teaching to learner-centred teaching (Weimer, 2013).

### **Research Questions**

There were two research questions formulated to help in conducting this research.

**RQ<sub>1</sub>:** What is the impact of the role of teacher on learner understanding?

**RQ<sub>2</sub>:** What is the impact of the balance of power on learner motivation?

## METHODS

This study followed the experimental research methodology where there was a need to study the “cause-and-effect” relationships between the learning environments and students’ learning outcomes. There was an independent variable to be manipulated in this study, which was the learning environments: students underwent their lessons in different learning environments. The implementation of each learning environment was monitored for its effect on the dependent variables, which were students’ motivation, understanding and content. The quasi-experimental design for this research consisted of one control group (C) and two treatment groups (X). The control group was where students were taught using a face-to-face teaching approach and PowerPoint was used as the presentation slides. In one of the treatment groups the lecturer conducted the lecture face-to-face via the interactive multimedia learning module, and at the same time students were allowed to access the same copy of the learning module from the computers. The other treatment group was allowed the students to have their own independent learning by accessing the web-based interactive multimedia learning module. Observation (O) through measurement was conducted through a pretest before and post test after the learning for the three groups. These three learning environments would be able to show how the impact of role of teacher and balance of power may change gradually in the learning environment.

The study adopts mixed-methods approach which uses both quantitative and qualitative methods (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In this study, the results from the survey were considered as quantitative approach, the comments received from the students were the qualitative approach. This research adopts triangulation as the strategy to conduct the study (Mathison, 1988).

This research had considered internal validity in the relationship formed among the variables from the quasi-experimental design which was unambiguous. The effect on the dependent variables should be due to the intervention of the treatment and there are no other unrelated variables. Therefore, it is important to control the threats to internal validity for the quasi-experimental design adopted (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The process of implementing each learning environment was the same, including the instruments and the same syllabus. The study was conducted at the same place and by the same researcher. Other than that, all the participants in the research had similar education backgrounds. The students in this class were divided into the three learning environments through convenience sampling after they formed their own groups. The lecturer who was the researcher could not choose which class to teach as the assignment of the teaching workload was administered in the faculty by the Dean and the Head of Programme.

There was a total of 76 students enrolled in the subject “CSC1170 Principles of Information Technology” and 68 of them participated in this study. These students

were studying in the Diploma of Business Administration course, semester one, under the Faculty of Business, Communication, Accountancy and Law (FOBCAL), at INTI International University. They were computer literate where they had some basic knowledge in computing or had experience in using computer. All of them had met the entry requirements of this course and also had passed the English test upon entry.

This research involved three instruments: (i) a pre-test and post-test with 20 multiple

choice questions, (ii) a learning environment survey with a five-point Likert type scale where five constructs were identified from the survey: motivation, understanding, content, role of the teacher and web features (this category was only available for the survey used in the web learning environment), (iii) the students' comments where the students were required to answer five open ended questions regarding the learning environment. The flow of study is presented in Figure 1.

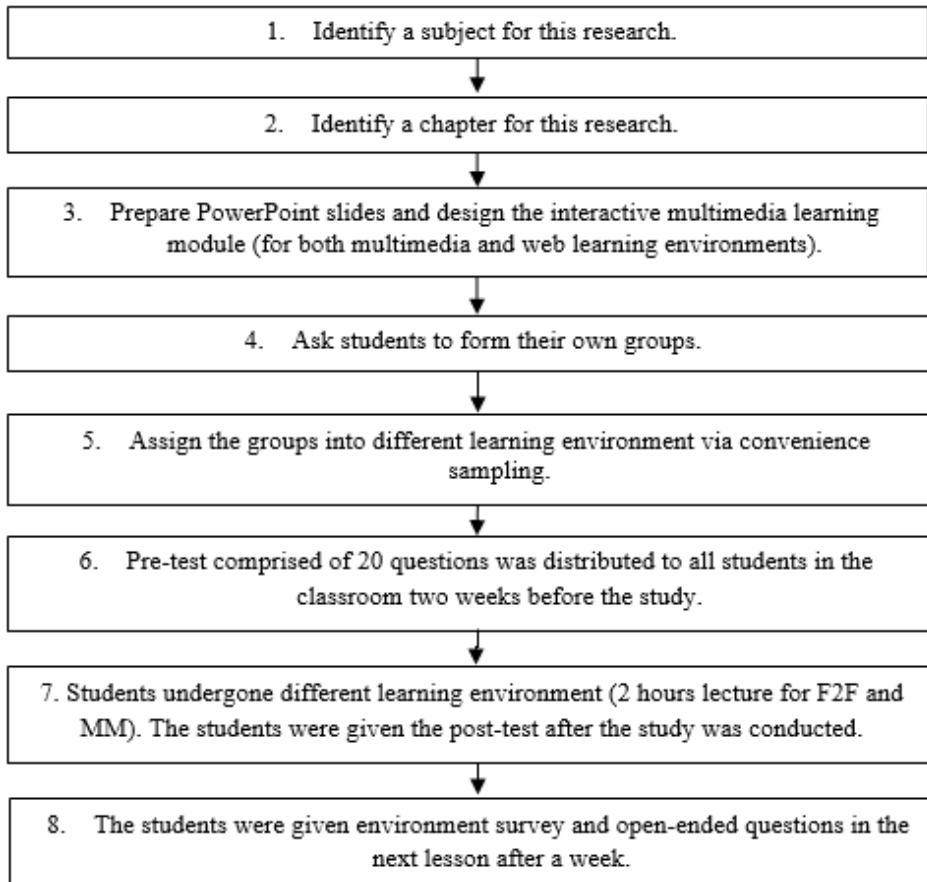


Figure 1. Flow of Study

## DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of students' performances (learning scores), students' perceptions of the learning environments in which they participated and students' comments, using the triangulation method from three different learning environments.

### I. Pre-test/ Post-test

The breakdown of the number of students involved in each learning environment (Face-to-face teaching with PowerPoint – F2F, Learning with multimedia – MM, Web learning with multimedia – Web) is shown in Table 1. All the Tables are located in the Appendix. The mean scores for pre-test/ post-test results were found to be higher for students who went through the learning with the multimedia module and also the web learning with multimedia module compared to the students who went through the conventional teaching environment (see Table 2). Students who had their independent learning on the web actually achieved the highest mean scores in the post-test. This appears to indicate that when the role of teacher changed from “teacher” to “facilitator”, students could actually learn better. The score difference of the pre-test and post-test results was found to be normally distributed where each was greater than 0.05 in the Shapiro-Wilk test (see Table 3). Next, the pre-test and post-test mean scores were compared using the paired-samples t-test. In Table 4, the p-value obtained in all three learning environments does not fall outside of the 95% confidence level (sig value is not greater than 0.05),

therefore it tells that the differences of the mean scores for the pre-test and post-test results were significant. Each learning environment managed to help in achieving the students' learning outcomes.

### II. Learning Environment Survey

**Teaching with PowerPoint (F2F).** Students in this conventional teaching environment were able to gain understanding after the class was conducted. However, the gain was not as great as the other two learning environments. Though different students were involved in each learning environment, from the background profile survey, it was found that they had similar educational backgrounds and computing knowledge, and that this was their first computing subject as well. The use of same chapter in the study for all three learning environments would contribute to the reliability of the results. When the teacher played the role of the authority, students were not able to be involved actively in the learning process (Yap, 2016). Therefore, the results of the survey supporting this “understanding” aspect were lower in this learning environment (refer to Table 5) (Yap, 2016). Besides investigating learner understanding in this learning environment, there were items which investigated students' perceptions of the role of the lecturer in the class (see Table 6). Another construct, “motivation,” was identified from the survey questions (see Table 7).

**Learning with Multimedia (MM).** When students started to be involved in the

learning process, they became aware of the topics they were learning and they could understand the information presented in the multimedia module (Yap, 2016). This appeared to assist students to successfully achieve the learning outcomes. In this study, there were seven survey items being extracted for the “Understanding” category (see Table 8). The presence of teachers in this learning environment appeared to help to guide the learning process but more at a scaffolding level (See Table 9 for the “Role of Teacher” category). When students found the lectures interesting, they were engaged throughout the learning process. When students were motivated during the learning process, students were encouraged to find more information regarding the topic they learn in the class (see Table 10).

**Web learning with multimedia (Web).** In this web learning with multimedia module environment, students went through a self-learning process. Since there was no face-to-face teaching done by the lecturer, it was necessary to investigate if students had gained any knowledge or understanding from their independent learning. For the “Understanding” category, there were nine survey items that were extracted (refer to Table 11). The presence of the lecturer in the web learning environment was to facilitate the learning process. If students were to have any problems in learning, the lecturer would be able to help the students by answering their questions. There was only one survey item extracted for the “Role of Teacher” category (see Table 12), and this item showed that students were concerned

about the support given by the teacher where they appreciated the teacher’s presence who acted as a facilitator in the class. There were 11 items extracted which were related to “motivation” (see Table 13).

### One-way ANOVA Analysis

Table 14 shows the results of the ANOVA analysis for the factor on learner understanding. It is noted that the difference between the mean scores for understanding is significant among the three learning environments where  $p < 0.05$ . For the effect on achieving understanding among the three learning environments, it differed significantly across all three,  $F(2, 65) = 7.680, p = .001$ . In terms of the effect on understanding, the web learning with multimedia module was significantly different from teaching with PowerPoint and teaching with multimedia modules. Tukey post-hoc comparisons for effect on understanding of these three learning environments indicated that the web learning with multimedia module ( $M = 3.87, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.71, 4.03]$ ) again had higher ratings than teaching with PowerPoint ( $M = 3.52, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.24, 3.80]$ ),  $p = .049$ , and also teaching with multimedia module ( $M = 3.41, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.22, 3.60]$ ),  $p = .001$  (see Table 15).

### III. Students’ Comments

In this study, students were asked for their written feedback regarding the learning environments which they went through. The comments were able to support the results obtained in the Pre-test/ Post-test as well as the survey results. Students expressed

that they could enjoy learning when they were given more responsibility and control on how they would want to learn. They also conveyed their appreciation of the multimedia module which made the learning easier and more interesting. Some common phrases for face-to-face teaching were “*boring*”, “*sleepy*”, “*couldn’t catch up*”, “*teach too fast*”, and “*less interaction*” (see Table 18). For the learning with multimedia module environment, some of the students’ comments were “*easy to understand*”, “*easy to memorise*”, “*teacher guide me*”, and “*pictures and animation*”. This supported the pre-test/ post-test and survey results, where when the role of teacher changed, and the learners’ understanding improved (see Table 19). Students who studied in the web learning environment commented “*lecturer can explain*”, “*easy to learn*”, “*easy to understand*”, “*can focus more*”, “*quiz help to memorize*”, and “*learn with fun and peace mind*” (see Table 20).

## DISCUSSION

The results obtained above had given an insight about the difference in the impact of the role of the teacher and the balance of power in learner understanding and learner motivation when these two factors change gradually from conventional teaching to learner-centred teaching. This study did not recommend replacing conventional teaching but recommends providing teachers with other learning environment options to consider if they would want students to achieve all learning outcomes and help them gain 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

### A. Role of the Teacher

The face-to-face teaching with PowerPoint was very much teacher-centred learning or known as conventional teaching approach. Students did show their appreciation towards presence of lecturer in the classroom. The teaching with multimedia module learning environment received positive ratings on the presence of lecturer. Due to the introduction of the multimedia module, the frequency of students asking questions was slightly reduced because they could find the answers easily from the multimedia module and they could understand the lecture easily. Therefore, the role of lecturer became a scaffold for the learner-centred teaching approach. In the web learning environment, a high level of learner-centred teaching was formed where the role of the teacher changed from authority to facilitator and students were encouraged to be active learners and were given more time to understand the contents. Hence, learner understanding improved.

### A. Balance of Power

This “motivation” construct received the most outstanding ratings from the students when they were given the opportunity to access the multimedia module either in the case while the lecturer was teaching in the class using the multimedia module or in the web learning environment. The majority of the students felt they were motivated in learning when the balance of power shifted from the teacher to the students: learner motivation increased. The results from the survey and comments supported

the literature where multimedia could motivate students in learning and created an interesting atmosphere for students. This has supported the effectiveness of multimedia technology in enhancing the learning experience.

## CONCLUSION

This study has indicated that learner understanding and learner motivation would be affected when the role of the teacher/lecturer changes from “teacher” to “facilitator” and also when the balance of power moves from the teacher to the students. Students were given more control over their learning pace and they decided on the sequence of topics to study. They also decided how much time was to be spent on each topic as the learning environment gradually changed to become more learner-centred as compared to the conventional teaching environment. Students’ comments revealed that they enjoyed the web learning environment. The learner understanding and learner motivation were statistically found to be significant in the ANOVA analysis comparing the conventional teaching environment with the independent learning environment. Last but not least, the use of the multimedia learning module in both the more learner-centred teaching environment and web learning environment also contributed in helping the students to learn successfully. The triangulated findings supported a framework which presents that there will be different level of impact on students’ learning outcomes – greater learner understanding and learner motivation when

teachers play different roles and also when the balance of power shifts gradually from one learning environment to another. In future, the research could be expanded by involving more students from different faculties, and different levels of programmes as well as courses. This research has only investigated the positive outcomes of implementing a learner-centred teaching environment in tertiary education which has just started taking the steps to move towards OBE before they concentrated on the student-centred learning approaches to be incorporated. It would be interesting to find out how a student-centred learning approach which involves the use of various technology-enabled learning tools in an online learning environment can enhance students’ learning experience. This future research would echo the recommendation from Malaysian Ministry of Education to increase awareness in all education institutions to ensure students acquire the necessary 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025, 2012).

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**APPENDIX**

Table 1  
*Number of participants in the three learning environments*

	Number of participants (N)
Face-to-face Teaching with PowerPoint (F2F)	14
Learning with Multimedia (MM)	24
Web Learning with Multimedia (Web)	30

Table 2  
*Mean scores for pre-test/ post-test in all three learning environments*

	N	Mean	STD
F2F: Pre-test	14	7.64	2.061
F2F: Post-test	14	11.64	2.205
MM: Pre-test	24	8.46	2.813
MM: Post-test	24	11.92	3.006
Web: Pre-test	30	8.10	2.496
Web: Post-test	30	12.80	3.253

Table 3  
*Normality Test for Pre-Test/ Post-Test*

Test of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Difference (F2F)	.143	14	.200*	.971	14	.885
Difference (MM)	.144	21	.200*	.968	21	.606
Difference (Web)	.124	30	.200*	.938	30	.080

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Table 4  
*Paired Sample Test for all three learning environments*

Pre-test – Post-test	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
F2F	-4.000	2.075	.555	-5.198	-2.802	-7.211	13	.000
MM	-3.458	3.538	.722	-4.952	-1.964	-4.788	23	.000
Web	-4.700	3.303	.603	-5.933	-3.467	-7.795	29	.000

Table 5  
Survey items for "Understanding" (F2F)

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
7	The content presented in the lecture was relevant to my learning	3.64	.497	64.3
10	I was clear about the objectives of the lecture	3.57	.646	64.3
11	The content was easy to understand	3.50	.760	50.0
14	I know better about the subject after the lecture	3.50	.760	50.0
13	I was able to learn better with the conventional method of teaching	3.50	.760	35.7
16	I understood the course content after the lecture	3.43	.756	57.1

Table 6  
Survey items for "Role of Teacher" (F2F)

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
3	The lecturer helped me understand the concepts in the lecture better.	3.86	.663	71.4
1	The presence of the lecturer during this lecture was helpful	4.21	.802	78.6
8	I was able to maintain contact with the lecturer at all times	3.57	.852	50.0
4	I enjoyed having the lecturer present to answer any of my questions	3.86	.663	71.4

Table 7  
Survey items for "Motivation" (F2F)

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
15	I enjoyed learning with the conventional method of teaching	3.50	.855	42.9
17	I found the lecture interesting and engaging	3.43	.852	50.0
18	I liked the conventional method of teaching.	3.29	.914	42.8
19	I was interested to learn more about the topic after the lecture	3.14	.663	28.6
20	I was motivated learning with the conventional method of teaching	3.07	1.072	28.6

Table 8  
Survey items for "Understanding" (MM)

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
6	Multimedia made understanding the content better	3.79	.658	66.7
18	The content presented in the module was relevant to my learning	3.71	.550	66.7
30	I understood the course content in the multimedia learning module	3.71	.784	61.9
16	The content was easy to understand	3.50	.834	58.4
27	I was able to learn better with multimedia content	3.33	.761	41.7
29	I was clear about the objectives of the multimedia learning module	3.33	.761	41.7
28	I knew better about the subject with the multimedia learning module	3.33	.761	41.7

Table 9  
*Survey items for "Role of Teacher" (MM)*

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
1	The presence of the lecturer during this module was helpful	3.96	.624	79.2
2	The lecturer helped me understand the concepts in the module better	3.83	.702	66.7
12	I enjoyed having the lecturer present to answer any of my questions during the module presentation	3.71	.690	66.6
25	I was able to maintain contact with the lecturer at all times	3.42	.584	45.8

Table 10  
*Survey items for "Motivation" (MM)*

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
5	I liked the multimedia learning module	3.79	.779	66.7
7	I enjoyed learning with the multimedia learning module	3.79	.833	70.9
8	I liked learning with this method than in the traditional classroom	3.75	.676	62.5
11	Multimedia made learning fun and motivating	3.75	.676	70.8
15	I liked being able to learn with multimedia-oriented modules	3.54	.588	58.3
18	I liked the multimedia content in the module	3.50	.659	50.0
19	I was motivated learning with the module	3.50	.590	54.2
20	I found learning with the module interesting and engaging	3.50	.834	54.1
21	I was interested to learn more about the topic after going through the multimedia learning module	3.50	.722	54.2
22	The interactive features in the module made learning fun and engaging	3.46	.721	50.0
23	The interactive features in the module motivated me to learn the content	3.46	.721	41.6

Table 11  
*Survey items for "Understanding" (Web)*

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
2	The content was easy to understand	4.10	.548	90.0
5	I understood the course content in the web-based module	4.00	.587	83.3
10	I was able to learn better with multimedia content	3.97	.718	73.3
17	The content presented in the module was relevant to my learning	3.87	.571	83.3
19	The content in the application relevant to the chapter objectives	3.87	.629	73.3
21	Multimedia made understanding the content better	3.83	.699	73.3
24	The instructions in the application was easy to understand	3.80	.551	80.0
33	I was clear about the objectives of the multimedia learning module	3.70	.702	70.0
35	I know better about the subject after using the web module	3.60	.675	63.3

Table 12  
Survey items for “Role of Teacher” (Web)

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
1	The presence of the lecturer helped me in the learning process	4.23	.626	90.0

Table 13  
Survey items for “Motivation” (Web)

No.	Survey Items	Mean (M)	STD	%
7	I find learning with the web interesting and engaging	4.00	.643	86.7
8	I enjoyed learning in the web environment	4.10	.548	90.0
13	Multimedia made learning fun and motivating	3.97	.669	83.3
16	I liked being able to learn at my own pace and time	3.90	.885	70.0
18	The interactive features in the module made learning was fun and engaging	3.87	.730	73.3
22	I liked the multimedia content in the web module	3.83	.874	73.3
23	I was motivated learning on the web	3.80	.805	80.0
25	I was interested to learn more about the topics in the web module	3.77	.898	73.3
27	I prefer this teaching / learning method in my learning process	3.77	.774	70.0
29	Interacting with the module motivated me to learn the content	3.73	.740	63.3
34	I liked learning on with this application rather than the traditional classroom	3.63	.928	60.0

Table 14  
One-way ANOVA analysis on “Understanding”

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.079	2	1.539	7.680	.001
Within Groups	13.029	65	.200		
Total	16.108	67			

Table 15  
Multiple comparison for “Understanding”

Tukey HSD						
(I) Method	(J) Method	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
F2F	MM	.11409	.15056	.730	-.2470	.4752
	Web	-.34841*	.14491	.049	-.6960	-.0008
MM	F2F	-.11409	.15056	.730	-.4752	.2470
	Web	-.46250*	.12261	.001	-.7566	-.1684
Web	F2F	.34841*	.14491	.049	.0008	.6960
	MM	.46250*	.12261	.001	.1684	.7566

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 16  
ANOVA analysis on "Motivation"

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.288	2	1.644	5.079	.009
Within Groups	21.037	65	.324		
Total	24.325	67			

Table 17  
Multiple comparison for "Motivation"

Tukey HSD						
(I) Method	(J) Method	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
F2F	MM	-.33095	.19132	.202	-.7898	.1279
	Web	-.58095*	.18414	.007	-1.0226	-.1393
MM	F2F	.33095	.19132	.202	-.1279	.7898
	Web	-.25000	.15580	.251	-.6237	.1237
Web	F2F	.58095*	.18414	.007	.1393	1.0226
	MM	.25000	.15580	.251	-.1237	.6237

Table 18  
Students' comments (F2F)

*"I don't like the conventional method of teaching."*

*"The class is boring because sometime will feel sleepy."*

*"Because if the long hour of classes is taken, will feel bore and sleepy."*

*"Some lecturer were less interect with the students.  
The slide were too boring, it should add more picture and even more in order to make the students more understand about what the lecturer were teaching."*

*"Boring."*

*"Difficult to follow."*

*"I don like this because there is not enough to splain."*

*"Because don't have tell any important thing."*

*"I will feeling sleepy after an hour in the class, and its tiring after all the classes."*

*"Sometimes will feel boring if lecturer present by a boring way."*

*"The lecturer teach too fast then student can't absorb fully information."*

*"Some lecturer might having less interaction with the students.  
Some lecturer might teaching too fast, the students might find hard to absord the knowledge. Students might not concentrated during the class."*

*"Difficult to follow."*

Table 19  
Students' comments (MM)

---

*"I still can remember what I see in the module."*

*"Understanding the module easy bcos got pictures and animation."*

*"Make learning fun and motivating."*

*"Very interesting and fun."*

*"It is well-prepared and systematic."*

*"The graphic is nice and explains clear to me."*

*"I like the note."*

*"Animation, pictures are clear."*

*"Within animation more helpful."*

*"Colour, pictures and sound are used nicely in the module."*

*"What I like about the interactive multimedia learning module is, the module have all the pictures and videos to make the student more understand about the topic."*

*"Like teacher explain to me."*

*"Teacher guides me in the class."*

*"I like that teacher still explains the chapter to me."*

*"My lecturer is there to explain some points."*

*"I like my lecturer give me time to see the module after she teach me."*

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Table 20  
Students' comments (Web)

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*"It has extra explanation."*

*"Easy to learning."*

*"Easy to understand."*

*"All the colourful pictures are provided, sound effect makes less boring."*

*"It is more easily to learn and it is interesting."*

*"Very easy to access and can interact with the teachers. Can learn in our own place at any time."*

*"The things that I like about the web module is that it is very interesting and fun. With it, I have learnt a lot of things."*

*"It is interesting, and it far more better than looking at those boring books."*

*"Afer reading all the information have a quiz. The quiz can help me faster to memorize the keyword and quick review."*

*"Many animation for more interesting to learn."*

*"The graphics and multimedia application make me interest."*

*"The animations and pictures help me to learn."*

*"Very easy to access and can interact with the teachers. Can learn in our own place at any time."*

*"Lecturer is here with us when we learn on our own."*

*"I am happy that I can learn on my own."*

*"I don't have to worry if I am slow in learning."*

*"Can learn in our own place at any time."*

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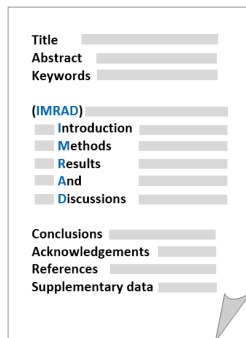
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 And \_\_\_\_\_  
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