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Research Paper

Antecedents of Social Media Brand Engagement and Their Impacts on Malaysian Food and Beverage Brands

Jayslyn Saw*

Abstract: The invention of new technologies and subsequent trend of change in media consumption are pushing businesses and companies to adopt social media as one of their marketing tools. They are actively seeking customer participation and engagement with their brands in this highly competitive business environment. However, customer brand engagement through social media is relatively new to academic and marketing practitioners, resulting in limited understanding of the concepts. Therefore, this study aims to explore the antecedents of social media brand engagement and their impact on the food and beverage industry in Malaysia. A mixed method research design was employed with survey being used in the first phase and a focus group interview to obtain in-depth information. This study involved 395 students aged between 16 and 35 years old from Penang colleges and universities. Results of the statistical analysis revealed that brand involvement, intensity of participation, telepresence and perceived interactivity were significantly related to brand engagement. Brand awareness, brand loyalty and word-of-mouth were found to be the potential consequences of such engagement.

Keywords: Brand engagement, involvement, intensity of participation, telepresence, perceived interactivity

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INTRODUCTION

Businesses have come to a realisation that they have to change their way of looking at their customers, and the concept of engagement, which appeared to be the key success of social media. Research shows that social media has emerged as a valuable tool widely employed by businesses and even 54% of executives of consumer goods companies participating in a recently conducted survey indicated that social media is central to their effort to engage customers in 2011 (WARC, 2012a). Undoubtedly, social media help to establish positive relationships between the brands and customers (Kumar et al., 2010) when building integrated brand and communication strategies.

Customer brand engagement is the central element of marketing promotional strategy as the process is multidimensional. This process consists of cognitive, behavioural and emotional expressions that are context-specific. In order to effectively carry out data collection and analysis, this study only focuses on one popular social networking site: Facebook. A study by Grant Thornton LLP (2010) revealed that out of the 64% of companies in the food and beverage industry that “has integrated some sort of social media into their business,” 39% are on Facebook and 25% were on Twitter (p. 2). This shows that the popularity of social media in businesses has rapidly increased for brands to effectively engage with customers. Such findings also support the survey results of Smart Insights 2017, which reported that Facebook is one of the leading social media platforms that generates lead and increases engagement with potential target audiences.

The notion of using online social media along with the predicament of the newly emerging concept of customer brand engagement has started attracting a number of academic and marketing scholars. However, Marketing Science Institute recognizes that the lack of consensus on the conceptual framework and methods for understanding customer engagement is one of the research priorities for the period of 2010-2012 (MSI, 2010). Therefore, this study aims to explore the potentially significant predicative power of the social media to customer brand engagement by looking at the factors affecting brand engagement through social media from a consumer standpoint and its impacts on the brands.

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviewed the literature associated with the main areas of interest in this study. These areas were as follows: firstly the customer brand engagement in social media, secondly, the food and beverage industry specifically in Malaysia; and finally, the conceptual foundation of customer brand engagement.

Customer engagement is defined based on its conceptual foundation whereby Brodie et al. (2011a) suggested that the theoretical roots of customer engagement are derived from the relationship marketing theory and service-dominant (S-D) logic perspective. Besides, previous studies by Van Doorn et al. (2010) and Verhoef et al. (2010) stated that customer engagement in the form of behaviours like word of mouth activity, recommendations, helping other customers, or blogging, result from motivational drivers. The concept of customer engagement behaviours implied that Van Doorn et al. (2010) focused on the behavioural aspects of the relationship between the customers and the firms. He also presented a number of consequences at customer engagement behaviour to the firm, the society and the customer itself. However, some other scholars have argued that the motivational driver of customer brand engagement includes involvement (Bowden, 2009), intensity of participation (Brodie et al., 2011a), telepresence and interactivity (Mollen & Wilson, 2010).

1. CUSTOMER BRAND ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Calder and Malthouse (2008) discussed the concept of media engagement, focusing on the customer's psychological experience while consuming the media. Higgins (2006, p. 441) who explains that motivation is not merely hedonic (the experience of pain and pleasure) but also derived from individually held principles or beliefs. Calder and Malthouse (2008) distinguished media engagement from mere liking, implying that engagement is a stronger state of connection between the customer and the media. On the other hand, Brodie et al. (2011) suggested that customer engagement is a process that is fluid and responsive to change, characterised by interactive experiences between a focal engagement subject (customer) and object (brand). It is a multidimensional experience comprising context-specific expressions of

emotional, behavioural and cognitive engagement and it plays the central role in a broader nomological network of other relational constructs serving as the antecedents and the consequences of engagement.

Based on the above, it seems inevitable to create a sense of engagement between the brands and customers to increase profit and awareness of themselves amongst their publics, through digital marketing strategies (Beckner, 2013). Undoubtedly, social media marketing on social networking sites allows companies to participate in customer brand engagement. Not only can companies interact and respond directly to customers and publics, but also promote events that would move social media marketing beyond the Internet. In order to gain strong customer engagement through social media marketing, it is crucial to know the factors that affecting customer engagement with the brands and determine the most effective platform that suits the targeted group such as the social media sites which are often used by those key publics (Lewis, 2013).

2. FOOD AND BEVERAGE TRENDS IN MALAYSIA ON ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEXT

KPMG (2013), a global network of professional firms which provides the audit, advisory and tax services, revealed that most firms realise that technology is paramount to driving growth and enhancing customer engagement. The respondents to KPMG's 2013 Food and Beverage Industry Outlook survey reported that new technologies are certainly accelerating the rate of change, and they acknowledge a significant increase in the use of technology to explore new ways of doing business especially social networking sites, which influence many companies in engaging strong relationships with their customers. Companies in the food and beverage industry are no exception. In order to promote and update customers about the new dishes or menu, promotions and events, most companies often use social media as one of the important marketing tools. Currently, social media is the most well-known advertising media worldwide and this includes Malaysia. Most food and beverage companies in Malaysia have their own Facebook page as a marketing tool and communication platform with their potential customers (Tan & Loo, 2014). Besides, Tan and Loo (2014) revealed that social media plays an important role because many customers are relying on the information from social media as primary source knowledge. The

use of social media have greatly impacted on customer-to-customer communication and it has also become a hybrid element of promotion mix as it enables two-way communication between companies and customers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Therefore, the impact of social role and social media advertising are substantial as two-way communication. Brands can share the latest information or promotion with the customers. At the same time, customers are given the opportunity to drop a review or feedback and to express their experiential value about the products or services (Tan & Loo, 2014).

3. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Brodie et al. (2011a) suggested that the theoretical roots of customer engagement lie in the service-dominant (S-D) logic perspective and relationship marketing theory. The S-D logic is a framework that conceptualises business exchange by addressing service as the main purpose, and explains how the different network actors (firms, customers and other stakeholders) can co-create value while interacting with each other (Karpen, Bove, & Lukas, 2012). The term “service” here is referring to “the process of using one’s resources for the benefit of another entity” (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). The logic implied that the co-creation of superior value is replacing the more traditional notion of value provision, meaning that creating superior value in cooperation with the customer becomes a source of competitive advantage for the firms.

Another perspective of exploring the conceptual foundations of customer engagement draws on the so-called broadened relationship marketing domain (Brodie et al., 2011a & Hollebeek, 2011a). Relationship marketing refers to the notion that successful relationship marketing entails relationship commitment and trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This relationship commitment is crucial to firms as they build long-term customer loyalty and allow customers to play an active role in co-creating their own unique experiences as consumers (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2011b).

Customer brand engagement is a multidimensional process (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a) that involves cognition, emotion and behaviour arising from customer-brand relationships (Hollebeek et al., 2014: 154). Van Doorn et al. and Verhoef et al. (2010) considered customer engagement as behavioural manifestations towards a focal

object (e.g. a brand or a firm), other than purchase, resulting from motivational drivers. The concept of customer engagement behaviours implied that Van Doorn et al. (2010) focused on the behavioural aspects of the relationship between the customer and the firm specifically the different types of motivational drivers and outcomes of customer engagement behaviours. The model implied that not only customer-related factors, such as attitudes, goals, resources and perceptions, but also the characteristics of the brand and the firm together with the different aspects of contextual environment can have just as much impact on customer engagement behaviours (Van Doorn, 2010).

However, there are other scholars claiming that the motivational drivers of customer brand engagement included involvement (Bowden, 2009), intensity of participation (Brodie et al., 2011a), telepresence and interactivity (Mollen & Wilson, 2010).

(1) INVOLVEMENT

Involvement has been defined as an internal state of arousal used to emphasise on the perceived importance and/or general interest in the purchase process (Bowden, 2009). Mollen and Wilson (2010) elaborated that involvement is the consumption of object (e.g. brand) based on its inherent concerns. Apparently, involvement plays an important driving factor in customer brand engagement if the object (brand) is highly relevant to the customers. Consequently, customers who are highly involved experience positive emotional responses like satisfaction and pleasure (Mathwick and Rigdon, 2004; Bloch et. al., 1986). Engagement, on the other hand, refers to a certain degree of emotional bonding such as cognitive and affective commitment which can be attained from the pleasant and satisfying environment (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Basically, this form of brand interaction helps in forming customer loyalty from new and existing customers (Bowden, 2009: 65). Thus, involvement is predicted to influence customer brand engagement, proposing the following hypothesis:

H1: The involvement (interest/importance/relevance) of an individual in the social media platform is positively related to the level of customer brand engagement.

(2) INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION

Customer engagement also includes participation on online social media platforms (Brodie et al., 2011a). Apenes Solem (2016) found that positive satisfaction and brand loyalty can be effectively formed from the high participation of customers through social media. In order to encourage customer participation in customer brand engagement, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and Hoffman and Novak (2012) affirmed that firms or organisations should fully utilize new technologies especially social media because the interactive nature of these technologies foster effective customer engagement in some brand activities (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015). This point of view is parallel with Chen (2017) revealing that customer satisfaction and affective commitment can be strengthened through customer participation. Based on the previous literature, this study predicted a positive relationship between intensity of participation towards customer brand engagement, proposing the following hypothesis:

H2: The intensity of participation of an individual on social media platform is positively related to the level of customer brand engagement.

(3) TELEPRESENCE

Customer experiences are related to the level of interactions between the customers and environment. Shih (1998) defined telepresence as the state of being present in virtual community with the simulated ability to interact with product which is the same in a physical store. The concept of telepresence helps to reinforce and develop the interaction and exposure of the brand to the customers as Sihem & Fatma (2016) revealed that users perceive that the experiences gained from the virtual interface for interaction are more dominant than the physical environment. Shih (1998) added that the ability of customer to interact with products in a virtual environment involves a sense of playfulness. Undoubtedly, this result in many favourable outcomes. Fiore, Song and Park (2007) found that telepresence significantly influenced the experience of shopping pleasure which consequently led to purchase intention. Meanwhile, Fiore et al., (2005a, b) further illustrated this point by stating that

positive customer experiences could be strengthened through the stimulation of telepresence. Thus, with the well-identified relationship between telepresence and customer brand engagement, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Telepresence on online social media platform is positively related to the level of customer brand engagement.

(4) INTERACTIVITY

Derived from the previous study (Ha and James, 1998; Ghose and Dou, 1998; Cho and Cheon, 2005; Voorveld et al., 2010) on the concept of interactivity, it has been shown that customer-brand relationship can be strengthened (Marcias, 2013) especially in terms of speed of personalized feedback on e-consumers' complaints (Song and Zinkhan, 2008). According to Mollen and Wilson (2010) perceived interactivity is defined as an experiential phenomenon that occurs when a user interacts with a website or other computer-mediated communication channels which are two-way, controllable, and responsive. Brodie et al. (2011) added that customer brand engagement arises by virtue of interactive experiences. Holistically, this digital experience allows brands or firms to transform their business to be more customer-centric for branding where customer needs are at the forefront of marketing. For instance, in pizza ordering, searching, online deals and digital ordering dominate the interactive customer experience (Bill, 2016). Thus, it is possible to state the following hypothesis:

H4: The higher the interactivity of the online social media platform, the higher the level of customer brand engagement.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework in Figure 1 shows the antecedent factors related to customer brand engagement in the social media platforms. There were involvement, intensity of participation, telepresence and perceived interactivity. The consequences of engagement to the customer were suggested to have an inherent effect on the ultimate framework suggested in the working definition; the conceptual framework did not only comprise of the behavioural aspect of engagement, but also addressed the concept in a broader sense including the cognitive and emotional

dimensions. Thus, it can be said that in this study the term ‘engagement’ to the brands was considered as multidimensional. Furthermore, brand awareness was found to be the new remark in this study other than the two potential consequences of such engagement to the brand, brand loyalty and word-of-mouth.

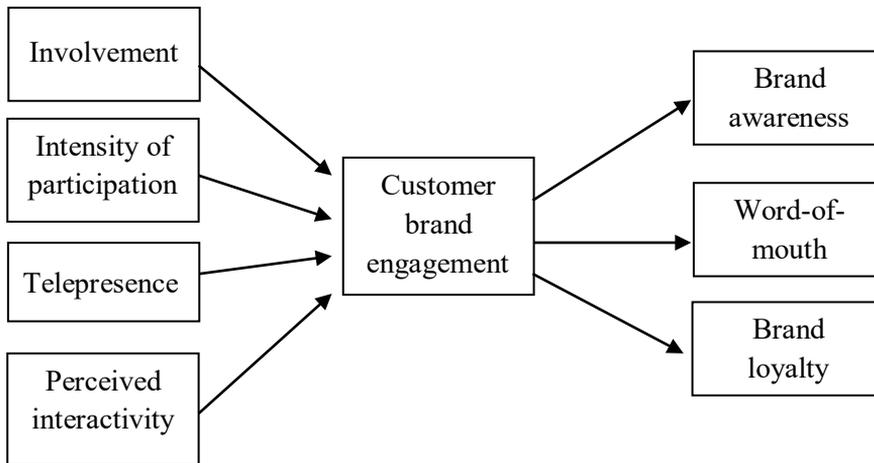


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of antecedent of social media brand engagement and their impacts on Malaysia food and beverage brands

METHODOLOGY

A mixed method research design was employed in this study. Basically, a survey was employed in the first phase and focus group interview was done in the second phase to obtain detailed and in-depth information. The intent of the two-phase exploratory design was that the qualitative method (focus group interview) can help explain the quantitative method (survey). Hence, data from the survey was collected because they were needed to follow up with focus group interview to interpret and explain the initial survey results.

1. RESEARCH SAMPLING

As the main objective of this study was to explore the factors that drive customers to engage with brands on the social media, the purposive sampling technique was used to seek respondents who are in the 16-35

age range and have been involved in social networking sites, particularly Facebook. Hence, the respondents in this study were students from colleges or universities aged between 16 and 35 years old because the findings from pewinternet.org showed that youth were the highest number of users in accessing the social media and 71% of them were using Facebook as the main social networking site.

2. DATA COLLECTION

Two different data collection methods were used in this study. There were survey and focus group interview.

(1) SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Quantitative approach was executed to collect the data needed especially through the survey methodology. Based on the sample size calculator, there were total 385 respondents needed in this survey. However, the number of respondents who participated in the survey was 395. The questionnaire was conducted in English. There were 41 items measuring the constructs related to the antecedent factors on customer brand engagement in online social media platforms and the consequences of such engagement to the brand.

(2) DESCRIPTIVE, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY ANALYSIS

In this study, data screening was performed to identify any missing value in the data. All the means, medians and standard deviations of each item were then calculated through SPSS. In the survey, reliability and validity were the important contexts to be examined. Basically, the reviews of instruments on the validity and reliability score were examined from the past studies. Content validity and criterion-related validity were employed to measure what is designed to measure for each instrument in this study. On the other hand, test and retest reliability was applied to check the reliability coefficients. To assess the reliability of the survey, Cronbach's alpha was employed and the minimum alpha value for the reliability test should commonly exceed the threshold of 0.7 (>0.7).

(3) STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The multiple regression analysis was used in this study as a statistical analysis due to the nature of the hypotheses aimed to be tested, where the value of a variable is predicted based on the value of two other variables. The dependent variable, is the outcome to be predicted, based on the explanatory or independent variables. In addition comparing the correlation of the two independent variables determines which independent variable is the stronger predictor for the dependent variable.

(4) FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

In this study, mainly youth aged between 16 and 25 years old were chosen as the participants of the focus group interview, aligned with the aim of exploring their perspectives on engaging with a brand through social media contexts. There were six participants who joined this focus group semi-structured interview for approximately 45 minutes. All the participants were given a consent form before they participated in the interview with electronic recording. The purpose of presenting the consent form was to enable the participants to voluntarily decide whether or not they should participate as research subjects. Information of the participants would remain confidential. There were 8 new questions identified based on the initial survey results and selected cases for the focus group semi-structured interview to answer which are shown below:

- 1) Which social media platforms do you always access to?
- 2) How much time do you spend on social media?
- 3) What are the purposes of using these social media platforms?
- 4) Did you follow any food brands on social media?
- 5) Why do you choose to follow the food brands on social media?
- 6) When you come across the posting you like the most in social media especially Facebook, what is the first thing you do with it? Why (probe)?
- 7) How did you feel when you manage to interact with the brands on social media?
- 8) What are the impacts of such engagement to the brands?

3. DATA INTERPRETATION

In the survey analysis, exploring the data entailed visually inspecting the data and conducting a descriptive analysis (the mean, standard deviation and variance of responses to each item on instruments or checklists) to determine the general trends in the data. The data collected in this survey was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

However, for the interview analysis, exploring the data involved reading through all the data to develop a general understanding of the database. This means recording initial thoughts by writing short memos in the margins of transcripts or field notes. In this general review of the data, all forms of data were reviewed such as journals and transcript of interviews (Creswell, Plano & Vicki, 2007).

FINDINGS

The findings from the survey and interview indicated that brand involvement mainly influenced the level of customer brand engagement. The empirical results showed that customer brand engagement was an important behavioural aspect that influenced not only the brand usage intent, but also engagement with the brand through social media.

It is essential to understand the motivational state of customers towards the brands or products, or the intensity of customer interest. Furthermore, the successful customer brand engagement requires telepresence as a mediator role that would be a variable that interacts with other variables such as interactive media and content to affect the outcomes of customer engagement to the brand. With a highly interactive media environment, it seems plausible that telepresence could be induced and eventually increase customer participation towards the brand in a computer-mediated environment. This study showed that brand involvement, the intensity of participation, perceived interactivity and telepresence factors were interrelated. They affected a whole range of customers' responses such as the creation of brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) and word-of-mouth (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996), and these effects vary by the level of customer involvement.

Multiple regressions were used to check the relationship among the four related antecedent factors and the two potential consequences. The data showed that the largest beta coefficient was in involvement ($\beta=0.255$, $p < 0.05$), followed by interactivity ($\beta=0.158$, $p < 0.05$). The third largest beta coefficient was telepresence ($\beta=0.153$, $p < 0.05$) and the smallest was participation ($\beta=0.129$, $p < 0.05$). This implied that the largest beta coefficient makes the strongest unique contribution to the interpretation of the dependent variable. Therefore, involvement made the most significant contribution; whereas participation with the smallest beta coefficient indicated that it made less contribution. It can be said that brand involvement has the most influence on customer brand engagement. This finding indicated that individuals had high intensity of interest towards the brand with highly interactive media through the social media, which might lead them to experience a sense of being present in the remote environment and develop brand relationship quality such as loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Moreover, each of these variables made a statistically significant unique contribution to the equation because all the Sig. values were lower than 0.05. Thus, the four driven factors to customer brand engagement in this study supported that brand involvement, intensity of participation, telepresence and interactivity have a positive relationship in the improvement of the attributes of brands and attract more customers that were loyal (brand loyalty).

In addition, there were two customer-based potential consequences of such engagement in online social media platforms – brand loyalty and word-of-mouth positive reviews. In the context of this study, these findings confirmed the four motivational drivers that positively influence customer brand engagement in social media. The results indicated that individuals with high intensity of interest (involvement) towards the brand with highly interactive media (interactivity) through social media, might lead them (participate) to experience a sense of being present in the remote environment (telepresence). Hence, it can be said that out of these four factors, brand involvement was the most important. Brand involvement was characterised as psychological identification and emotional ties that a customer has a particular category of products; this was a complex expression of customer attitude and intensity of feelings

for a brand, reflecting the positive customer assertion of priority for one brand against other brands (Morris & Martin, 2000).

Furthermore, brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) and word-of-mouth (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996) were also identified as the potential effects on customer brand engagement in social media. Interestingly, the unique finding featured in this study was brand awareness served as the potentially important effect from customer brand engagement. According to Farquhar (1989), building a strong brand within customers' minds means creating a positive brand evaluation, an accessible brand attitude, and a consistent brand image, the accessible brand attitude actually referring to what the others term as awareness. Brand awareness was considered as a fundamental dimension in customer brand engagement because customers can recall the brand in the context of a given specific product category, awareness increasing the probability that the brand will be a member of the consideration set. Additionally, the study of Wei Huang (2005) showed that brand awareness plays an important role in reaching the customer's mind, encourages a customer to develop a preference and eventually provides a positive contribution to customer decision-making.

DISCUSSIONS

Generally, young people nowadays tend to be the most avid users of social media and they also tend to adopt new things on a regular basis. This study revealed that most youth nowadays have social media platforms. The survey showed that all the respondents have more than 3-5 numbers of social media platforms; whereas Facebook remains the most popular social media sites. This phenomenon was similar to the report from We Are Social Malaysia, which depicted that most of the Internet users have multiple accounts on social media. At the same time, they were diversifying their social network site use; the proportion of respondents who used another site was on the rise, there were Facebook users who also used Google+, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, and Twitter. According to the follow-up in the focus group interview, it was revealed that most youth nowadays like to share, view pictures and gain the latest information from the brands rather than just for socialising. One of the respondents indicated that Instagram not only functioned as a site

for sharing pictures, but it also helped to gain an idea of capturing a nice photo with great captions from the brands they followed. Similar to other respondents, it is also revealed that most of the firms nowadays like to use Instagram to gain more traffic or followers by organising an online competition of a brand. Moreover, YouTube which ranked as the third popular online social media platform in this study, has seen one of the respondents stated that it enabled the users to watch music videos, the latest movie trailers, and they can even upload their own video at the same time. Sometimes, friends would drop comments or feedback on the uploaded music. This eventually helps to strengthen their relationship by staying in touch through these platforms.

However, another respondent disagreed and stated that YouTube consumed a lot of bandwidth or quota to watch it unless free Wi-Fi is given to them. Thus, it can be inferred that social media users have different experiences and motivation in using social media which could subsequently affect their time spending on online social media or the intensity of participation in social networking sites.

The intensity of participation among them can be seen clearly through the results of average time spending on social media, which was between 1 and 3 hours. Similar to the data made in the focus group interview, the majority of them spent most of their time on Facebook primarily for communication, cognitive, entertainment and learning purposes. This finding was also supported by the report from We Are Social Malaysia claiming that Malaysians spent an average of 3.3 hours on social media sites.

In addition, this study revealed that 73.4% of the respondents had engaged with the food and beverage category of brands on social media typically Facebook. The most popular food and beverage brand found in this study was McDonalds (61.4%), followed by KFC (48.3%) and Pizza Hut (36.6%). A detailed follow-up was carried out in the focus group interview and the results revealed that fast food appeared to be their favourite food due to their interest as the prices were affordable and convenient. It was remarkable to note that young people nowadays tend to use social media to become more integrated with favourite food brands. They tend to use social media to engage with the brand for many reasons. Firstly, they can get updated information for new launch

promotion or products through a variety of platforms without having to visit the premises.

Secondly, the interactivity of the social media displayed by the brand also played an important aspect to them. Social media are increasingly used by most of the brands nowadays to show that customers are connected to their thinking or feelings which indirectly amplified the brand's message. With Facebook, they are allowed to interact or share experiences among the communities as it is a two-way conversation which helps to build rapport among the brands and the customers. Thirdly, social media creates opportunities for the content being shared in the form of text, pictures and video which turn into attractive content among the users. This encourages more existing or potential customers to click 'Like' button on the Facebook fan page. Once they liked the page, the customers would receive updates on their wall, whereby their friends would also be able to see them. This in return helps to build brand awareness among the online users. All these are categorised as behavioural engagements which can lead to better customer brand engagement. The findings of this study show that the unique information on behavioural, emotional and cognitive dimensions of customer brand engagement in the context of social media plays the mediator role in customers' engagement with the brands. Besides, brand awareness is found to be the new finding in this study other than the two possible effects of such engagement to the brand, brand loyalty and word-of-mouth.

CONCLUSION

The whole approach of this study has been exploratory and descriptive as reflected by the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The most important message that comes across in this study was the four related factors found to influence customer engagement are involvement, intensity of participation, telepresence and perceived interactivity. The concepts of brand loyalty and word-of-mouth were identified to be the positive consequences of such customer engagement to the brand. Besides that, brand awareness was found as the new remark for potential consequences of such engagement. In conclusion, the new conceptual framework presented in this study provided an initial understanding of the factors that lead to

customer brand engagement and its impact on both academic marketing literature and practice. Indeed, to date the scholarly inquiries into the notion of customer engagement have mostly remained conceptual. Meanwhile, marketing practitioners can also determine some useful implications that are relevant to engage with potential customers through social media.

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The Representation of Transgender in Southeast Asian Cinema:

A Comparative Study of *Dalam Botol* and *Beautiful Boxer*

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Abstract: *Maknyah* or *Bapok* are the slurs used by Malaysians to refer to male to female transgender, transvestites and transsexuals where they usually are being made fun of on the streets or being imitated by people in films, television dramas and programs and even in daily live conversations. Rarely are they taken as a serious subject matter, this by means in a larger context, outside of their own minority group that they deserve, an equal place in society. Our closest neighbor in the north, Thailand, is known worldwide for its popular culture of transsexuals, but often people would see them as sex symbols or objects. Any tourist who travels and walks around Bangkok city will see many advertisements of this male to female transgender offering sex services and this has become synonymous with Thailand. This paper studies the representation of transgender (male to female) in Southeast Asia in terms of three (3) aspects using Foucault's Queer Theory as a reference: First and foremost, trans as a freak show, trans as a sex symbol or object, and, lastly the perspective of this issue from the legal, religious and human rights point of view. A Malaysian and Thai film will be used as a comparative case study, namely Raja Azmi's *Dalam Botol* (2011) and Ekachai Uekrongtham's *Beautiful Boxer* (2004) respectively.

Keywords: Queer, transgender, transsexual, transvestite, freak show, Islamic perspectives, Buddhism and human rights

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THE QUEER NATION: TRANSGENDER, TRANSSEXUAL, TRANSVESTITES

“If, as it seems we are living in such a moment, then one of the ways in which erotic life is currently being renegotiated is through the exploration of how we understand sex in the ways we do.” (Spargo, 1999).

There are many things in the world nowadays that have changed dramatically especially in terms of sexuality. Some have started to choose who they want to be and who they want to be with, opposite to what they are assigned biologically (or with) when they were born. Sex and gender exploration have always been political and the group that goes against the norm such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender have been foremost in the exploration of sexuality.

Transgender is an umbrella term used for gender pluralism where it is defined as bodily practices of pluralistic sensibilities and dispositions such as adornment, attire or mannerism and desires towards social roles and sexual relationships which are linked to the concept of femininity, masculinity and androgyny. It is generally used to refer to different kinds of people such as transsexuals, drag queens and kings and cross dressers. Virginia Prince, a pioneer in the cross dresser movement, in referring to individuals who do not see themselves as transsexuals but live in the gender opposite to the one assigned to them at birth, had used the term transgenderist as a political, umbrella term (Stryker, 2008).

Michael Foucault, a gay, contributed to the Queer Theory, a collection of intellectual engagements of relations between sex, gender and sexual desire, making him a powerful model for lesbian, gay and other intellectuals to analyse his interrelationships of knowledge and power. The term Queer is used theoretically and politically as an insult, associating it with Queer Nation to apply to certain groups of individuals such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). The Queer Theory applied by Foucault and Derrida aims to study the Heteronormative ideology where heteronormativity refers to the taken for granted social and sexual arrangements in a centred world-view (Bettcher, 2009).

“The term Transsexual has been connected to psychiatric notions such as gender dysphoria and has also been associated with the metaphor ‘trapped in the wrong body’” (Bettecher, 2014).

The term *Transsexual* might also indicate a break from the term *Transgender* from the political ideology of the “transgender movement” (Bettcher, 2014). Meanwhile, the term “transvestites” is commonly used for those who have not yet gone for surgery to change his/her sexuality but dressed up contrasting to their nature of ‘assigned at birth’. Judith Butler as quoted in Bettcher (2014) claims that the gendered self is socially constructed and the phenomenology of gendered embodiment experienced by a trans is a disagreement between the trans’ “felt body” and the external appearance of the body (Salamon, 2010 cited in Bettcher, 2014).

TRANS AS THE MODERN FREAK SHOW

In the mainstream cinema of Southeast Asia, transgender, drag queen or cross-dressers have been represented as a comedic relieve or an entertainment value even till today. There are possibilities they were influenced by the carnival freak shows (or sideshows) during the Victorian era in the 1800s, where people with oddities or biological rarities were marketable and palatable to perform with a view to entertain the audience.

“In a country where transgender people are traditionally portrayed as clown or jokers in television or film, Beautiful Boxer was marketed as a serious film” (Goodridge, 2005).

In the 1830s, the original Siamese twin, Chang and Eng Bunker left Siam for tours in the United States, Europe, Canada, and the Caribbean to give demonstrations and became one of the most popular exhibition of curiosities, along with other ‘freaks’ like General Tom Thumb (see Figure 2) and Schlitzie the Pinhead (see Figure 3).



Figure 1:
Lady Vida
Tattooed
Woman
(1907)



Figure 2:
Charles
Stratton Tom
Thumb
(1848)



Figure 3:
Schlitzie the
Pinhead
(1970)



Figure 4:
The Bearded
Lady
(1865)



Figure 5:
The Iron
Ladies by
Yongyoot
(2000)

In a traditional context, this group of people (pictures above) is seen as different from what we believe is normal. What is normal? According to Foucault:

“An average standard created by the human sciences against which people are measured: the sane man, the law-abiding citizen, and the obedient child are all "normal" people. But an idea of the "normal" also implies the existence of the abnormal: the madman, the criminal and the deviant are the reverse side of this coin. An idea of deviance is possible only where norms exist. For Foucault, norms are concepts that are constantly used to evaluate and control us: they also exclude those who cannot conform to "normal" categories. As such, they are an unavoidable but somehow harmful feature of modern society.” (Hatch, 2013).

Thus, this applies to the exhibition of male to female transvestites; such as the popular classic *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) in the United States where the people looked physically masculine, tough and big but have the appearance of a woman so the audience would enjoy watching them for the entertainment value. Similarly, in the comedy genre, Malaysian television drama, *Sutun* was extremely popular back in 2005 that they made a sequel of it, *Sutun 2* in 2006.

Willson (2008) stated that the audience was fed with a voyeuristic desire for a difference but it also makes them feel better off, prettier or luckier. In the real life of Nong Toom, she (before the sex-change surgery) gained popularity as a lady boy when she wore lipstick and face

powder before fighting his opponent in a Muay Thai Championship in Bangkok that had garnered worldwide attention in 1998. At that time, transgender audience was given the privilege to watch the championship for free. Politically, there were two aspects argued by the Thai government and the conservative Thais. Toom had brought disgrace to the arena of Muay Thai that has always been known for its man's pride of strength and masculinity.

“For in accordance with external gender norms and internalised gender identity, this person will have generally had the types of interactive worldly experience that would be expected to yield such an image” (Bettcher, 2014).

The quotation above can be related to Rubidin in *‘Dalam Botol’* film (2011) before he changed his identity to Ruby, where his character was described as a handsome, shorthaired and metrosexual man who was in a gay relationship with another “manly” individual. There was a time when Rubidin thought about his boyfriend’s “casual talk” and took it seriously that he decided to go for a sex operation in Thailand as a surprise for his lover. As a matter of fact, this can be seen more as a self-sacrifice to prove his love instead of his own sexual desire.

Referring to the work by Schilder (1950), one’s desire of becoming a trans is built up over time through experiential contact with the outside world including interactions with other people (Salomon, 2010 cited in Bettcher, 2014) and not to be seen as a pathological structure. From the portrayal of Nong Toom in the film, it was shown that her desire to become a woman flourished since he was a little boy.

The turning point was when she went to the local festival and watched a traditional Thai dance performance, in which the performer wore a fancy costume and accessories with heavy makeup on her face while dancing in a very delicate manner, and she fell in love with it. Since then, she has started to wear lipstick and face powder and once, performed in front of her family during dinner. Nong Toom was shown to have changed his sexuality appearance due to his own passion for a woman’s world, instead of for sexual pleasure or her love interest.

THE LAW, RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

“...How to cope with ‘sex offenders’ generally. Are they ill, and if so, what’s the cure? Or are they ‘evil’? What or whom are they offending? Nature, the law, Society.?” (Spargo, 2000, p5)

In Islam, Muslims are forbidden from changing their gender. By this it means, men are not allowed to dress up resembling a woman or women resembling a man and strictly, a sex-change operation is intolerable, it is one of the biggest sins in Islam, except for hermaphrodites who will have to choose their dominant sex apart from having two genitalia. The same goes to homosexuality, where Islam is strictly against it. Some Islamic countries or states in the world have punished, incarcerated and executed the gay men and women.

Rahman and Polymenopoulou (2012) stated that the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has expressed its concerns towards what it believes is the discrimination and violation of LGBT individuals and reiterated the nature of the fundamental human rights of human beings when violence is imposed on them. It has been stressed that the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which represents the Muslim majority states, has a disrespectful view towards the homosexual group, which applies to the transgender individuals, by ignoring their sexual rights, and considering them as portraying “abnormal sexual behaviour”.

This can also be linked to the medical history between 1952 and 1973 when homosexuality was classified as a mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association until it was declassified in 1973. It was announced that homosexuality does not have any relativity in the impairment of judgment, stability, reliability or general social and vocational capabilities, that it was inappropriate to use the psychiatric notion on an individual’s diversity rather than opposing the social forces that oppress sexual and gender non-conformity (Drescher, 2010).

In Malaysia, religious authorities prosecute queer individuals, including transsexuals and cross-dressers or the local term ‘*mak nyah*’ by using both Syariah and colonial laws. The “Conference of Rulers” issued a *fatwa* in 1983 to prohibit all sex change surgeries performed by Muslim surgeons. This can be closely linked with Malaysia’s previous history of

political development; where the country gained independence in 1957 from Britain, and Islam became the national religion in 1963 after the formation of the nation-state of Malaysia. Since then, *Syariah* Law has been implemented for its Muslim citizens (Yik, 2004).

When then Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak made a public statement in 2012 that went against the LGBTQ, it caused an outrage among the human rights activists and in November 2014, the LGBTQ's existence were approved by the Court of Appeals, to allow three transgender individuals to wear women's clothing and behave like women.

Foucault had argued that sexuality is basically constructed and connected to the experience of individuals, which has historical, social and cultural rather than a natural biological feature (Spargo, 1999). Ruby, who was once a 'real man', went for a sex change surgery in Thailand in order to satisfy his boyfriend's needs for him to become a woman. As a matter of fact, his surprising 'new appearance' after the surgery brought a total disaster in his life when his boyfriend did not like it and coldly treated him. This did not change the fact that Ruby or Rubidin is still a Muslim man even though he no longer has his manhood; he carried out his duty as a son when his father died: to bathe, pray and bury him as the way Islam taught its followers.

Nong Toom was sent to the Buddhist Temple in Thailand so that she could become a monk when she was a child hoping that it would suppress her desire to become a woman when she grows up. But for her, a man's world is full of violence that she could not understand and that is why she chose to enter kick boxing, to fight like a man so that he can become a woman. There is one scene in the film where Toom said to the man who was interviewing her in a bar, that she had done a bad thing in her past life and has to suffer in this one. Reflecting on the Buddhists' beliefs, under the karmic law every bad deed committed by individuals in former life would have resulted an imbalance to the current life (Hodgekinson, 2005). When Nong Toom lived in the monastery to become a monk, the master caught him when he sneaked out from the place and eventually the master let him choose his own path that is out from the monastery. Buddhists also believe that if you do well in this life, your wish will be fulfilled in both the current and the next life.

Spargo (1999) stated that in traditional accounts, sexuality is viewed as a natural feature of human life that has been repressed in Western society and culture from the 17th century, hidden from view like Victorian Piano legs and censored out of speech and writing. This also applies to most Islamic countries and in Southeast Asia where usually the existence of queer individuals is being neglected or discriminated. Gay film festivals or programmes that represent the rights of LGBT are banned. In Malaysia, local films have to go through a strict process of censorship, and adherence to rules.

Arguably, most local films need to have a moral value at the end, and most importantly every bad character needs to repent or die so that it would not influence the audience to follow their bad examples. As the first gay film in mainstream cinema, the film *Dalam Botol* created by Raja Azmi brought much controversy. It went through a few amendments in editing via the National Board of Censorship so that it would become 'non-explicit' to be screened in public cinemas. As the first mainstream film in its genre, Malaysian films are not allowed to show support for gay lifestyles: the country still maintains a law against sodomy, which is punishable by up to 20 years in prison, though prosecutions are rare (Child, 2011)

Kugle (2014) indicated that the homosexual and transgender Muslim's biggest struggle is to overcome the alienation caused by the family's reactions about their 'out of the norm' desires. The family can be nurturing, controlling or oppressive that in some cases, violence may occur towards the family members. Ruby in *Dalam Botol* went back to his village to visit his parents, Makcik Sal and Pak Mus, and told them the truth. Even though they were disappointed with his choice especially his father, never once did they speak about disowning him as their only son. Pak Mus still requested Rubidin (Ruby) to take charge of his will and the funeral preparation once he passed away. This shows the strength of the relationship between a Muslim family and Islam, where it is an obligation for a Muslim son to carry out the duties of the family once he is an adult. We can argue that his sexual desires and choices he made in life had never interfered with his beliefs and practices in religion. This can be related to the Greco-Roman culture, where they see desire and sexual practice as ethical and moral concerns and as a relation of an

individual and itself, and not the basics for standards and not as the ultimate disgrace (Spargo, 1999).

Meanwhile in *Beautiful Boxer* (2004), Nong Toom's father at first did not seem to accept his son's feminine side and had shown an 'uneasy' face when his son danced and put on makeup. Eventually he accepted her as the way she was, especially after she struggled to support her family's welfare by kickboxing and signed the consent letter for her to go for a sex-change operation. Transsexual narratives are driven by the sense of not feeling at home in one's body through a journey of surgery to ultimately feel like home afterwards (Prosser, 1995 cited in Bettcher, 2014). This is supported by Foucault's theory as suggested in Spargo (1999) that home is where you can 'come out' and 'come in' from the closet, coming out from the confinement into an open space, a movement from secrecy to public affirmation.

CONCLUSION

The concept of portraying transgender individuals in Southeast Asian cinema is still far from questioning their rights and showing the deeper side of their life. They are still treated as part of the Victorian era's freak show where most of the audience always have a high degree of curiosity for abnormalities as well as voyeuristic traits, to peep into other people's personal aspects. The idea of normality according to Foucault is highly constructed in order to control people and also to imply the existence of what people call 'not normal'. This can be closely related to the political structure of a state, where Malaysia is functioning as an Islamic country with a wide range of diversity: race, religion and class. The *Sharia* law used towards Muslims sometimes have been hypocritically placed; there is still a lot of discrimination towards the LGBT group. How, then, do we find a solution for the Muslim society especially when this matter has always been politicised by certain groups with powers to fulfil their own needs? Islam teaches its followers to adopt Islam as a way of life, and undoubtedly homosexuality is a sin as stated in the Quran but the rights of an individual is also important, that every action is going to be between him and the god in the hereafter. Meanwhile, as a Buddhist country, Thailand has a very high profile in transsexuality. Buddhism looks at everything that happens in the current

life are as a result of actions in the past life, which they call *Karma*. On the other hand, like any other country around the world, there are two types of society: one that can accept them, and one that cannot accept them as the way they are. It is critical for us to look for a solution to acknowledge the existence of this group regardless of their religious and cultural background and change the negative perspectives of society towards them.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATION

Figure	Title
1	Chang and Eng, promotional lithograph
2	General Tom Thumb
3	Schlitzie the Pinhead
4	The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)
5	The Iron Ladies (2000)

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Factors Motivating the Willingness to Work after Retirement:

A Preliminary Penang-based Study

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Abstract: Malaysia will be an ageing nation by 2030. Reemployment after retirement is one way for the aged to support themselves for their post-retirement life. The factors motivating post-retirement employment were examined based on 434 currently employed individuals aged 40 or above. The results indicate that 47.2% of the sample was willing to work after retirement. Those likely to work after retirement were made up of older, single and private sector workers. They were more likely to be Chinese, males who find their current job 'not interesting', and those who have dependents. Post-retirement employment should be encouraged through active ageing. More flexible job and training opportunities need to be opened up for older workers and guidance should be given to them in order to tap into a growing pool of older, experienced and willing workers.

Keywords: *Ageing, post-retirement employment, dependants*

INTRODUCTION

Rapidly increasing longevity is a development dividend. Rapidly increasing longevity increases the demand for health care services, social security and also increases the need for income in order to sustain one during the post-retirement years. Retirement can be defined as the period when an individual stops formal employment completely and begins a new phase of life.

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In Malaysia, the retirement age has been raised several times from 55 to 56 in October 2001 and from 56 to 58 in July 2008. It was then increased further from 58 to 60 in January 2012 under the Minimum Retirement Age Act 2012 and was enforced on 1 July 2013¹. The Act states that the minimum retirement age of an employee shall be upon the employee attaining the age of 60 years, in common with countries like China and India. In Singapore, retirement age is fixed at 62 years, while in several developed countries such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Spain, and Germany it is set at 65 years or above. However, employers in Malaysia, may fix the retirement age above 60.

Countries like Singapore (Lee and Hian, 2014) and Japan (Clark, 1996) actively encourage workers to seek employment after retirement to not only keep them productive but also as a means of additional financial support so that the burden on public funds to support retired workers is reduced.

According to the Malaysian Secretary General of Ministry of Human Resources, reemployment of retiring workers will help the Malaysian economy retain the skilled human capital required for its transformation into a high-income nation by the year of 2020. He further added that the retention of older workers can help maintain corporate skills and save employers the cost of “re-inventing the wheel” (Thye, 2012).

However, in order to conceive a proper strategy to encourage post-retirement employment, it is important to identify the factors likely to encourage or inhibit an individual from reentering the labour force. This aspect has not been studied in a systematic way in the Malaysian context. Any strategy to boost post-retirement employment must reinforce factors likely to encourage an individual from seeking reemployment and address the factors likely to inhibit such a move. This paper is an attempt to identify characteristics of individuals who are likely to seek employment after retirement and to examine the motives for doing so.

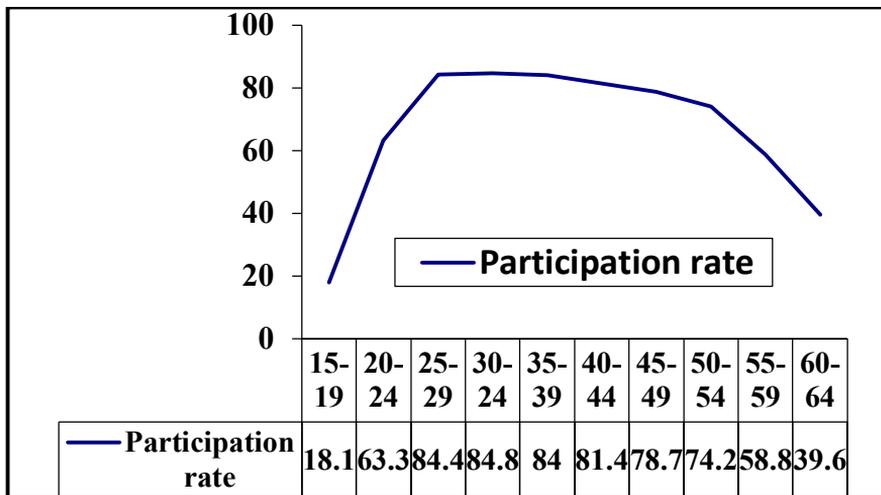
¹Available at <http://www.thestar.com.my/story/?file=%2F2012%2F12%2F7%2Fnation%2F20121207112706&>

RATIONALE FOR ENCOURAGING EMPLOYMENT AFTER RETIREMENT

Malaysia, as a developing country, is projected to become an aged nation by 2030 (Suhaimi Abd Samad, 2013), where 15% of the total population will be old age population (older persons aged 60 and above)². The number of older persons in Malaysia, has increased from 0.7 million (5.4% of the whole population) in 1975 to approximate 2.8 million (9.2%) in 2015. It is projected that the number of Malaysia's older people will continue to increase at a rapid rate and probably will increase to an addition of 23.6% in 2050 (United Nations, 2015).

Population ageing will financially burden the nation. As the older groups grow, there will be a need to provide social security support for older persons from public funds. Leaving older people unemployed will definitely affect economic growth. A larger older population in a nation will hinder economic productivity and hamper economic growth due to their low participation in the economy. In Malaysia, the participation rate of the labour force is declining with age. Figure 1.1 shows the dramatic decline of participation rate after the 50-54 age group. The lower participation rate may be due to several physical and mental disabilities such as lack of stamina, health, learning ability and speed—all of which tend to decline with age. Older workers will exhibit lower productivity than younger workers in the labour force. Thus, as the population ages, and life expectancy continues to increase, the importance of post retirement employment is also likely to increase (Shultz, 2003). Re-employment after retirement seems to be one of the ways of coping with the dilemma of an increasingly ageing population and promoting productive ageing.

²Based on projections made by DOS, read <http://www.establishmentpost.com/malaysia-population-ageing-can-live-long-prosper/>



Source: Department of Statistics, 2015

FIGURE 1.1 MALAYSIA’S LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE BY AGE GROUP, 2014

The current retirement savings in Malaysia can be classified into two main models; one is a defined contribution scheme and another is defined benefit scheme. In Malaysia, the most popular defined contribution scheme is the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) which is open to both private and public organisations, though it attracts more contributors from the private sector. This is because public servants have an alternative to switch to the non-contributory pension scheme.

The EPF is essentially a savings fund with a prescribed rate of contribution by employees and their employer. Gross contributions are channelled into two accounts which are Account 1 (for retirement and can be withdrawn only when one reaches 55 years and Account 2 (for housing, tertiary education and health needs and can be withdrawn at age 50) (Rahim, 2011). Some employees choose not to take out their savings in full and keep it to continue enjoying the dividends. The main issue with funds with the EPF is that the majority of the members find that the accumulated savings are inadequate to finance their retirement years because pre-retirement withdrawals are allowed for house purchases, higher studies financing or for medical emergencies (Narayanan, 2002).

Therefore, alternative sources of earnings become very important for this group.

In contrast, the civil service pension scheme is one of the defined benefit pension schemes fully financed by the government without any contributions from beneficiaries (defined-benefit model). The minimum retirement age is 60 years with the requirement of minimum 10 years of service and there are provisions for those who are injured or who die during service (Park, 2012).

In 2012, the Malaysian government introduced the Private Retirement Scheme (PRS) to encourage personal savings on a voluntary basis. It is a voluntary long-term investment scheme designed to help individuals accumulate savings for retirement. PRS seeks to enhance choices available for all Malaysians, whether employed or self-employed, to voluntarily supplement their retirement savings under a well-structured and regulated environment.

Life expectancy in Malaysia rose by 2 years from 73 to 75 years old between 2000-2005 and 2010-2015. By gender, the average lifespan has risen to 75 years for males and 77 years for females. Rapidly increasing longevity increases the demand for health care services, social security and the need for income. Assuming retirement at 60 and a life expectancy of 75 years, the post-retirement period could span up to another 15 years. A retiree aged 60 has to support himself or herself for another 15 years or more, and this will burden public funds in providing medical and welfare aid to the aged community (Garfinkle, 1977). Therefore, financing older people has become a very expensive programme for a nation. In Malaysia, over the past 10 years, government expenditure on pension and gratuities averaged about RM5.7 billion and this year, the amount is anticipated to increase to RM16.3 billion³.

DATA

In this study, primary data were collected to determine the factors that influence whether or not an individual would seek employment after retirement. A survey was conducted with a structured questionnaire. It was distributed to currently employed individuals in Penang, drawn from

³Available at <http://www.stockhut.com.my/news/20080>

various ethnic groups, aged 40 years and above, and who had not retired previously. The reason for interviewing those aged 40 and above is because individuals in this age group are more likely to have thought about their post-retirement plans. It is less likely that subjects below this age would be thinking seriously about their post-retirement plans. The survey was restricted to workers on Penang Island and the mainland due to time and financial constraints.

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOS, 2015), the population of the employed people in Penang has been increasing over the last 30 years. In 2013, employed people aged 40 and above represented 19 percent of Penang's population and 39 percent of the working population in 2013. By using the Raosoft sample size calculator, it was determined that the minimum recommended sample size for this study was 384 respondents. However, 500 questionnaires were distributed in this study over a three-month period, from June to August, 2015.

Questionnaires were randomly distributed to willing participants located in multinational companies, local factories, government departments, other private sector enterprises and the self-employed. Permission was sought and obtained from the management of these organisations, many of whom were very cooperative when the reasons and objectives of the study were explained to them.

The objectives of the study were also explained to the participants. Most of the questionnaires were filled through direct, face-to-face interviews with the workers. In a few instances, the questionnaires were distributed to workers with the assistance of the factory manager, the human resources manager, or other senior officers. A total of 434 usable responses were collected, giving a response rate of nearly 87 percent.

The questionnaire was prepared in both English and Malay versions. It consisted of two parts. The first section comprised questions related to the socio-demographic details of respondents such as age, race, gender, highest education level, marital status, sector of employment, monthly personal gross income, job scope, nature of the job and health issues of respondents and spouse. The second section dealt with economic factors that determine their post-retirement plans. There were also questions on factors likely to influence whether or not they would like to work after retirement.

INSIGHTS FROM LITERATURE

A comprehensive survey of the relevant empirical literature by (Lee, 2016) found that the decision on whether or not to opt out of the work force after retirement depends on two broad groups of factors: the ability to work, and the willingness to work. In the literature, the ability to work is usually measured by variables such as age (Adams, 1999; Taylor, 1995; Quinn, 1999), education level (Shultz, 2003; Han, 1999; Parries, 1994; Berkovec, 1991) and health status (Quinn, 1977; Antolin and Scarpetta, 1998; Hurd, 1990; Ulrich and Brott, 2005).

The willingness to work, on the other hand is usually proxied by variables such as current income (Taylor, 2007; Clark, 1988; Diamond, 1999; Mitchell, 1983; Beehr, 2000), having an adequate pension plan (Hall and Johnson, 1979; Samwick, 1998), having dependents (Kim, 2000; Talaga, 1995; Cahill, 2006) and sometimes, the nature of current employment (interesting or uninteresting) (Beehr, 2000; Hurd, 1993; Zappala, 2008; Elsayed, 2015). Studies also often included variables such as gender (Han & Moen, 1999; Hurd, 1990; Herz, 1995), marital status (Hardy, 1991, Besl & Kale, 1996; Pleau, 2010) and ethnicity (Honig, 1996; Spalter-Roth and Deitch, 1999; Szinovacz, 2001) to determine if they affect the preference for post-retirement work.

Among factors indicating the ability to work after retirement (which, in turn, influences the willingness to seeking post-retirement work), the effect of age and *self-reported* health status remains inconclusive. Education level, however, may be expected to be positively correlated with the willingness to work after retirement. This suggests that those with higher educational attainments are more likely to seek work after retirement, all else remaining constant. Education increases a worker's value in the job market.

In the case of the willingness to work, the effect of high current income on the decision to continue working is unclear; on the one hand, retirement is less desirable when income increases, as the opportunity cost for the time used for leisure will be higher, thus, more time will be used at work. On the other hand, assuming leisure is normally good, higher earnings throughout a person's lifetime would tend to induce earlier retirement. Having an adequate pension plan is expected to be negatively associated with the intention to seek post-retirement

employment, since there is a lower need to keep working. In contrast, having dependents will likely have a positive association since there will be a greater pressure to build up finances, even after formal retirement. The direction of association between the nature of the current job (interesting or uninteresting) and the decision to seek a job after retirement is unclear.

Finally, of the socio-demographic variables examined, the preference for post-retirement work was in most cases found to be positively related to men as men are still seen to be the primary breadwinners while women take on the job of care giving for family members and dependents. As for marital status, married women are expected to be less likely to consider working than married men, again because of their role as family caregivers, while single men are more likely than single women to seek employment after retiring, possibly because the former face less gender-based discrimination in the labour market. The effect of ethnicity in the Malaysian context remains to be determined empirically.

FINDINGS

Out of 434 respondents, 205 (47.2%) indicated that they are willing to work after retirement, while 229 (52.8%) respondents did not intend to work after retirement. The socio-economic and demographic characteristics of respondents who are willing and unwilling to work after retirement are summarized in Table 1.

ABILITY TO WORK

Looking at the effect of age, 38% of the respondents were between 40 and 44 years old (the youngest age group), 30% were in middle age group (45-49), while 29% of respondents were between 50 and 59 years old. Only 3% were 60 or over (the oldest age group). The older groups (≥ 50 years) accounted for 38% of those who intended to seek post retirement employment, relative to about 29% among those who did not. This suggests that older respondents, nearing retirement, are more likely to think seriously about their post-retirement plans.

In terms of education, the sample consisted of well-educated respondents with 39% having secondary education, 32% having pre-university level of education, 24% with university degrees and only 5% possessing primary education. However, the distribution of respondents by various education levels was fairly similar across all three groups (intending to seek work, not intending to seek work and the overall sample). Contrary to expectations, educational attainments did not seem to feature prominently in the decision on whether or not to seek post-retirement employment.

On health, about 93% of all respondents declared that they did not have serious health issues. Health issues also did not come across as a critical factor to respondents who intended to work after retirement. An almost similar proportion in both groups (willing to work and unwilling to work) viewed it as being important in making their retirement decision. This can be understood in the context of minor health issues (like hypertension, diabetes, migraine etc.) because jobs accommodating patients with minor ailments can always be found. Part-time work or flexible hours also help to cater for people with minor health issues.

WILLINGNESS TO WORK

The sector of employment was used to proxy the availability of post-retirement support. Most, if not all, public sector employees are on the public-sector pension scheme that provides generous benefits on retirement. Private sector employees, on the other hand, have to depend on the EPF or their own savings. Self-employed workers are not bound by a mandatory retirement age and can continue working if necessary.

It is clear from the table that most of the respondents (73%) were employed in the private sector. Only about 20% were government employees while 7% were self-employed. Those working in the private sector were dominant in the group wanting post-retirement employment, as compared to those who did not. This is not surprising since most government servants can rely on the government pension scheme. The EPF, on the other hand, as noted previously runs out fairly quickly after retirement since pre-retirement withdrawals for housing loans, study loans and medical emergencies deplete savings for many individuals before retirement.

Table 1 Characteristics of respondents who are willing and unwilling to work after retirement

Variables	Willing to work after retirement (n=205)	Unwilling to work after retirement (n=229)	Total (n= 434)
Ability to Work			
Age			
40-44	77 (37.6%)	88 (38.4%)	165 (38.0%)
45-49	50 (24.4%)	74 (32.3%)	124 (28.6%)
50-59	67 (32.7%)	63 (27.5%)	130 (30.0%)
≥60	11 (5.4%)	4 (1.7%)	15 (3.5%)
Education level			
Primary	10 (4.9%)	13 (5.7%)	23 (5.3%)
Secondary	81 (39.5%)	87 (38.0%)	168 (38.7)
Pre-University	66 (32.2%)	74 (32.3%)	140 (32.3%)
University	48 (23.4%)	55 (24.0%)	103 (23.7%)
Health issues			
Has Issues	14 (6.8%)	16 (7.0%)	30 (6.9%)
No Issues	191 (93.2%)	213 (93.0%)	404 (93.1%)
Willingness to work			
Sector of employment			
Government	21 (10.2%)	66 (28.8%)	87 (20.0%)
Private	171 (83.4%)	146 (63.8%)	317 (73.0%)
Self-employed	13 (6.3%)	17 (7.4%)	30 (6.9%)
Monthly personal income			
<RM4,000	138 (67.3%)	142 (62.0%)	280 (64.5%)
RM4,000-8,000	53 (25.9%)	66 (28.8%)	119 (27.4%)
>RM8,000	14 (6.8%)	21 (9.2%)	35 (8.1%)

Table 1 Characteristics of respondents who are willing and unwilling to work after retirement (continued)

Dependents			
Has dependents	121 (59.0%)	100 (43.7%)	221 (50.9%)
No dependents	84 (41.0%)	129 (56.3%)	213 (49.1%)
Nature of current job			
Interesting	175 (85.4%)	209 (91.3%)	384 (88.5%)
Not Interesting	30 (14.6%)	20 (8.7%)	50 (11.5%)
Other variables			
Gender			
Male	125 (61.0%)	95 (41.5%)	220 (50.7%)
Female	80 (39.0%)	134 (58.5%)	214 (49.3%)
Race			
Malay	87 (42.4%)	120 (52.4%)	207 (47.7%)
Chinese	100 (48.8%)	87 (38.0%)	187 (43.1%)
Indian	18 (8.8%)	22 (9.6%)	40 (9.2%)
Marital status			
Single	31 (15.1%)	25 (10.9%)	56 (12.9%)
Married	174 (84.9%)	204 (89.1%)	378 (87.1%)

Turning to current income, 65% of all respondents reported monthly personal incomes below RM4000, 27% had incomes that ranged from RM4000 to RM8000, and 8% of the respondents had monthly personal incomes of RM8000, or above. However, lower income respondents were a marginally larger group (67%) among those who intended to seek jobs after retirement, relative to those who did not (62%). This provides weak support to the view that high income earners will value leisure and retire while those from lower income groups are more likely to work past retirement to ensure financial security.

With regard to dependents, nearly 51% of respondents indicated having dependents. Nearly 59% of those who chose to work after

retirement had dependents, relative to about 44% among those who did not. In contrast, those without dependents comprised 56% of those who would not seek post-retirement work but only 41% among those who will seek work. Thus, having dependents appears to be a strong predictor of the willingness to work.

Finally, on the nature of the present job, 88% of all respondents reported that their current job was 'interesting' while only 12% found their current job 'not interesting'. Respondents who reported an interesting job also accounted for a larger proportion of those who were keen to re-enter the workforce after retirement. This indicates that those who enjoy their current work are more likely to want to keep working past their retirement. However, a larger share (15%) of workers willing to seek reemployment were also in uninteresting jobs, as compared to the share (9%) among those unwilling to be re-employed. This may indicate that those who are in uninteresting jobs and want to continue working after retirement either need the income, or are hoping to land more interesting new jobs after retirement.

OTHER VARIABLES

About 51% respondents in the overall sample were males. Males also comprised a larger proportion among those seeking post-retirement employment (61%), as compared to those who did not intend to seek post-retirement employment (41.5%).

Ethnically, Malays dominated in the total sample, accounting for 48%, followed by Chinese (43%) and the minority being Indians at 9%. However, there was a preponderance of Chinese in the sample of those who intended to work after retirement (49%), relative to those who chose not to (38%). This may be capturing two overlapping influences. Firstly, most Malays are public sector workers covered by the pension scheme. Secondly, post-retirement opportunities are most likely to be found in the private (not public sector) or via self-employment. The Chinese dominate both these activities and this increases the likelihood for employment among Chinese job-seekers.

A large majority (87%) of the sample consisted of married respondents. Married individuals accounted for the majority among those willing and unwilling to work after retirement. It appears that marital

status per se is a poor predictor of who is likely to continue participation in the workforce after formal retirement.

REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO WORK AFTER RETIREMENT

Table 2 shows the primary reasons for being willing to work past retirement, and other aspects of the job they were seeking. The statistics are based on the 205 respondents who expressed willingness to seek post-retirement employment.

The main reasons for wanting to work after retirement is to keep active (35.6%), to support their family financially (33.7%) and to strengthen personal finances.

The other interesting information pertinent to policy makers hoping to create or design opportunities for older workers to remain in the labour market can also be drawn from the table. Firstly, the preferred working hours range between 4 and 5 hours daily for the majority (46.3%). This appears to provide the balance needed to keep them from being bored in the post-retirement period. This is consistent with the fact that 68.3% would rather work as part timers, on an hourly basis, instead of working full time. This indicates that they prefer more time flexibility in their post-retirement job. This also corroborates the notion in the literature that older adults seeking work after retirement are more likely to seek part-time employment (Adams, 2004).

Table 2: Primary reason for seeking employment after retirement and other aspects

Variables	Frequency (n=205)	Percentage
1. Reason(Main)		
To improve myself	17	8.3
For financial support	46	22.4
To support my family financially	69	33.7
To keep myself active	73	35.6
2. Hours willing to work after retirement		
< 4 hours	38	18.5
4 – 5 hours	95	46.3
> 5 hours	72	35.1

3. The kind of job sought after retirement		
Full time (fixed salary)	65	31.7
Part time (per hour)	140	68.3
4. Different field		
Yes	177	86.3
No	28	13.7
5. Lower status than current job		
Yes	168	82.0
No	37	18.0
6. Willingness to be retrained for job after retirement		
Yes	164	80.0
No	41	20.0
7. Willingness to leave current location for job after retirement		
Yes	62	30.2
No	143	69.8

Secondly, 80% of the respondents are willing to accept retraining, if needed to find a job. This suggests willingness to move away from activities that they are presently engaged in. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that nearly 86.3% are willing to accept a job in a field different from their current job.

Thirdly, jobs created for older workers need not offer earnings matching their current earnings; thus, older workers will be less expensive to re-employ. The vast majority (82%) are willing to accept a job with a lower status than their current one.

Finally, new opportunities created for retiring workers should ideally be in locations close to where they presently are; nearly 70% expressed an unwillingness to leave their current location in search of post-retirement employment. The low mobility of older workers has been interpreted by one author to indicate the continued desire for stable employment, even after the end of the career job (Ruhm, 1990).

SUMMARY AND POLICY INFERENCES

The individuals most likely to seek employment after retirement are the Chinese, males, private sector employees (those lacking adequate financial resources to meet post-retirement needs), individuals who find their current job uninteresting and those with dependents. Any campaign to encourage older workers to continue working should devise job opportunities for these groups rather than focusing on those unwilling to work after retirement. The only exceptions should be in cases where workers are reluctant to continue working because they fear discrimination or because they are unaware of opportunities available. The present study did not investigate this aspect.

Any campaign to encourage currently employed workers to remain in the workforce should concentrate on older respondents (≥ 50 years of age) because they are nearing retirement, and are more likely to be thinking seriously about their post-retirement plans.

Any policy designed to attract older workers to continue working should provide flexible working hours and be located not too far away from the current locations of retiring workers. New jobs can be lower paying than the present jobs and be quite different from the activities workers are presently engaged in as they are willing to undergo retraining to prepare themselves for their post-retirement jobs. Re-tooling programmes can be offered to the ≥ 50 age group, alongside their current employment, to ease transition to the post-retirement job. After work training schemes may be considered.

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The Perplexing Use of Pronouns: Interview with the PM

Cheah Wui Jia*

Abstract: This paper argues that exploring grammatical and textual features in a political interview alerts English as Second Language learners to the creative role of language in constructing social and political identities. It applies critical discourse analysis to a political interview transcript, and discusses relevant applications for classroom teaching. Since journalists and the media shape public discourse, studying the political interview enables learners to understand how representation of identities is creatively achieved in media discourse. This paper draws on Fairclough's premise that linguistic features of talk are linked to power and ideology. The Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework of questions is employed in the analysis of grammatical features. This study explores how pronoun shifting in this media interview reflects the speaker's representation of himself as an individual, on behalf of a group, or to distance or affiliate himself with others. The relevance and applications of such linguistic analysis of the political interview in the classroom is then discussed to raise learners' awareness of the creative and constructive role of language in reinforcing ideology and identities.

Keywords: *CDA, language, power*

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THE PERPLEXING USE OF PRONOUNS: INTERVIEW WITH THE PM

The political interview is a contract forged between the journalist and the politician. The journalist, in exchange for receiving content that sustains viewer interest, provides the politician with a platform to attract an audience of potential voters (Stromback and Nord, 2006). Hence the political interview is imbued with interest and power, raising the questions of “Who has preferential access to journalists, who will be interviewed and quoted in news reports, and whose opinions will thus be able to influence the public?” (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 86). Unlike journalists and politicians, public readers or viewers have passive access to news (Van Dijk, 1996). Studying political interview is significant in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) as journalists and the media (re)construct public discourse and the mental maps of audiences through journalistic representations (Smeltzer and Lepawsky, 2009).

By raising critical awareness of language and discourse in the classroom, language teachers are recommended to use Fairclough’s (1995) proposed framework when using a media text as teaching material. This study focuses on an interview between *Al Jazeera* and the then Malaysian Prime Minister (PM) Najib Razak, dated a week before the occurrence of Malaysia’s 13th General Elections. It focuses on one of the four questions that Fairclough (1995) suggested in his framework:

“How is the text designed, why is it designed in this way, and how else could it have been designed?” (p. 202)

It analyses how the Prime Minister used pronoun shifting to represent himself as an individual, on behalf of a group he belongs to, or to distance or affiliate himself with others (Bramley, 2001) when he formulates a reply to the interviewer’s questions. Such analysis enables learners to understand the role of language in the representation of people and events and appreciate the connection between discourse and reality.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. DISCOURSE, INTERTEXTUALITY AND MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS

Discourse refers to spoken or written language use, and also the way in which texts are produced by media producers, accepted by media audiences and distributed by media organisations (Fairclough, 1995). Understanding a written or spoken text is an intertextual experience as it draws on the basis of assumptions about other texts in previous discourses that are relevant. A producer assumes or constructs an ‘ideal reader’ that shares common knowledge from experiences with previous texts held in one’s long-term memory (Chilton, 2004; Fairclough, 1989; Van Dijk, 2002). These presumed intertextual experiences are interpretative procedures or mental representations. They are mental representations of a topic or subject matter, like the assumptions associated with being ‘a woman’, or what an abstract concept of ‘democracy’ entails (frames). They also refer to assumptions on the roles of subject identities and relationships between them, such as the way in which a doctor behaves or speaks to a patient (scripts) (Fairclough, 1989). Information that is implicitly gleaned by the user from linguistic features of the text, and not explicitly expressed by the text, stems from such mental models (Van Dijk, 2001).

2. DISCOURSE AND COMMON SENSE

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) not only describes relational features of conversation, but also links talk to social relations, power and ideology (Fairclough, 1995). The term ‘critical’ has its roots from the Frankfurt School and critical theories that locate thoughts and facts in historically constituted contexts of power (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui and Joseph, 2005). So CDA investigates not just a particular text, but their relationships with other texts and extra-linguistic factors like social identities and relevant power relations that are not considered in other methods (Meyer, 2001). Analysing linguistic features within the text is accompanied by examining the presuppositions that the text elicits. Linguistic features within texts do not “spout ideology” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 85). They are constructed by the producer who draws upon implicit ‘common sense’ or taken-for-granted assumptions

and interpretations of the world, which leave “traces” in the text (p.67). These traces, in turn, are “cues” in the text for the interpreter to draw upon particular dominant “frames” or sets of common sense assumptions that guide the interpreter to make sense of the text according to a particular view point (p.67). Interpreters begin with particular assumptions of a context in mind before they make sense of the linguistic features of the text (Fairclough, 1989). These assumptions are taken-for-granted, commonsensical knowledge, implicit in all manifestations of individual and collective life (Gramsci, 1971).

This study utilised one of a series of questions that Fairclough (1989) has suggested to guide the analysis of grammatical features, relation between clauses and turn-taking conventions in his CDA framework: *Grammar* - What relational values do grammatical feature have? (Are the pronouns “we” and “you” used, and if so, how?) Hence, in analysing the interview, the relational values of grammatical features employed by the PM in his replies were examined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. RELATIONAL VALUES OF GRAMMATICAL FEATURES

Examining relational values of grammar is useful as they reflect the social relations that the text is concerned with (Fairclough, 1989). When pronouns ‘we’, ‘I’ and ‘you’ are used, they reinforce power in solidarity. Using ‘I’ can be a strategic form of a politician’s construction of a ‘self’ in an interview, in association with personal qualities or experiences that he or she wishes to promote a positive image (Bramley, 2001). Referring learners to an editorial of a newspaper that exemplifies the use of ‘we’ is useful. The use of ‘we’ claims one’s implicit authority to speak for others, for it is inclusive of the reader and the writer (or speaker). The use of ‘you’ in mass communication, where addressees with diverse identities are unknown to the producer, minimises impersonality. ‘You’ is also an indefinite pronoun used, for example, in political speeches, to create a sense of solidarity between the government and ‘the people’ in general (Fairclough, 1989). Hence, pronouns are pertinent in revealing relationships between the identities that are concerned.

Political speeches are useful for students to examine the use of pronouns. Pronouns can convey collectivity or individuality (Fairclough, 2003). In political discourse, pronoun shifting is common, its meaning and usage vary according to status, solidarity and power, and the associating “conflicting pressures” (Partington, 2003, p.72). Barack Obama, in his speeches in 2012, used the pronoun “we” to bridge the gap between himself and the crowd when talking about preceding achievements or future plans (Kazemian and Hashemi, 2014) thus claiming authority to speak on behalf of ‘everyone’ (Fairclough, 1989). Students learned that using such pronouns induce interpreters to perceive group identity such as coalitions and nations as homogenous without cleavages, derived from cognitive frames that are shared understandings or mental representations (Fairclough, 1989) of the structures of a ‘group’.

Goffman (1974; 1981) maintains that in political interviews, interviewees take on a participation status, or who they are talking as, for instance, as party representative, when they construct a self in conversation to an overhearing audience. Pronoun shifting occurs to represent shifts in footing (Goffman, 1974) and shifts in a participation status when one wishes to distance oneself or affiliate oneself with others (Bramley, 2001).

While the real deal-breaker for UMNO’s success in the elections is the Malay votes, the election campaign is a show “directed to every individual voter and every special interest group or social element” (Kessler, 2013). The concept of a homogenous *rakyat* (Malaysian population) constructed by leaders is a projection of properties of their own supporters onto an entire population (Fairclough, 1989). The data analysis section (in Section 4.2) looks at how the PM’s use of different pronouns reflects shifts in a participation status. As the son of the creator of the NEP that privileges the special position of the Malays (Shannassy, 2013), Najib negotiates the tension between an inclusive rhetoric of *IMalaysia* and its reformist ‘solidarity’ with the ‘people’ regardless of race and religion. He disregards criticism of the right-wing nationalists from his own political party as they uphold Malay supremacy (Noor, 2013; Shannassy, 2013). The superior position of the UMNO within the ruling coalition of a country consisting of three race-based parties, the UMNO, the MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association) and the MIC

(Malaysian Indian Congress), operates as a one-party dominant state (Abdullah, 2016). It is taken for granted that conservative elements within the UMNO are eager to defend (Shannassy, 2013). At the textual level, learners appreciate the contradictions that emerge from the presence of relational elements of conversational discourse (through his alignment with ‘the people’ “we”) that express solidarity and those of traditional political discourse type that express authority *over* ‘the people’ and *over* other members in the BN (the ruling coalition) in his interview responses (through his alignment with the UMNO, “we”).

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section covers relational values of grammatical features in examining the PM’s responses and how he employs pronouns to achieve different purposes. As mentioned, Najib walks “a political tightrope” (p.436) straddling inclusive, meritocracy-based policies and exclusive, Malay interests (Shannassy, 2013). This shift in footing manifests when he constructs his political self in relation to his political party and the ruling coalition (the Barisan Nasional). He manages such identity construction within the context of the associated power relations amongst these social groupings.

Pronoun Use and Shift in Footing and Participation

Interview Extract 1

IR: Prime Minister Najib Razak, thank you very much for joining us on Talk to Aljazeera. We appreciate that it must be an extraordinarily busy and crucial time for you.

There are descriptions of the elections ahead as indeed being a struggle for the, Malay soul, as it were. Do you think that’s a fair enough description?

IE: Uh let me put it this way. I think this will be, this will be uh a very uh, hard fought robust election. Uh but I will commit because in a sense it’s reflective of how far we’ve come in the in the our democratic process in Malaysia much more matured in that sense. Uh but uhm as a political party uh we we have uh been in power for fifty five years, but within this

time we have brought you know real change to the government in Malaysia, so although I expect this to be a keenly fought contest but the, I am cautiously optimistic that the voters will return Barisan Nasional National Front back to power.

Najib uses the pronoun “we” interchangeably. The first time he uses “we” is when he constructs Malaysia as a ‘nation’ (“how far we have come in [...] our democratic process in Malaysia”), and he claims solidarity with the ‘people’ to convey that he is ‘for’ them and fudges the power disparity (Fairclough 1989) between him and *all* ‘ordinary’ Malaysians. This discourse type is to appeal to non-Malay voters, defined by what is the “vision” of a “moderate Muslim country”, a *IMalaysia* that is ethnically neutral in solidarity (Shannassy, 2013). He oscillates between “I” and “we” in his sentences. For example, “I will commit because in a sense it’s reflective of how far we’ve come” and assimilates himself into a collective “we”, it is akin to Obama’s speech where he uses the pronoun “we” to represent unity and commonality (Kazemian and Hashemi, 2014).

A shift in footing also occurs when he implies an authoritative relationship between his party and the ruling coalition itself (“we have brought [...] real change to the government”) as he uses “we” and assimilates himself to UMNO. He then aligns himself with UMNO, as a collective actor that “has *brought*” change to the government, the Object or Patient. The government is acted upon, or subordinated, and nominalised even. The ruling coalition includes not only the UMNO, but also the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) and the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA). This is the incumbent government’s actual political hierarchy that props up UMNO’s dominance (Abdullah, 2016).

There is a pronoun shift again when he then uses “we” and aligns himself in solidarity with the ruling coalition (“we’ve been in power for fifty-five years”). Being elected to rule is a process that is ‘natural’. Downplaying ‘the people’ or the population of voters here, the ruling coalition takes centre stage as the Subject. This creates the impression that the BN are the ‘natural’ rulers. It is ‘natural’ to maintain the status quo that BN be voted again, since “we’ve been in power for fifty-five years”. The taken-for-granted status quo, an UMNO that operates within

a one-party dominant institutional framework (Abdullah, 2016) is evoked.

When it is proper, he shifts the authority to the ‘people’ where he describes the “voters” as “return[ing]” the government to “power”. This consolidates his previous argument that a “matured democratic process” is in store. While he has highlighted the role of the government earlier, he now emphasises that the “voters” here are causal agents. He refrains from the pronoun “we” that emphasises solidarity with the *rakyat*, and distances “Barisan Nasional” from the “voters” to emphasise that the “democratic process” is determined by ‘the people’, *not* by his government. This is a shift in footing (Goffman, 1974) and shift in participation status when one distances or affiliates oneself with others (Bramley, 2001).

CONCLUSION

This essay discussed how examining grammatical features within a language classroom empowers learners to know how such features in language construct identities and events. By exploring how texts are designed with particular choices in mind, and excluding alternative choices, the language learner appreciates the role media discourse plays in shaping power relations and the relevant identities (Fairclough, 1995).

Learning to use pronouns complements the teacher’s explorations of topic-related commonsensical assumptions. Discussing assumptions of what is the general elections (e.g. a “free *and* fair elections” quoted by politicians in campaigns or oneness, solidarity and the pronoun “we” in Najib’s *IMalaysia* slogan) alerts learners to intertextuality - how their interpretative processes of a texts entail assumptions gleaned from encounters with other texts and relevant discourses. The learner appreciates that he/she brings assumptions to the text, and exercises his/her agency through the activation of such assumptions when he/she infers relationships or causality between events and/or participants. With the increasing role of social media and blogs among the youth, the language and heavy pronoun use of “we” in blog posts from *The People’s Parliament* (“The people’s voice and the people’s declaration”) (Ibrahim, 2008), exemplifies blogs that mobilises mass support for a particular ‘cause’ and contributes to the discourse on national identity.

LIMITATIONS

Although much effort was invested in this research paper, I am aware of its limitations. First, the proposal advocates for a raising of learner consciousness during English lessons about how language is ideological. But low proficiency learners who struggle to grasp the foundational structures of grammar would find it difficult to comprehend such lessons. Second, Fairclough's procedure for critical discourse analysis details three stages – description of text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context. This study only focuses on the first stage – description of text.

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Community-Based Tourism in Malaysia: Challenges Faced by Homestay Operators

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Abstract: The tourism industry in Malaysia generates jobs and leads to development of infrastructure, education and related industries (Abdul Rashid et. al. (2011). The sustainable tourism activities have also been incorporated into the national tourism sector development in line with the awareness towards the need to conserve the natural resources. Thus, the Malaysian Rural Tourism Master Plan 2001 was formulated with the above interest. Among others, the homestay activity was given much focus in the plan. However, Nor Ashikin Mohd Nor (2010) claimed that various challenges were faced by homestay operators in Malaysia from within the community as well as outside the community including the readiness of the homestay operators from the aspect of knowledge, attitude and skills. Thus, this paper explores the related literature as a preliminary study to create awareness on the challenges faced by homestay operators and lead to future initiatives in upgrading and sustaining the homestay business among rural and semi-urban entrepreneurs. Among others, the main challenges of homestay operators discovered in this study are lack of local participation, local leadership, knowledge and skills, poor planning and community structure.

Keywords: Community-based tourism, homestay operators, challenges

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is vital for many countries including Egypt, Thailand, Malaysia and Maldives. This is in-line with the importance of the associated goods and service industries in these countries which play an

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important role to aid the tourism industry. These include transportation services, hospitality services such as accommodation including hotels and resorts, and entertainment venues like amusement parks, shopping malls and casinos.

It is universally accepted that promotion by the Malaysian government in tourism is a good idea that brings excellent return on investments. The country recorded 25.9 million tourist arrivals which contributed RM82.1 billion to the country's revenue (Ministry of Tourism and Culture: Statistics 2018). It further generates jobs like no other, and its development also leads to development of infrastructure, education and related industries.

If a country is widely viewed as secure, modern, clean and efficient, chances of getting tourists to frequent attractive destinations are good. If a nation is known for its unique features whether they are cultural, manmade or natural, there will probably be a positive curiosity towards them encouraging tourists to discover something new themselves.

Tourism has become a fastest growing industry in Malaysia since it started from the early 1970s. It has experienced continued growth and diversification to become the second largest contributor after the manufacturing sector to the country's economy (Abdul Rashid et.al. (2011). The tourists who visit Malaysia comprise tourists from the neighbouring ASEAN countries especially Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and Indonesia. Malaysia has also been popular among tourists from other countries including Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, China, Taiwan, India, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. It also contributes to the economic enhancement and creates job opportunities. Thus, the government realizes the importance of the tourism industry for the country. In addition, community development takes place from the socio-economic perspective.

Malaysia was also ranked the 9th most visited country in the world (PEMANDU, 2010). Boasting as a multiracial country, Malaysia is rich with various ethnic groups that practise different cultures and festivals. This makes Malaysia a colourful tourist destination. The increase in tourist arrivals in Malaysia is attributed to the multiple efforts in upgrading the standard of attraction sites and tourism facilities by the local authorities. It also targets to receive 36 million tourist arrivals by the year of 2020 (PEMANDU, 2010).

Due to the strong growth of the industry, there is a possibility that Malaysia needs to monitor and conserve the attraction areas which are nature-based. Problems related to the degradation of natural resources may affect the number of tourists visiting Malaysia. Thus, achieving sustainable tourism as emphasised in the National Tourism Policy (MOCAT, 1992) will not be realised. In addition, small scale tourism activities which are concentrated in rural areas and islands, should also be given attention and require proper and integrated planning so that they comply with the fundamental principles of sustainability.

At present, the sustainable tourism activities have been incorporated into the national tourism sector development, in line with the awareness on the need to conserve the natural resources. It was done using various means and tools (UNEP, 2006) namely the policy and strategies in the 5-year Malaysia Plan, Ecotourism Master Plan (MOCAT, 1997) and National Tourism Policy.

COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM (CBT)

The development of the tourism industry brings a collective benefit to the country and the society that has resulted in greater interest and appreciation from all parties. The tourism development in Malaysia has also embedded community-based tourism in its products which emphasises community development and rural tourism acts as its mechanism. The Malaysian Rural Tourism Master Plan 2001 was formulated in line with the above interest.

In most developing countries, tourism is normally portrayed as a contributor to small scale enterprises and directly uplifting the standard of living (Honey, 1999) as well as a catalyst for community development. Furthermore, Community Based Tourism (CBT) can create direct employment opportunities which will indirectly solve the poverty issue in rural communities. Rural community development can be realised with the modernisation and commercialisation of agricultural activities and creation of new economic activities. This will also result in the reduction of income imbalance between the rural and urban areas. In short, rural tourism is a catalyst for rural community development.

The emphasis on local participation and the bottom up approach puts the local community at the centre of tourism development which will benefit them economically and socially.

Therefore, community-based homestay programmes can be regarded as a tool to improve the standard of living among the communities in rural areas. (Nor Ashikin, 2010). Based on the report by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2018), a total income of RM30,124,466.06 was generated in 2017 compared to RM4,923,433.30 in 2007 through the homestay industry. The booming of homestay industry in Malaysia can be easily witnessed as the total income has become six folds in a span of 10 years. The statistics recorded in 2017 also show that a total of 321,115 (84%) were local tourists while 61,846 (16%) were international tourists. The report also shows that as of 31 December 2017, there were a total of 3994 entrepreneurs operating the homestay industry in Malaysia on 206 plots throughout Malaysia.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Based on the discussion above, it can be acknowledged that community-based tourism especially the Homestay Industry plays an important role in the tourism industry in Malaysia. Thus, it is important to aid the homestay operators in upgrading and sustaining the homestay business. This study will further explore the related literature of past research as a preliminary study to:

1. create awareness on the challenges faced by homestay operators in the homestay industry
2. recommend future initiatives in upgrading and sustaining the homestay business among rural and semi-urban entrepreneurs

THE CONCEPT OF MALAYSIAN HOMESTAY PROGRAM

According to Richardson, K. (2003), the terminology of ‘homestay’ is still evolving and various definitions have emerged in different countries which practise the programme. For example, Australia associates homestay with bed and breakfast or accommodation for

international students, United Kingdom with English language learning and United States as 'bed and breakfast'. As for Malaysia, homestay is defined as "an experience where tourists stay with selected families, interact and experience the daily life of these families as well as experiencing Malaysian culture".

The homestay programme in Malaysia can be traced back to the early 1970s at the then 'drifter enclave' of Kampung Cherating Lama in Pahang. A local lady by the name of Mak Long took in long staying 'drifters'/hippies and provided breakfast, dinner and accommodation in her traditional house (Amran, 1997). At that time and soon after, most of the homestays were scattered along the beach in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Later on, during the 1980s there was an influx of Japanese youths coming to this region on exchange programmes and the homestay concept took another dimension.

At present, Homestay Programme in Malaysia accommodates tourists in a village with a local family. This will enable the tourists to assimilate local lifestyle and culture. As there has been a demand among tourists for fresh air, leisure activities, freedom and access to the countryside, homestay programme has become more significant in the tourism industry. The concept of the Malaysian Homestay Programme involves the tourist staying together with host families, where he/she is able to interact, gain knowledge and experience the lifestyle and culture of the host family. Thus, two parties with different cultural backgrounds are able to interact. Through the homestay programme, tourists would be able to experience the daily life of the ordinary people of a community. A village homestay programme is operated by a group of certified homestay operators although many homestay operators have not registered themselves.

The Ministry of Tourism in Malaysia issues a licence if the house owner is able to provide a list of criteria, as follows:

1. Easy access from the main road
2. Adequate facilities
3. No history of criminal record
4. Not suffering from communicable disease
5. High standard of hygiene

After obtaining the licence, the home owners have to attend a basic training course that is conducted by the Institute for Rural Advancement (INFRA). The homestay industry has lately been receiving more allocation for upgrading infrastructure and facilities. For instance, the 9th Malaysia Plan has allocated RM40 million and further given a boost of another RM10 million under the Second Stimulus Package.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENCIES

The Malaysian government plays an active role to plan, organise, implement and control the Homestay Programme. There are three main ministries that are directly involved in the planning and implementing of the programme; Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, and Ministry of Agriculture.

Ministry of Tourism (MOTOUR) is the direct owner of the homestay programme because homestay programme falls under the category of rural tourism. MOTOUR implements policies, develops programmes, provides funds for development of homes and their infrastructure, carries out marketing and promotion activities.

Institute for Rural Advancement (INFRA) is a training institute that provides training and capacity building for the rural community. It trains the Village Security & Development Committee (JKKK) which is appointed by the state government to be responsible for the security and development of the village. Thus, all implementation exercises must be through the committee.

Next, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) makes the homestay programme more attractive through agricultural products and agro products. MOA provides financial and technical assistance to improve value-added activities (tourism) for the agriculture sector.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Past researches show that females in local communities were more highly motivated to be involved in the Homestay Programme than men. Most community members who participated in the programme were aged 42 and above. On the other hand, youth participation in the Homestay

Programme was low, comprising only 4.8% of the participants (Abdul Rasid Abdul Razzaq et. al., 2011). Thus, youths should be encouraged to become involved in the Homestay Programme. They could take up roles like tour guides, cultural performers, boat and transportation handlers and others. Knowledge of technology including ICT literacy and facebook among youths should be tapped as a motivational factor to boost their income by participating in this programme.

The readiness of the homestay operators from the aspect of knowledge, attitude and skills also requires serious attention. The majority of the operators claimed that they had neither knowledge about business and entrepreneurship nor knowledge about foreign culture. On the other hand, the majority of the operators claimed to have moderate knowledge on knowledge about the tourism industry, managing and operating the programme, knowledge about local products and attractions, knowledge on tourists' expectations and knowledge about customer service and marketing. Abdul Rasid Abdul Razzaq et al. (2011) further reported that overall score of required knowledge was at a moderate level. However, English communication skills, safety and first aid knowledge are crucial and need immediate action from stakeholders. Therefore, homestay operators must gain adequate skills in those areas.

Nor Ashikin Mohd Nor (2010) claimed that various challenges were faced by homestay operators in Malaysia. These challenges emerged from within the community as well as from outside the community. Many of the homestay operators did not register with the Ministry of Tourism since it was not compulsory to register. They claimed that if they were to register, the State Tourism Action Council (STAC) was seen as a barrier because the officers demanded for necessary facilities for the comfort of tourists which many operators did not have the capital to invest. In addition, the operators were not satisfied with the delay in payments from Institute of Rural Advancement (INFRA) which continuously supplied domestic guests from other parts of Malaysia. Both the reasons above were seen as external challenges.

The internal challenges include lack of youngsters contributing to the homestay programme because many youngsters sought jobs outside the villages. Most of the homestay villages also acted as a passive community and required close and constant supervision in terms of regular visits from the representative of state tourism agency to ensure the

programme progressed. The change of the leader in the village also slowed down the program due to poor communication, poor external relations and alleged corruption. Other internal challenges faced by the homestay operators included no formal system in the organisation structure of a village homestay, self-interest of selected successful homestay operators which had marginalised the majority of the community and conflicts within the community that threatened the sustainability of the programme.

Arif Kamisan Pusiran & Honggen Xiao (2013) argued that the misconception of the homestay programme by operators was an important external challenge. The first-time homestay operators need to register with the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism before attending the basic homestay course. The Ministry will arrange for house inspection and give their endorsement by awarding a certificate before guests can be accepted. On occasions, some villagers were confused when their applications were not approved because the facilities in their houses fell short of the standard set upon the State Tourism Action Council after inspection. As rural communities are generally poor, they were unable to invest in equipping and upgrading their houses for the basic comfort of tourists. The operators also were not able to receive payment promptly because most of the programmes were government agency programmes and LO (letter of order) took time to be approved by the Government.

Sometimes a passive community was seen to be an internal challenge in the development of the homestay programme because the community members have become too dependent on the Government agency overlooking their homestay programme. When the community became too reliant and required constant monitoring, their programme might not run smoothly or sometimes end when they were not regularly monitored. This problem was further intensified when there were leadership problems at the helm such as poor communication, poor external relations, lack of transparency and alleged corruption, etc.

Typically, a homestay programme that is community-based will only be successful when the villagers perceive that it benefits the general community members. However, if personal interest among certain groups of villagers driven by commercialisation and links with private sectors has replaced community interest, conflicts in the community would arise

and soon become disjointed. This negative attitude can cause a breakdown in unity.

Arif Kamisan Pusiran & Honggen Xiao (2013) further reported that sometimes a passive community is seen to be an internal challenge because the community members have become too dependent on the Government agency. In addition, a homestay programme most probably has its host lacking communication skills which becomes a hindrance to the experience of the guest in interacting with the hosts. The drawback by the host is the lack of communication skills or mastering an internationally accepted language especially English as the medium of conversation with the tourists. The inability of the host to master Basic English is usually a hindrance to the experience of the guest in interacting with the host.

They further added that attitudes of the communities need to be strengthened in terms of sense of belonging, sense of community, sense of tourist needs, etc. so that everyone can cooperate and work together to make their homestay a lasting success. Through proper planning and implementation, operational regulation and management, appropriate development and financial allocation in homestay operations, all of the stakeholders involved in homestay programmes can ensure a sustainable tourism development.

Another past study suggested that an image of a destination consists of a few components and is a multi-stage process that the friendliness of the locals also plays an important part in positioning (May Chiun-Lo et al., 2012). They further reported that tourism researches in the past focused on the tangible returns of tourism to the local communities and ignored the human dimension factors and hence, it is timely to involve communities in the planning of positioning of a rural tourism destination in order to avoid wrong brand stigmatization with the wrong decision.

In addition to that, the increase in tourists' arrival will result in enhanced employment opportunities, which further translates into an increase in revenue for the communities in eco-tourism destinations. Furthermore, more youths and their families will be willing to make a living in rural destinations by operating the homestay lodges and other tourism related activities. This will help to reduce rural-urban migration and increase the number of visitors, enhance the quality of services provided and will ultimately generate repeat businesses. This will also

improve the livelihood and increase the quality of lives of the local community which can be largely achieved among those involved in the tourism-related industry.

They further concluded that though sustainable tourism is important, it will not be successful without the local participation and that the dimensions of positioning should be locally determined, based on the perspectives of the local communities.

Oi Yee Wong (2014) who did a research on community-based tourism, had the view that though local communities are given the chance to manage products and activities for homestays, decision making process of the development of tourism remains largely top-down and heavily depends on political networks. As a result, development to the industry has a clear disparity within and among communities. At a local level, due to financial barriers and inter-village level power dynamics, homestay has excluded the poorer segments of the community. Her findings were supported by earlier critiques which suggested that a widening gap can be created between the richer and poorer households (Chok and Macbeth, 2007; Mowforth and Munt, 2009).

The above conclusion relegates people below the primacy of profit and economic growth. As a consequence, broader issues such as insecurity of land tenure, pollution and inequalities continue to undermine the sustainability of homestay tourism as well as the livelihoods of the indigenous communities in Malaysia. Although it is perceived as a laudable development tool due to its morally-induced concept, yet it remains vulnerable to political hijacking. It is apparent that the issue of underdevelopment is a challenge and linked with unequal power relations amongst various stakeholders and individuals across different scales. The resolution to this phenomenon requires a fundamental transformation of the existing power structure as mentioned by Schilcher (2007); Harrison (2008).

Sharon Esther Donny Sita and Nor Ashikin Mohd Nor (2015) have contributed significant findings of the perceived social impacts by the residents for the local government to have a plan for future activities relating to the homestay programme. They claimed that the residents could help to increase the economic opportunities for the grocers at the village. For example, grocers can take turns to become the suppliers of mineral water or carbonated drinks for tourists during the homestay event

in the village. To encourage the villagers to directly and indirectly involve as the decision makers in the village, a number of meetings can be held from time to time by inviting the whole community members of various backgrounds and interests. Such meetings can be the channel of communication between the committee members and the entire community to bring up issues related to the homestay programme.

They claimed that there are different degrees of contact between local people and tourists in a tourist destination. By having three elements, namely, 1) high contact; 2) medium contact; and 3) low contact, the impacts as perceived by the local people could be varied and detailed in a sense that not every individual in the community has the same perception towards tourism and its impacts.

The above research further concluded that the degree of contact has a role in determining the local perception of social impacts of Homestay programme. All of these three groups of respondents had different perceptions towards social impacts resulting from the homestay programme. It was also found that the Low Contact respondents did not necessarily support additional tourism development, although several benefits from the homestay programme were mentioned during the interviews. By acknowledging the heterogeneity of the local residents in terms of perceiving the tourism impacts, a lot more conflicts and issues faced by these groups of respondents can be identified.

Looking from the angle of effective interpersonal communication, language skills and the ability and confidence to communicate well in English could be essential tools in the homestay business. However, despite this notion, there has been very little focus given to these areas during the training programme to certify homestay operators. Munir Shuib et al. (2011) suggested that English language classes should be conducted on a regular basis to meet the needs of the homestay operators. They also proposed that English language should be taught from the basic level e.g. word, phrase and sentence level and pronunciation. They added that English words that are catered specifically for different needs and situations that are closely related to the homestay scenario should be included in the training modules of INFRA.

It probably cannot be denied that the English language manual/module would be very beneficial to the homestay operators as it would serve as a 'dictionary' or point of reference during interaction with

foreign guests. This will help these homestay operators to cater to the service more professionally.

Moscardo (2008) who also explored capacity building and community participation in sustainable tourism development listed the following crucial factors as the key elements for the failure of Community-Based Tourism:

1. unsustainable tourism development
2. limited community involvement in tourism development
3. external domination/manipulation
4. lack of human capital organization structure
5. limited community capacity building

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature reviewed in this study, it can probably be summarised that homestay operators faced various obstacles because of a lack of local participation, local leadership, knowledge and skills, poor planning, community structure, etc. This is in line with the argument by Hall, Kirkpatrick, and Mitchell (2005). They claimed that limited skills and knowledge of tourism can contribute to false expectations about the benefits of tourism and a lack of preparedness for the change associated with tourism, and limits opportunities.

Abdul Rasid Abdul Razak et. al. (2011) concluded that the operators in the Malaysian setting have an overall knowledge to manage and run the homestay program, but they require space for improvement in the future as the market becomes more competitive. Knowledge of developing packages in adapting to foreign culture needs to be addressed in community capacity building programmes. For instance, English communication skills, safety and first aid knowledge are crucial and need immediate action from the stakeholders. Communication between hosts and tourists are seen to be probably important to enhance the interaction.

Based on the findings of this study, the challenges of homestay operators can be compiled as the following:

1. lack of capital for initial investment to start the homestay business
2. lack of payment and delay in payment from the authorities
3. non-standardised organization structure enables a minority group of operators to monopolise the industry
4. youths do not participate actively leaving the senior citizens with communication barriers to confront foreign tourists
5. operators become too dependent on the government agency to overlook their programme
6. operators lack knowledge on friendliness and correct human dimension to involve the villagers in the project
7. industry needs to be restructured so that villagers can have high-contact with the industry players to boost social impacts and provide an opportunity for income
8. absence of English Language module during the training programme
9. lack of future development plan to enable operators to stay competitive in the future

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Adaptation or Revelation? *Raavanan*, a Class Analysis

Ilaiya Barathi Panneerselvam *

Abstract: Adaptation of Hindu Mythologies or Hindu Epics into movies is not new in the Tamil film industry, based in India or more specifically in the state of Tamil Nadu. Known to be one of the largest film exporters to the world, commercial value of the films is often over glorified as if the film is nothing but a moneymaking tool in the film fraternity. It may be true to a certain extent, but the rule however is not applicable to all. *Raavanan*, a film by Maniratnam is an adaptation of the great Hindu Mythology called *Ramayana*, but with a whole new perspective, the question of reinforcing or challenging the status quo of the class structure does flourish in the film's depiction. With the rise of Hindu extremism in the current political arena, and the larger population being Hindus, the question arises on the need of taking a film that could be regarded as a sensitive issue, endangering the filmmaker and those who are involved with the film. However, it is important to understand the central theme of this film, guided by the Marxist theories, as it is juvenile to dismiss the whole film as merely an adaptation of the mythology. The common orthodoxy value of Good vs Evil is not the only theme, which the director delves with, but the idea of good and evil differs are also debatable. The struggle for freedom by the natives (*representing Raavanan – supposedly antagonist/proletariat, working class*) against the police and state (*representing Lord Rama – supposedly protagonist/bourgeoisie, ruling class*) may look superficial if the characters of *Ramayana* is imposed on this film, but is that all? This paper discusses the classic notion of class struggle and proposes the question, what is the concern that the film tries to speak to the audiences?

Keywords: Raavanan, class struggle, Maniratnam, Marxism, Ramayana

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INTRODUCTION

Over the course of 100 years of Tamil film industry, filmmaking has flourished tremendously, on par with the Bollywood industry (Hindi films) becoming an important player in the film industry. Film as an industry requires a huge sum of budget to complete the whole production process. Therefore, the motive of gaining profit is much more important to the producer or financier than the filmmaker. Arguably film can be merely a tool of propaganda or the voice of those who owns the means of the production as what Marx & Engels (1974)¹ says, “the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it”.

In that sense, besides independent filmmakers, films are not free from ideology as most of the time it upholds the bourgeois ideology. A bourgeois ideology, as defined by Lenin, Althusser & Gramsci (2000)², is an ideology generated by class society through which the dominant class comes to provide the general conceptual framework for a society’s members, thus furthering the economic and political interests of that class. Despite that, certain filmmakers through their film with a relative autonomy which they possess, sometimes due to their own production house or financed by those who are in similar ideological stance would be able to execute films that oppose the dominant ideology in the society. The film has also tried to renegotiate the dominant ideas and ideals spoken in the mythology within the socio-economy and political context of India although Althusser argues that, ideology naturalises social inequalities and relations of domination, passing them off as natural and immutable³. In this paper, *Raavanan* is to be analysed in detail to understand the concern it tries to promote.

¹See *The German Ideology* (1974).

²See Stam, R. (2000). *Film Theory*

³Stam, R., *Film Theory*, p. 136.

THE INFUSION OF MYTHOLOGICAL EPICS INTO CINEMA

According to Dwyer (2006), it all started with the inspiration gained by the man who is fondly recognised as the ‘father of Indian cinema’, D.G. ‘Dadasaheb’ Palke⁴ who made the first entirely Indian film in the year 1913, titled as *Raja Harischandra*, whereby he achieved in establishing India’s first filmic genre, the ‘mythology’, creating an immediate connection between religion and cinema in India which persists to this day.

As mythological adaptation was gaining box office numbers, there was much needed requirement for the film producers, the genre flourished in the early days of film industry as what DeMille⁵ remarked as ‘God is box office’ where these attractions included a great spectacle and often special effects for miracles as well as providing audiences with religious experiences. Dwyer (2006) argued that mythology is the founding genre of Indian cinema, and one of the most productive genres of its early cinema, as one which depicts tales of gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines mostly from the large repository of Hindu myths, which are largely found in the Sanskrit *Puranas*⁶ and the Sanskrit epics, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

As this paper’s central argument is based on the film *Raavanan* (a character in *Ramayana*), it is important to introspect the historical background of the mythology itself. Richman (1991), finds the text of *Ramayana* is the work of single author, Valmiki, however, historical analysis finds them to be the result of oral composition and as such there is no original text of either, nor is there one single, correct version but there are many versions of each epic. Going by the version of Valmiki, Sita’s hand is won by Rama⁷, eldest son of Dasharata, king of Ayodya. When the king abdicates, he is tricked by his youngest wife into banishing Rama and handing his kingdom to her son, Bharata. Rama, Sita

⁴Dhundiraj Govind popularly known as Dadasaheb Phalke (30 April 1870 – 16 February 1944), was an Indian producer-director-screenwriter. He made 95 movies and 26 short films in his career spanning 19 years, till 1937.

⁵Dwyer, Richard (2006) *Filming the Gods* (page 14).

⁶Epics (mythologies)

⁷Lord Rama is the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu (out of ten avatars), one the major deity in Hinduism. Based on the mythology, Lord Rama was born in Ayodhya to the ruler of Koshala Kingdom, Dhasaratha – Kaushalya.

and his brother Lakshman go into fourteen years of exile in the forest. A demoness, Surpanakha, repulsed by Rama when she tries to seduce him, attacks Sita, provoking Lakshman to mutilate her as punishment for her erotic desire. Her brother Ravana, wished to avenge his beloved sister and enticed by her tales of the beauty of Sita, carries Sita off to his kingdom of Lanka. Rama's devotee, Hanuman, finds Sita, sets Ravana's city ablaze then brings Rama and his armies to rescue Sita. Rama takes Sita back only after she has undergone a trial of fire to prove that she is pure (no sexual intercourse with Ravana) after living in the house of another man.

MANI RATNAM AND THE RAAVANAN

As VR Talkies, a popular film review blog says, Mani Ratnam's films are not just movies but events. Looking back on his films, it could not be truer. "Between the 1970s and 1990s, Tamil cinema was reinvigorated by the arrival of new and young talents as the stars of earlier decade faded away or entered retirement. These three decades saw the entry of the second generation of actors like Kamal Hassan...and so forth in lead roles and major directors such as K. Balachander, Bharathiraja, Balu Mahendra, K. Bhagyaraj, T. Rajender and Mani Ratnam⁸." (Velayutham, 2008). Mani Ratnam had his directorial debut⁹ into Tamil film industry in 1985 through *Pagal Nilavu*, however so, it didn't go well in the box office. But in 1986, Mani Ratnam came back with his critically acclaimed as well as the box office hit, *Mouna Ragam*. This film gained attention and popularity on par with the director himself, which led him to many more groundbreaking films such as *Nayakan* (1987), *Roja* (1992), *Bombay* (1995) and many more. Many of his films portray issues happening in the nation pertaining to the society at that point of time, and some are even valid till today.

For instance, *Roja* is a film that discuss Indian nationalism enlightening the war between the Indian army and Kashmiri rebels who seek for liberation from India, as what Benjamin (2006) said, *Roja* is a film that deals with complex contemporary issues of separatism in

⁸See Thoraval, Y. (2000), *The Cinemas of India*

⁹Pallavi Anupallavi (1983) was Maniratnam's first film as Director, in an Indian-Kannada language film.

Kashmir and wider notions of Indian nationalism. Another noteworthy film of Mani Ratnam, *Bombay* - explores beyond the constraint of “not to speak of it” where the communal clash of Hindu-Muslim conflict that leads to the demolition of the 16th century *Babri Masjid*¹⁰ in Mumbai by the Hindu militants in 1992 was the issue portrayed in the film. This film severely criticises religious extremism and conservatism, which sucks the bloods of the innocent lives. The film had undergone severe censorship and some states banned the film from screening as there were constant harassment from the religious fundamental religious groups such as *Shiv Shena*. “Despite Thackeray’s¹¹ censorship, enough remains for Ratnam to depict the common people who participated in the riots as minions of an unholy hegemony exercised by Hindu and Muslim leaders who cynically mobilise dormant communal hatreds to pursue their own goals.” (Guneratne, 1997).

RAAVANAN

Huge stars being casted accompany the loose adaptation of the Tamil epic onto the film in the year 2010. Below are the stars according to their characters in the film and their representation in mythology as well.

Table 1: Cast in the film and their character in the mythology

Cast	Role in the film	Character in the mythology
Vikram	Veeraiya	Raavanan
Prithviraj	Dev Prakash	Lord Rama

¹⁰Babri Masjid was built in Ayodhya, a small town in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh (UP), in 1528 during the reign of Zahiruddin Mohammad Babur, the founder of Mughal dynasty in India – hence the name of the Masjid. (see Syed Serajul Islam, 2007: 345 – 347)

¹¹Bal Thackeray, a one-time cartoonist turned Hindu fundamentalist leader of India, founder of Shiv Shena (army of Lord Shiva) in 1966, which was also responsible in the demolishment of *Babri Masjid*. A right-wing extremist group.

Aishwarya Rai	Raagini (Dev's wife)	Sita (Lord Rama's wife)
Prabhu	Singarasu (Veeraiya's elder brother)	-
Priyamani	Vennila (Veeraiya's younger sister)	Surpanakha
Karthik	Gnanaprakasam	Lord Hanuman

Adaptation of the central plot and theme of a mythology is not alien for Mani Ratnam. In 1991, he tried adapting *Mahabaratha* into *Thalapathy* through the juxtaposition of characters to develop a theme of its own, a theme that questions the status quo preached in the mythology *Mahabaratha*. In other words, it was a breakthrough for a new breath of critical perspective in filming an adaptation especially one that is based on mythology. Like *Ramayana*, the film evolves around the abduction of Raagini by Veeraiya, with, Dev along a massive police force entered the forest to rescue Raagini, and more importantly, to eliminate Veeraiya. From here, the story develops into the episodes of rescuing Raagini, the resistance of the tribe against the police force sanctioned by the state, the emotional turbulence of Raagini, the duty-bound desire of terminating Veeraiya by Dev and the quest for revenge by Veeraiya himself.

GOOD VS EVIL. WHICH IS WHICH?

An analysis without a clear contextualisation of the socio-political and economic contingencies of the nation will result in a shallow conclusion, assuming Veeraiya as another loose depiction of Raavana himself, but is that all? A critical and witty Mani Ratnam would not be so naïve in dismissing a great plot to retell or portray the historical events happening in the proximity, as he did earlier through his films. Bounded by traditional orthodox values set by the society (Hindu society), and without forgetting the moral obligations constructed by the highest caste of the social strata-the Brahmins, the good or what is perceived to be good and positive is highly lenient on those who have the power to rule and dominate, accompanied by the luxury of wealth, while what is wrong

or evil, are painted on those who are powerless, moneyless, and most of the time from the lower or lowest caste in the society.

Dev is the newly appointed Superintendent of Police (SP) of the town, specially brought by the state government to curb the “violence”, presumably by Veeraiya in the traditional tribe village assisted by his brothers and several others. Veeraiya abducts the wife of Dev at the very beginning of the film with the intention of killing her as part of the revenge. The reason behind the whole blood avenging plot is crucial to be understood before entering the bigger discussion. On the surface, an impression of another good guy battling all his might against a cold-hearted evil-minded antagonist who kidnaps a police officer’s wife with ill intention of seeking revenge might be prevalent here. However, a deeper examination on the characters reveals beyond what is projected on the surface.

THE RISE OF VEERAIYA

The violent and ruthless ruling of Veeraiya as told by Dev in the beginning, “for every violence that’s happening, he (Veeraiya) might have been the cause.” The purpose of having Dev in the town is to nab or eliminate the perpetrator. Despite so, the village people saw Veeraiya in an entirely different perspective. Upon entering the village to enquire about Veeraiya who had already kidnapped his wife, Dev was taken by surprise and convulsed with rage hearing the positive remarks given by the people – caring, kind hearted, humorous, brave as his name (Veeraiya)¹², had the guts to stand against anyone, genius, philosopher and warrior.

Conflicting opinions began here, as the dialectic principle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis comes into the picture. Thesis - Veeraiya, the bad guy clashes with an antithesis -Veeraiya, the people’s champion/warrior was in constant feud trying to find a synthesis or a conclusion. Talking on theory of color and Hinduism or the Hindu culture, the black is an Omen, signifying negativity, equivalent to anything but goodness, in contrary to white. In a scene, Veeraiya stands in front of a huge black statue of a Hindu God, presumably Lord Krishna. The dominant ideology in

¹²The meaning of *Veeraiya* is bravery.

Hinduism portrays God in white, which equals to purity and divinity. However, the God is shown in black where the filmmaker projects an idea that God which they (tribes) believe does not necessarily belong to the construction of Upper Class society¹³ or from the high caste community, can be ordinary just like you and me. Thus, the notion of black equals to evil is broken here by indicating that he's avenging to the brutality that happened to his sister (similar to Surpanakha).

While throughout the film, Dev is to be seen in white clothing (most of the times) and this is the man who kept his silence when Venilla (Veeraiya's sister) was raped in the police station by policemen, the man who ambushed Venilla's wedding and the man who used his wife to eliminate Veeraiya. The film hence puts forth the question of who is the greater evil? In this film the distinction between good and evil is demystified by constantly shifting the meaning that is attached to the concept of good and evil. This is also an attempt to evoke the subconscious mind of spectators that there are both good and evil in each person, yet, it only unleashes itself according to time and situation, both Rama and Raavan present in everyone.

THE REVENGE OF VEERAIYA

Veeraiya, as the character Raavana himself, had a sister named Venilla who is in a relationship with a guy from the upper-class society. The guy does not live among the tribes and is not associated with the tribes. This is to be known through the reference made on him by Veeraiya as the people of "*Mettukudi*" (uptown – upper-class people). On the day of the wedding, Dev along with the police, ambushed the wedding ceremony to capture Veeraiya. As soon as Dev had a shot at Veeraiya, rubbing off his neck but leaving him alive with an injury on his vocal cord forcing him to flee from there assisted by his friends.

¹³Practice of casteism have divided Hindus into an unjust social hierarchy by isolating the lower caste community as untouchables and despicable. It was a custom of the higher caste that the lower caste people shouldn't enter the temple as the Gods are reserved only for the higher caste who comes from the High Class society (often times).

Disappointed with his escape, DSP Hemanth¹⁴ arrested Venilla and brought her to the police station. During investigation, she was sexually harassed with nonsensical questions in condescending manner. The worse was yet to come as she was brutally raped by police officers throughout the night, which led to her suicide. Raged by the inhumane police brutality and the injustice to his sister, Veeraiya took the law into his own hands by taking revenge on everyone involved, including the “husband to be” who fled the scene seeing the police officers during the wedding ceremony itself.

Besides the husband to be whose hand was chopped off, the police officers that perpetrated the cruelty were burnt alive in the earlier scenes of the film. One might have a sense of exaggeration involving police brutality portrayed in the film but the editor of Andaman Chronicle, Denis Giles in his lecture at Kannada University’s seminar, said, “it is with pain I say that the tribal women are being sexually assaulted and young girls are being exploited. The tribal are faced with the problem of eviction and have lost their identity.” This clearly shows that the film tried to depict the resistance by the people as an effect to the brutality caused by the police force.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN RAAVANAN

The two main characters of the movie represent two different background and demographical identity, which also unveils their position in the society’s social hierarchy. Veeraiya belongs to the native tribes who live in the outskirts of the town, a rural village on the hill where he performed as the tribe’s leader, representing none other than the working class or the proletariat. On the other hand, Dev, a police officer holding the rank of the Superintendent of Police (SP) belongs to the authoritative group, which serves the bourgeoisie or the higher class of the society. The police force functions as a tool of the state, or in Althusserian concept, - the ruling regime’s repressive state apparatus.

The conflict between these two groups began when Veeraiya ran a parallel system of administration in his village assisted by his brothers, dismissing the existing law and order of the state. This act of defiance by

¹⁴Deputy Superintendent of Police, close associate of Dev.

the tribes led by Veeraiya was an attempt to challenge the status quo in the society, thereby challenging and overthrowing the power of the ruling class. Denying the state's legitimate power as the ruling regime, the notion of social emancipation is determined through "dictatorship of the proletariat" as coined by Marx in *The Class Struggle in France 1848-1850*, where the political power lied in the hand of the proletariats, not the bourgeoisies as seen here.

This sparked a chain of aggressive reactions by the police force, sanctioned by the state, taking desperate measures to uphold its dominance in the society. This is as argued by Marx and Engels in *The Holy Family* (1845), private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to preserve its *own* existence and thereby the existence of its opposite, the proletariat – in other words, proletarian classes are needed to ensure the domain of the bourgeoisies. However, the requirement of proletariat is to abolish itself and thereby its conditioning opposite – the private property which makes it a proletariat.

Here, the police as an instrument of the state and the proletariat experience has the same form of self-alienation. Despite so, the possessing class is undisturbed by this phenomenon as what Marx argued in *Alienation and Social Classes*¹⁵, the possessing class feels satisfied and affirmed in this self-alienation, experiences the alienation as a sign of *its own power*, and possesses the *appearance* of human existence. Though self-alienated, the possessing class is comfortable with its acquired wealth and property, however, the proletariat is not as how the latter feels destroyed in this alienation. It sees its own impotence and the reality of an inhuman existence. Hereby, the struggle for emancipation of the tribe in the film is a fight against wealth seeking bourgeoisie, though physically not represented, the presence is felt through the massively deployed police force.

The bigger question that lies around the context of the film is what it has to do with the current socio-political settings in India itself. Inspired and largely influenced by Marxism and Maoism¹⁶, the peasants, natives

¹⁵See Tucker, R.C. (1978). *The Marx Engels Reader*; p. 133.

¹⁶The movement is primarily spearheaded by a Maoist party, i.e. the CPI (Maoist) which derives its ideological and militaristic inspirations from the China's Mao Tse Tung's thoughts which propagates agrarian armed revolution to capture political power. See D.K. Sandeep (2003)

or tribal groups and lower caste community have been collectively a critical voice in resisting the economical exploitation by the *Zamindar*¹⁷. With constant harassment and oppression, the tribes have no further choice but to take up the arms as a course of struggle. These groups of people were known to be the *Naxalites*¹⁸. *Raavanan* is the indirect (if not direct) representation of the armed struggle carried by the *Adivasis* (tribes/natives) against the state backed by bigger capitalist industries. This is aligned with the neo-liberal policy, which opens the natives' land to be ventured by both local and foreign capitalist investors. In Orissa, according to Pattnaik (2013), the Orissa Mining Corporation (OMC) with several Indian and multinational mining companies had attributes to the contemporary resistant movements in the signing of several Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs). This, of course, is a reflection of India's post-liberalized economic policy. The option of mining based heavy industrialization by the state was obvious as the state of Orissa had massive mineral resource deposits of iron ore, bauxite and ferromanganese.

While a larger part of the society in the nation has moved beyond the feudalistic era, many villages in India still maintain the feudalistic system in a capitalistic society. These are the villages, which, their economy is primarily agriculture, and as the classic feudalistic society functions, the land belongs to the landlord and they are paid meagrely. This is also the period where the tensions have reached the peak, resulting in a massive hunt against the *Naxalites* deemed as a threat to national security. "Threat to national security" is the preferred national slogan of the ruling regime of the day on every uprising encounter in any nation. While the question remains whether the threat is posed to the nation or the ruling regime, it is left untouched or unspoken throughout history, though in every epoch, the uprising of the masses has been largely against the ruling regime, from French Revolution, Russian Revolution and even the recent Arab Spring.

¹⁷In the late seventeenth century, the British Corporation granted these landlords, known as *Zamindars* the ownership of land in return for their collection of tax revenue. See Gupta (2007), p. 163.

¹⁸*Naxalite* movement began with a relatively insignificant attack by the largely landless peasants in Bengal, in the foothills of the Himalayas. Happened in a village called Naxalbari. (See Gupta (2000) p. 162.

The extensive usage of police forces to restraint the tribes' insurgency was seen in the film, which shows a mirage or illusion of rescuing Raagini as the sole reason of deploying a tremendous force looking for Veeraiya and his comrades. A deeper viewing might give a different notion, as it is illogical to deploy a massive number of police to merely search and rescue a policeman's wife unless the real intention is to extinguish the uprising led by Veeraiya and others. This is clearly supported by findings of Shah and Jain (2017) where Indian government preferred to adhere to a national security and militaristic stance on counter-insurgency that relies on 'fear mechanisms', including torture, encounters, crackdowns, enforced disappearances, the creation of strategic hamlets, and the formation of local militias. This occurs within the context of a network of overreaching undemocratic laws and acts that legitimize these practices and create the conditions for impunity.

Similar to James Cameron's films such as *Aliens* (1986) and *The Abyss* (1989), James (1999) argued that the political/ideological content of Cameron's films exists almost entirely on a secondary level that resides just beneath the primary narrative content. As such, Maniratnam's *Raavanan* sets or talks the political/ideological content at a secondary level, as the primary narrative moves around Raagini's abduction and the aftermath that follow.

A clear-cut exploitation or oppression is not available or depicted in the film, which could be a drawback of the film. Unlike James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009), this film has not shown anything significant of an extensive or absolute form of exploitation by the state backed by the hefty capitalists as it was obvious in the forceful eviction and demolition of the *Naavi* tribe's habitat to seize the natural resources in their land leading to a displacement, what is called *homelessness* in modern day. Yet, there are few dialogues and scenes showing them as the oppressed class in the society.

In one of the scenes, a school for the natives were burned down and people were lying around wounded and covered in blood. Though the cause of the fire was not shown in the film and what could be inferred from this scene was purely subjective, an account by Chandan Sinha, an Indian Administrative Services Officer's diary was nowhere more evident in exhibiting the failures of the developmental state of the tribe. Further reinforced by Shah, Alpha and Jain (2017), "Sinha's Kindling of an

Insurrection is a chronicle of one state failure after another: villages unconnected by roads, without sufficient provision of drinking water, where people regularly die early because of lack of medical facilities, a situation that is not uncommon in the Adivasi-dominated hills and forests of central and eastern India". Through this account by Sinha, who had also served as the district magistrate and Collector of Paschim Medinipur in West Bengal, the interpretation that could be drawn in this scene is the incapacity of the state or the people in power to provide a school which was safe and conducive for the learning purpose of the young generation of the tribes.

Development as a key to modernity is debatable as the tribes are displaced in the name of development by losing their homeland and means of living. Coming back to Marx's critique of capitalism in *Grundrisse*, he argued that all production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society. In this sense, it is a tautology to say that property (appropriation) is a precondition of production. In another instance, Veeraiya was having a conversation with Raagini on a river bank with a huge statue of God in the background where Veeraiya used "oppressed" as the word describing him and his community, further justified in the later part of the film where once again he explained the instillation of fear by the authorities on the tribes, "is this the first time they are trying to scare us? They raised their hand, we raised too, they took the stick, we did too, but today, they are using guns, so we shall crush their head".

Referring to the constant exploitation and subjugation faced by the Adivasis, peasants and labourers in rural India, the arms struggle carried by Veeraiya transpired, resembling the oppressed classes in the society.

Hereby, the idea of violence and self-defense changed invariably, and the purpose of taking the arms was indeed a relevant question to be answered before labelling Veeraiya and the tribes as terrorists. In the context of Indian politics, the *Naxalites* are stamped as the terrorists throughout their struggle by government-controlled mass media. India's then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, declared the Naxalites to be the single greatest internal security threat in the country and soon launched unprecedented counter-insurgency measures—dubbed Operation Green Hunt—against them and anyone seen to sympathise with their cause. It was estimated that the Naxalites comprised anywhere between 10–25,000

armed cadres with an additional 100,000 militia members, are present in 190 out of India's 626 districts, and have the capability to strike in 90 districts, though the numbers changed all the time. Tens of thousands of members of the armed forces, police officers, and special police officers from across the country were mobilized in counter insurgency and sent to surround the hilly forests of central India (Shah and Jain, 2017).

Leading the police force, Dev claimed in his introduction in the film that "for half of the people, Veeraiya is a God, the other half are merely afraid to stand against him, but in the eyes of the law, he (Veeraiya) is a terrorist, law breaker and extremist", which led into a witch hunt on Veeraiya and anyone associated with him, reminds us starkly on spectre of McCarthyism¹⁹. To further attest the claim of witch-hunt by the police force, once again Dev proudly yet sadistically claimed that he was specifically brought into the town to destroy Veeraiya. Shah, Jain & Alpha (2017) said that the regions around this guerrilla terrain have some of India's largest untapped mineral reserves—iron ore, coal, and bauxite, in particular. From the 1990s, the Indian state began welcoming big businesses in the hope of becoming the next world superpower. Multinational companies began lining up to exploit these resources. The Adivasis who lived on these lands, and the Naxalites who made their guerrilla strongholds amid them, were now in the way of economic exploitation.

To add to the misery, the commercial interests clashed with the traditional life style of the tribal people as the outsiders moved in for the lucrative resources that the forests had to offer. The mining, logging, and agricultural interests collided squarely with the interests of the tribal people and the tribal lost. The power-hungry nation, looking for cheap and non-polluting hydroelectric power developed plans for large dams, displacing and consequently, further alienating these already marginalized communities (Gupta, 2007).

¹⁹ McCarthyism, name given to the period of time in American history that saw Wisconsin Sen. Joseph McCarthy produce a series of investigations and hearings during the 1950s in an effort to expose supposed communist infiltration of various areas of the U.S. government. The term has since become a byname for defamation of character or reputation by means of widely publicized indiscriminate allegations, especially on the basis of unsubstantiated charges. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/McCarthyism>)

As the bourgeois interest began to venture in like vulture, the need to defend their rights by any means necessary became the priority of the tribes. Largely assisted by his brother Singarasu, Veeraiya was performing himself as the chosen leader of the tribe to empower the Adivasis as well as mobilizing a handful of people to stand against the exploitation and to resist any form of threat posed on them.

The masses (working class) were in favour of the leader they had chosen for themselves, but they were being oppressed and vindicated for despising what was imposed on them as law and order. Safeguarded by the state's apparatus, the natural consequences of challenging the existing system would be dreadful, as the ruling regime would exploit all its apparatus to diminish any sort of uprising to maintain their power and wealth. To stay alive, Veeraiya and his comrades went underground and started a mini guerrilla warfare against the police force, a tiny revolution so to speak. In the end, Dev and his police force making us recall the classical Ramayana killing Veeraiya, but in the context of *Naxalites* it is a symbolic reference to the fallen warriors during the struggle all those years.

Both Marx and Engels later acknowledged that the road to social change was through peaceful revolution though their earlier sympathy lied on violent struggle, where they promoted "the weapon of criticism cannot replace criticism with weapons, and physical force must be resisted with physical force. However, in his Preface to the English-language version of *Capital*, Engels wrote in 1886 that Marx was "... led to the conclusion that, at least in Europe, England is the only country where the inevitable social revolution might be affected entirely by peaceful and legal means.

CONCLUSION

While the film did not produce or portray any significant characters or resemblance of the Capitalists, as in the films of James Cameron like *Alien* and *Avatar* or Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*— despite so, the presence of class struggle is demonstrated throughout the film. In the classic Marxist paradigm, the film might not have justified the concept of condemning the capitalistic excess and celebrating the heroism and humanism of the underclass, so to speak, but however, through an in-

depth analysis of the theme and the subtext of the film, the humanism and heroism of the underclass is clearly shown and elaborated.

Veeraiya, the hero of the *Adivasi* (underclass, proletariat) and the leader of the tribe was the man who championed the rights of the natives despite of being wanted by the police, supposedly causing terror and violence. Contrary to the ideology carried by the state's apparatus, the police, Veeraiya was the people's man, the people's leader, clearly signifying the great leaders of the Adivasis in the past who have been subjugated and tortured by the police and, in certain cases, the army as well.

For instance, as recorded by Gupta (2007), in July of 1972, Charu Muzamdar was arrested and died in police custody in Calcutta amidst widespread allegation of torture and maltreatment. The film also ended in such a way that leaves us in further dilemma whether the director has taken a position in support of Veeraiya (the Adivasis-proletarian class) or justifying the act of the police force headed by Dev (State – Bourgeois class) in containing the uprising violent of the *Naxalites* in the society.

Without further confusion, the film has taken a bold step in justifying the struggle of arms carried by the Adivasis in the largest democratic country in the world, India. Here, the director has demystified or denounced the idea of democracy which is applicable to all sect of society as the oppression based on social status, ethnicity, caste and many more is prevalent, especially when Adivasis were considered illiterates and uncivilized. Chakrabarty and Kujur (2010) argued that representative democracy has not only failed but also becomes more oppressive as it serves the interest of the market and acts as a collaborator of global market-capitalists. For Chakrabarty and Kujur, it is this paradox of Indian democracy that explains the appeal and spread of the Indian Maoists referring to the *Naxalites*.

The film has been very much influenced by Marxism as its underlying theme in its subtext although it chose a different set of metaphors such as the mythology to identify the characters, the theme of the film was clearly affected by Marxism's theory of class struggle. As James (1999) concluded Cameron's work on *The Abyss*, *Alien* and *Titanic* that the films hardly constitute emancipatory capability of art sought by Althusserian Marxism, they are still rich in Marxist ideology pertaining to class struggle, which applies to Mani Ratnam's *Raavanan* too.

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Should the Government Have a Say in Our Diets?

Eric Shaun Seaton*

Abstract: This research paper examines why the government should have a say in our diets with a focus on obesity in America. The American government has taken a few drastic measures to tackle this problem and it has also conducted research and introduced a diet programme to the public. This paper will examine case studies and research cases in the United States of America because in every state of the USA, the obesity rate is about 18 percent and above. A newspaper article on taxing soda and pizza in the United States will also be discussed in this paper. Furthermore, this paper will investigate a research done by the government and a proposed diet programme by the government. This paper will also explore eight specific actions that were proposed and sponsored by the state of California in a fight against obesity in the state. Finally, this paper will analyse a U.S. food programme.

Keywords: Diet, government, obesity

According to The Free Dictionary, the definition of “diet” is the customary amount of food and drink taken by a person on a daily basis. “Diet” also means a planned diet made by an individual to meet specific requirements. In other words, some people may go on a planned diet to lose weight. The definition of “government” according to The Free Dictionary means the ruling political party or coalition of parties in a parliamentary system. In my opinion, the government should have a say in our diet. The government in the United States of America should have a say in the people’s diet. According to Reuters, the government spends an estimated \$147 billion a year on healthcare costs alone. This huge amount of money that is spent yearly on healthcare costs of its citizens

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could be saved and spent on other requirements. In other words, the government could have allocated this huge sum of money in for something else other than the healthcare cost. From the yearly figures of government expenditure, anyone can tell that it is too much money spent only on healthcare cost in one country. The main reason why the government of the United States of America spends so much on yearly healthcare cost is because two-thirds of the American population are either overweight or obese. According to medterms.com, the term “overweight” means someone is heavy or it compares the state between normal and obesity in terms of weight. According to the National Institute of Health, an individual is considered obese if his or her Body Mass Index (BMI) is 30 or above. The reason why two-thirds of American citizens are obese is because of the food that they consume on a daily basis. The reason why I chose the United States of America as a case study is because all of their 51 states have an obesity rate above 15 percent. The lowest obesity rate is 18.6 and the highest is 34.4. Nine states have an obesity rate of 30 percent and above. The table on the following page shows the obesity rates in all the 51 states in the United States of America.

2009 State Obesity Rates							
State	%	State	%	State	%	State	%
Alabama	31.0	Illinois	26.5	Montana	23.2	Rhode Island	24.6
Alaska	24.8	Indiana	29.5	Nebraska	27.2	South Carolina	29.4
Arizona	25.5	Iowa	27.9	Nevada	25.8	South Dakota	29.6
Arkansas	30.5	Kansas	28.1	New Hampshire	25.7	Tennessee	32.3
California	24.8	Kentucky	31.5	New Jersey	23.3	Texas	28.7
Colorado	18.6	Louisiana	33.0	New Mexico	25.1	Utah	23.5
Connecticut	20.6	Maine	25.8	New York	24.2	Vermont	22.8
Delaware	27.0	Maryland	26.2	North Carolina	29.3	Virginia	25.0
Washington DC	19.7	Massachusetts	21.4	North Dakota	27.9	Washington	26.4

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Florida	25.2	Michigan	29.6	Ohio	28.8	West Virginia	31.1
Georgia	27.2	Minnesota	24.6	Oklahoma	31.4	Wisconsin	28.7
Hawaii	22.3	Mississippi	34.4	Oregon	23.0	Wyoming	24.6
Idaho	24.5	Missouri	30.0	Pennsylvania	27.4		

Source: U.S. Obesity Trends, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html>

According to a newspaper article by Reuters dated 8 March 2010, U.S. researchers estimated that an American adult's calorie intake can be lowered and his/her weight could be reduced by 5 pounds (2 kg) per year if soda and pizza can be taxed at 18 percent. Kiyah Duffey who led the research team from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill said that although this move will not fully solve the obesity epidemic by taxing soda and pizza and may face opposition from food manufacturers, it could still be an important strategy to call attention to overconsumption, help reduce energy intake, help in weight loss and reduce the rate of diabetes among U.S. adults. Policymakers are increasingly looking at taxing these unhealthy foods as a way to call attention to obesity at the population level. According to Reuters, two states in America have already introduced legislation to tax soft drinks in a fight to limit consumption rates. The two states are California and Philadelphia. The taxing of soft drinks in these two states is supported by The Director of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr. Thomas Frieden and the American Heart Association. There are also early signs that such a policy is working.

Kiyah Duffey's team from the University of North Carolina has analysed the diets and health of 5,115 young adults aged between 18 and 30 from 1985 to 2006. In their research, they compared food prices during the same time and they found out that a 10 percent increase in cost was linked to a 7 percent decrease in the amount of calories consumed from soft drinks and a 12 percent decrease in calories consumed from pizza. They came to this conclusion after a 20 year period. The team also concluded that an 18 percent tax on these foods could cut daily intake by 56 calories per person and this could lead to a weight loss of 5 pounds (2kg) per person.

This would be a good move by the government in a fight against obesity in the country. When the cost of soft drinks and pizza increases the amount of consumption will eventually decrease. Duffey and colleagues wrote “Our findings suggest that national, state or local policies altering the prices of less healthful foods and beverages may be one possible mechanism for steering U.S. adults toward a more healthful diet,” (Reuters, 2010). The action to tax soda and pizza in the country is also supported by Dr. Mitchell Katz and Dr. Rajiv Bhatia of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. They said that it is an appropriate way to correct a market that favours unhealthy food choices over healthy food. The two doctors also argued that the government should carefully consider food subsidies that contribute to obesity. They wrote, “Sadly, we are currently subsidizing the wrong things including the product of corn, which makes the corn syrup in sweetened beverages so inexpensive,” (Reuters, 2010).

They instead suggested that agricultural subsidies should be used to make healthful foods such as locally grown vegetables, fruits and whole grain less expensive. If the government removes subsidies on items and products that contribute to obesity and instead introduces subsidies on products that contribute to healthful living, people would be more reluctant to purchase unhealthy foods and they will go for healthful products that have been subsidised by the government.

A newspaper article has revealed that a government- recommended diet programme for lowering blood pressure can save people from heart attacks and stroke and this has provided the strongest evidence to date that the government knows what to do to fight obesity in the country. A group of researchers followed 88,000 healthy women for almost 25 years. In their research, they examined the women’s food choices and also looked at how many of them had heart attacks and strokes. Those women who passed with flying colours in the study done had eating habits similar to the ones recommended by the government to stop blood pressure. This proves that the government knows what is best for its citizens. They know what diet programmes would be the best to fight against obesity. The diet plan which is recommended by the government is called “Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension” or DASH which favours fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk and plant-based protein over meat.

The researchers also concluded that women who followed the DASH plan were 24 percent less likely to have heart attack and 18 percent less likely to have a stroke than women who did not follow the DASH plan and stuck to their typical American eating habits. The researchers have also said that these are meaningful reductions since heart attacks and strokes are so common in the society nowadays. About two in five U.S. women will develop cardiovascular disease which includes heart attack and stroke when they hit 50. The women who were involved in the study were in their mid-30s to late 50s when the research began in 1980.

According to The Associated Press (2010), previous research has shown this kind of diet that is now recommended by the government can help prevent high blood pressure and cholesterol, which both can lead to heart attacks. This further proves that the government knows what is best and this further strengthens my opinion that the government should have a say in our diets. A new study by a group of researchers also appeared in the *Archive of Internal Medicine*. Teresa Fung, a researcher from Simmons University and the study's lead author said that some people may think that if they do not have high blood pressure, they do not have to follow the diet plan. However, the study suggests that even healthy people should get on it. This move will encourage even healthy people to follow the recommended diet plan introduced by the government to increase the percentage of healthy people and it will also help individuals to stay away from obesity in the long run.

In other words, healthy people will be less likely to start consuming unhealthy foods and become obese. It will be like an educational lesson and it will also address the public especially healthy people on obesity. In the study, about 15,000 women had diets that closely resembled the low pressure diet that was recommended by the government. In the government recommended diet plan, the women ate twice as many fruits, vegetables and grains.

On the other hand, an estimated 18,000 women diets are more closely similar to the typical American diet. Although this study only followed women, Teresa Fung said that men would probably get similar benefits from the approach. The reason why this study was limited to only women was because it merely tracked the women and their eating habits for 24 years and that it is a better way to come up with results

rather than randomly assigning equal groups of women different diets and then comparing the results.

Dr. Laura Svetkey, director of Duke University's hypertension centre, said that the study done has provided the best evidence to date of the importance of long term benefits from a low blood pressure diet. Svetkey said "It's nice to see research that is really aimed at helping people with prevention in a very practical way," (The Associated Press). She also said that the Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension or DASH diet, is available free on the National Institutes of Health web site. The study conducted was funded by the National Institutes of Health or NIH grants. Thus, it comes down to whether the public would take necessary initiative to go online and download the diet plan recommended by the government. The government has taken actions to help the country to fight against obesity but it is up to the people whether they want to fight obesity alongside the government by following the diet plan. Many people would rather not follow the diet programme and instead take the easy way out by relying on diet pills.

To support this statement, Dr. Nieca Goldberg who is the medical director of New York University's Women's Heart Programme said that many of her patients would rather take a pill than adjust their eating habits. If a person consumes too many diet pills, it might have side effects and it could affect their kidneys. Dr. Goldberg (2010) said, "I always point out to my patients, if you make these changes in your lives, it could keep you off medication in the long run", (The Associated Press, 2010). If a person chooses to go on a diet instead of taking diet pills, this will bring benefits to them in the long run. Not only would they be healthier and fitter, they would also be free of the diet pills' side effects.

On the other hand, if more and more people choose to take diet pills rather than going on a diet plan, the government would eventually have to spend more on healthcare costs because people would start to buy more medication and seek more medical treatment to treat their illness that was caused by the diet pills. This was what Dr. Nieca Goldberg meant when she said that "it could keep you off medication in the long run".

This further strengthens the view that why the government should have a say in our diets. After all, the government spends so much money on healthcare costs a year, while the money could be used for other developments in the country. If a person takes diet pills for many years

rather than going on a diet, the side effects will start to kick in and people would continue to consume pills. However the pills that they would consume are to treat their illness caused by the diet pills. Thus, it would be an ongoing process of consuming pills. People have to be aware of this and take necessary precautionary actions to stay away from diet pills that could harm their health. Dr. Nieca Goldberg (2010) added that “there has to be a greater emphasis on the way we live our lives”.

According to a press release by the Office of the Governor of California, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has announced eight specific actions that he will pursue to support healthy living in the state of California. Schwarzenegger announced this after he had a moderated discussion with the U.S. President at the Governor’s 2010 Summit on Health, Nutrition and Obesity: Actions for Healthy Living. The summit brought together a cross-section of public health, education, community and local government leaders from around the state. These institutions have been active in promoting healthy living in the state. The eight specific actions announced by the Governor of California were aimed at fighting childhood obesity and to encourage all Californians to live a healthy, active lifestyle through promoting healthy beverages, increasing physical activity and incorporating the idea of “health in all policies”. The eight specific actions are increasing the access to free drinking water during school mealtimes, eliminating electrolyte replacement beverages from California public schools, increasing moderate to vigorous physical activity in Physical Education (PE) classes, expanding the Governor’s fitness challenge to one million participants, increasing flexibility to develop shared facilities, simplifying and focusing safe routes to schools and strategising growth council executive order.

In his speech, he said that his top priority was to include the health and well-being of our children and all Californians; and reducing obesity will help improve both. He also said that he wanted to take what was discussed at the Summit and turn the state’s goals into action, fighting obesity at every level and creating a healthy foundation for California’s future.

The Governor’s Health and Human Services Secretary Kim Belshe, Director of the Department of Public Health, Dr. Mark Horton and staff have been working to identify practices and innovative policy developments in the fight against obesity. They are also working on

reviewing current state programmes, studying on community health and meeting with a wide variety of stakeholders including physical education, public health and think tank groups. This proves that the government is striving and taking many initiatives in the fight against obesity to help the public. Thus, the government should have a say in our diets. After all, the government has been trying so hard to fight obesity. The government could easily not take up initiatives to fight obesity in the country but instead choose to help the public and introduce many ways to fight obesity. This shows that the government is responsible and cares about the public.

In line with the action to promote the consumption of healthy beverages in schools, the Governor said that sufficient hydration is vital for academic achievements and health of the students but he also addressed that there were many students who did not have proper access to fresh and free water in school, especially in low income communities. For schools that do not have a proper water system available, they still do not provide enough fresh and free water during mealtimes. The consumption of electrolyte replacement beverages or otherwise known as sports drinks, which are becoming more and more popular among students in public schools, is associated with weight gain, diabetes and obesity. In order to promote healthier beverage consumption among students, the Institute of Medicine called for the elimination of electrolyte replacement beverages from public schools and instead recommended the standard beverage requirements to schools.

The Governor proposed two specific actions. The two specific actions were increasing access to free drinking water during school mealtimes and eliminating electrolyte replacement beverages from California public schools. To increase the access to free drinking water during school mealtimes that was proposed by Senator Mark Leno and sponsored by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, this required all school districts to make fresh, free drinking water available in food service areas by January 1, 2012.

The proposal to eliminate electrolyte replacement beverages from California public schools that was proposed by Senator Alex Padilla and sponsored by Governor Schwarzenegger stated that all electrolyte replacement beverages, otherwise known as sports drinks, were to be eliminated from being sold during the day in public middle and high

schools by July 11, 2011. This will be two good ways in giving awareness that water is the best liquid rather than drinking energy drinks or sports drinks. This also will be a good way to give awareness to children and mould them while they are still young.

The action to boost moderate physical activity and vigorous level in educational programmes in after-school programmes will provide the opportunity for youths to achieve the recommended daily requirements of physical activity in a safe environment. The Governor of California also stated that moderate to vigorous physical activity in Physical Education classes has the greatest potential to increase health benefits for students and it also contributes to the prevention of obesity while at the same time improving self-esteem and concentration among students. The state of California required all students to participate in PE classes for a specified number of minutes for every 10 days, but studies showed that students did not spend as much time that was originally allocated. The studies concluded that some students only spent four out of the thirty minutes that had been originally allocated for moderate to vigorous physical activity in PE classes.

Schools that have participated in the Governor's Fitness Challenge had also seen benefits to their students. The benefits were there was an increase in points for physical test. Furthermore, for schools that have participated in the Governor's Fitness Challenge, they have won new state-of-the-art fitness centers and facilities to further promote physical activity.

The action to increase moderate to vigorous physical activity in educational programmes has three specific actions. The first specific action is to increase moderate to vigorous physical activity in after-school programmes that has been proposed by the Assembly Member of Isadore Hall and sponsored by Governor Schwarzenegger which required schools to provide at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity in an after-school programme using the new Physical Activity Guidelines commenced on January 1, 2013.

For the second specific action, it was to increase moderate to vigorous physical activity in Physical Education (PE) classes which was also proposed by Isadore Hall, and requires students to spend at least 50 percent of PE class time in moderate to vigorous physical activity by January 1, 2013.

In the third specific action, the Governor's Fitness Challenge will be expanded to 1 million participants. In this proposal, Governor Schwarzenegger would work with Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Chairman Jake Steinfeld through public-private partnerships to expand the Governor's Fitness Challenge to 1 million participants in 2010. This move could encourage students and the public to join in and lead a healthier life. The government took up so many initiatives to help the public in a fight against obesity. It was proven here when Governor of California, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger had announced these actions to promote a healthier lifestyle to school children.

The government of California was able to somehow have a little control in the diets of their citizens with these ideas and approaches. For example, schools that had sent students to participate in the Governor's Fitness Challenge saw benefits and won new state-of-the-art facilities. This move has been proven to be working well and has encouraged many schools to participate in the challenge because the benefits are too valuable to let go. This also further strengthens the point that the government should have a say in diets because the government seems to know what to do to encourage the public to participate in these activities in the fight against obesity.

The main reason why Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed and sponsored these moves to fight obesity among school children was because children should be moulded, be given proper and sufficient awareness about obesity at a young age before they grew older and it was too late for them to change their eating habits from the typical unhealthy American diet to a healthier diet. In other words, it is best to start them young when their minds are still in development.

The third main action in Governor Schwarzenegger's speech was to incorporate healthy living options through "Health in All Policies". The Governor said that physical, social and economic environments could influence individual health behaviours and health outcomes. Policies and practices that support sharing of school facilities could provide great opportunities for physical activity for the community before, after or during school hours. The Safe Routes to Schools aimed to promote physical activity and healthy living by allowing students to safely walk or cycle to and from school rather than riding on the school bus. By this

way, students can move physically rather than just sit on the school bus. In other words, students who walk and ride a bicycle to school can also exercise. However, the Governor also addressed that there were still many low income communities who were facing obstacles in applying for funding in terms of regulations and a resource-intensive application process. In order to incorporate healthy living options through “health in all policies”, the Governor has proposed to increase the flexibility to develop shared facilities, simplify and focus safe routes to schools and to strategise growth council executive order. The specific action to increase flexibility to develop shared facilities that were proposed by Assembly Member Isadore Hall and sponsored by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has been introduced to expand eligibility opportunities and flexibility for communities to apply for shared funds. The aim of this proposal was to ensure that vital shared projects were not pushed aside by restrictions.

The Safe Routes to School project funded by Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) analysed whether the schools that had many students in need were participating in Safe Routes to Schools. The Governor also directed Caltrans and TARC to develop strategies that would ensure sufficient access to Safe Routes to School funds. This proposal has been put forward to eliminate barriers and obstacles to ensure that communities in need were receiving the sufficient funding. The Governor of California directed this by sending a letter to Caltrans Director Randell Iwasaki. This move was under the specific action to simplify and focus safe routes to schools.

Under the strategic growth council executive order, the governor has instructed the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to establish a Health in All Policies Task Force that would be facilitated by the California Department of Public Health. The task force job was to work with other already established Strategic Growth Council (SGC) groups in identifying important programmes, policies and strategies which could be used to improve the health of all Californians.

In an article written in HealthDay, the U.S. government report stated that a sponsored food programme by the federal government should be improved to promote healthier living by providing healthier meals and snacks to children and adults in day care facilities throughout the United States. The report which was from the Institute of Medicine called for

more fruits and vegetables and less fat, salt and sugar in the meals and snacks served. The Child and Adult Care Food Programme (CACFP) Chairperson, Suzanne P. Murphy said that “many of the most needy children and adults relied on their food programme,” (HealthDay, 2010). She said this during a press conference after reviewing the programme. She said that the food programme needed to be improved because the current CACFP guidelines and regulations were based on nutrition and health guidance that was nearly 20 years old.

Suzanne P. Murphy who was also a researcher and professor at the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu added that food insecurity or the difficulty for a family to obtain enough food and childhood obesity was rising in the United States. The report which was titled “Child and Adult Care Food Programme: Aligning Dietary Guidance for All” called for bringing the nutritional standards of the CACFP in line with the dietary guidelines used in other U.S. Department of Agriculture food programmes. This study was funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Child and Adult Care Food Programme was introduced to help family day care homes, child care and after school centers, adult care programmes, emergency shelters and other facilities in offering nutritious meals and snacks to people from low income families. According to the Institute of Medicine, about 3 million children and 114,000 adults received meals and snacks through the program in the year 2010.

The Institute of Medicine also set a minimum amounts of food in each meal excluding soft drinks and candy that was based on the existing standards made by the Child and Adult Care Food Programme (CACFP). The report called for the following: one serving of fruit and two servings of vegetables in every meal, more dark green and orange vegetables, less starchy vegetables, no fried vegetables, 100% fruit juice with no added sugar, no juices for kids under 1 year old, only one serving of fruit juice day per day served to older kids and adults, 50% of grains as whole grains, only one serving per week for baked or fried grains high in fat and sugar, limited use of salt, saturated fat, trans fat and added sugars, lean meats, more soy, beans, eggs and nuts as meat alternatives, only breast milk or formula until 6 months for infants, whole milk for children until 2 years old and low fat milk for those over 2 years old.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) said that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) must revamp the Child and Adult Care Food Programme (CACFP) in order to provide better planning and preparation. Suzanne P. Murphy said that the costs for feeding children could increase to as much as 44% percent if they started to enact the recommendations made. The recommendation was supported by Samantha Heller, clinical nutrition coordinator at the Centre for Cancer Care at Griffin Hospital in Derby, Connecticut. In her statement, she said that it is encouraging to see the Child and Adult Care Food Programme making healthy changes to its recommendation (HealthDay, 2010). She added that the changes could potentially have a powerful impact on the health of the families that depend on the Child and Adult Care Food Programme (CACFP) for most of their food consumption. Heller also said that it was still unclear whether sufficient funding and personnel will be provided to make the suggested changes.

“In theory this report looks fine, but the reality is a long way down the road. In the meantime, parents and caregivers who are struggling financially need support and education at the community level on how to find and prepare affordable healthy foods for their families,” (Heller, HealthDay, 2010).

What she meant here is that the society should work together with the government institutions in practising healthy eating habits and fight against obesity. The government or families could never work alone to promote healthy eating habits. Both have to work together to achieve the goal. In other words, they both complement each other.

As can be seen, the government is working so hard to provide the best diet programme for everyone to follow. They provide healthy food under a government programme to low income families. The government could easily refuse to help these low income families. However, the government has set up suitable programmes to feed these people. Furthermore, they provide healthy food that fits the standards and the guidelines. They do not provide and serve food that is less healthful. The government institutions which are in charge of the programme take their time in planning and providing proper, sufficient and healthy food to these people. Moreover, it is for free. Adding to that, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Child and Adult Care Food Programme (CACFP) is even taking the initiatives to improve the food programme

that they feel is outdated and is not appropriate to the diet of people nowadays. The reason why these government institutions are taking these initiatives to provide a better food programme is because they want to provide what is best for the people. This further strengthens my point that the government should have a say in our diets.

The government allocates the money and resources needed in order to provide the best diet programmes for the people. Thus, we as citizens should always support government efforts to promote a healthier living and to fight obesity.

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The Effect of the Quality of Lecturer Services on Students' Withdrawal Cognition Among ACCA Students

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Abstract: Quality of education is an important factor to sustain institutions of higher learning, specifically among private institutions of higher learning in order to retain their students. The popularity of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants professional qualification is rising globally, including the Asia Pacific region. Institutions of higher learning offering ACCA courses which are known as tuition providers are mushrooming. Competition is therefore intense between tuition providers and as a result, these tuition providers are paying more attention to the services provided by the lecturers to retain their ACCA students. This paper seeks to understand the relationship between the quality of lecturer services, student emotional satisfaction, institutional commitment, and students' withdrawal cognition.

Keywords: ACCA, tuition providers, students, lecturer services, quality of instructor services to students

INTRODUCTION

Quality is one of the important factors to ensure business sustainability because it is a determinant of customer satisfaction and cost minimisation (Atrek & Bayraktaroglu, 2012). Sander, Stevenson, King, and Coates (2000) claimed that students' retention and academic performance are influenced by the service quality provided by institutions of higher learning (IHL). Therefore, service quality provided by IHL

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should not be neglected as it will affect student retention, which is the source of revenue for the IHL.

IHL will lose revenue from their tuition fees when students drop out from the institution (Hogan, 2012). Retaining students is therefore an important task for the local IHL, especially the private ones to ensure that their business is sustainable. Shank, Walker, and Hayes (1996) cautioned that students in the future will behave more like consumers and have higher expectations for the value of the education received and the time spent in classrooms. East (2001) urged IHL in Australia to operate more commercially and to treat students as their customers due to the vigorous competition to attract international students. Indeed, there were earlier calls to treat students as customers (Sines & Duckworth, 1994; Kanji, Malek, & Tambi, 1999). Therefore, lecturers in IHL should treat their students as their customers because IHL are after all, service organisations (Emanuel & Adams, 2006).

According to ACCA (The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) search database (Search Tuition Provider, 2018), there is a total of 33 ACCA tuition providers in Malaysia. An IHL that offers ACCA courses is called an ACCA tuition provider. Out of the 33 tuition providers in Malaysia, there are only two public IHLs, which are Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) and Kolej Universiti Poly-Tech Mara while the rest are private IHL. This implies the intense competition among the 31 private IHL vying for student enrolments. The number of ACCA students rose steadily from 425,894 students in 2012 to 503,262 in 2018 (Integrated Annual Report, 2018). The rising number of students also translates into higher demand for ACCA courses in Malaysia. The higher demand spells business opportunities and it also intensifies competition among the IHL that offer ACCA courses. It only makes sense that IHLs must now pay attention to services provided by the lecturers to differentiate themselves in order to improve student retention.

Students who drop out from IHL are at a disadvantage because of the time, energy, and resources they spent in that particular IHL (Hogan, 2012). However, in the context among ACCA students, not necessarily all of the time, energy, and resources are lost because those students merely drop out from an IHL to switch to another IHL. Furthermore, they just need to continue sitting for the remaining examination papers they have yet to pass. Therefore, it is a challenging task for IHL to retain them

because there is no real need for students to remain in one particular IHL for the entire duration of their ACCA studies.

This research therefore aims to study the relationship between quality of lecturer services given to students (both expected and perceived), students' emotional satisfaction, institutional affective commitment, and students' withdrawal cognition.

QUALITY OF INSTRUCTOR SERVICES TO STUDENTS

Extant research have used SERVQUAL model (Parasumaran, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) to assess the quality of services received by students from the IHL as a whole (Russell, 1995). According to Carter (2009), a high level of service quality leads to a high level of customer satisfaction. A successful service organisation relies on all of its employees to provide the best service to its customers (Emanuel & Adams, 2006). That best service should then also come from the lecturers in the colleges.

Emanuel and Adams (2006) used a different approach to assess service quality by assessing the service quality of the instructor. For this reason, the quality of lecturer services offered to students will be examined in the present study. Unlike services offered by IHL, quality services offered by lecturers can be assumed to be more personal and it should be more effective in strengthening student retention. Based on the SERVQUAL model, both expected and perceived quality of the lecturer services will be assessed in the present study.

STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION

According to Ranaweera and Prabhu (2003), satisfied customers are more loyal and they will recommend the business to others which will eventually benefit the company financially. Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000) claimed that emotion is a core attribute in satisfaction and it should be assessed. Yu and Dean (2001) found that emotional customer satisfaction is a better predictor of loyalty and many studies have established the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer

loyalty (Yu & Dean, 2001). For this reason, students' emotional satisfaction is assessed in this study.

INSTITUTIONAL AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

Affective commitment has been established as a predictor to turnover intention (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Hogan (2012) argued that organisational commitment can be applied to students to understand student persistence to continue studying in a particular IHL. A student may be affectively committed to an IHL due to their experience in the campus (Hogan, 2012).

The present study therefore adopts the organisational affective commitment literature to be applied to IHL among ACCA students. Hogan (2012) found that only affective commitment among students is negatively correlated to students' withdrawal cognition. For this reason, only affective commitment is included in the theoretical framework.

STUDENTS WITHDRAWAL COGNITIONS

Based on the turnover intentions literature, the variable is adapted into the higher education context to make a study on student retention. Turnover intention represents a good proxy for actual turnover in an organisational context (Smyth, Zhai, & Li, 2009). For this reason, students' withdrawal cognition is assumed to be a proxy for the actual withdrawal of students from the IHL. In the present study, students' withdrawal cognition represent students' intent to leave the IHL. Hogan (2012) claimed that withdrawal cognition is at a stage where remedial action can still be taken by the IHL to discourage them from leaving. This implies the importance of studying the determinants to students' withdrawal cognition.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the above literature, the theoretical framework and hypotheses are developed. The proposed framework for the research is shown below in Figure 1.

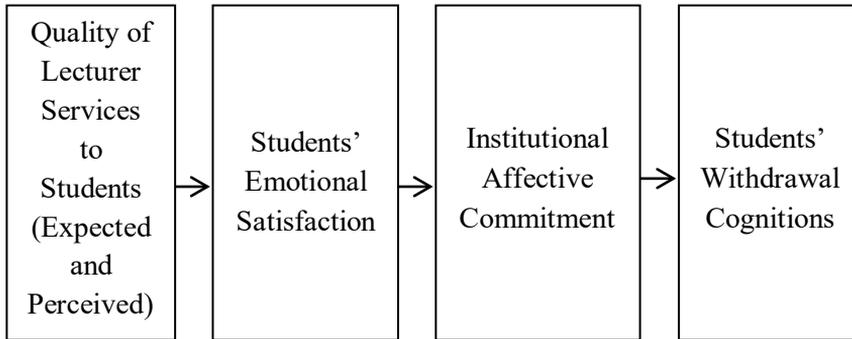


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

- H1. There is a positive relationship between expected quality of lecturer services to students and students' emotional satisfaction.
- H2. There is a positive relationship between perceived quality of lecturer services to students and students' emotional satisfaction.
- H3. There is a positive relationship between students' emotional satisfaction and institutional affective commitment.
- H4. There is a positive relationship between institutional affective commitment and students' withdrawal cognitions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Structural equation modelling will be used to test the hypotheses network of relationships mentioned above. Self-report surveys will be used to assess the hypotheses and the survey will be created using scales adopted from authoritative researchers. The surveys will be distributed to all ACCA students in the only two ACCA tuition providers in Penang on

a convenience sampling basis. All of the measures will use a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

QUALITY OF LECTURER SERVICES TO STUDENTS

Quality of lecturer services to students will be assessed based on the Quality of Instructor Service to Students (QISS) questionnaire. The QISS questionnaire (Emanuel & Adams, 2006) is divided into student's expectation and student's experience and it contains 20 questions each. The Cronbach's alpha were reported at between 0.83 to 0.88 for student's expectation and between 0.77 to 0.90 for student's experience (Emanuel & Adams, 2006). The word "Instructor" will be replaced with the word "Lecturer" to suit the settings in Malaysia.

STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION

Students' emotional satisfaction will be measured using the scale developed by Liljander and Strandvik (1997). It consists of seven questions and it has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.80 as reported by Yu and Dean (2001).

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

Institutional commitment will be measured using the scale developed by Hogan (2012). The Cronbach's Alpha were reported at 0.92 and 0.83 respectively.

STUDENTS WITHDRAWAL COGNITIONS

Students' withdrawal cognitions will be measured using the scale developed by Hogan (2012). The scale has three items with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.75.

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Kertas Penyelidikan

Penggunaan Media Sosial Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Berketurunan India di Pusat Pengajian Komunikasi Universiti Sains Malaysia

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Abstrak: Penggunaan media sosial menjadi trend popular di kalangan masyarakat moden. Di Malaysia, hampir 81% daripada penduduknya menggunakan Internet. Demografi pengguna media sosial menunjukkan bahawa 31% daripada pengguna media sosial di negara ini ialah pelajar. Ini menunjukkan bahawa golongan pelajar gemar menggunakan dan menghabiskan waktu mereka dalam dunia media sosial berbanding aktiviti lain. *Facebook, Instagram, Twitter* dan *Whatsapp* adalah di antara media sosial yang digunakan secara luas di kalangan pelajar. Satu reka bentuk kajian menggunakan temu bual mendalam telah dijalankan ke atas 31 pelajar berketurunan India dari Pusat Pengajian Komunikasi, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

Kata Kunci: Media sosial, *Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp*

PENDAHULUAN

Meneliti definisi media sosial, ia merupakan salah satu aplikasi dalam internet yang muncul sebagai media baru di zaman era digital dan telah mempengaruhi kehidupan manusia dari pelbagai aspek. Apapun perkembangan media sosial tetap dipengaruhi oleh perkembangan internet itu sendiri (Ika Destina, Ali Salman & Mohd. Helmi Abd Rahman 2013).

Media sosial dianggap unik bukan sahaja kerana memberikan ruang untuk bertemu dengan orang yang tidak dikenali sebaliknya

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membenarkan penggunaanya untuk memperlihatkan kandungan dan meluahkan perasaan dalam rangkaian media sosial. Kajian mendapati adaptasi penggunaan media sosial juga berjaya membawa satu revolusi dalam hubungan komunikasi manusia.

Buktinya, komunikasi antara manusia memasuki fasa kelima (Brody 1990; Siti Ezaleila Mustafa & Azizah Hamzah 2011) iaitu lebih menekankan komunikasi interaktif yang berfungsi atas bantuan teknologi berasaskan internet dan pengkomputeran yang menyaksikan media baharu atau era media kedua (Poster, 1995; Holmes, 2005; Siti Ezaleila Mustafa & Azizah Hamzah 2011).

Dengan perkembangan internet, manfaat penggunaan laman sosial membawa evolusi terhadap bagaimana cara manusia berinteraksi antara satu sama lain di samping mewujudkan 'kebergantungan sosial' (Edwi Arief Sosiawan 2011). Menurut laporan Media Facts 2012/2013, di Malaysia terdapat sebanyak 6,868 pengguna internet. Statistik kajian menunjukkan 5,631 orang daripada keseluruhan populasi melayari internet tujuan penggunaan media sosial.

Hasil kajian demografi pengguna media sosial menunjukkan 42% daripada mereka terdiri daripada golongan berusia 20 hingga 29 tahun. Turut dikenalpasti 31% daripada jumlah di atas merupakan golongan pelajar. Ini menunjukkan bahawa pelajar yang berada dalam lingkungan 20 hingga 29 tahun gemar menggunakan media sosial berbanding aktiviti lain.

Demikian itu, penglibatan remaja dalam penggunaan media sosial memberi sumbangan signifikansi kepada populariti media sosial. Selain itu, pendedahan kepada teknologi maklumat pada alam remaja mendorong perkongsian maya, terutamanya menggunakan platform media sosial (Wardrip-Fruin & Montfort 2003; Chuah, K. 2013).

OBJEKTIF KAJIAN

Kajian ini dijalankan bagi mencapai objektif:

1. Mengenalpasti tren penggunaan media sosial di kalangan pelajar berketurunan India di Pusat Pengajian Komunikasi USM.

2. Mengenalpasti faktor yang mendorong penggunaan media sosial dalam kalangan pelajar India di Pusat Pengajian Komunikasi USM.

SOROTAN KAJIAN

Terdapat banyak kajian lepas yang menyelidik tentang penggunaan media sosial atau media baharu. Antaranya, kajian kuantitatif oleh Hanafi, K. & Mohd Helmi Abd. Rahim (2017) yang meneliti faktor penggunaan media sosial dan pengaruhnya terhadap pembentukan gerakan pemimpin pelajar universiti di bandar Indonesia. Penemuan kajian menggariskan media sosial seperti *Facebook*, *Whatsapp*, *Twitter*, *Instagram* dan *Line* antara platform sosial yang kerap digunakan untuk membentuk gerakan sosial. Kajian ini turut mendapati platform media sosial mempunyai kontribusi utama dalam pembentukan gerakan sosial dan memandu ke arah kehidupan berdemokrasi kumpulan mahasiswa.

Kajian tentang *How social is Twitter use? Affiliative tendency and communication competence as predictors* (2014) pula memberi hala tuju kepada kajian pada masa akan datang dengan memberi cadangan supaya menjalankan kajian tidak hanya berfokuskan kepada *Twitter* tetapi juga kepada penggunaan *Facebook* dan juga rangkaian media sosial yang lain. Dapatan kajian ini juga menyatakan rangkaian media sosial merupakan lanjutan hubungan komunikasi berbanding dengan dapatan yang menyatakan media sosial merupakan alternatif kepada hubungan bersemuka.

Kajian Mohd Zaidi Mahmud & Bahiyah Omar (2013) yang mendapati tiga motif yang mempunyai hubungan signifikan dengan kekerapan penggunaan *Facebook* iaitu merasa hebat berteman, menghiburkan dan mencari maklumat. Manakala motif menghiburkan dikenalpasti sebagai faktor penyumbang dominan yang signifikan kepada model regresi penggunaan *Facebook* dalam kajian ini. Limitasi yang terdapat dalam kajian ini adalah ia hanya mengukur satu medium rangkaian sosial sedangkan pelajar terdedah kepada pelbagai rangkaian media sosial tanpa sebarang had.

Kajian yang dijalankan oleh Ika Destiana dan rakannya Ali Salman dan Mohd Helmi Abd Rahim (2013) mensasarkan 298 pelajar ijazah sarjana muda di Palembang, Indonesia yang berumur 17 sehingga 25

tahun. Hasil kajian turut menunjukkan bahawa penerimaan media sosial dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor terutamanya faktor mudah guna, faktor kaitan dan rangkaian antara peribadi dan sosial.

Kajian yang dijalankan oleh Priscilla Gitimu dan rakannya Megan Sponcil (2012) menyimpulkan bahawa hampir kesemua pelajar menggunakan salah satu bentuk rangkaian sosial. Kajian turut mengenalpasti bahawa 99% pelajar menggunakan *Facebook*. Menurut pengkaji, mereka bersependapat dengan penemuan kajian yang ditemui oleh Lenhart et al, (2010) iaitu *Facebook* dikenalpasti sebagai rangkaian media sosial yang paling popular. Kajian ini menggunakan persampelan stratifikasi mengikut gender dan juga umur. Sebanyak 96 informan digunakan untuk menjawab *survey* atas talian bagi mengkaji penggunaan media sosial oleh pelajar kolej dan kesan penggunaan media sosial terhadap komunikasi terhadap orang lain dan juga konsep pembentukan diri.

Rumusannya, kesemua kajian lepas menggunakan reka bentuk kuantitatif dan menggunakan borang soal-selidik bagi mencapai objektif kajian mereka dan hampir kesemua kajian menggunakan pelajar sebagai informan serta menggunakan kaedah persampelan tujuan atau purposif. Pendekatan yang dipilih pengkaji untuk kajian ini menonjolkan kelainan berbanding kajian kerana pemilihan kumpulan informan yang kecil sedangkan hasil penelitian kajian lepas mendapati menggunakan bilangan informan yang besar bagi reka bentuk kuantitatif.

METODOLOGI

Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif iaitu temubual mendalam. Pendekatan kualitatif dipilih untuk menjawab persoalan kajian berdasarkan pengalaman informan kajian. Kajian kualitatif ini juga menggunakan kaedah persampelan bertujuan (*purposive sampling*).

Sampel kajian terdiri daripada pelajar berketurunan India di Pusat Pengajian Komunikasi, (PPK) Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Kampus Induk Pulau Pinang. Informan kajian adalah seramai 31 pelajar berketurunan India yang terdiri daripada 8 orang pelajar tahun pertama, 10 orang pelajar tahun kedua dan 13 orang pelajar tahun tiga. Terdapat seramai 5 orang pelajar lelaki dan 26 pelajar perempuan. Umur kesemua informan adalah daripada 19 hingga 25 tahun. Kajian ini juga hanya

melihat penggunaan empat rangkaian media sosial iaitu *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Twitter* dan *Whatsapp* di kalangan pelajar berketurunan India di Pusat Pengajian Komunikasi USM.

HASIL KAJIAN

Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kesemua informan kajian ini memiliki akaun media sosial. Hasil temubual mendapati seramai 14 pelajar menggunakan empat medium rangkaian media sosial, 9 orang pelajar menggunakan tiga rangkaian sosial dan 7 orang pelajar daripada jumlah informan menggunakan dua rangkaian media sosial. Turut didapati seorang pelajar menggunakan satu medium sahaja daripada keempat-empat rangkaian media sosial yang dibincangkan dalam kajian ini.

Kesemua informan mempunyai akaun *Whatsapp* atas alasan ia merupakan medium komunikasi yang paling murah dan cepat. Informan juga berpendapat bahawa *Whatsapp* merupakan medium yang mesra pengguna dan ciri utama aplikasi ini yang digemari ialah kerana mempunyai kemudahan mewujudkan kumpulan. Kemudahan ini membolehkan maklumat dapat disampaikan kepada rakan-rakan mereka secara serentak.

Hasil temubual mendapati *Facebook* merupakan medium kedua yang digemari oleh pelajar berketurunan India di PPK USM. Alasan yang diberikan oleh informan ialah aplikasi media sosial ini menghiburkan dan mereka dapat mengetahui aktiviti kawan-kawan maya mereka dan meluahkan perasaan mereka setiap masa. Manakala penggunaan *Instagram* dan *Twitter* dikatakan kurang digunakan dengan alasan tidak mesra pengguna dan tidak semua rakan informan mempunyai kedua-dua aplikasi berkenaan.

Pelajar-pelajar ini menggunakan perkhidmatan internet percuma yang disediakan oleh USM dan ada kalanya data peribadi dalam melayari media sosial. Hasil kajian juga mendapati 70% daripada informan menggunakan telefon bimbit secara amnya dan telefon pintar secara khususnya dalam melayari media-media sosial ini. Informan lain menggunakan komputer riba, komputer peribadi dalam bilik atau rumah, *ipad* dan *tablet* dalam melayari halaman-halaman sosial ini.

Menjawab mengenai masa yang diperuntukkan dalam melayari halaman-halaman sosial ini, rata-rata informan menyatakan mereka tidak mempunyai masa yang tetap untuk melayari halaman-halaman sosial ini. Jawapan yang diberikan oleh kesemua informan ini ialah media sosial menjadi teman mereka setiap masa dan di mana sahaja selagi mereka boleh mengakses internet. Bagaimanapun informan bersetuju bahawa mereka sekurang-kurangnya memperuntukkan 1-2 jam secara purata setiap hari untuk media-media sosial ini.

Informan juga menyatakan masa yang paling banyak diperuntukkan untuk melayari halaman-halaman ini adalah pada waktu malam iaitu sebelum masuk tidur dan pada masa-masa terluang seperti semasa menunggu bas di sekitar kampus, menunggu sesi kuliah bermula, ketika membeli makanan dan berjalan keseorangan sama ada di dalam atau luar kampus.

Hasil kajian dengan pendekatan temu bual ini juga telah mendedahkan bahawa setiap informan menggunakan platform media sosial dalam aktiviti harian mereka atas tujuan penggunaan yang berbeza. Menurut informan-informan ini, faktor utama penggunaan media sosial adalah mereka rasa hebat di kalangan rakan. Golongan ini menyatakan mereka merasa hebat apabila mereka mempunyai lebih banyak halaman sosial terutamanya aplikasi-aplikasi baru yang belum dimiliki oleh orang lain. Mereka merasakan lebih banyak aplikasi media sosial, lebih banyak maklumat yang bakal mereka peroleh.

Seperti yang ramai sedia maklum, pelajar institusi pengajian tinggi mempunyai beban kerja dalam bentuk tugas, laporan dan aktiviti berkumpul untuk disiapkan sebagai tanda aras dalam memenuhi keperluan satu-satu kursus. Dengan melayari halaman-halaman ini rasa kerisauan tidak melengkap tugas yang diberikan dapat dikurangkan dan memberikan ketenangan kepada mereka. Pelajar turut berpendapat media sosial dapat membantu mereka mengharungi kesunyian ketika melakukan tugas-tugas yang diberikan oleh pensyarah. Mereka juga bergantung pada media sosial semasa tidak mempunyai teman terutamanya ketika cuti hujung minggu, cuti pertengahan semester atau cuti-cuti khas yang lain.

Informan kajian bersetuju bahawa faktor menghiburkan turut mendorong penggunaan media sosial di kalangan pelajar. Kata pelajar, penggunaan media sosial merupakan satu aktiviti yang menyeronokkan

kerana mereka boleh mengikuti perkembangan kenalan yang melibatkan gambar kenangan sahabat yang turut mendaftar dan mempunyai akaun dalam aplikasi yang sama. Pelajar juga dapat menghiburkan diri dengan memuatnaik gambar kenangan dan percutian, mengemaskini maklumat diri dan juga memuatnaik status, pendapat atau maklumat yang mereka ingin kongsi dengan pengguna media sosial yang lain.

Informan juga berasa terhibur apabila gambar-gambar dan status yang dimuatnaik oleh mereka mendapat perhatian daripada pengikut dan kawan-kawan mereka. Kepuasan juga dicapai oleh informan apabila status mereka mendapat sokongan dan persetujuan daripada pembaca yang lain. Dengan cara ini, informan merasakan apa yang dilakukan oleh mereka adalah betul dan mereka harus terus melakukan aktiviti yang mendapat sokongan itu. Informan turut berasa selamat dan tenang apabila status mereka disokong terutamanya status yang berunsur emosi, kekecewaan dan memerlukan perhatian.

Seterusnya informan kajian turut menjelaskan bahawa faktor mengekalkan hubungan turut mendominasi faktor-faktor sampingan penggunaan media sosial. Pelajar harus bersedia untuk menempuhi alam universiti tanpa ahli keluarga dan rakan-rakan dari alam persekolahan di sisi terutamanya bagi mereka yang mendapat tawaran di institusi yang jauh dari kawasan tempat asal mereka. Jadi mereka menggunakan platform media sosial untuk menghantar mesej kepada rakan-rakan dan keluarga di kampung halaman dan menghubungi mereka secara kerap. Dengan cara ini, informan merasakan rakan-rakan dan ahli keluarga masih berada di sisi mereka. Informan juga dapat mengetahui aktiviti yang dilakukan oleh rakan dan ahli keluarga mereka serta merasakan diri mereka masih dikelilingi oleh mereka yang disayangi dan tidak terasa kesunyiaan.

Media sosial juga mendekatkan hubungan orang yang dikenali dan mendapatkan akses untuk menghubungi individu yang sukar dihubungi. Kajian oleh Siti Ezaleila Mustafa & Azizah Hamzah (2011) mengukuhkan penemuan kajian ini dengan menyatakan pelajar menggunakan media sosial untuk mengekalkan perhubungan sosial mereka.

Bernaung di bawah bumbung PPK secara tidak langsung memerlukan pelajar untuk mencari bahan dan individu yang terlibat dalam bidang komunikasi dan media sebagai keperluan untuk

melengkapkan tugas yang diberikan. Pelajar yang menggunakan platform media sosial terutamanya *Facebook* untuk mencari kenalan dan orang yang mempunyai kepentingan dalam bidang media termasuk wartawan, editor, pengarah, artis, syarikat periklanan dan sebagainya untuk melengkapkan tugas yang diamanatkan. Informan berpendapat penggunaan media sosial bukan sahaja cepat tetapi menjimatkan wang mereka kerana media sosial membolehkan mereka mengumpulkan bahan secara chat dan memberikan komen melalui *Whatsapp*. Cara ini membolehkan informan menyiapkan tugas tanpa perlu banyak pergerakan.

Hubungan yang dibina terus dikekalkan dalam media sosial terutamanya melalui *Facebook* dan *Instagram*. Perkongsian gambar dan status terus dilakukan dan kadang-kadang perbualan melalui *chat* juga dilakukan. Aktiviti ini dilakukan oleh pelajar untuk membolehkan mereka 'menggunakan' kawan baru mereka jika bantuan mereka diperlukan baik untuk melengkapkan tugas atau bantuan untuk mendapatkan pekerjaan pada masa hadapan. Informan juga bersetuju bahawa mereka tidak kisah jika golongan *vip* ini tidak melayan mereka secara mesra, tetapi merasakan diri mereka hebat dan bangga kerana berkawan dengan mereka dalam alam maya.

Bagaimanapun, faktor mencari maklumat turut memberi dorongan kepada pelajar untuk melayari platform media sosial. Informan menyatakan bahawa media sosial memainkan peranan penting dalam penjaan idea baru. Kenyataan informan ini mengetengahkan idea bahawa media sosial telah mula menggantikan peranan media tradisional kerana pelajar lebih selesa dan mudah memperolehi maklumat melalui sumber media sosial.

Informan mengaku bahawa kebanyakan hasil kerja tugas yang mereka lakukan adalah hasil kajian atas talian dan perkongsian yang mereka lakukan dalam halaman sosial. Bagi mereka banyak idea untuk melengkapkan tugas diperolehi dari facebook terutamanya idea dalam menghasilkan tulisan rencana, idea menghasilkan iklan dan idea untuk menghasilkan filem-filem pendek. Informan berpendirian status dan gambar-gambar yang dimuat naikkan dalam halaman sosial seperti *Facebook* dan *Instagram* memberikan mereka idea-idea baru terutamanya dari segi *trend* yang diminati oleh pengguna iaitu kawan-kawan mereka.

Informan juga menyatakan *Twitter* merupakan medium sosial yang paling berkesan untuk berdebat mengenai satu-satu isu dan medan untuk mendapatkan pandangan daripada pelbagai lapisan masyarakat. Manakala aplikasi *Whatsapp* digunakan sebagai medium perhubungan dalam membantu berkomunikasi antara ahli kumpulan terutamanya perbincangan idea dan perancangan.

Menurut informan yang ditemubual, media sosial juga memberi ruang kepada mereka untuk membina hubungan romantik bersama pasangan mereka. Ini kerana penggunaan aplikasi media sosial adalah mudah dan tidak mengenakan sebarang bayaran. Penggunaan media sosial *Whatsapp* paling kerap digunakan oleh golongan pelajar ini dalam menjalinkan hubungan romantik. Manakala *Instagram* digunakan untuk bertukar gambar-gambar sesama mereka dan *Facebook* pula banyak digunakan untuk meluahkan perasaan dan merakamkan rasa penghargaan kepada pasangan mereka terutamanya berita-berita gembira.

Menariknya, pelajar juga menggunakan platform *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Whatsapp* dan *Instagram* untuk mencari orang lebih menarik dalam hidup mereka. Orang yang lebih menarik bukan sahaja merujuk kepada teman hidup tetapi juga terdiri daripada mereka yang mempunyai persamaan dalam perwatakan, mempunyai hobi yang luar biasa ataupun memuatnaik atau menyebarkan maklumat yang menarik dalam ruangan media sosial.

Dengan berbuat demikian, pelajar merasakan mereka banyak mendapat informasi baru dan melebarkan sayap dalam bidang yang diminati. Terdapat 5 orang informan yang menyatakan minat mereka dalam dunia masakan, hiasan bunga dan tarian berjaya ditingkatkan dengan hanya berkongsi pengalaman dan video daripada rakan-rakan alam maya mereka. Manakala 7 lagi informan menyatakan mereka berasa puas apabila memuatnaikkan berita terutamanya kejadian yang berlaku di sekeliling mereka untuk bacaan rakan-rakan mereka. Informan lain pula berasa selesa dan selamat apabila mendapati rakan-rakan mereka mempunyai pemikiran dan perwatakan yang sama seperti mereka seperti gembira dan ceria selalu. Golongan informan ini merasa kurang selesa apabila ada antara rakan media sosial mereka bersikap radikal dan kritis daripada mereka. Selalunya golongan radikal ini cuba didiamkan atau dikeluarkan terus dari senarai kawan-kawan media sosial mereka.

Turut diakui, media sosial digunakan untuk mencari populariti di kalangan pengguna media sosial lain. Pelajar menggunakan pelbagai

teknik dan pendekatan untuk dikenali dan menjadi pujian warga media sosial. Daripada 31 informan, 17 menyatakan, mereka akan memuatnaikkan banyak status dalam halaman sosial mereka dan berasa popular jika menerima banyak *like* dan *share* daripada rakan-rakan mereka. Bagi golongan ini lebih banyak *like* merupakan kayu ukur untuk tahap populariti mereka.

Bagaimanapun 14 orang informan yang lain kurang bersetuju dengan faktor ini. Informan ini menyatakan mencari populariti dan menjadi pujian bukan tujuan mereka menggunakan media sosial. Mereka menyatakan media sosial adalah untuk bersosial dan mencari maklumat dan kenalan yang baru dan bukannya untuk tujuan lain. Golongan ini juga percaya populariti melalui media sosial mungkin boleh mengundang bahaya dari segi keselamatan diri.

KESIMPULAN

Kesimpulannya, kajian ini berjaya menggariskan sembilan faktor yang mempengaruhi penggunaan media sosial di kalangan pelajar berketurunan India di PPK USM. Walaupun media sosial selalu diwar-warkan sebagai medium yang melalaikan tetapi hasil kajian ini banyak mendapat respon yang positif daripada pelajar. Bagi golongan ini media sosial seharusnya dilihat dari sudut yang positif iaitu membantu mereka mengharungi zaman pembelajaran di universiti dengan lebih baik. Kajian ini juga mendapati kepelbagaian yang perolehi oleh informan dari segi maklumat, komunikasi dan hubungan baru sebenarnya mendekatkan dan menyediakan mereka ke arah dunia pekerjaan yang bakal mereka tempuhi selepas tamat pengajian mereka dengan lebih kreatif dan inovatif.

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Format of References

1. References with the same authors are arranged by the year of publication in chronological order. If there is more than one references to the same authors and published in the same year, insert alphabet a, b and c after the publication year.
2. Each entry in the reference list should be special indented one-half inch hanging indentation.
3. Chinese and English references should be arranged in chronological order. Chinese references should be arranged using the surname (pinyin) of the author; English references should use the last name of the author.

Bibliographic classification according to books, journal papers, dissertation and newspapers is not required.

(1) Single Author / Editor

Author, A. A. (Year). *Book Title*. Location: Publisher.

Editor, A. A. (Ed.) (Year). *Book Title*. Location: Publisher.

(2) Two or More Authors / Editors

Editor, A. A. & Editor, B. B. (Eds.). (1991). *Book Title*. Location: Publisher.

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (1997). *Book Title*. Location: Publisher.

(3) Translation Works

Author, A. A. (1951). *Book Title* (B. Translator, Trans.). Location: Publisher.
(Original work published 1940)

(4) An Article in a Collection of Essays by Several Authors

Author, A. A. (1992). Article Title. In B. B. Editor & C. C. Editor (Eds.), *Book Title* (pp. xx-xx). Location: Publisher.

(5) Journal Articles

Author, A. A. (2009). Article Title. *Periodical Title*, xx(x), xx-xx.

(6) Conference Papers

Author, A. A. (1995, April). *Title*. Name of Conference, Venue.

(7) Dissertations

Author, A. A. (1999). *Dissertation Title*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University Name, Place.

(8) Encyclopedia

Author, A. A. (Ed.). (1980). *Title* (6th. ed., Vols. 1-20). Location: Publisher.

(9) Newspaper Article (With or Without Author)

Author, A. A. (1983, September 20). Article Title. *Name of the Newspaper*, pp. xx-xx.

Article title. (2013, June 9). *Name of the Newspaper*, p. xx.

(10) Website (With or Without Author and Published Date)

Author, A. A. (2011, August 3). Article Title. *Website Title*. Retrieved from <http://www.xxx.xxx>

Article Title. (n.d.). Retrieved March 9, 2009, from XXX website, <http://www.xxx.xxx>

(11) Blog Articles

Author, A. A. (2011, January 12). Article Title. [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.xxx.xxx>