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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Measuring work-role transitions: The cross-cultural experience of hotel expatriates in Malaysia

* Haslina Halim
Universiti Utara Malaysia
lina@uum.edu.my

Che Su Mustaffa
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Farah Lina Azizan
Universiti Utara Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The literature on expatriation highlighted many individuals and organisational factors that affect expatriate adjustment. However, the roles of some individual and organisational factors are still not clear and have been ignored by past researchers. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the variations in expatriates' work, general and interaction adjustment and to examine the relationship between work-role characteristics and expatriate adjustment in the hotel industry. The work-role characteristics; which are comprised of role novelty, role ambiguity and role conflict, are tested on the different dimensions of adjustment. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 323 respondents who were comprised of expatriates working in Malaysia's hotel industry. The findings revealed a positive correlation between role novelty and work adjustment that indicated the impact of work-role characteristics on adjustment dimensions. However, both role ambiguity and role conflict are negatively correlated with work adjustment. The findings from this study proved significant for the industry as it contributes towards new knowledge on expatriation in a multicultural society, especially the work adjustment of hotel expatriates. It would also help create awareness among hotel companies on the importance of work characteristics in the process of adjustment. The findings also contributed to new empirical findings in regards to literature on expatriation and cross-cultural adjustment, which integrate the information on determinants of adjustment among hotel expatriates. Beside the findings, the discussions on limitations and suggestions for future research are also presented in the paper.

Keywords: ***work-role characteristics, expatriate adjustment, hotel industry***

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies on expatriation have shown the relation between cultural environment and adjustment and how the relationship influences individual adjustments, attitudes and behaviours (Davies, Kraeh, & Froese, 2015; Selmer, 2001; Yavas & Bodur, 1999). Huff, Song and Gresch (2014) stated that culturally adjusted expatriates are open to the host culture and are able to adjust their behaviours, norms and rules to the current environment accordingly. On the other hand, the maladjusted expatriates will experience anxiety which precedes to several negative job-related outcomes such as lower job satisfaction and performance (Silbiger, Berger, Barnes, & Renwick, 2017). Thus, this ongoing issue leads to early returns of affected expatriates to the home country (Shi & Franklin, 2014). Torbiorn (1982) defined expatriate adjustment as as a state of “homeostasis”, whereby an individual feels comfortable towards the new environment and this leads him/her to function effectively and eventually succeed the assignment.

Previous research had identified a failure rate between 25 to 40 percent for international relocations leading up to the new millennium which ended with premature return especially in developing countries (Harzing, 1995; Wang & Varma, 2019). Among the reasons attributed to these failure rates include: (1) the inability of the spouse to adapt to the host culture; (2) the inability of the expatriates themselves to adapt to the host culture; and (3) family-related problems associated with foreign assignment. The higher failure rate in developing countries is described as rather alarming as this is the region where the most “attractive” and “growing” countries of the world are located (Halim, Bakar, & Mohamad, 2019; Shay & Tracey, 1997; Tahir, 2018).

The rapid development and growing trend in the number of expatriates in Malaysia has heightened the need for research and understanding of how these expatriates adjust to a developing country like Malaysia during their assignments. Although there has been abundance of research on expatriation especially on expatriate adjustment, reviews suggest that empirical studies on the adjustment of expatriates in a developing, multiracial country are still scarce (see Halim, Bakar, & Mustaffa, 2017). With the exception of Mohd Tahir and Ismail (2007) who investigated cross-cultural challenges; Subramaniam, Raduan, Jegak and Naresh (2010) on personality and cross-cultural adjustment; Halim et al. (2017) on the mediating effects of communication and interaction; and Miranda (2009) on expatriates’ learning style; it can be said that very limited research on expatriate work adjustment in a multicultural environment have been published.

As a developing, multicultural society, Malaysia is worth investigating especially when the country has become one of the preferred foreign direct investment (FDI) destinations in the South East Asia (Jomo, 2019; Malaysian Industrial Development Authority, 2009; UNCTAD, 2017). The aggressive promotion on Malaysia as a tourism destination, together with the government’s policy has clearly indicated that the country will face a continuous increase in the number of expatriates in various sectors such as oil and gas, manufacturing and engineering. In fact, a part of the Economic Transformation Program (ETP) set up by the previous government has also acknowledged the human capital needs of the Entry Points Projects (EPPs) and business opportunities, whereby the government will take action to attract foreign talent (expatriates) to work in Malaysia and ease immigration rules to facilitate the entry of talent as it is believed that this will provide a ready pool of technical, critical thinking and leaderships skills needed to run future business opportunities as well as projects in non-National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs). The government’s policy further proves that the number of expatriates working in Malaysia will increase tremendously. The latest statistics provided by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2018) puts the expatriate population at around 55,000 (10.7%), with no specific figures. Therefore, it is strongly believed that increased research on expatriates in Malaysia is needed, expecially when the country is moving and developing fast toward in achieving its vision. To further enhance our understanding on expatriate adjustment in Malaysia, this present research examined how work-role characteristics affect hotel industry expatriates in Malaysia.

PERSPECTIVES OF ADJUSTMENT

Earlier works on expatriate adjustment suggested that adjustment is a multidimensional construct (Black & Gregersen, 1991). The multidimensionality of the adjustment process has been widely discussed from various perspectives in the cross-cultural communication, acculturation and expatriation literature.

Communication perspective

In the cross-cultural communication framework, two areas of adjustment have been identified: the social adjustment (Clark & Altman, 2016; Furnham & Bochner, 1982) and communication adaptability (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001; Wheeless & Duran, 1982). Studies on these two facets of adjustment mainly focus on adjustment of sojourners, specifically international students. Chu, Khan, Jahn, and Kraemer (2015) suggested that the stress experienced by international students is caused by the inability to socially adjust to the host culture. This has largely resulted from their lack of social skills needed to deal with new situations. It was also suggested that an individual might face a major source of stress when dealing with an unfamiliar culture, especially in everyday interpersonal encounters with people of the host nation such as being in the streets, shops, bars and around strangers. There are a variety of factors that affect the social adjustment process. This includes the inability to communicate such as speaking and understanding the language used in the host country, which is important in ensuring the development of social relations with the host nationals.

Adaptability on the other hand, is an important concept in communication competence (Kim, 2015). It focuses “on the ability of the communicator to be flexible in communicating with a variety of people in a variety of situations” (Wheeless & Duran, 1982, p. 54). Researchers have identified how an individual’s personal characteristics such as personality, psychological and socio-demographic variables influence their communication behaviours (Kim, 2015). Beside personality, cultural differences are also found to affect an individual’s communication behaviour.

Acculturation perspective

Three areas of adjustment are identified in the acculturation literature. Ozer (2015) proposed psychological and sociocultural adjustment, while Aycan and Berry (1996) and Bayl-Smith and Griffin (2015) posited work adjustment. Psychological adjustment refers to the psychological well-being and satisfaction, which includes a feeling of satisfaction with the various aspects of life. Unlike psychological adjustment, sociocultural adjustment refers to the social skills or the ability to “fit in” into the new cultural environment (Lee & Ciftci, 2014). Simply, this refers to an individual’s ability to handle problems associated with living their lives, how they work toward becoming effective in the new culture and how they engage in positive interactions with the host nationals (Koveshnikov, Wechtler, & Dejoux, 2014). Work adjustment simply refers to how an individual accomplishes their tasks and their attitude towards work (Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, & Bakker, 2014) and this is marked by good performance and a positive attitude towards the new job. The concept of psychological adjustment is actually based on a problem-oriented view that focuses on attitudinal factors in the process of adjustment (Hirai, Frazier, & Syed, 2015), whilst the sociocultural adjustment is based on the cultural learning theory, which focuses on the social behaviour and social skills that underlie attitudinal factors (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Gudmundsdóttir, 2015).

In acculturation literature, acculturation attitudes are considered important for successful adjustment (Fisher, Hutchings, & Pinto, 2015; Hajro, Stahl, Clegg, & Lazarova, 2019). Berry (1980, 2005) who proposed a model of acculturation attitudes addresses two critical issues with regard to an individual attitude toward the host culture (Figure 1).

Issue 2
Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationship with members of the host society ?

Issue 1
Is it considered to be of value to maintain own cultural identity and characteristics ?

	Yes	No
Yes	Integration	Assimilation
No	Separation	Marginalization

Figure 1. Model of acculturation attitudes
Source: Berry (1980, 2005)

While the first issue concerns whether or not an individual values maintaining his/her own cultural characteristics, the second issue concerns whether or not maintaining relationships with people of the host culture is considered to be of value. The model suggests that if the response to the first issue is "no" and to the second issue is "yes", therefore "assimilation" occurs. This means that the acculturating individual does not wish to maintain his/her cultural characteristics but instead, seeks to relate with groups in the host society. "Separation" is the opposite of assimilation. This is the urge to maintain one's own culture and identity. As a result, the individual does not want to interact with host nationals. Meanwhile, "integration" occurs when the individual is willing to interact with others in the host society, but at the same time, still maintains his/her cultural identity. The final sector, "marginalization" takes place when an individual is not interested in maintaining his/her own culture or even interacting with host nationals. However, there have been debates on how the difficulties are conceptualised, and how the concept of "marginalization" is measured, as it is indistinguishable from "cultural alienation" (e.g. Birman, Simon, Chan, & Tran, 2014; Rudmin, 2003). Berry (1980, 2005) further noted that among the four, integration predicts good mental health and produces lower level of stress among sojourning individuals. This was supported by previous studies conducted on rural to urban migrant youth (e.g. Fang, 2020; Chen, Wang, & Wang, 2009), which revealed that integration is the most effective strategy on their successful adjustment.

Meanwhile, Aycan (1997) noted that the application of acculturation attitudes is more evident in literature on organisational behaviour, but the framework has never been utilised in studies of expatriate adjustment. The model of acculturation attitudes discussed earlier predicted that an integrationist attitude in both work and social life will yield successful adjustment (Halim, Rahman, & Mohamad, 2013). This is based on two reasons - firstly, as the expatriate moves to a new culture, it is necessary for them to adopt the norms and values of the host country. This is to ensure that they function efficiently in the social and work contexts. In this case, willingness to interact with people of the host nation is crucial at this stage. The social learning theory (SLT) introduced by Bandura (1977) suggested that interaction with hosts helps expatriates to obtain information regarding what is appropriate and what is not in the new society. Secondly, interaction with hosts and the efforts shown in learning their ways of doing things help the expatriates to prove to the locals that they value and appreciate the new culture and that they are putting the efforts into learning their ways. In return, the hosts will display greater acceptance and co-operation towards the expatriate.

Ward and Kennedy (1993) believe that there are three main points that need to be considered when theorising cultural influences on psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Firstly, they believe that the variables that affect adjustment should be distinguished either as cultural general or cultural specific. Secondly, they claim that the level of psychological and sociocultural adjustment differs according to the characteristics of the group and the purpose of the sojourn (i.e. expatriation, travelling, studying and so on). Lastly, they believe that the relationship between psychological and sociocultural adjustment also varies according to the expatriate or sojourner's experiences, and this includes their adjustment strategies and how they integrate into the host society. They maintain that the distinction between psychological and sociocultural adjustment has proven to be very useful in cross-cultural adjustment and even though the two forms of adjustment are conceptually interrelated, they are actually distinct concepts and are being predicted by different variables.

Expatriation perspective

Earlier research on adjustment to a foreign culture mainly focused on adjustment to social contexts such as food, weather, interaction with host nationals or the culture in general. However,later research on adjustment suggested that there are three areas of adjustment, namely adjustment to the general environment, adjustment to interaction with host nationals and adjustment to work (Bhatti, Battour, Ismail, & Sundram, 2014; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Fisher et al., 2015; Gudmundsdóttir, 2015; Halim, Bakar, & Mohamad, 2018; Lu et al., 2014). Adjustment to the general environment is an area that has been widely studied by researchers and scholars. It encompasses factors that affect the daily lifestyles of expatriates such as weather, food and entertainment.

When expatriates enter a new culture, they must learn the whole new set of norms, values and practices of the host culture, which are different from their own. This new set of norms, values and practices is not stated anywhere and it is the responsibility of the expatriate to learn and adjust. Studies have revealed that the more similar the home country and the host country, the easier the adjustment will be. Expatriates who come from China to Malaysia for example, would experience less difficulty in adjusting to the new culture as compared to those who are being assigned to the Middle East. This is due to cultural similarities between Malaysia and China. Most of the similarities from traditional culture were brought over by migrant Chinese especially in 19th and 20th centuries. As Malaysia is multi-ethnic society, the Chinese cultures are integrated with the overall national culture (Lu, Zhang, Chee, & Yeoh, 2018). In one of the studies conducted by Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992a), they found that successful adjustment which eventually leads to the completion of foreign assignment is linked more closely to the expatriate's ability to adjust to the new culture rather than to adjustment to work.

Adjustment to interaction, on the other hand, involves the level of comfort that employees feel when interacting with members of the host culture. Claus, Maletz, Casoinic and Pierson (2015) believe that this is the most difficult area of adjustment since differences between individuals will usually be revealed when they communicate. Huff et al. (2014) state that an individual with good relational skills will experience less difficulty to interact with people of the host nation. Those with good interpersonal communication skills in their home culture will normally adjust better to the new culture as compared to their counterparts who possess lower levels of interpersonal communication skills. It is also noted that expatriates with good relational skills are able to apply the principles of human interaction in different cultures. Thus, this makes it easier for them to relate to the host nationals.

Adjustment to work is described as the level at which employees are adjusted to their job tasks, work roles and work environment, as well as the level at which they are able to perform within that environment. This is thought to be the easiest area of adjustment as compared to the other two (Black et al., 1992a) though it does not necessarily mean that it is easy to do. The suggestion is made as studies on American, European and Japanese expatriates revealed that their adjustment to work is very much influenced by the similarities in "procedures, policies and requirements" (p. 117) of the job in the home and host countries. Even though those factors could be similar, other factors such as business practices could be different, and this is the time when the expatriates have to adjust to suit to the local practices but still manage to achieve the target outcomes. Some of the work-related variables that are found to be related to work adjustment are role clarity, role discretion, role conflict, role novelty and organisational culture.

Huff et al. (2014) maintained that the combination of the three areas of adjustment (general, interaction and work adjustment) is important in determining the overall degree to which expatriates are able to adjust to their new cultural environment. They also argue that cultural adjustment should be viewed as a multidimensional concept and not as a single variable. However, it is also important to treat each area of adjustment separately as some important variables that affect adjustment may not be equally related to all three areas of adjustment (Black et al., 1992a).

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Work role characteristics and expatriate adjustment

Li (2016) suggested that role novelty involves the difference between the past role and the new role, or the extent to which the past and present roles differ. Past research has shown that role clarity helps reduce the uncertainty associated with the new job environment and this would help ease work adjustment (Anand & Vohra, 2019). According to Puck, Holtbrugge and Raupp (2017), role novelty or clarity is the extent to which what is expected of the individual is clear and ambiguous. However, it is obvious that it is rather difficult for anyone to adjust to something that is not "clear and ambiguous" but according to them, the case is true for American and Japanese expatriates. If the demand of the new work role is sufficiently different from those of the past, decrements in job performance and feelings of lack of confidence are likely to be especially pronounced (Selmer & Lauring, 2014). Teagarden and Gordon (1995) also share the same view where they suggest that if the job is novel to the expatriate during the assignment, they would expect significant learning curves and hence, influence the expatriates' success. This leads to the generation of the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The higher the degree of role novelty, the lower the degree of work, interaction and general adjustment.

Beside role novelty, role ambiguity or sometimes referred to as role discretion is also found to have a great impact on work adjustment. Instances of role ambiguity in a work situation include uncertainty about the scope of responsibility and uncertainty about expectations of others the performance of the expatriate. Kawai and Mohr (2015) argued that role theory suggested ambiguity should increase the probability that; an expatriate will be satisfied with his or her role, will experience anxiety, will distort reality and will thus perform less effectively. Chuan (2018) argued that an individual has to adapt themselves to their work role and not vice versa. Role discretion involves the flexibility in determining the type of job that an individual wants to do, when and how to do it and whom to involve in doing the job. This is important because it allows expatriates to adapt their work roles and setting to themselves rather than adapting themselves to the situation (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018; Zhang & Ockowski, 2016). An individual with greater role discretion will be able to adjust to their work by using their past successful behaviours (Black et al., 1992b; Branco, 2018). Consequently, this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The higher the degree of role ambiguity, the lower the degree of work, interaction and general adjustment.

On the other hand, role conflict is the extent to which conflicting expectations are put on expatriates. Black et al. (1992b) and Makela, Kinnunen and Suutari (2015) believed that a new environment normally projects conflicting signals that later increase uncertainty. Expatriates therefore, have to make a careful decision in choosing what is acceptable and what is not. Role conflict has been found to affect expatriate's work adjustment. Role theory suggests that when the behaviours expected of an individual are inconsistent, the individual will experience stress. In addition, Zhang, Crant and Weng (2019) suggested that those reporting role conflict claimed that their trust in those who imposed the pressure was reduced, they liked them less on a personal basis, they held them in lower esteem, they communicated less with them and their own effectiveness also decreased. Similarly, Black (1988) and Fliege et al. (2016) suggested that the greater role conflict the expatriates face, the greater the difficulty of the role transition and this brings us to the next hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The higher the degree of role conflict, the lower the degree of work, interaction and general adjustment.

In sum, role conflict and role novelty increase uncertainty associated with the job. The higher the degree of role novelty in the expatriate's job demand, the more pressure they have in changing their professional identity or job-related skills (Haslberger & Dickman, 2016; Khalil, Jabeen, Jadoon, & Salman, 2016). Role novelty is expected to increase uncertainty associated with work role. Based on previous research, it can be summarised that role conflict and role novelty have a negative relationship with expatriate adjustment.

METHOD

Participants

The participants of this study were the individual hotel expatriates attached to Malaysia's hotel industry. Since information on expatriates (i.e. location, workplace, etc.) is considered confidential, it was hard to identify the exact number of expatriates currently working in Malaysia. The Expatriate Association in Kuala Lumpur had been supportive enough to provide the information containing a list of hotels in Malaysia where expatriates worked. From the list, together with the telephone directory, the expatriates attached to 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star hotels were identified. These rated hotels were then contacted to identify the number of expatriates currently working at the premise. Based from these calls, 323 expatriates were identified. Since the total population of expatriates was rather small, all of them were considered as participants of the study.

Instrumentation

The self-administered questionnaire was the key part of data collection used in the study. The drop and collect method were employed in the survey distribution. In ensuring the safety and privacy of the expatriates, the questionnaires were distributed to the General Managers or human resources office and these offices would then distribute the questionnaire to the individual expatriate working at the premise. This would also mean that the distribution of questionnaire was left to the discretion of the respective offices. Upon advice from the hotel, the questionnaire could only be collected in one week so that the expatriates would have enough time to respond to it. Of the total number of questionnaires distributed, 241 questionnaires were returned and after the cleaning process, 203 usable data were analysed, which yielded a 71% returned, usable rate. The response rate was comparable to previous studies conducted by authors in different geographical settings (Kittler, Rygl, Mackinnon, & Wiedemann, 2011), and was considered a respectable figure for research involving expatriates (Selmer, 2006).

Measurements

Measures for the expatriate's overall adjustment were based on a 14-item instrument developed by Black (1988). The items were divided into three dimensions—general, interaction and work adjustments. Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 (not adjusted at all) to 5 (very well adjusted), the degree to which they are adjusted to the items. The reliability value of the instrument was $\alpha = .92$, which was rather high. For each dimension, general adjustment ($\alpha = .87$), interaction ($\alpha = .93$) and work ($\alpha = .82$).

Role novelty was measured using Black (1988) instrument which was developed based on a measure proposed by Steward's (1982) categories of managerial demands and constraints. Respondents indicated on a 5-point scale of how similar or different of the 11 items compared to their previous work experience. The reliability value for the item was $\alpha = .83$. Meanwhile, role ambiguity ($\alpha = .76$) was measured using Rizzo et al. (1970) proposed measure which includes 14 items measured on 5-point Likert scale. The measures had also been adopted by Black (1988). The measures looked at the predictability of the outcome of responses to one's behaviour and the existence of clarity of behavioural requirements, often in terms of inputs from the environment that would serve to guide behaviour and provide knowledge that the behaviour is appropriate. The final work-role characteristics, which was role conflict ($\alpha = .75$) was also measured using Rizzo et al. (1970) proposed instrument of 15 items on a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked to rate how often they experienced the situation given in the instrument, which could lead to role conflict.

FINDINGS

Characteristics of the respondents

Using descriptive statistics, it discovered that 131 (64.5%) were married, a majority of respondents fell under 35 years of age (30.5%) and that 58% had a bachelor's degree. The expatriates have been in the country from as brief as nine months to more than 20 years. A majority of them came from European countries (48.3%). It was also found that 179 respondents (88.2%) held managerial posts as compared to those holding the non-managerial positions (11.8%). Most of these expatriates (90.6%) had experiences working in foreign countries prior to expatriation in Malaysia. When asked whether the respondents speak native language of the host country, 121 (59.6%) admitted that their ability to speak were limited to very short and simple phrases only.

Descriptive statistics

The full respondents, the means, standard deviations (SDs) and correlations of all variables were also calculated. The mean scores of the variables were utilised to determine the levels of agreement of the variables. The mean scores of the variables were utilised to determine the levels of agreement of the variables. Mean scores of less than 3.00 were considered "low", the mean scores between 3.00 and less than 4.00 were categorised as "moderate" and mean scores of 4.00 and higher were considered "high". The respondents' general adjustment appeared more varied with a range from 4.06 to 4.69. Even though some of the scores were lower as compared to the other two dimensions, the mean level of general adjustment was still considered high, at 4.48. For the interaction adjustment, the scores ranged between 4.37 and 4.46, with an average of 4.40 and it also suggested a slightly high interaction adjustment to the new culture. The mean level of work adjustment was 4.70 (scores ranged from 4.61 to 4.81). Finally, the average level of the overall reported adjustment was 4.50 with a standard deviation of .39, signaling that on the whole, respondents appeared to be adjusted to general, interaction and working with Malaysian co-workers. Meanwhile, mean for role novelty was 3.86 and standard deviation was .33. The mean value of role ambiguity and role conflict were 3.61 (SD = .48) and 3.58 (SD=.49), which was perceived as moderate by respondents.

The zero-order correlation indicated that role novelty is significantly positively correlated with general adjustment ($r=.278$), interaction adjustment ($r=.283$) and work adjustment ($r=.233$). Moreover, the result yielded a significant negative correlation between role ambiguity and work adjustment ($r=.416$ and $p<.011$). However, there was no significant correlation between role ambiguity and general adjustment ($r=-.219$) and interaction adjustment ($r=-.120$). For role conflict, a significant negative correlation was observed between role conflict and work adjustment ($r=-.363$, $p<.01$). No significant relationship was also found between role conflict and general and interaction adjustment. In addition, an analysis of the variance inflation factors (VIFs) indicated the VIFs in all models to be lower than 10. Thus, all variables could be maintained in the regression analysis (Neter, Wasserman, & Kutner, 1985).

Hypotheses results

The hypotheses were tested using the hierarchical regression analysis. It was hypothesised that the higher the degree of role novelty, the lower the degree of general, interaction and work adjustment. As shown in Table 1, the result shows the existence of significant positive relationships between role novelty and each of the facets of adjustment measured. Role novelty is significantly and positively related to general adjustment ($\beta = .148$, $p<.01$), interaction adjustment ($\beta = .441$, $p<.01$) as well as work adjustment ($\beta = .460$, $p<.01$). Together, role novelty explained 20.2% of the variance on the overall adjustment. Thus, running counter to the hypothesis, respondents who reported higher levels of role novelty also reported higher levels of each of the facets of adjustment measured. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the higher the degree of role ambiguity, the lower the degree of general, interaction, work adjustment and the overall adjustment of expatriates. The result yielded a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and work adjustment ($\beta = -.301$, $p<.01$). Respondents who reported lower levels of role ambiguity also reported higher levels of work adjustment. However, there was no significant relation between role ambiguity and general adjustment and interaction adjustment. Hence, the hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

The final hypothesis hoped to identify the relationship between role conflict and general, interaction, work adjustment. A significant negative correlation was observed between role conflict and work adjustment ($\beta = -.132$, $p<.01$). No significant relationship was found between role conflict and general and interact adjustment. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Table 1. Regression summary for direct relationship

Predictors	Role novelty Model 1	Role ambiguity Model 2	Role conflict Model 3
Adjustment:			
General adjustment	.148**	-0.237	0.296
Interaction adjustment	.441**	-0.111	-0.120
Work adjustment	.460**	-0.301**	-.0132**
R^2	.202	.088	.096
Adjusted R^2	.191	.071	.085
F-change	4.905**	1.232	2.761

Note: *p <.05 **p<.01

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationships between work-role characteristics and the adjustment of hotel expatriates in Malaysia. The adjustment patterns were examined based on the overall adjustment and the dimensions of this adjustment.

As revealed in the descriptive statistics, a majority of the expatriates came from the European countries. This has been consistent since Ruddy's (1991) study on career development of hotel managers in the Asian Pacific, where he found that 68% of the respondents surveyed were from Europe and North America. It seemed that the pattern of movement of European expatriates is still consistent until now, where more Europeans are keen to explore, travel and work in a foreign country.

As hypothesised, while the expatriates in our sample are well-adjusted to working and living in Malaysia in general, they have displayed variations across the adjustment dimensions examined. With regard to the value of focusing on work role characteristics when attempting to account for the variations in these adjustment dimensions, the analysis suggested that they do indeed account for an amount of the adjustment variance. In the area of role novelty, contrary to the hypothesis that higher role novelty would result in lower general, interaction, work and overall adjustment scores, the data showed a significant positive relationship between role novelty and each of the dimensions of adjustment measured. This is contrary to suggestions in the literature which demonstrated that role novelty will have a negative impact on adjustment as the encountered novelty will promote lack of confidence in job performance, potentially creating stress and also creating a significant learning curve, which is something that could lead to a negative spill-over effect into other dimensions of expatriates lives. It can be argued that it may be a question of threshold level with a deal of novelty resulting in the generating of a renewed interest in the work and its completion.

Consistent with the present literature, the results on role ambiguity demonstrated a significant negative relationship with work adjustment and the overall expatriate adjustment. The correlations with both the general and interaction adjustment were consistent with the hypothesis (i.e. negatively correlated), but still failed to reach the significant level. Role conflict and adjustment dimensions also reveal partial support for the hypothesis, with a significant negative correlation emerging between role conflict and work adjustment. The results on the relationship between role ambiguity and role conflict are not surprising since literature and previous studies in the area have demonstrated that respondents who experience high levels of role ambiguity and role conflict typically experience lower levels of work adjustment.

The findings from this study would contribute to the new knowledge on expatriation in a multicultural society, especially work adjustment of hotel expatriates. It would also help create awareness among hotel companies on the importance of work characteristics in the process of adjustment.

Limitations

In spite of the contributions discussed above, several limitations need to be acknowledged. The first is the reliance on a single respondent for the independent and dependent variables which may have contributed to the common method variance. Although this issue is pervasive in research in social sciences, it is particularly salient when measuring variables more susceptible to perceptual bias. Therefore, when designing the questionnaire survey for the study, attempts were made to minimize same source bias by placing the independent and dependent variables in separate sections of the questionnaire. Hence, the concern for same respondent bias or common method bias was further reduced.

Secondly, this study also has limitations in its statistical techniques and data, as it only looked at only one particular industry (i.e. hotel). The hotel industry was chosen because despite the extraordinary interest of Multinational Hotel Companiess (MNHs) and International Joint-Venture Hotel Companies (IJVHCs) in expanding their operations globally, very little is known about expatriates in this industry. Another limitation with regard to this is the sample size itself. Response rates within groups are particularly important for all multivariate analysis (Klein, Dansereau, & Hall, 1994). In the present study, the 203 respondents are rather small samples for multivariate analyses and this could lead to some problems when estimating regression weights in relation to hypotheses testing. Due to the time constraints and the small population of expatriates in the industry, the number of respondents was considered sufficient (return rate of more than 70%). Also, owing to the constraints of time and financial resources, the samples of this study are also limited to expatriates located in Peninsular Malaysia. Thus, generalisation of the results (that all expatriates in Malaysia's hotel industry) should be made with appropriate caution.

Beside the statistical techniques, data and sample size, there is also a limitation with the instruments adopted by the study. Even though it is acknowledged that the instruments used in the data collection were adopted from past research as they had shown high reliability and validity, the instruments were still applied with caution as in hotel industry some of the supports (especially human resource support) could have not been provided by the organisations or they are already available to the expatriates due to the nature of the industry (i.e. car, housing, etc.) (Halim, 2013).

Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the present research also contributes to the limitation of the study. Clearly, a longitudinal research that tracks the adjustment progress and communication activities during expatriation is needed. In addition, statements of causality based on the results of statistical techniques (such as multiple regressions) are useful in making inferences, but must be treated with caution given the correlational nature of the data.

CONCLUSIONS

Although research on expatriation management has been numerous, the findings from the present research represent an incremental step towards better understanding of the complex phenomenon of the adjustment pattern of expatriates and the relationship between work-role characteristics and their adjustment. This research also extends our understanding of expatriate adjustment by looking at those in the hotel industry. The study also confirms the unpacking concept of adjustment and presenting it as a multidimensional concept.

In sum, the findings from the study provide further understanding of adjustment among expatriates and it is hoped that the study will be a step further in enhancing our understanding of expatriates, especially in the hotel industry located in a multicultural society like Malaysia. The findings will certainly help various government departments in Malaysia such as the Immigration Department, Human Resources Department as well as the Ministry of Finance to further understand the needs of the expatriates residing in Malaysia.

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Haslina Halim
is an Associate Professor and Head of Communication Department, School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Her research works and publications mainly focus on communication in the workplace, cross-cultural adjustment and strategic communication. She has been appointed as reviewers for article publications in various journals, either at the national or international level, including the International Journal of Intercultural Relations and Journal of Humanistic Psychology. She is also a member of the World Communication Association, and Pacific Asian Communication Association.

Che Su Mustaffa
is a Professor of Communication, School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Her research area is in organisational communication, which includes communication and disaster management and social media. Her written works have been published in various journals including Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, Intercultural Communication Studies, Corporate Comunications and Malaysian Journal of Communication. She had provided several trainings and consultations to Lembaga Kemajuan Wilayah Kedah (KEDA), Lembaga Kemajuan Pulau Pinang (PERDA), Tenaga Nasional Berhad and Lembaga Kemajuan Wilayah Terengganu Tengah (KETENGAH). She is also an Editorial Board Member of Malaysian Management Journal, International Journal of Knowledge and Change (2007), Malaysian Correctional Journal and Malaysian Journal of Communication and Language. Her schorlarly contribution could also be observed in her revieweing manuscripts for the national and international refereed journals.

Farah Lina Azizan
is a research assistant and has just graduated with a Doctoral degree in management. Her thesis focuses on leadership and communication. She has experience doing qualitative and quantitative research. Her research interests include organisational behaviour, leadership, business management, and organisational communication.

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Seeking sexual and reproductive health information among students at Universiti Utara Malaysia: A qualitative study on effective media use

Chen Kai Qi
Universiti Utara Malaysia

* Nuredayu Omar
Universiti Utara Malaysia
nuredayu@uum.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) has become one of the more imperative and critical issues in Asia, including Malaysia. While it is a taboo for families and the Malaysian community to discuss about SRH, it is imperative for the youth to obtain SRH information from valid information sources. Thus, this article aimed to explore and discuss information-seeking behaviours related to SRH information sources among final-year undergraduate students at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Twelve final year students in UUM had participated as interview informants. Thematic analysis and Nvivo 11 for Windows software were utilised in the process of analysing the interview data. This study found that in comparison to other information sources, the Internet has been identified as the most popular and is more frequently utilised by the youth in seeking information on SRH. However, this study found that seeking information from a variety of sources is preferred and the results of this study revealed that the youth are presently more open in searching for SRH information. Overall, this study has highlighted the significance of appropriate sources for SRH information chosen by the selected informants and its contribution to the well-being of youth in Malaysia.

Keywords: ***information sources, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), youth, Internet, communication***

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) has become one of the important and critical issues in Asia, including Malaysia (Manivasakan & Sankaran, 2014; Rahman et al., 2011). An estimated 92,895 people living with HIV in Malaysia at the end of 2015 in which had increased from 91,848 in 2014 (Global AIDS Response Progress Report, 2016). Other than that, pre-marital sexual activities among adolescents have become common over the years and are on the rise (Low, 2009). A total of 11,646 illegitimate children were born to underage mothers in June 2018 compared to 4,992 born to girls aged 18 and below in 2017 (Chong Hui, 2018). This phenomenon may increase the risk of contracting and transmitting sexual diseases including HIV or AIDS and consequently lead to unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Low (2009) stated that Malaysian youths are primarily involved with premarital sexual intercourse, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted and unsafe pregnancies, abortions, sexual diversity, HIV or AIDS, and cybersex.

Based on current developments in Malaysia, issues related to SRH are increasingly debated and discussed. Deputy Minister for Women, Family, and Community Development Hannah Yeoh since 2018 had repeatedly emphasised that many primary and secondary school children in Malaysia are involved in sexual crimes resulting in many cases of baby dumping and abortions (Chong Hui, 2018). One of the reasons for this is the lack of proper sex education at school. Therefore, the Ministry; in collaboration with the Ministry of Education are developing a sex education module so that the said students can get the right information about SRH in schools instead of getting information from social media (Farik Zolkepli, 2019). Further to this, Parent Action Group for Education Malaysia (PAGE) chairman, Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim argued that one of the reasons for the high number of baby dumping and abortions among schoolgirls in Malaysia is because the SRH is a sensitive topic that parents are still reluctant to discuss openly with their children. The lack of communication causes children to seek information from other channels and later engage in sexually explicit experiments (Chong Hui, 2018).

Due to the increasing rate of SRH problems, information about SRH should be communicated well among the youth. Accurate and appropriate information are among the core elements in ensuring the youth have astute perceptions when taking care of their SRH. Communication planning for SRH is a significant action in managing SRH information among youth through the media. Thus, this present study discussed youth behaviour in selecting appropriate information sources in learning about SRH.

INFORMATION SOURCES OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Since the majority of Malaysians practise a high-context culture, a discussion on any sexual topics is still considered as a taboo among Malaysian families of all races (Leul, 2015). Sexual issues and taboo attitudes in the Malaysian society can only be corrected if the community and society are exposed to the accurate information of SRH that reduces any negative effects of sexual behaviour. Proper disclosure of information on sex can break down the taboo mindset on sexual activities (Kohno, Dahlui, Nik Farid, Ali, & Nakayama, 2019; Yeo, Lee, & Handayani, 2018). Topics related to SRH have been widely discussed in the past few years in Malaysia, but the taboo attitude is unresolved and getting accurate information on SRH is still a challenge. According to Jahanfar, Loh, Yeoh, and Charles (2008), sex education is not encouraged because it has been assumed to incite the culture of “out-of-marriage sex” and in turn encourages the youngsters to get the risk of unsafe sexual behaviours. There is also a general assumption that adolescents who are exposed to information on sexuality will get involved in sexual activities, but there is no evidence that sex education increases the cases of SRH. As SRH is a very sensitive topic and should not be discussed publicly, education and communication about this topic are often inadequate. This causes the lack of appropriate messages and communication channels for the youth to obtain information and be aware of the importance of SRH management in their daily activities. According to Ismail and Hamid (2016), young people are often reluctant to discuss sex-related topics with anyone with the exception of puberty changes. Hence, there is a need to identify reliable information sources for youth in Malaysia in obtaining SRH information.

In Malaysia, sex-related taboos are due to cultural and religious factors. In the Muslim context, sex is illegal and courtship is not allowed. As children are eager to know about sex but parents insist that sex topics cannot be discussed before they are married, the children tend experiment to find out what happens if sex is committed (Mohamad Nor, Ahmad Shah, & Sumari, 2017). According to Halina Hafizah Hj Siraj (2019), the taboo in discussing sex needs to be lifted as children from nine to twelve years old in Malaysia are in the process of learning about sex. They have been exposed to sexual information such as masturbation especially through peers and at this age, it is exciting to explore and experience. Parents who refuse to talk about sex would subsequently give proper advice to their children. Therefore, curiosity at a child-adolescent phase causes them to seek information from elsewhere, especially social media.

Lack of communication and education programmes related to SRH in Malaysia may cause the youth who are curious about any sexual topics to search for information from unreliable and non-trustworthy sources. According to Zhang, Li, and Shah (2007), the youth can obtain knowledge of SRH from different sources such as the media, family, school, health services providers, and the community. School teachers and mass media have been identified as the two most important sources on information seeking related to SRH topic. Previously, the adolescents have relied on mass media to get the information, while the percentages of adolescents seeking information from teachers were less favourable. Similarly, Ruppel and Rains (2007) stated that health providers, family, friends, magazines, newspapers, television, books and the Internet are the information sources that can be reached by adolescents to obtain SRH information. However, due to technological developments, the Internet usage in seeking health information has become increasingly common among youth (Yan, 2010). Therefore, there is a need to examine the preferred information sources used by the youth to seek SRH information.

Information-seeking behaviours among the youth have been studied from academic and health perspectives. Previous studies explained that the information-seeking behaviours are purposive actions of their respondents. The findings of Thani and Hashim (2011) and Fasola and Olabode (2013) showed that people seek information due to the academic purposes; particularly to expand knowledge, obtain and validate new knowledge, solve problems as well to fulfil social purposes and needs. Waheed (2019) found that the youth prefer to search and share information using online communication because of specific socialisation purposes, which later exposes them to strangers, false advertising, hacking, stalking, scams, pornography, and cyberbullying.

Previous studies also posited that people are able to seek any health and other information for numerous reasons through various sources such as the Internet, doctors, parents, social media, libraries, and textbooks (Fasola & Olabode, 2013; Waheed, 2019; Zhang, 2013). However, not all information sources are suitable for everyone as audiences will select their own preferred source according to the proximity and quality of information, the availability of sources, the accessibility and familiarity of sources and the authoritativeness of sources. Thus, the findings from these previous studies contribute towards some understanding of the nature of information-seeking behaviours, particularly on the type of information sources and preferences of information sources which will be further explored in this study.

Past researches also discussed how their respondents select information sources on SRH and other related topics. Family, especially mothers act as the most important and most preferred SRH information source (Kamrani, Sharifah Zainiyah, Hamzah, & Ahmad, 2011; Quaye, 2013) as SRH is identified as a very sensitive and taboo topic. Quaye (2013) stated that mothers are the most reliable and credible information source as they will keep their children's privacy and are able to give information suited to the needs of their children. In comparison, books and the Internet were considered less important sources (Fasola & Olabode, 2013; Kamrani et al., 2011). With regard to the process of choosing information sources, tailorability and anonymity are the first two important characteristics of choosing the information sources of any health information, followed by medical expertise and convenience to reach the sources (Quaye, 2013; Zhang, 2013; Fasola & Olabode, 2013; Ruppel & Rains, 2012). Quaye (2013) also posited that reliability and credibility are the criteria that motivate individuals to choose their information sources. These findings contribute to an understanding of information-seeking behaviours of SRH.

Past studies also found that sex education is crucial in the development process of adolescents by emphasising the importance of the SRH information transmission. SRH education is important to prevent any misconceptions about the SRH issues (Rahman et al, 2011) and need to be started at an earlier stage (Lester & Allan, 2006). In transferring information about SRH, teachers also play an important role in providing accurate information (Lester & Allan, 2006; Rahman et al., 2011). Previous researches also showed that communication of SRH topic among the youth and their parents is important. Although parents act as trusted information source of SRH, embarrassment was still the main barrier for the youth to discuss the topic with them (Ismail & Hamid, 2016; Lester & Allan, 2006; Rahman, et al., 2011). Other than that, the studies showed that the topics related to abstinences, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections are the two crucial topics that should be shared, discussed, and transferred in the sexual education programmes. However, it was found that their respondents had misconceptions about these two topics and they are not willing to discuss it with their parents or teachers. These findings revealed the recurring issues in SRH communication which are able to guide the researcher in exploring youth behaviours in selecting information sources.

METHOD

Design and participants

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted among students at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) in order to explore their actions in selecting information sources of SRH topics to obtain in-depth and detailed viewpoints on such sensitive and taboo information (Edwards & Holland, 2013). The interview process enables the researcher to not only identify the information source selected by students but also the criteria and characteristics that motivates the students choose it as the most preferred source for obtaining the information on SRH topic. Secondly, interviews have been described as a type of conversational face-to-face interaction (Wengraf, 2001). Kvale (1996) stated the interview as an “interchange of views between two or more people on a mutual interest topic, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasises the social situatedness of researcher data”. The interview method is suited for this study as SRH is not a common topic that the public are aware of or discuss in the open.

Interaction and face-to-face communication with informants such as providing a briefing of this sensitive topic to ensure the accuracy of collected data is essential to the study. The researcher was able to give explanation and clarification on certain terms of SRH, in example, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to the interviewees. Hence, it helped prevent miscommunication or different interpretation of certain questions.

The interview method is also useful when the researcher intends to explore a subject which is relatively sensitive (Kielmann, Cataldo, & Seeley, 2012). Through face-to-face interaction, the researcher can leave their participants with a positive feeling (Wengraf, 2001), which later may help the researcher get deeper opinions and ideas. Besides, as SRH is a sensitive topic and considered as taboo (Bennett, 2005), there is a high risk of receiving invalid and inaccurate results if a questionnaire was set instead and distributed to the respondents. Therefore, the interview process is more appropriate in this study as the researcher is able to comprehend the answers from informants by understanding their actions and non-verbal cues when they are answering the questions.

A total number of twelve Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) final-year students aged 22 to 25 years old were selected as the informants of this study. Adler and Adler (2012, p. 10) suggested that the researchers who conduct an interview "should shoot for a sample of twelve". It is because numbers of samples that are more than twelve seem to be impractical due to time constraints and the difficulty to transcribe the interviews.

According to Low (2004), curiosity on sexuality and one's own sexual development will increase when as a child gets older, and in turn, will drive the person to explore and seek more information related to sexual and reproductive topics. Subsequently, the reason to choose final-year students as the informants of the study is that they are still in their youth and they may have the highest intentions in conducting information-seeking on SRH. Considering that they will soon graduate from university and get ready to build their own family, they would most likely experience an increasing interest in sexuality topics and mark the onset of sexual activity (UNFPA, UNESCO & WHO, 2015). Besides, they would also frequently encounter different information sources in their any information-seeking activities of various topics including SRH. The profile of informants is illustrated in Table 1.0.

Table 1. Profile of Informants

Informants	Gender	Races	Marital Status
Informant 1	Male	Chinese	In Relationship
Informant 2	Female	Malay	Married
Informant 3	Female	Malay	Single
Informant 4	Female	Malay	Single
Informant 5	Female	Malay	Married
Informant 6	Female	Malay	Single
Informant 7	Female	Chinese	In Relationship
Informant 8	Female	Chinese	In Relationship
Informant 9	Male	Malay	Single
Informant 10	Female	Indian	Single
Informant 11	Female	Indian	Single
Informant 12	Female	Chin ese	In Relationship

The interview sessions were conducted using dual languages, namely English and Malay as the informants were given the choice for choosing the language that they are familiar and comfortable with. The interview sessions proceeded to ask questions related to demographic factors, information sources, and preferred information sources.

Consequently, the interviews among selected informants were conducted within the time frame of two weeks. According to Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), researchers commonly conduct a 30-minute interview for each informant and the researchers need to consider their informants' concentration when designing the length of the interview (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Therefore, each participant in this study was interviewed for about 30 minutes to 40 minutes to respect the time constraints of the participants and to ensure their level of concentration. The location of the interview was agreed upon by both the participants and the researcher. In conducting the interview, rapport-building is crucial. According to Karnieli-Miller, Strier, and Pessach (2009), self-disclosure is considered as a process of rapport-building which is likely to encourage the participation of informants and the richness of the research data. In this study, the researcher took around five to ten minutes at the beginning of the interview process to build trust between the interviewer and the informant by introducing the team and explaining the motivation for conducting the study. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) stated that starting the interview with background questions can enhance the level of confidence and trust in the interviewer. Hence, after the introduction session from the researcher, the interview session started by asking the informants' personal backgrounds as a way of building rapport and warm up interaction between both parties.

Karnieli-Miller et al. (2009) also pointed out the importance of being honest between both parties. Thus, prior to questioning on information sources of the SRH, the interviewer gave a brief introduction to the topic of study, the purpose of the study, and the procedure of conducting the interview to make sure the informants were clear with the study. All informants were allowed to read the interview questions in order to make them fully understand the interview questions. The researcher explained interview questions that was not understood by the participants.

DATA ANALYSIS

According to Alhojailan (2012), thematic analysis is appropriate when the researcher targets to examine the collected data from more than one participant or informant in order to identify the common themes and thoughts. Blacker (2009) also stated that thematic analysis enables researchers to present the similarities and differences of opinions from informants which may help the researcher to interpret a similar viewpoint once the interview data are obtained. Therefore, thematic analysis is appropriate for this study to analyse the interview data.

In this study, the audio data were transcribed into written words. With regard to the thematic analysis, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated that the collected data 'must' be read at least twice in order to help a researcher to "get a feel for the text by handling the data multiple times". Hence, the written transcriptions were read several times to understand the information provided. The information obtained was organised and managed according to the interview questions. Then, the data from each interview question were categorised into relevant themes.

Since the size of data in the qualitative research that need to be handled was enormous, Miles and Hueberman (1994) suggested the use of qualitative data analysis software package. NVivo 11 for Windows software package is a tool to help the researcher in reducing the number of manual tasks, and in turn, researchers have more time to discover the tendencies, themes, and derive the conclusions (Wong, 2008). Hence, the researcher decided to use the NVivo 11 for Windows software to analyse the data collected.

FINDINGS

A total of twelve informants participated in this study, where there were two males and ten female students. In this study, the marital status became an important demographic factor which affected the information-seeking behaviours on SRH among informants.

Marital status and information seeking

Based on the findings, the researcher found that married females have a higher understanding of the SRH topic compared with the informants who are single and in a relationship. The two married female informants stated that knowledge about SRH has become their responsibility since they are married. They tried to seek SRH information more frequently compared to their lives before getting married. For example, Informant 2 provided an explanation about her marriage as below.

> *"I am married now, surely I sought this kind of information. Before my wedding day, I have to get ready with this kind of knowledge. However, after getting married, I have to keep this kind of knowledge in my mind and practise it… I have discussed this topic with my mother, my sister, and my husband. It was not embarrassing anymore as I already married. Talking about this topic becomes normal for me and it is appropriate for me to obtain the SRH information from them" (Informant 2).*

Information sources

The researcher found that all informants relied on various information sources in getting the SRH information. There are many types of information sources that were used by the informants such as family, health service providers, Internet, peers, books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and television.

Internet

Based on the findings, the Internet is the most popular information source among all informants. All of the informants stated that the Internet is one of the main information sources for obtaining information on SRH. Based on the findings from the informants, the Internet is a platform that allows them to access any online media and social media. For the informants, Internet sources which discuss the SRH topics are from the health providers' websites, online newspapers, Facebook, YouTube, and other online resources. For example, informant 6, informant 8, and informant 9 have stated as follows:

> *"In this modern era, I am able to get the information just by a click. I always tried to know more about this topic by using the Internet" (Informant 6).*

> *"Facebook, television programmes, YouTube, and newspapers are the sources that sometimes provide me some information on SRH. I saw some of this information distributed through a few web pages at Facebook pages. Besides, there are some channels on YouTube distribute the educational videos about this topic" (Informant 8).*

> *"Usually I will seek SRH information through online media. For example, when I need information about this topic, I will search it by using Google. I will try to seek information from the blogs or forum of the experts and professionals.*

> *Besides, I will visit the health websites first to get information rather than simply trusting information from any web pages or bloggers" (Informant 9).*

Peers

The findings showed that peers are the second most popular information source among the informants. Peers can be defined as those who belong to the same societal group and share the same characteristics such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity (Reitz, Zimmermann, Hutteman, Specht, & Neyer, 2014). Ten out of twelve informants commented that peers are the information source which are able to provide information about the topics of SRH. Though the informants mentioned peers as the source of the SRH topics, nine of them stated that they do not always discuss this topic with their peers. Instead, they coincidentally obtained the information when they discuss topics related to intimate relationships. Informants 2, Informant 8, and Informant 12 stated that:

> *"[Did you discuss the topic of sexual and reproductive health with your friends?] Yes. But it is not often. Finding someone or intimate friends is not so easy. If you discuss this topic with normal friends, it is risky that the friends will betray you. And it is quite embarrassing and weird if she is not your intimate friends. Normally we discussed this topic when there were some other topics related" (Informant 2).*

> *"Yes, I discussed this topic with my friends before, but it was rare" (Informant 8).*

> *"I will only discuss this topic with my close friends" (Informant 12).*

Family

Family is the third-ranked information source that is accepted by the majority of the informants. Eight out of twelve informants specified family as one of the information sources when they are seeking information about SRH. Based on the findings, family refers to mother, sister, and husband. Among the eight informants who specified family as their information source, four of them stated that they usually discussed this topic with their family. For example:

> *"I will discuss this topic with my mother. She is okay with this topic. When I have some questions related to SRH, she is willing to answer me. She will teach me how to take care of our own and how to take a tonic for reproductive health. Since I am in a relationship, she keeps reminding me of the importance of abstinence and how to prevent unwanted pregnancy. She is quite open-minded" (Informant 8).*

Four informants stated that they rarely discussed this topic with their family due to the reason of shyness and embarrassment, the conservative thinking of family, and the family posit that it was not an appropriate timing to discuss this topic. Excerpts from Informant 3 and Informant 7 are as follows.

> *"Although my sister is married, she thinks that this topic is not so important for me now and maybe it was inappropriate to tell me so much. Therefore, she was rare to share the information about this topic with me" (Informant 3).*

"I have never discussed this topic with my family, except for the topic of puberty, but it is rare. Sometimes my mother will give some information about how to take care of my internal body. But when it is about the sexuality topic, my mother will always try to avoid communicating about it with me. They are [family] quite conservative in talking this matter" (Informant 7).

Magazines

From the interview findings, magazines were identified as one of the information sources for the informants. Seven out of twelve informants stated that they obtained the SRH information through magazines.

"She [sister] will buy some magazines which have a forum discussed this topic, so sometimes I obtained information from the magazines too" (Informant 10).

"There were some magazines provide and distribute the tips which are related to the methods of taking care our reproductive physiology, some tips for maintaining a happy family, tips in solving the SRH problems, and others which are related. It is quite useful in our daily life" (Informant 2).

"Sometimes I may obtain the information from magazines too. You know "Feng Cai"? It is one of the magazines which focus on female. There are few discussions about SRH in that magazine. Some products for woman care have been promoted there" (Informant 7).

Books

Four out of twelve informants stated that they sought information about SRH from books although it was not the main information source. For example, Informant 9 stated that he used the books as a guideline and to study the basic knowledge about SRH before going into deeper exploration of sexual matters.

"During that time, I get the information from books. Although the information in that book is very general, at least it provided some basic information for me" (Informant 9).

Newspapers

Five informants mentioned newspapers as one of the information sources, but they did not emphasise the use of newspapers. Informant 8 stated that:

"Facebook, television programmes, YouTube, and newspaper are the sources that provide me some information on SRH. Sometimes newspaper also provided a space for the specialist to discuss this topic" (Informant 8).

Pamphlet

Two informants mentioned that pamphlet is also one of the information sources that can be used to obtain SRH health information. Informant 11 and informant twelve stated that they only get pamphlets when they visit the health service centres.

"Sometimes I will seek information through the LPPKN websites, sometimes I will get information from the pages in Facebook, sometimes I will read

information from the hospitals' pamphlets when I visit there, sometimes I will read information from newspaper and magazines" (Informant 11).

"I have tried to seek information through books, newspaper, television programmes, online media, and pamphlets when I visit the clinics and watch movies" (Informant 12).

Television

Based on interview findings, television is also an information sources that were used to get information on SRH. Three informants stated that they have gained the SRH information from the television programmes. For an example:

"I also get the information through a television programme which discussed this topic. The programme was "Wanita Hari Ini" on TV3. It is on air at 8 a.m. every morning. This programme has invited doctors and professionals to discuss topics on health, especially for the woman" (Informant 6).

Health service providers

Health service providers were the least chosen information source among the twelve informants. Only two informants mentioned they have obtained the SRH information from the health services providers when they were attending health programmes. The researcher found that the informants do not purposefully seek information from the health service providers. They obtained the information accidentally when they attended health programmes or talks. Excerpts from informant 9 and informant 10 are as follows.

"I have obtained knowledge about SRH during my training at PLKN. I asked the SRH health service providers when I attend their talk" (Informant 9).

"I attended one programme before. From the programme, I have obtained some related information on SRH" (Informant 10).

DISCUSSION

The Internet has been identified as the most popular source among the informants in this study. The informants used the Internet to access online media and social media, such as the online newspapers, online magazines, Facebook, YouTube, blogs, and health websites. This finding was aligned with the previous researches which studied the popularity of using the Internet for information seeking (Evers, Albury, Byron, & Crawford, 2013; Yan, 2010; Zhang, 2013). The findings of Zhang (2013) showed that web search engines and health websites were ranked by the participants as highly important sources of health information. Zhang's (2013) finding is also consistent with the study of Evers et al. (2013) which stated that their participants identified Google search as their most common source when seeking health information. Thus, our findings reflect that Internet use as the SRH information source is increasingly becoming common (Yan, 2010).

Peers have been revealed as the second information source for the topic of SRH in this study. This finding supports the findings from a few previous studies, which showed that friends are among the main information sources of SRH among the teenagers (Lester & Allan, 2006; Rahman et al., 2011). Fongkaew, Fongkaew, and Muecke (2006) also found the adolescents often seek information from their friends. Although ten out of twelve informants stated that they have obtained the information from their peers, one informant mentioned peers as the primary information source. Peers are an additional information source for the informants. This study has revealed the effects of feeling embarrassed between information seekers and friends. This explanation is consistent with the statement of Jahanfar et al. (2008) which mentioned that friends as an information source of sexual education were less due to some conservative mindsets among Malaysians.

Family is the third most popular information source in this study. Although the informants stated that they rarely discuss the topic and get the information about SRH from their family members, except the informants who are married, family is still a good source for SRH. These findings were consistent with the findings of the previous study by Ismail and Hamid (2016) which found that Malaysian adolescents hardly discuss any culturally forbidden issues such as a topic related to sex matters and reproductive issues with their parents. The majority of their respondents never discussed issues such as fertilisation, pregnancy and pregnancy abstinence, sexual relationship, abortion, STD, and prostitution with their parents (Ismail & Hamid, 2016). In our study, the informants stated that they usually discuss topics on general issues due to the feelings of shyness and embarrassment. Besides, the conservative thinking of their family members is one of the barriers for them to seek information. This finding is aligned with the study of Okwun, Siraj, and Okwun (2013) which stated that the SRH topic is classified as highly sensitive or taboo and is considered impolite to be discussed openly and regularly in Malaysia.

We found that there are some contradictions from our study with Zhang and Shah (2007) and Quaye (2013). The findings of the study by Zhang and Shah (2007) showed that adolescents who have not had any relationships were more likely to discuss the topic of sexuality with their parents. In our study, it was revealed that only the married informants tend to discuss the SRH topic with their parents. Meanwhile, Quaye (2013) found that the adolescents assumed their family, especially mother, as the first information source when they are in need of information. In our study, it was found that discussing this matter with family is not a common practice.

The mass media of magazines, books, newspapers, and television was also mentioned by the informants as an information source for the topic of SRH. Our findings were in line with Yan (2010), who found 49.2% of respondents selecting mass media as the preferred source for health information. Also, a large number of informants stated that they obtained the information from magazines which is consistent with the findings of Zhang and Shah (2007).

The results of this study have shown that trends in the search for the SRH information among the youth are more open. It is a taboo for families and the Malaysian community to communicate but it is a must for the youth to get the right information from the proper information sources. Due to cultural factors, the communication of SRH is still restricted and inadequate among the young people in Malaysia. The youth need such information to help them make proper decisions in the matters related to sexuality as it may affect their lives onwards.

The results of this study supports and strengthens the study conducted by Ismail and Hamid (2016) on taboos and the role of society on the SRH issue. The well-being of youth and their self-management are among the priorities that need to be communicated strategically. Our study found that when the youth, their parents, or the society are not blanketed by sexual taboo factors, the risk of unethical and unsafe behaviour among youth that involve the usage of media could be managed. Therefore, policymakers, parents, and health service providers are recommended to actively promote the importance of SRH in order to educate and inform the public. Communicating about SRH to the youth is imperative because messages from the right information source could help ensure youths have a wholesome understanding of SRH. This study helps all institutions to rethink their role as a source of information about SRH. If the taboo in the discussion of SRH can be resolved, then it is easy for all parties especially parents, health providers, and NGOs to communicate well and improve knowledge on managing health communication in Malaysia. All parties will work together to manage and raise awareness of SRH to all parties, especially among the youth. Obviously, in the context of health communication, understanding of the taboo issues among Malaysians provides important cues to researchers in the health communication field to explore sensitive issues of SRH in providing strategic and well-received information on the SRH topic for all ages. Furthermore, sexual crimes, especially among underage children and unmarried youth can be addressed.

Besides, the findings of this study demonstrates that utilising the Internet in promoting SRH is crucial. The Internet was found as the most common source of SRH information as the informants tend to use the Internet because of its accessibility and convenience. Therefore, policymakers are suggested to take advantage of the Internet for its interactivity, audio and visual combination and the affordance of animation to distribute the information. Besides, the information distributed by the policymakers and health service providers can ensure the accuracy of information and does not lead to any misconceptions of SRH among young people.

In addition, this study is important to the field of communication as topics related to SRH are often difficult to discuss in-depth. However, through interviewing methods, a clear finding was made in exploring the needs and desires of the youth to obtain accurate information about SRH. This study shows that sensitive information on the topics of sexuality can be explored using appropriate methods. Parents play a crucial role in the development process of their children especially teenagers and adult children. They have the responsibility to educate their children about SRH. Parents were regarded as the trusted information sources, although the informants rarely discuss the topic with them. The informants stated that they do not want to discuss the topic with their parents because their parents will misunderstand them as having the intention to do sexual activities. Therefore, the parents need to be educated to understand that communication regarding SRH does not increase sexual activities, instead could possibly delay intentions of intercourse and in turn reduces the frequency of sexual activities, pregnancies, abortions, and unwanted birth rates (Rahman et al., 2011).

Lastly, we found that it would be opportune to conduct further studies on the understanding of communication barriers between parents and children regarding SRH information. We found that most of the students are not willing to discuss the topic with their parents, except the students who were married. Therefore, I recommend that the study about communication barriers of SRH in family communication could be explored.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study found that the information sources used by the youth in seeking information on sexual and reproductive health are the Internet, peers, family, magazines, books, newspapers, pamphlets, television, and health service providers. Besides that, this study found that they do not only depend on one information source but also seek information from various sources in order to make a comparison and get a deeper understanding of various needs. The findings also identified that the youth choose various information sources which are convenient for them. The findings are also able to provide some insights for the policymakers in choosing the familiar and popular medium or media in educating SRH information to the youth in Malaysia.

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Cheng Kai Qi
is a Bachelor of Communication student at the Department of Communication,
School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM).

Nuredayu Omar
is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Communication, School of Multimedia
Technology and Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM).
Her research interest lies within the fields of Organisational Communication
and Interpersonal Communication.

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Social media or social comparison? An analysis of Instagram use among Malaysian youth

* Nurzihan Hassim
Taylor's University Malaysia
nurzihan.hassim@taylors.edu.my

Muhammad Hasrul Nizam Hasmadi
Taylor's University Malaysia

Mohamad-Noor Salehhuddin Sharipudin
Universiti Utara Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The ever-changing landscape of social media had shifted information-seeking behaviours of its audiences towards achieving personal gratifications and social mobility. The emergence of Instagram as a mobile application had enabled instantaneous networking and feedback among personal acquaintances and strangers alike that find shared interests from intermingling with one another. Additionally, the curation of distinctive videos and photos on Instagram is significant in enhancing the self-esteem of its users and in turn, their followers. The predominantly youth cohort are found to have become reliant on comparing themselves to others through Instagram, where the discovery of their own insufficiencies result in lifestyle envy and the fear of missing out (FOMO). This study examined Instagram use among Malaysian youths as an agency of social success and life satisfaction where findings showed that social comparison was prevalent through the application and had influenced attitudes and behaviours of its users.

Keywords: ***social comparison, social media, social networking, peer engagement, Instagram***

* Corresponding author

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Exposure to social pressures with ubiquitous access to the Internet today is inevitable, considering what is trending on social media platforms subconsciously dictates ideals among youths whom are within their developmental stages and are seeking avenues to shape each of their own personalities. Aside from initiating friendships and enhancing visibility, *Instagram* presents a myriad of current trends and diverse cultures within the digital community based on its vast outreach towards youths that prefer the more exclusive Instagram affiliation compared to *Facebook* (Salomon, 2013). Such intercultural transformations have sparked the understanding of modern norms such as the term “YOLO” which means “you only live once”, describing the astute realities of digital cultures that persistently provoke youths to seek newness and creative ventures in their social media use (Lebedko, 2014; Leavitt, 2014). According to Wagner (2017), more than 600 million people are using Instagram on a daily basis to share snippets of their seemingly differentiated lives with friends, families and associates through vivid photos and videos. In Malaysia alone, there are approximately 4 million active Instagram users (Lim, 2016). The new addition of *Instagram Stories* feature enabled users to track activities of others throughout the day where photos or videos are presented in an engaging slideshow format (Bradford, 2017). This was followed by recent additions of the *IGTV* and *Live* buttons that offer permanence in streaming user activities through more replays and interactivity, subsequently retaining and increasing valuable followers. The heightened insight into the personal life of others on Instagram reinforce the notion that content is imperative in creating shaping identities, social constructs and expectations among social media users (DeNardis, 2012).

A pre-internet study by Taylor and Brown (1988) hold the view that individuals possess unrealistically positive views of themselves and an exaggerated belief in their ability to control their environment, thus finding others more inferior, or in contrast; more threatening to their existence. This perception today is not just confined to existing relationships offline, but have been brought forward to social media platforms through the intermingling of users with strangers who are able to “follow” them and vice versa, particularly on Instagram despite not having any earlier acquaintance in real life. These stalking behaviours are even more pervasive through the evolution of Instagram features and the frequency of its use as posited by Kong (2015), particularly when Instagram deploys an algorithm that suggests who to follow, which photos and videos to view and “like” (Tait, 2017). In addition to the consistent yearning for post updates by users on an individual’s Instagram feed, Lup et al. (2015) argued that the ability to interact with profile owners on social media has redefined the term “strangers” by creating intimacy among people who barely know each other through shared interest and mutual understanding of issues at hand that spark productive debates and discussions thus enticing even more strangers into their virtual network through the growing visibility of the profile. Typically, most Instagram users will share photos or videos that document memorable moments that are positive and reinforces life ideals for the followers and present a gratifying reflection of themselves within the digital community. Kim and Lee (2011) established that this method creates an encouraging self-image that will boost their confidence and self-assurance; but is argued by Denti et al. (2012) that this “ideal” representation will lead followers to believe that they are leading a lesser life.

Moreover, the richness of information, particularly of a person’s profile, background and routines shared on Instagram are open to “voyeuristic” reactions from followers; where such details are open to scrutiny of others that are able to access them and find enjoyment in seeing weakness on such postings or content on the platform, leading a follower to a “lifestyle envy” of sorts. The origins of this behaviour can be traced from the Social Comparison Theory established by Festinger (1954), where despite the display of positive image to others, there is a constant urge to compare one’s life with another that would result in an emotional state of insufficiency. This is in line with the “Fear of Missing Out” or better known as *FOMO* that was discussed by Nguyen (2014), where tech-savvy youths today suffer from anxieties when they are not using social media as they fear that they would be excluded from social events, updates of news and inclusion into important status updates if they are away from it. In a more recent study, results indicated that social needs increases with the heightened use of social media such as Facebook (Beyens, Frison, & Eggermont, 2016). A total of 402 adolescents participated in a survey that indicated a mechanism in their willingness grow their social circle by appearing more visible on their social media profiles with their daily activities. Subsequently, these unrealistic expectations include social status and body insecurities thus resulting in doctoring their posts as well as curating only impressionable realities on social media for others to see (MacMillan, 2017). Other studies found a lack of self-esteem on social media through stalking behaviours that heighten social comparison and envy that would eventually dampen the standards of their own lives (Krasnova et al., 2013). Chou & Edge (2012) also highlighted that the frequent browsing of other social media accounts are by individuals who believe other people are far happier and have a better life compared to themselves.

Pursuant to this, we examined the extent of social comparison among Malaysian youths by organising a survey and conducting several interviews with university students. Among the objectives of the study is to ascertain motivations of the youth in their Instagram use that shape their outlook on life satisfaction. We also sought to explore their Instagram presence and factors that determine their perceived sufficiency. Subsequently, the study also intended to analyse whether feedback and interactivity from others on their Instagram posts reinforce their positive behaviour towards life satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the birth of social comparison studies, researchers have looked into various areas in which comparison is relevant to the progressing times in communication and media. Morrison et al. (2004) found that psychologically, youths are prone to have social comparison in their adolescence as their need to present their ideal body-image have also developed. Comparisons that occur are mostly among individuals that are dissimilar with themselves and apply on dimensions such as physical appearance and eating habits (Martin & Kennedy, 1993; Wheeler & Miyake, 1992). Further according to Morrison, the Social Comparison Theory is known to have "upward" comparison as well as "downward" comparison that are universalistic and particularistic respectively. An upward comparison with someone that has more alluring and fascinating lifestyle is detrimental to the confidence of a person whilst downward comparisons with people who are more inferior to them provides validation and dominance (Suls et al., 2002; Wills, 1981).

Upwards view

As explained by Kong (2015), individuals compete to rank themselves and establish where they could be on the metaphorical scale of social hierarchy, which in effect increases their efforts in enhancing their self-worth and shaping their identity (Tandoc et al, 2015). Festinger's take on the Social Comparison Theory emphasises on the individual's insecurity and the need to constantly measure and assess themselves to define themselves. Nevertheless, Suls et al. (2002) pointed out that the comparison occurs when individuals are unable to evaluate their opinions and abilities, thus needing reference from others who are finer and worthier as indicated by Baumeister et al. (2003). This process may be predominantly resilient for women who have a higher technique of surveillance as the betterment for physical appeal is a more prominent goal for them as argued by Tylka & Sabik (2010). Rooting from this perspective, the engagement in recurring upward comparison on social media provides users with a continuous cue afforded by features that allow consistent notifications and updates to indicate whether they are within their goals or falling behind. Incessant comparisons with particularly unrealistic imageries of other social media users and the exposure to media stereotypes would drive youths to abandon their current goals and pursue new ones based on how frequent they utilize Instagram.

Downwards view

The emergence of social media platforms such as Instagram observed the desire to gain attention from peers by its fervent users. Further to the previous section, an important point brought forth by Festinger (1954) is the choice of whom individuals emulate or compete with, where Argo et al. (2006) highlighted that individuals become more willing to lie or deceive others when they are exposed to unfavourable social comparison to the self. Thus any outperformance by someone who is both close, or not close at all; requires mitigation of threats both public and private as clearly observed on the unrealistic and false sense of realities portrayed on social media accounts at present. According to Lister (2017) there are over 282 million selfies on Instagram that present a strong correlation with the self-confidence of followers who view such selfies. When involved in a downward comparison, the explicit details through media exposure increases the level of social comparison of the user (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). In regards to this matter, the practice of self-esteem refers to feelings of self-acceptance where a universally favourable evaluation of the self creates a more superior view of the user compared to others as highlighted by Baumeister et al. (2003). Various other studies also saw that narcissism and egocentricity are motivations to why people use social media to document their achievements (Andreassen et al., 2016; Błachnio et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2012). Those with high self-esteem are open to communication with their peer group and are more likely to comment on social media accounts of others compared to instant messaging features of the platform (Barker, 2012; Wang et al., 2012).

Comparison for subjective norm

Research also found that while individuals feel the need to conform to the current norms, they try to improve themselves after evaluating their weaknesses that are pointed out by others (Festinger, 1954). Barry et al. (2015) argued that an individual with low self-confidence may be more inclined to have self-disclosure on social media rather than face-to-face interactions for acknowledgement that they would not be able to achieve in real life. In other studies, responses and endorsement of others towards what has been posted on social media, such as intensive ideologies i.e. *parenting styles,* would reinforce agreement and understanding of the affected individual thus indicating the areas of right and wrong for the person (Tiggemann, 2003). Social comparison is also largely applied on issues of body positivity where increased anxieties about body image and dissatisfactions are reassured by support and motivation of others (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). In relations to Instagram use, a study by Chua & Chang (2016) on social networking sites find that youths who create virtual representations of themselves online with texts, photographs and videos are conscious that their self-presentation and comparison of peers happen simultaneously. When feedback is collected from followers, it allows the Instagram user to step back and evaluate their postings that would increase the tendencies of comparison with how others present themselves and subsequently rethink their decisions in life and future undertakings; as well as how they would want to illustrate their worth on their social media accounts.

METHODOLOGY

To examine the practice of social comparison on Instagram among youths, both quantitative and qualitative methods were deployed. Preliminary data was gathered on “digital natives” to ascertain certain behaviours and reactions of this generational cohort that is known to be technologically savvy and adept with social media platforms (Fernandez-Cruz & Fernandez-Diaz, 2016).

To begin, a self-administered questionnaire was designed on Googleforms where the respondents were asked a sequence of 27 statements about their Instagram use as well as their attitudes and behaviours towards others on the social media platform, based on dimensions identified in the literature review founded on the Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954). The criteria for participants to complete the survey must be the following; (1) the participants have an active account on Instagram; and, (2) he or she must be 18 to 23 years old during the administration of the survey. Schroer (2008) had also defined the digital natives as teenagers born from the year 1995 onwards; which makes the majority of social media active users are aged 18 to 23 years old at present.

Respondents were required to evaluate their answers based on 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire remained open for two weeks and was later tabulated and elaborated with basic descriptive analysis as a foundation to its subsequent qualitative research method. The questionnaire was distributed online but was concentrated towards students of universities in Klang Valley, Malaysia, with the assistance of student representatives and lecturers on virtual bulletin boards. These included posting the link on student Facebook groups where the respondents voluntarily but anonymously participated. A majority of the participants were female at 73% compared to males but both genders are predominantly pursuing their bachelor's degree (57.4%). 20.8% are from SPM/STPM/O Level/High School Certificate or equivalent, 17.8% are from Diploma and the remaining 4% are postgraduate (Masters, PhD or equivalent) students.

The consequences of social media use can be analysed from user activities on the platform. With Instagram in focus, the questionnaire items regarding this factor are separated into several sections. Firstly, respondents reported the hours spent on using Instagram on a daily basis and their likelihood of using Instagram. Secondly, participants reported on how often they use Instagram on average. Next, the respondents were asked about the people they follow to gauge their perceptions and tendencies of comparing themselves with others. This includes those who represent an interesting lifestyle and references that are influential in their information gathering and evaluation of self-esteem through upwards comparison. Similarly, considering that Instagram is renowned for the use of photography filters by the majority of its users, respondents are required to report their need and the necessity of edit their photos uploaded on Instagram that would present a more preferable and superior image towards others thus making a photo and their self-presentation stronger for downwards comparison.

Finally, respondents were required to report on how follower feedback affect the way they look at themselves. As discussed in the literature review, the volume of followers and responses of "likes" as well as encouraging comments play a major role in the continuation of Instagram use among respondents. An individual's attractiveness and popularity are also deduced from these elements. Hence, in the last section, respondents are given statements that discuss their emotions, motivation, moral values, and indication of success, superiority, self-degradation, disassociation and social stature that were observed from their use of Instagram.

After the breadth of Instagram use and its relationship to life satisfaction of the youths were identified in the quantitative section of this present study, six university students were selected to participate in in-depth interviews through convenience sampling, considering their proximity to the researchers. Based on the results tabulated from the survey in the first section of this study that identified more female respondents than males, all informants selected for the purpose of the interviews were females. All interviewees were students of Taylor's University that partake in diploma, foundation as well as bachelor degree studies. The criteria of informants were similar to the questionnaire respondents, where they are heavily involved with the practice of social media and are within the age range of 18 to 23 years old. The interviews were conducted individually on campus with standardised, open-ended questions that correspond to themes determined by the study within a duration of one week. Interviews recorded from the informants were transcribed and were later coded using Atlas.ti8 software. The quotes obtained from the transcripts were organised and clustered based on repetitive patterns and themes that emerged during the coding process.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Motivation of Instagram use among youths

In the descriptive analysis done on the survey, the survey revealed that 81% of the respondents use Instagram on a daily basis. A majority of respondents are heavy users that spend between four to six hours on Instagram (57%) while 9% beyond six hours of use. This signifies the dependency of users toward the application and is congruent with previous studies on heavy usage of social media among youths. Further to this, the results found that 40.6% of the respondents follow other users on Instagram that portray positive, unique and interesting lifestyles. The process of glorifying regular persons with enticing Instagram posts can be referred to the "micro-celebrity" trend that is presently seen as a form self-promotion and self-branding where the consistencies of these largely followed users are purposeful in order to sustain audience interest and regular consumption of their "celebrity-like" uploaded content (Couldry et al., 2016). It can also be argued that the daily exposure to Instagram posts of others shape social expectations and anxieties on the personal lives of youths, setting some Instagram profiles that they follow as role models. Most importantly, 75.2% of the respondents find it imperative to keep up with the lives of their friends or strangers due to the "fear of missing out" (FOMO).

This is consistent with the interview excerpts gathered. Informant 1, a 22 year-old biosciences student felt that reading the newsfeed Instagram today can be compared to reading the newspaper, but the updates are dependent on her interests and what Instagram users are heavily discussing or sharing at the moment. In example, she would most likely attempt a recent diet phenomenon if she saw posts related to it, mainly because many other users on Instagram has done the same.

Meanwhile, Informant 2; a 20 year-old diploma student, revealed that aside from viewing updates from her personal circle of friends, her curious nature and algorithms of Instagram had also lead her to frequently browse Instagram profiles that are worth following on the "explore" section of the Instagram application. While following strangers are unintentional, it helped her understand new trends and find inspiration in her daily life. She also expects to gain knowledge about other cultures. It is also a coincidence that the people that she was most likely to follow in her exploration of Instagram are mostly socialites and celebrities.

> "… they are basically people who are *instafamous* - maybe because they use Instagram more often because of what they do that are fascinating to others, visually. But what they do is very interesting, like how they dress, what they eat where they hang out… et cetera," –Informant 2.

Informant 3, a 19 year-old foundation student said found it fascinating to follow friends with seemingly interesting lives on Instagram mainly because what they feature on their posts required a lot of effort like posing for fashionable outfits, putting on make-up and looking presentable despite their busy schedule.

> "…it must be tiring, having to be perfect all the time. If I had that kind of time or money perhaps I would also do the same. But I don't. It's very distracting but it's a form of escape." – Informant 3

While this is indicative of the influence of Instagram users upon their followers, this also illustrated that the ardent following could expose them to false sense of realities. The "follow" intent of users are concerned with attractiveness of Instagram posts are regarded as high points of reference and users that are consistent in their inspiring uploads are considered as role models for followers to benchmark their life goals. This in turn would impose the feeling of insufficiency among followers amidst their downwards comparison which is discussed in the next section.

Instagram in shaping sufficiency

It has been shown in this study that the prevalence of social media among youths are primarily due to the ability to express themselves freely and creatively while they are able share their current moods, thoughts and feelings on a personal level (Rahim et al., 2011). Storsul (2014) argued that online modes of self-presentation are inspired by trending conversations on social media sites and youths, particularly university students that are willing to expand their social networks in order to formulate a more customisable version of themselves to others, connecting to an unfavourable outcome of "downwards comparison". The results further indicated that 72% of respondents are affected by what is viewed on the Instagram accounts that they follow, such as postings of vacation photos and relationship updates that could spark envy and sadness.

Viewing of such posts may also inflict their self-esteem as they feel the urge to experience the same amount of joy as their friends. A study by Lai et al. (2016) and Dossey (2014) indicated that FOMO is also correlated to the competitive sense of belonging among social media users as subconscious "social monitoring systems". Consequently, this study found that a total of 81% of the respondents believed that the need to edit their photo before posting it on Instagram, illustrating a lack of self-esteem where they require technological affordances in deceiving others with photos of their false realities which they feel is more superior.

Among the interview informants, Informant 3 agrees with this and was further concurred by Informant 4 who find that not all Instagram users posts genuine photos, including themselves.

> "Yes some of them [pictures] do not display what I really feel actually. I realise us younger generations are more obsessed about how we present ourselves to others. Some people only look good on photo and was not able do PR or socialise in reality. I know some of them who are like me," – Informant 4.

> "I believe that Instagram is like a photo gallery and people expect to see a groomed and `good' version of you. So I normally don't post anything before I've taken many angles and done what my friends and I call `quality control'. If I look bad or fat, I won't post it." – Informant 3.

This contradicted the study done by Bakhshi et al. (2013) where presentation of selfies or personal photos do not necessarily generate reactions or followings from others as other followers are more interested to look into the user's day-to-day socialising activities. Informant 1 finds that when comparing photos, people look to others for weaknesses and try to place themselves as role models.

> "I'm sure there is a statement to be made when you upload your stuff online. I try not to give a damn about people say about my photos on social media but there is always a hater out there that has nothing better to do but comment to appear better than others so I can't help but to post a version of myself before someone thinks differently of me."- Informant 1

Informant 1 went on to comment that this habit brings more harm to young generations, especially for women because other Instagram users tend to see visuals and later take it out of context through their individual interpretation. "By trying to hate someone, they actually begin to hate themselves," Informant 1 further elaborated. However, Informant 5, a Master's degree student felt that posting merely pictures of outfits shouldn't reflect the reality of a person and youths should not resort to deception but rather, archive their lives as per how it should be on Instagram.

> "No, I feel it doesn't have a direct link! Marketing yourself is one thing, but changing or affecting a belief system requires a lot of careful and deliberate postings. If you invest so much time creating a story that is untrue, how do you

> expect people to understand the real you and accept the idea of your real individuality?" – Informant 5.

Implications of Instagram feedback on youth behaviour

While Instagram posts of others could shape the outlook of youth on life satisfaction, validation and enforcement during their interactivity with others creates more mileage to their online presence. The majority of the respondents agreed that instantaneous responses received on their posts would increase positive attitudes towards themselves (57%). The present study connoted the influence of peer engagement upon the participant's self-esteem, where 76.2% of respondents would not delete any of their past Instagram posts due to the favourable responses attained. Finally, the study found that 51% of the respondents are motivated to improve their lives after evaluating their posts and receiving feedback from the postings on Instagram. The posts become more beneficial when the person receives feedback from strangers that provide encouragement and motivation in improving themselves.

Similarly, Informant 6, a 23-year old undergraduate interview informant felt that flattery received during engagement with other Instagram users defines her generation. She is an avid user of Instagram and feels that encouraging words from others are a representation of her self-worth.

> "We're mostly millennials (are we?)… oh, we're not? Okay Gen Z then. Maybe from the same group of people who in my opinion thrives on attention and likes. We like to find something easy to gain validation instead of working hard for it. Which is not a bad thing [chuckles]" - Informant 6.

Informant 5, on the other hand finds social comparisons on Instagram is not just a phenomenon and it is a part of the lives and social cycle of digital natives. This was also agreed by a majority of the informants, some believing that interpersonal relationships that can be forged online and grow from the engagements made with others.

> "I think social media presence is just like real presence, although that being behind the screen is more convenient for introverts. If you are shy, the comment section is a great way to connect with someone without being too forward." – Informant 5.

> "Sometimes I like that I get comments from others especially when I wear something nice, or look like I lost weight, even if I don't know the person too well. It shows that somehow the person made an effort to make your day and it does affect my mood positively, and vice versa." - Informant 4

Further to the analysis of interviews, youths are more affected by the life of strangers than of their closer circle of friends, considering them as opinion leaders. However, Informant 2 and Informant 6 feels differently about this matter.

> "Social media is very influential especially to the youngsters. Since it's such an influential tool, the way how one addresses another on Instagram or whichever public digital platform is a powerful statement that could make or break a person, especially if comments come from close friends" – Informant 2.

> "When a `real' close friend who has seen my InstaStory on what I did that day, but didn't send me a direct message to ask me in detail, I feel offended or sad. Also sometimes when we meet face-to-face and they fail to know what I was up

> to, I feel annoyed that they didn't invest the time or care enough to check on me on how I'm doing on Instagram," – Informant 6.

Following the responses of Informant 2 and Informant 6, the impact of real friends that are connected to youths on social media should not be overlooked because an individual is more connected to the people they are actually close with on an emotional basis due to their personal history. Thus, engagement from strangers or celebrities on Instagram are not the only sources of credible and affective reinforcements.

DISCUSSION

Van Rooy et al. (2016) showed that over time, there is a force in self-evaluation upon people who belong to groups against others, in which they tend to choose opinions that hold them in high regard. The results of the present study are highly demonstrative of Festinger's assumption of the Social Comparison Theory (1956) that argued the discrepancies of this expectation will lead to the anxieties in behaviours the affected individuals. In the case of social media sharing on Instagram, demonstrating a highly favourable lifestyle on Instagram is intended to create a shared norm in the society whilst at the same time is driven to distinguish themselves among each other. While social media has the positive value of helping associate the youth with their individual branding or personality, the negative cycle of the comparisons made by these youths striggers low self-esteem that could lead to negative assumptions and onwards depression. Social media engagement at a younger age is prone to enhance the feelings of loneliness and anxieties as the distortion towards the user profile will not only create false realities for their followers, but also themselves in their attempt to evaluate their upwards comparison (Oberst, 2017). Social networking sites are influential in spreading ideas to youths, but it is youths who are accountable for their own decision-making processes and the development of their self-esteem based on their intention and exposure (Munzel & Galan, 2018). The overt narcissism of youths on social media are not always due to attention-seeking behaviours or feeling of entitlement as argued by Ozimek et al. (2018), as postings on Instagram is a defence mechanism that protect users from low perceptions from others and their way to build a wall against negative contestations against their vulnerability in a public sphere.

After six decades in testing and developing Festinger's theory, analyses of scholars time and again had proven that individuals start with evaluating themselves first when they compare their lives with others during their "upwards comparison", followed by grandiose presentations of their personalities on social media with "downwards comparison" as described by Gerber et al. (2018). The results of both quantitative and qualitative sections of the study are congruent with progressions of the theories where their upwards comparison would reflect the output of their downwards comparison, which ultimately would determine if they would view their lives as sufficient or insufficient. The survey had been deployed to illustrate the habits of youths on their Instagram use and general assumptions they may have on connecting with others on the social media platform. The in-depth interviews were meant to elaborate the dimensions of the survey to ascertain the patterns of behaviour and predict the extent and impact of social comparison on Instagram. It can be said that, validation from other users of Instagram would help raise or lower the scale of comparisons done previously to mark and validate their achievements. While there are various learning theories on attitudes and behaviours related to media use, the youths have been so significant in the process of determining the influence of content, particularly in the narrowcasting of social media that bring forth the power of youth users in shaping the trends of future social networking sites.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the studies, the Social Comparison Theory is still very much relevant to the use of social media today. It is found that Instagram is influential in moderating the relationship between youth self-esteem and life satisfaction where they are able to project a different reality for themselves and for ardent followers to create a more cohesive outlook of their individuality. In doing so, their comparisons with the lives of others have significant effects towards how they project that reality in order to mask their own weaknesses in comparison to the strengths of others. In doing so, the level of engagement from others encourage the veracity and tenacity of their posts, in which creates room for others to do the same. The process is cyclical and inevitable due to the affordance of ever-changing mobile and networking technologies. Whilst the comparisons are mostly concerning social status among youths due to their adolescent growth, there is much to be explored on other generational cohorts in terms of their achievements at later stages in life to demonstrate the impact of Instagram towards digital migrants in compared to the already savvy digital natives.

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Nurzihan Hassim
is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Media and Communication at Taylor's University. Her research interests include cultural and new media studies. Nurzihan completed her PhD in examining the discursive practices of female modesty in Malaysian media and is currently working on research projects on health communication as well as youth engagement in politics in the ever-changing digital environment.

Muhammad Hasrul Nizam Hasmadi
recently completed his study in Master of Communication. His research interests lie in youths and social media. To further enhance his breadth of knowledge, Hasrul is currently a social media executive specializing in digital marketing strategies.

Mohamad-Noor Sharipudin
is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Multimedia Technology and Communication. He holds a PhD in Marketing from Victoria University of Wellington. His research interests include sponsorship and non-profit marketing, consumer behaviour and consumer culture (ethnicity). Dr Sharipudin has industry experience in banking and corporate branding before turning to academia.

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Perception of communication negotiation in Malaysian Islamic organisations: An alternative practice

* Abbas Ramdani
Universiti Utara Malaysia
abbas@uum.edu.my

Mohd Khairie Ahmad
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Rosli Mohammed
Universiti Utara Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Negotiation is a universal mechanism for accomplishing an agreement that involves multiple individuals or parties. On a daily basis, most nations, institutions, and organisations use it to meet their interest and objectives. In view of that, considerable discussion of the negotiation practices has been largely conducted based on different standpoints that are informed by its value system. However, the purpose of this paper is to bring out the perceptions of the Islamic organisational practitioners on shariah-compliant negotiation practices. A series of interviews were conducted to drive data from the informants of this study. A set of thematic data analysis was directed by the assistance of the NVivo8 software. Findings identified that the informants' perception of shariah-compliant negotiation practices is based on four factors; God's command, value system, public benefit focus and spiritual satisfaction. This study concludes that the epistemological aspect is the first main element that differentiates the Islamic perspective from other negotiation approaches.

Keyword: ***organisational communication, spiritual satisfaction, Islamic bank, shariah-compliant***

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that Islam and Muslims gained prominent visibility in media and public discourse and in academic research since the 1990s (Ghauri, 2019). From that decade many studies from the Islamic perspective have been the focus of the scholars from different fields of knowledge. This article reviews negotiation practices from the perception of Malaysian Islamic organisations. The focus of this paper is on individual negotiations as well as negotiations on the organisational level because several organisations such as halal companies, Islamic insurances, Islamic banks and others, have adopted the Islamic system of management to organise their relations, handle transactions and manage their conducts. This is due to the need to align with the Shariah system of management. Additionally, it is because Islam is increasingly becoming a major symbol of "Malay-ness" in Malaysia, in which faith is inseparable from the Malay ethno-cultural heritage (Fong & Ishak, 2015). However, most of these Islamic organisations negotiate in order to meet their objectives and satisfy their interest.

Negotiation has an essential significance from the Islamic perspective as well as conventional perspective. It is a constructive activity that is commonly practiced by all individuals, groups, organisations, and states, for different purposes related to interests, conflicts, goals, rights, and obligations (Al-Zuhaili, 2003; Ghanim & Fatima, 2009). Hence, negotiation is a vital component for organisational survival in the current global challenges (Tu & Chih, 2011). Therefore, it is essential for organisational practitioners to understand the best practices on how to conduct their negotiations in accordance with their management system.

However, as Muslims believe, Islam is not only a religion, but a complete way of life (Maududi, 1960). That means Islam is a comprehensive system and complete code for successful life, here and hereafter. The holy Qur'an and the teaching of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him (PBUH)) are the basis that described every aspect of Muslim life. One of these aspects is negotiation and its ultimate objective is not only to establish an ideal structure for individuals, organisations or societies with a mere application of morality, ethics and social conducts but also to get spirituality satisfaction through active participation in this life (Al-Zuhaili, 2003; Ghanim & Fatima, 2009; Ramdani, Mohammed, & Ahmad, 2016a).

Thus, the phenomenon of negotiation from the Islamic perspective has been investigated by scholars and researchers where there are several studies in the area of negotiation such as Al-Zuhaili(2003),Ghanim & Fatima(2009),Yousefvand(2012) and more. Although, Ramdani et al. (2016a) noted that, only few studies has focused on negotiation from the Islamic perspective. The study argued that, the available studies are either religious-oriented or superficial which is insufficient in its valuation of negotiation practice from Islamic approach. Hence, the objective of this study is to contribute and enrich the literature on negotiation from Islamic perspectives by bringing out the perception of Islamic organisations practitioners on Islamic negotiation practice. Thus, the finding of this present paper will be a significant contribution to the development of the *shariah*-compliant negotiation model

LITERATURE REVIEW

Negotiation concept from Islamic perspective

Negotiation has been defined in many ways. From the conventional literature, the most prevalent considered it as "a process of combining conflicting positions into a common position" (Zartman, 2008). Not far from this definition, Islamic literature defined it as daily activities practiced by individuals through communication with one another.

Al-Zuhaili (2003) defined negotiation in Islam as an assortment of crucial and serious conversations that take place between Muslims and others for the purpose of ending conflicts, or enabling the spread of the Islamic call, or acknowledging good neighbourly relationships, or strengthening the bonds of cordiality and cooperation, or concluding cultural and economic treaties. Additionally, Ghanim and Fatima (2009) noted that it is a direct or indirect communication between two parties or more for the aim of setting up relations, defining rights and obligations, ending divergence and clashes, or agreeing on the terms of negotiating parties.

Meanwhile, Ramdani et al. (2016a) argued that negotiation in Islam is not just a matter of give and take process, it is an interactive process which provides a different platform of arguments between two parties or more within the Shariah teachings to obtain spiritual satisfaction. They noted that negotiation has three kinds of platforms or forms; reconciliation, discussion and communication. Disagreemen platforms Muslims use to execute their negotiations should be based on Qur'an and Sunnah in order to achieve ultimate outcome of the negotiation conduct from the Islamic view, which is a spiritual satisfaction.

The importance of negotiation from Islamic perspective

Several Qur'anic verses emphasise the importance of negotiation between individuals as a humane way to regulate relations and end differences. It is necessitated by conflicts of interest and differences in goals and points of view, or the different methods that are used to reach the targets of *shariah*-compliance in transactions and acts of worship (Ghanim & Fatima, 2009). The following verses indicate that Allah (Glory to Him (GTH)) instructs His prophet (PBUH) to invite the people of the Book to negotiate;

> "Say (O Muhammad SAW). "O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians). Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say; "Bear witness that we are Muslims". (Qur'an, 3: 64, p 78).

Regarding the interpretation of this verse, Ibn Kathir (2003) stated that this verse is about *tawhid* (oneness of God) and this is the message of Allah's (GTH) to his messengers (PBUT), to invite every person to knows about *tawhid*, includes the people of the Book; the Jews and Christians, and those who follow their ways. In another verse, Allah (GTH) urges Muslims to facilitate between the believers in order to help them end their conflict, when He says;

> "If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed, Allah is ever all knower, well acquainted with all things". (*Qur'an*, 4: 35, p 113)

Relating to the interpretation of this verse, Ibn Kathir (2003) specified that the *ulama'* (scholars) say that when conflict occurs between the husband and wife, the judge refers them to a trusted person who examines their case in order to stop any wrongs committed between them. If the matter continues, the judge sends a trustworthy person from the wife's family and a trustworthy person from the husband's family to meet with them and examine their case to determine whether it is best for them to part or to remain together. Continuingly, Ibn Kathir (2003) noted that Allah (GTH) gives preference to staying together, and this is why Allah (GTH) said, "If they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation".

However, negotiation from the Islamic perspective, just like other perspectives, is of significant importance because it is considered a constructive tool (Al-Zuhaili, 2003). According to Ghanim and Fatima (2009), it is characterised by the following features;

i. It is one of the activities that are frequently experienced by all individuals, groups, organisations and states, for various purposes related to interests, conflicts, goals, rights, and obligations.
ii. It is essential for the stability of the lives of individuals, based on high humanistic manners, which assist to reach goals and solve complex problems.
iii. It helps to end feuds and hostilities. It also aids an ambiance of satisfaction and understanding between parties, as well as acknowledgement of reciprocal rights, and respect for different opinions regardless of the fact that they may be disliked.

Hence, through negotiations, individuals discover solutions for clashes that emerge between them because of the differences in points of view and goals. They also seek to engender common relations and carry out transactions. And so, the answers provided by the negotiation process should be practical and acceptable to all parties.

The purposes of negotiation from Islamic perspective

Negotiation in Islam has many aims that relate to the need for such. According to Al-Zuhaili (2003), among the most vital aims is; to spread the Islamic call, and to invite humanity to live the Islamic way (*da'wah*). For example, the messengers and prophets of Allah (GTH) negotiated with people to spread the call for the oneness of Allah (GTH), belief in His existence, and following the institution of His Shariah (laws). In the Holy Qur'an, Allah almighty enjoins His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Muslim believers to adhere to commands. Allah says;

> "Invite (mankind, O Muhammad SAW) to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the divine inspiration and the *Qur'an*) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the best aware of those who are guided." (*Qur'an*, 16: 125, p 367)

According to interpretation of Ibn Kathir (2003), this verse is about to invite people to Islam with wisdom and good preaching. That is very clear when Allah (GTH) commands His messenger Muhammad (PBUH) to invite the people to Allah with wisdom. Likewise, on the authority of Abdullah bin Amar bin Al-As (may Allah be pleased with them), the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says; "Convey from me even a verse of the Qur'an" (Al- Bukhari). Indeed, negotiating to invite people to Islam is one of the best ways of serving Allah. Moreover, Muslims should do *da'wah* because it is their duty to share the knowledge of Islam with others (Mababaya, 1998).

The second objective of negotiating in Islam is to prevent armed conflict, to end an ongoing war, to exchange prisoners of war, or to ransom them (Al-Zuhaili, 2003). For instance, prophet Muhammad (PBUH) negotiated in the first military encounter between the Muslims and the pagans of Mecca during the Great Battle of Bader in the second year after Hijrah (a year of the Muslim era begins with Muhammad (PBUH) emigration to al-Madinah) (Wehr, 1976). Even during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (after Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) time), negotiation was the first concern of Muslims in times of war. For example, during the era of the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs, peaceful negotiation was held with the Persians and the Romans.

In our present time, negotiations on the problem of the exchange and release of prisoners of war in the last war between Hamas (the Palestinian party) and Israel in Gaza continue to meet difficulties despite international mediation and United Nations and Security Council resolutions on the matter. Muslims also negotiated for the aim of boosting good neighbourly relationships, encouraging trade and exchange, or any other objective towards implementing peace and exchanging other essential interests with other nations. These occurred multiple times during the different Islamic eras (Al-Zuhaili, 2003; Yousefvand, 2012). This particularly occurred between the Islamic state and the Roman state (the Byzantine state) in Eastern Europe, the latter of which was absolutely the greatest European power in the medieval ages (Al-Zuhaili, 2003).

Shariah compliance negotiation

Shariah is an Arabic and Islamic terminology that refers to the body of Islamic law based on the holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (the teaching of the Holly Prophet Muhammad–PBUH). According to Wehr (1976), it is the revealed canonical law of Islam. It also means "the path to be followed". It is the term used to describe the rules of the lifestyle (*deen*) ordained for mankind by Allah. Practically, Shariah includes all the do's and don'ts of all aspects of daily activity and actions of Muslims (Abdul Rahim, 2013). In this study, *shariah*-compliance is conceptualised as being in accordance with Islamic teachings.

In accordance with the above concepts, Ramdani et al. (2016a) defined *shariah*-compliance negotiation as an interactive process which provides a platform for disagreements between two parties or more within the Islamic teachings to obtain spiritual satisfaction.

STUDY METHOD

This study used a qualitative method by conducting in-depth interviews to bring out perceptions of the informants about *shariah*-compliant negotiation practices among Islamic organisations. The sample design was based on the purposive sampling technique. This technique is appropriate for this study that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea in a rich and detailed form (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Boyce & Neale, 2006; Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). However, the total population of this study formed by fifteen informants from four expert groups; *mufti* (Muslim legal expert) (1 person), academicians (8 persons), practitioners (3 persons) and Islamic bank managers (3 persons).

The use of qualitative procedures certified for the collection of rich, in-depth information from the respondents (Thambu & Rahman, 2017). This study conducted a series of face-to-face interviews to gather data. Each interview duration conducted was not more than 30 minutes. After the data was collected, it was codified and categorised under themes and sub-themes using the NVivo8 software. A thematic data analysis technique was used to analysanalyse the interview data. Thematic data analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. It is based on participants conceptions of actual communication episodes (Keyton, 2015; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Within qualitative data, this technique is not tied to a specific epistemological or theoretic view. This makes it a very flexible method, and a substantial advantage given the variety of work in learning and teaching (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

The data analysis was carried out systematically in stages. The first stage began with transcribing the interview recordings. Then, the interview transcriptions were read and re-read in order to enable the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the data. Therefore, every time the interview transcriptions were read, it gave the researcher richer information that directed the pattern in which the coding emerged. After that, the second stage was importing the data into the NVivo to be coded. However, coding is a crucial aspect of qualitative data analysis, it is one of the essential steps used during the data analysis to form and make the common sense of data (Basit, 2003). Accordingly, every relevant part of the transcribed data was coded adopting three coding stages; open, axial and selected as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990).

The informants were all asked about their perceptions of the *shariah*-compliant negotiation practices. At the end, this paper generated four sub-themes. Thus, throughout this process, the researcher was able to analyse the data of this study systematically and based on the research focus that was established.

FINDINGS

Evidently, the informants of this study viewed the practices of the *shariah*-compliant negotiation with a clear difference from the conventional practices. However, the informants emphasised that the practices of *shariah*-compliant negotiation is based on five norms which are; Allah's (GTH) command, value system, public benefit focus and spiritual satisfaction process, as illustrated in the Figure1, and each of them is discussed below.

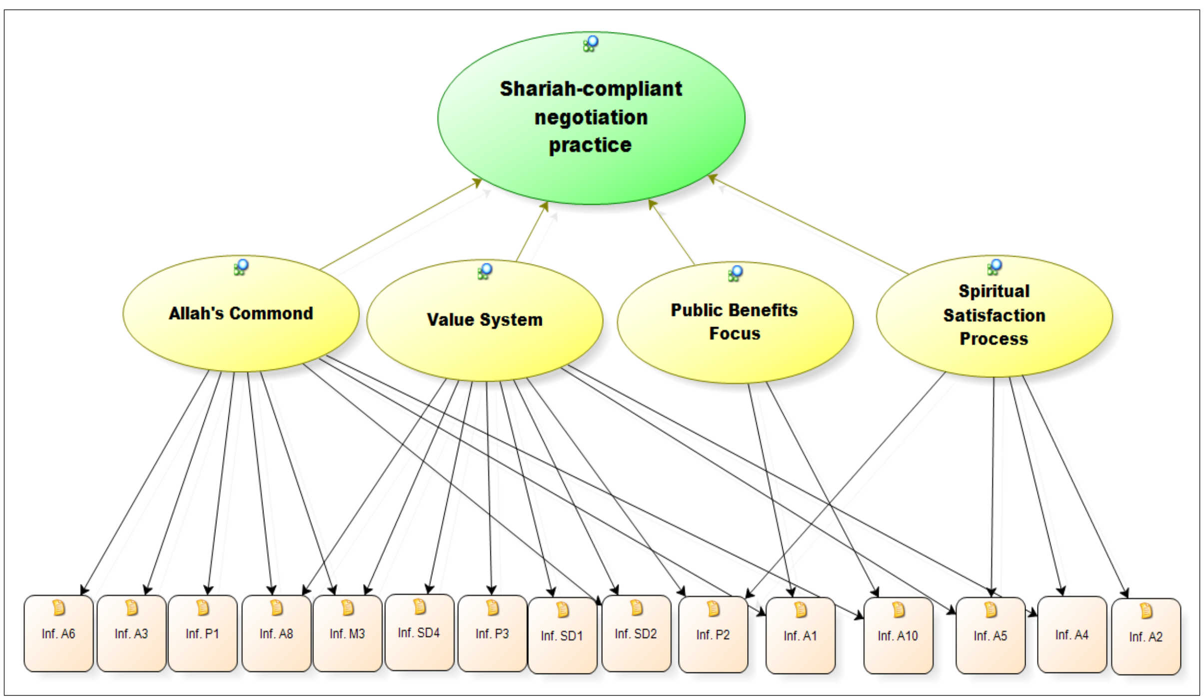

Figure 1. The Informants' Perception on Shariah-Compliant Negotiation Practice

Allah's (GTH) command

Based on the informants' perception, Allah's (GTH) command is the first factor that makes Islamic organisations practice the *shariah*-compliant negotiation. The sub-theme that emerged obviously confirmed that all the informants considered the *shariah* principles as the main pillar in conceptualising Islamic negotiation. In addition, the informants all see Allah's (GTH) command through Islamic teachings as the main element that makes the negotiation *shariah*-compliant, as the principles and practices are derived from the holy Qur'an and *sunnah*. Allah (GTH) says; "And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (SAW), fears Allah, and keeps his duty (to Him), such are the successful ones" (Qur'an, 24:52, p 475). Ibn Kathir (2003) noted that this verse discusses the main attitude of the believers, which is obeying Allah (GTH) and His Messenger (PBUH) in what he is ordered with, and avoid what he is forbidden. Certainly, the verse states that he who follow the commands of Allah (GTH) and his Messenger (PBUH) is the successful one.

Therefore, Informant A10 argued significantly that the epistemology from Islamic perspective is different from the conventional paradigm; "The moment you talk about the Qur'an and *sunnah* they are evident truths". Therefore it is not debatable for muslims, while "the moment you talk about theories, this is subject to human error, therefore they are debatable". Informant A1 support the above informant and noted that, the important thing is to negotiate within the ambit of Allah's (GTH) commands. More so, Informant A6 and A3 confirmed that the *shariah*-compliant negotiation is a negotiation type based on the teachings of the Qur'an and *sunnah*.

Informant A6 posits that there is no detailed discussion on the form and process of negotiation in the Qur'an and *sunnah*, but the Qur'an highlighted its principles and the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has made certain negotiations in the course of his practice of Islam, which has been preserved and should be repeatedly observed. As such, Informant A10 pointed out that; "For the Muslims, we may differ in the application, but we don't differ on the principles."

Informant A2 agree with the position of Informant A10 and added that, from the shariah-compliant negotiations perspective, before the negotiations start, three questions should be answered to confirm *shariah*-compliance. These are; "Why do you want to negotiate? What are you negotiating for? And what is the subject matter of the negotiation?" This is because, based on Informant M3's opinion, we negotiate in a lot of things and at different levels; political, family, and social, but for all of them, the negotiations should be based on *shariah*-compliance. However, Informant A8 summarized the above by stating that obeying Allah's (GTH) commands means observing Islam's teaching. According to Informant P1, following the teaching of Islam is what makes negotiation a *shariah*-compliant. Also, Informant SD2 supported this argument and presents his organisational view:

> "For example, in Islamic finance institutions, we cannot enter into negotiations to sell the conventional *riba* (interest)-based products, because they are not *shariah*-compliant. In general, if something is not a *shariah*-compliant product, it is not negotiable."

Value system

From the analysis of the interview in this study, value system is the second factor that makes the *shariah*-compliant negotiation followed by the Islamic organisations. There is unanimous agreement by all informants in this study that, following the Islamic values is the second main norm that aids the practices of *shariah*-compliant negotiation. According to informant A5, A8 and M3, negotiations are of similar nature and comes from a common ground. The religious value system is the major difference between the *shariah*-compliant perspective and the conventional alternative.

Hence, Informant A5 explained that the *shariah*-compliant negotiation is a type of negotiation that is based on the practice of the value system that is conceived from Islamic principles and ethics, which are themselves derived from the Qur'an and *sunnah*. Therefore, it is the best, most just and most right guide for Muslim believers to follow. Allah (GTH) says in Surah Al-Isra;

> "Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers (in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger, Muhammad PBUH, etc.). who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward (Paradise)". (Qur'an, 17:9, p 369)

Concerning the of this verse, Ibn Kathir (2003) ensured that in this verse Allah (GTH) praises the Holly Qur'an, which He (GTH) revealed to His messenger Muhammad (PBUH), and ensured that it directs people to the best and clearest of ways.

However, Informant P3 stated that while the conventional negotiation may adhere to some principles, the *shariah*-compliant negotiations are based on fundamental Islamic values. In addition, Informant SD1 posits that those values are basically not rules, but are embedded in the nature of the Islamic negotiations. The informant continued and stated that "As I mentioned earlier; the transparency, honesty and core ethics are not mere rules, they are part of our beliefs and faith."

Therefore, Informant SD4 stated that the values and principles of Islamic Shariah are borders of the *shariah*-compliant negotiation, which should not be crossed. Hence, Muslims should stay away from negotiations that are within non-halal activites and non-permissible dealings. Above all, Informants A4 and P2 concluded that following the Islamic value system is the main spiritual factor that motivates Muslims to practice the *shariah*-compliant negotiation.

Public benefit focus

Public benefit focus is another factor of the *shariah*-compliant negotiation practices that is highlighted from the analysis of the interviews for this study. Focusing on the public interests or benefits in its essence is not only important for safeguarding benefits and preventing harm, it is essential for it to be in accordance with the objectives of the Shariah.

According to Elvan et al. (2014), achieving public interest is considered as one of the Shariah objectives, because it is one of the purpose of creating *maqasid shariah* (Islamic legal doctrine), where it helps to prioritise the needs of the public and its effects. Accordingly, this principle has the same objectives which *maqasid shariah* tends to achieve for humans, by a way of protecting five basic values; religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Al-Bugha, 1999). Meaning that, anything that leads to public interest is recommended by Islam while anything that may cause harm are prohibited. All jurists (*fuqaha*) agreed upon this as a basic principle (Nik Abdul Ghani, Laluddin, & Mat Nor, 2011).

In support of the above, Informant A10 argued that, negotiation from an Islamic perspective should be for the sake of Allah (GTH), after which we should ensure justice. We also want to ensure peace, as the result will enhance brotherhood, which is a focus of interest. Therefore, Islamic philosophy (especially economics) and societal or public interest are the drivers that constitute the significance of the *shariah*-compliant negotiations, which evolves into the self or individual interest. However, the opposite is the case in the Western philosophical point of view.

More so, Informant A1 stressed that the importance of this vital norm is that it gives some kind of control to the negotiating parties over the negotiation outcome. He noted that, focusing and implementing this guiding principle may help diffuse their self-interest or selfish ambition. He concluded his argument as such; "...by practicing *shariah*-compliant negotiation, there would be a balance, because in Islam, we have to balance between the private right and the social right." Overall, utilisation of this factor as a basis for the *shariah*-compliant negotiation leads to the elimination of misconducts that underlie issues of injustice, oppression and social disharmony.

Spiritual satisfaction process

The final key standard that emerged from the findings of this study is the spiritual satisfaction process that make Muslims and Islamic organisations practice the *shariah*-compliant negotiation. This factor is the outcome of the three norms that are analysed above. The informants of this research agreed that the Islamic principle is the main component that makes the *shariah*-compliant negotiation practice differ from other perspectives.

According to Informant A2, the importance of practicing the *shariah*-compliant negotiation is the fulfilment of spiritual satisfaction. This is because everything is spiritual in Islamic creed since all activities must be in accordance with Allah's (GTH) pleasure. Hence, Islam does not view spirituality distinctly from everyday actions. Muslims should be mindful and establish constant awareness and consciousness of Allah (GTH) in their endeavours. Similarly, the view point of Informant A4 is that the main motivation for the Islamic organisation to practice the *shariah*-compliant negotiation is its spiritual element. That is because according to Informant A5, it is a type of negotiation that is intended to achieve a goal based on the Shariah. Nonetheless, the concept of spiritual satisfaction is clearly explained in the Qur'an by using the term; a pure and good life. In a Qur'anic verse, Allah (GTH) says;

> "Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter)". (Qur'an, 16:97, p 362).

This verse indicates that, whoever does good deeds in this world, Allah (GTH) will reward him for that in this world and in the Hereafter (Ibn Kathir, 2003). Then, Ibn Kathir (2003) continued his explanation, we are told that the life of the Hereafter will be better than the life of this world. Moreover, the reward in the Hereafter will be more complete than the reward in this life.

Generally, the lesson from the above verse is that a good believer will have a special and good life in this world and the Hereafter, provided his deeds are in accordance with Allah's (GTH) pleasure. Therefore, Informant P2 noted that spirituality is a major factor that makes the *shariah*-compliant negotiation practice special.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study shows that following the commands of Allah (GTH) is the first factor that makes a negotiation *shariah*-compliant. Evidently, all informants in this study agreed that following the commands of Allah (GTH) is the main motivation for conducting negotiations according to the *shariah*-compliant model. This act of religiosity in negotiation practices was recommended by Holy Qur'an and *sunnah* of His Prophet (PBUH) as a mechanism for better and fair conducts.

In addition, this study documented that that negotiation from the Islamic perspective is a *shariah*-principled approach. Meaning that, negotiation is a conduct that adheres to the Shariah, and that makes it distinct from the human-principled approaches. Therefore, the informants confirmed that this element makes the epistemology of *shariah*-compliant negotiation different from the other approaches. That is because according to Informant A10, it is grounded in the Qur'an and *sunnah*; the truthful messages from Allah to Muslims. However, conventional approaches are questionable because they are based on theories, which are the products of human intellectual. Based on this argument, Abdul Rahim (2013) posits that *shariah* commands are different from human commandments due to their religious origin, which is based on divine revelations. Thus, they are different since human law is the creation of reason and consequence of expected procedures, which cannot create uniformity of conduct. That is because the practices and comportments of one group could be different from that of others. However, Muslims accept Shariah as faultless principles of conduct for all aspects of human life. Therefore, this study concludes that the epistemological aspect is the first main element that differentiate the *shariah*-compliant and the other negotiation approaches.

Secondly, this research evidently showed that value system is another distinguishing factor of *shariah*-compliant negotiation. The findings revealed that the conducts of negotiation are common in nature but the features of value system is the difference in terms of approaches and perspectives . In consideration of that, the current research claims that it is very obvious that *shariah*-compliant negotiation is markedly different from other approaches because of its *shariah*-based value system.

In support of this argument, Ramdani, Mohammed, and Ahmad (2016b) documented that Muslims and Islamic organisations purposely negotiate within *shariah*-compliant principles in order to adhere to the Islamic value system in all aspects of life. According to Informant SD1, the principle of *shariah*-compliant is an essential aspect of faith and beliefs, and not just an ordinary role embedded in the nature of the negotiation. In addition, Abdul Rahim (2013) noted that, compare to the western value system, the Shariah value system has a comprehensive scope and purpose. Therefore, this work surmises that the Islamic value system is one of the elements that motivate Muslims to practice the *shariah*-compliant negotiation.

More so, the outcome of this study identifies public benefit focus as the third factor of the *shariah*-compliant negotiation practice. The informants in this study argued that negotiation from the Islamic perspective is based on an integrative analysis approach. Consequently, it focuses only on the cooperative and collaborative techniques to build a common ground between the negotiating parties, which makes it focus on accomplishing all-win outcomes. Furthermore, this study proved that focusing on the public interests does not mean protecting the benefits or the rights only in the *shariah*-compliant negotiation approach. It also means preventing evil and harmful things.

Moreover, the Islamic jurists agreed with the importance of this element. According to Al-Bugha (1999), this principle has the same objectives with *maqasid shariah*. Therefore, Nik Abdul Ghani et al. (2011) stated that, harmful and evil deeds are prohibited in Islam, while whatever that benefits public interest is commended. Also, Elvan et al. (2014) specified that achieving public interest is an essential element, as it helps to prioritise the needs of the public and its effects. Therefore, this research claims that this essential distinguishing element makes the *shariah*-compliant approach conform with the objectives of the Shariah.

Lastly, this study proved that, the spiritual satisfaction process is the fourth factor and a key norm that distinguishes the *shariah*-compliant negotiation practice from the other perspectives. As stated earlier, this study evidently argued that spirituality is a unique element of and a key norm that distinguishes the *shariah*-compliant negotiation practice from the other perspectives. Therefore, Informant P2 noted that spirituality is a major factor that makes the *shariah*-compliant negotiation practice special.

The first three components discussed above are integrated with this basic requirement. However, all the informants argued that the main purpose of practicing the *shariah*-compliant negotiation is to attain spiritual satisfaction, which correspond with the assumption of this study. This is in line with the study of Ramdani et al. (2016a) who documented that, Muslims and Islamic organisations' motivation for executing their negotiation conducts based on Shariah teachings is the fulfilment of their life's purpose, which is to be good believers and to live the Islamic life. This belief leads to spiritual satisfaction here in this world and in the hereafter. Therefore, the current study claims that this key factor also makes the Islamic view of negotiation differ from other perspectives.

More so, the position of previous studies is that the factor of spirituality in Islam is unlike the secular or humanistic understanding (Ahmad & Khan, 2016; Marzband, Hosseini, & Hamzehgardeshi, 2016). In the conventional approaches, spirituality is understood as "a way of being and experience that comes about through awareness of transcendental dimension, and is characterised by certain identifiable values in relation to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the ultimate" (Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988). It is the human effort, self in connection to and with the external world. According to Mayhew (2004), spirituality is a concept that is practically different from religiosity.

Hence, in the Islamic perspective it is understood as a persistent reference to Allah (GTH) and ensuring that everything mankind does is in accordance with Allah's (GTH) pleasure. It means the connection of human actions to the purpose of life, which is worshiping Allah (GTH) (Marzband et al., 2016). Consequently, it is viewed as a standard of living for Muslim believers, in that it forms their values, thoughts and actions in the light of Allah's (GTH) pleasure. (Ahmad & Khan, 2016). Therefore, Islamic scholars argued that spirituality and religion are complementary. Religion is the road that needs to be travelled to get to spirituality (Marzband et al., 2016; Ramdani et al., 2016a). Indeed, this study shared a similar view with the Islamic scholars' positions.

From another angle, the findings of this paper have a significant contribution even for non-Muslims especially the non-Islamic organisations by providing a clear understanding of how Muslims perceive the practice of negotiation base on their religion. That is because, negotiation is considered an essential element for organisational survival in the present global challenges. This is backed by Tu and Chih (2011) that globalisation and economic openness have contributed to the increased international engagement of countries in negotiations in the 21st century. Hence, before these organisations can achieve their objectives, they have to know the best practices on how to negotiate with others. Not only that, one of the major symbols of the twenty-first century is the emergence of the Islamic system of management which has remarkable increase among non-Islamic organisations especially in finance and banking (Ramdani et al., 2016a). Many banks all over the world are providing the Islamic product by applying the Islamic financial system (Zahid, Hussain, Islam, Aziz, & Ghazenfer, 2012). The bottom line is, if Islamic Finance is based on religious and ethical principles that most Islamic investors feel strongly about, it is therefore important to know how Muslims perceive the negotiation conducts from their religious view and practices in their dealing with their various customers. Accordingly, this was the motivation for this study exploration of the negotiation practices perception from the Islamic perspective.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this study is on the the perception of practising the *shariah*-compliant negotiation in Islamic organisations in Malaysia. The findings of the study revealed that religious factor is the main factor that distinguish the *shariah*-compliant negotiation from the conventional negotiation. Comparing the Islamic concept and principles of negotiation and Malaysian Islamic organisation managers' opinion, the findings of the study revealed the relevance of Islamic concept of negotiation as identified by Ramdani et al. (2016a) and notes its correlation and contribution to present negotiation practices among Islamic organisations. However, when compared to the conventional approaches, this study acknowledges that negotiation from the Islamic perspective is still an evolving approach. Therefore, there is a need for further research in this area and for spreading the good *shariah*-compliant negotiation framework and practices to ensure conformity with the required standards.

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Abbas Ramdani

is an International Senior Lecturer at Communication Department, School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia. His researchers is in organisational communication and focus on alternative perspectives. Currently he has interest on various aspect of organisational communication from Islamic perspective.

Mohd Khairie Ahmad

is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia. His research and scholarly efforts includes communication and media for social change, health communication, political communication and communication management.

Rosli Mohammed

is an Associate Professor of Communication, School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia. His research interests are public relations and managerial communication. With almost twenty years of teaching experiences, he teaches managerial communication, public relations, communication audit, strategic communication and research methodology.

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Determinants of online purchasing decision among university students

* Ali Salman
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan
ali.salman@umk.edu.my

Mohammad Agus Yusoff
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Tan Poh Ling
Xiamen University Malaysia

Anis Sofiah Binti Abd Razak
Yayasan Kasih Sayang, Negeri Sembilan

ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has led to the uptake of online purchasing which has become widespread among netizens. This study was undertaken to identify the factors that affect students' acceptance of communication technology for online shopping. This study used the Technology Acceptance Model. A key driver of this study is by using elements of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, ICT safety, ICT skills, and social influence as independent variables in relationship to online purchasing decision. Using quantitative method, a survey using questionnaires was administered to 222 students sampled as respondents for the study. Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the hypothesis for significant relationship. From the results, the independent variables; perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, ICT skills, ICT safety and social influence, had a significant relationship with the dependent variable—online purchasing decisions. This study can serve as a guide to online sellers in the process of attracting students to repeatedly buy online.

Keywords: ***online purchasing decision; university students; perceived usefulness; perceived ease of use; ICT safety***

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development and growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), started as early as the 80s (Bray, 2017). However, its developmental ripples happened around the early 70s. While most countries face management challenges of new world economy, the answer to the challenge is through efficient, flexible and efficient use of computers. The rapid development of ICT has indeed changed the lives of humans and it continues to this day. ICT has always played an important role in modern society as it became a necessary tool and used in various fields (Niebel, Kopp & Beerfeltz, 2013). Hence, it is not impossible if an individual can make a purchase online by merely using the smartphone.

Most urban Malaysians use online shopping application in purchasing various items due to fast internet network and their busy daily routine. In line with the lifestyle nowadays, online purchasing methods have gained attention from many and it has also become a starting point for shopping without queuing at the counter or being at a very congested mall (Norli Baharin, 2013).

With the emergence of information technology allowing for rapid message transmission to anyone, anywhere; this has made it possible for a number of shoppers nowadays to buy online rather than the conventional method due to the online banking facilities. This is because online purchase can take place anywhere and anytime (Anon, 2014).

Online transactions are becoming increasingly reliable and popular. This is because, through online transaction costs, such as traveling costs, parking fees, time and energy are saved. However, online transactions are prone to scams (Aslinda Onn, 2015). Hence, this study will also identify the use of technology and its relationship to online purchase decisions with regard to ICT safety.

This paper aims at determining the factors that have relationship with online purchase decisions. The objective of this paper is to identify the level of communication technology use by students in making online purchasing decisions and to evaluate the relationship between usefulness, accessibility, ICT skills, ICT security, social influence and online purchase decisions among university students.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Evolution of online businesses

There are on-going efforts worldwide to enhance confidence in electronic platform-based transactions, build human resources, bridge the digital divide and create new business activities (Oemar Hamdan & Abd Manaf, 2015). This is an enormous opportunity to develop technology-driven businesses at an international level. Anandya Cahya (2013) stated that online purchases does not require buyers and sellers to meet face-to-face, and this enables the sellers to have the opportunity to be connected to buyers worldwide.

Based on a report by Communications and Multimedia Commission (2013), the evolution of online purchases has encouraged the need for reliable courier services. The combination of communication technology, reliable courier service and digital lifestyle nowadays has led to the growth that is closely related to online businesses. The report also found that most websites during the year were only for advertising purposes and some were using website facilities to introduce organizations' products and services to customers.

Surfing the internet is easy and can be done at any time (Made Dwipayani and Ketut Rahyuda, 2016), hence, it is not impossible for people to opt to shop online. The current lifestyle of the society has also changed, due to the development of the technologies. One of the most obvious impacts of these development are activities that slant towards online purchase (Anandya Cahya, 2013).

Zaleha et al. (2016) emphasised that online purchases are more convenient, time-saving and cost-efficient because transactions are done virtually rather than as a direct purchase which requires an individual to come to the store to purchase an item. This statement is also supported by Fatin Hafizah and Mohd Shahar (2013) that the advantages of buying on the Internet are shopping opportunities at any time of day, night or midnight. Customers are not inconvenienced to look for parking. Dwipuspita, Mulyana et al. (2012) and Umair Cheema et al. (2013) further asserted that customers do not need to struggle with traffic, parking and walking from one store to another.

In line with that, Farhan et al. (2016) and the Communications and Multimedia Commission (2013) pointed out that the advantages of online shopping are that customers do not have to queue up at the mall. They can compare brands, prices and order items 24 hours a day from anywhere. This is because in this era, many entrepreneurs use online applications such as blogs, Facebook, Instagram and online business applications to enhance business access, facilitate the sales and purchase of their items (Faradillah, Rahim & Ali Salman, 2015). Hence, with this kind of medium, it is not a problem for an individual to spend a small amount of time, as it is easy and at their fingertips.

Online purchasing decisions

There are various factors that affect the buying decision of a consumer, both internally and externally (Verina, Yulianto & Latief, 2014). Purchase decision is an individual activity directly involved in the decision making to purchase the product offered by the seller (Anandya Cahya, 2013). Based on a survey conducted by Jan Wong (2013), 65% of the respondents make online purchases after one to two hours of shopping via the Internet.

Perceived usefulness of technology

Technology usefulness is one of the key variables in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). According to Davis (1989), users must believe that using technology will improve their performance. This clearly illustrates the usefulness of the technology for its users in many aspects. Hence, the usefulness of the technology is able to form a belief in accepting the technology or vice versa. Generally if users trust the usefulness of a particular technology, then they will accept and use it and vice versa (Endang Fatmawati, 2015).

Perceived ease of use of technology

Perceived ease of use of technology is also one of the important variables in the TAM model. The perceptions of ease of use according to Davis (1989), that the application is easy to use without much effort. This includes ease of use of information systems in accordance with the wishes of its users. Findings from Davis's research (1989) showed that the convenience of the user explains the reason why users are prefer technology. Study on the perception of ease of use by Mona Windi and Christiawan Hendratmoko (2015) among students in Surakarta found that online shopping provided by the Internet and has facilitated students in online shopping.

Information communication technology skills

The generation Z (1995-2010) and Alpha (2010-2023), have been exposed to various types of gadgets as young as one year old. The first generation of Y "touched" by technology, makes Z generation a more versatile generation with technology and gadgets. This generation relies heavily on digital technology such as the Internet and social media. Meanwhile, the Alpha generation emerged from the effects of economic crisis and are expected to be more adaptable towards technology and more educated compared to previous generation (Adi Kusma, 2013). This led them to be more interested in technology when they are in school and they prefer activities related to multimedia technology.

ICT security and usage of technology

Internet is used for various activities such as research, banking and trading. In every transaction, with an online business, users need to feel secured (Seddeq H. Belgassem, 2004). Customers who explore the Internet world are looking forward to buying products hence ICT security is essential in making online purchase decision (Andy Putra et al., 2014). Farhan et al. (2016) clearly demonstrated that ICT security is one of the major factors that affect online purchase decision.

Social influence on online purchase decision

Social influence is one of the main factors affecting the use a technology. A research conducted by Rasimah et al. (2014), showed that in identifying factors affecting parents' acceptance of the eWaris school management system at MUSLEH network primary school in Klang Valley, social influence is a major factor, followed by usefulness. Based on the results of this study, it is clear that social influence has a great impact on adapting a technology. Social influence can also be said to come from the surrounding community. For example, based on studies conducted by Mujiyana and Elissa (2013), on the stage of information retrieval, consumers will search online references from all aspects using search engines or online stores. The information sought is the opinion of others who have benefited from the product purchased and thus able to influence online purchase decisions.

Theoretical framework

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains the factors affecting technology acceptance. The theory was developed by Davis (1989) as shown in Figure 2.1 and later adapted by other scholars such as Adam et al. (1992), Szajna (1994), Chin and Todd (1995), Davis and Venkatesh (1996), Gefen and Straub (1997), Igbaria et al. (1997), Venkatesh and Morris (2000) and others (Sanjaya, 2005). TAM is an adaptation of the Theory of Reason Action (TRA).

According to Davis (1989), TAM have two important variables that influence behaviour in the use and acceptance of technology, which are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Previous empirical studies show that both the individual internal variables have strong support in observation (Venkatesh & Morris, 2000). This study further added three variables in perceiving an individual interest in using information technology, especially new media.

TAM has been tested from various perspectives. Moon and Kim (2001), Der Heijden (2004), concluded that TAM proposed by Davis (1989), not only involved one's extrinsic motivation in technology use but also includes intrinsic motivation such as pleasant or entertaining element. Margaret et al. (2006) extended the TAM to understand the internal factors or external factors that influence a person in accepting and using technology, such as feeling happy and entertained in using technology. Personality factors have shown better result in measuring the acceptance of information technology than cognitive factors.

TAM focuses on factors affecting the acceptance of new technology (Endang Fatmawati, 2015). For this study, two variables from TAM (Davis, 1989) perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use and three new variables are included in the conceptual model namely ICT skills, ICT security and social influence to measure their relationship with online purchase decision. Hence, based on the framework of this study, five independent variables namely perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, ICT skills, ICT security and social influence were used to measure their relationship with the independent variable (online purchase decision).

The perceived usefulness is an independent variable that emphasises on the extent of the usefulness of a particular technology which facilitate users in making online purchase decisions. It also examines the aspect of internet accessibility at all times without limit. In addition, the role of technological usefulness is also supported with the existence of various new media that exist today together with the interactive features included in the new media. The new media also facilitate the sale and purchase of goods and services compared to traditional buying and selling which take up energy and time.

The perceived ease of use is a variable that emphasises the extent to which technology can facilitate purchase decisions online. Meanwhile, ICT skill is an independent variable that emphasise on the skill level of a student using the latest technology in online purchasing. ICT skill is needed to facilitate successful trading online. The ability in handling technologies such as laptops, computers, tablets and smartphones to access social media, as well as websites can make more students purchase items online rather than buying them directly at the retail outlets.

The security variable towards new technology is an independent variable, which is also studied in this research. Security and safety are key factors of technology acceptance among online users for online purchasing decisions. Additionally, the study also examined the security features of the technology in preventing cyber-crime related to personal data information, which can bring a huge loss if it occurs. Safe technology applications can also attract more people, including students to buy online and are able to maintain their use for a longer time.

Social influence is the final variable in this study in determining the relationship of the independent variables with online purchase decision among the university students. The aspects that are studied included the social influence of family members, friends and surrounding communities and their influence on the students' online purchase decisions using new technologies. The goal is to see how far social influence can stimulate students to make purchase online rather than physical shopping.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Emanating from the literature review and theoretical framework, five hypothesis were developed and tested for their significance. The hypothesis testing, evaluated the relationships between the independent and dependent variables in terms of significance.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase decision.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and online purchase decision.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between ICT skill and online purchase decision.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship between ICT security and online purchase decision.

Hypothesis 5: There is a significant relationship between social influence and online purchase decision.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted at two Research Universities located in Klang Valley, namely Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). This study adopted the quantitative research method, utilising questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The researchers applied purposive sampling in selecting the respondents to ensure that the respondents fit the criteria that are set earlier for this study, which limit the respondents to only those who by goods online.

Some 222 respondents consisting of 110 males (49.5%) and 112 females (50.5%) were purposively sampled for the study. The age group of the respondents, 19 to 25 years made up 151 (68%) of the respondents. The second age group, between 26 and 30 years old consisted of 31 (14%) respondents and followed by the age group 31 to 35 years old with 18 respondents (8.1%). The respondents aged 41 years and above represented 5.9% of the sample with 9 respondents. The least number of respondents came from the age group 36 and 40 years old representing 4.1 percent of the sample with 9 respondents.

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis were applied. For the descriptive statistics, Means and Standard Deviation (SD) were used. Meanwhile, for inferential statistics, Pearson correlation analysis was used to analyse the data.

In building the instrument, items for the variables were adopted from both TAM (Davis, 1989) and past studies (Table 1). A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire for reliability using Cronbach Alpha. Prior to this, the questionnaire was tested for validity involving two lecturers and a PhD student. The reliability results for Cronbach Alpha of the variables are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 1. Source of items for the variables

Variables	Source of Items
Perceived Usefulness	Davis, 1989 Endang Fatmawati, 2015.
Perceived Ease of Use	Davis, 1989 Mona Windi & Christiawan Hendratmoko, 2015.
ICT Skills	Adi Kusma, 2013
ICT Security	Seddeq H. Belgassem, 2004 Andy Putra et al., 2014 Farhan et al., 2016
Social Influence	Rasimah et al., 2014
Online Purchase Decision	Anandya Cahya, 2013 Made Dwipayani & Ketut Rahyuda, 2016 Zaleha et al., 2016 Fatin Hafizah & Mohd Shahar, 2013

Table 2. Cronbach alpha of the variables

	Cronbach Alpha		
Variables	Pilot Study	Actual Study	Items
ICT Skill	0.843	0.798	4
Ease of Use	0.734	0.836	10
Perceived Benefits	0.806	0.913	11
Social Influence	0.798	0.820	9
ICT Security	0.786	0.866	10
Online Purchase Decision	0.864	0.913	11

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Based on Table 3, ICT skills have the highest overall mean (mean = 3.94, SD = 0.614). The second highest is perceived usefulness (mean = 3.63, SD = 0.637) and followed by online purchase (mean = 3.61, SD = 0.661). Social influence and perceived ease of use both have mean value of 3.57 (SD = 0.557) and 3.53 (SD = 0.559) respectively. The variable with the lowest mean value is ICT security (mean = 3.41, SD = 0.664).

Table 3. Overall Mean Value and Standard Deviation (SD)

Variables	Mean*	SD
ICT Skills	3.94	.614
Perceived Usefulness	3.63	.637
Online Purchase Decision	3.61	.661
Social Influence	3.57	.557
Perceived Ease of Use	3.53	.559
ICT Security	3.41	.664

(N=222) *(scale 1-7) (1.0-3.0 = low) (3.1-5.0 = moderate) (5.1-7.0 = high)

The findings from this section is reported based on the inferential statistics that have been conducted to test the relevance of the hypothesis of the study. There were five hypotheses tested using the Pearson correlation analysis. The test was conducted to identify the significant relationship between all the independent and the dependent variables. The measure of strengths and weaknesses of the relationships between the variables were based on Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1989) measurements as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Measurement of relationship power (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 1989).

Pearson Correlation	Relationship Power
.90 to 1.00	Very High
.70 to .90	High
.50 to .70	Moderate
.30 to .50	Low
.01 to .30	Very low
00	No Correlation

Table 5. Pearson Correlation between independent and dependent variables

Independent Variables	Online Purchase Decision	
	R	*P*
ICT Skills	.330**	.000
Perceived Ease of Use	.606**	.000
Social Influence	.596**	.000
ICT Security	.619**	.000
Perceived Usefulness	.699**	.000

Hypothesis testing

The five hypothesis are tested using the Pearson correlation as shown in Table 5 above.

Hypothesis 1: *There is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase decision*

The results show a significant relationship between the two variables where the value of r = .699 with a significant level of *p* <0.01. Hence, hypothesis 1 is accepted. The correlation coefficient value indicates a moderate relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase decision among the university students. This is because the measurement of Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1989), the correlation coefficient 0.50-070 shows that there is a simple relationship. This demonstrates that perceived usefulness is relevant for online purchase decision.

Hypothesis 2: *There is a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and online purchase decision*

The results show a significant relationship between the two variables where the value of r = .606 with a significant level of *p* <0.01. Hence, hypothesis 2 is accepted. The correlation coefficient value indicates a moderate relationship between perceived ease of use and online purchase decision among the university students. This is because the measurement of Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1989), the correlation coefficient 0.50-070 shows that there is a moderate relationship. This demonstrates that perceived ease of use is important for online purchase decision.

Hypothesis 3: *There is a significant relationship between ICT skills and online purchase decisions*

The results show a significant relationship between the two variables where the value of r = .330 with a significant level of *p* <0.01. Hence, hypothesis 3 is accepted. However, the correlation coefficient value indicates a low relationship between ICT skills and online purchase decision among the university students. This is because the measurement of Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1989), the correlation coefficient 0.30 - 0.50 shows that there is a low relationship. This demonstrates that ICT skill is somehow important for online purchase decision.

Hypothesis 4: *There is a significant relationship between ICT security and online purchase decisions*

The results show a significant relationship between the two variables where the value of r = .619 with a significant level of *p* <0.01. Hence, hypothesis 4 is accepted. The correlation coefficient value indicates a moderate relationship between ICT security and online purchase decision among the university students. This is because the measurement of Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1989), the correlation coefficient 0.50 – 0.70 shows that there is a moderate relationship. This demonstrates that ICT security is important for online purchase decision.

Hypothesis 5: *There is a significant relationship between social influence and online purchase decisions*

The results show a significant relationship between the two variables where the value of r = .596 with a significant level of *p* <0.01. Hence, hypothesis 5 is accepted. The correlation coefficient value indicates a moderate relationship between social influence and online purchase decision among the university students. This is because the measurement of Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1989), the correlation coefficient 0.50 – 0.70 shows that there is a moderate relationship. This demonstrates that social influence is important for online purchase decision.

DISCUSSION

This study was set out to examine the determinants of online purchasing decision among university students. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between the technology factors (perceived ease of use; perceived usefulness; ICT security), individual factor (ICT skills) and social factor (social influence) with online purchase decision among university students. The study found that most of the university students spent more than an hour each time surfing the internet. The results of this study are similar to the study conducted by Pramudita and Samsudin (2011) that 80 percent of respondents have access to the Internet and one third of them surf the internet for more than 7 hours a week. The findings are also in line with Shamsul Azahari (2015) that not only the students but the Malaysian community also spent more time browsing the Internet than conventional media such as television, radio and newspapers because of the widespread Internet network for social networks.

However, the results of this study found that the university students were not very addicted to the internet. The findings showed that they did not feel worried about not surfing the internet. The results of this study were contrary to the study conducted by Teong and Ang (2016), which found that students were the most highly addicted internet-based groups. Students make the internet as their major tool for accomplishing tasks, which include other leisure task such as surfing Facebook, playing games and chatting online. Additionally, a report by MCMC has also shown that the 72% of the 18.6 million local internet users are as young as seven years to 35 years old (Anon, 2014). Internet addiction among students is not at the alarming stage as the overall usage is more about learning objectives, where Harlina Halizah and Abdus Salam (2015) find out that high internet usage leads to better academic results as it provides opportunities of learning as explore to the world of information.

The second objective of the study is to measure the relationship between the independent variables, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, ICT skills, ICT security and social influence with online purchase decisions. The perceived usefulness of technology helps students learn more about communication technology because of the many benefits they can obtain. Based on the findings, the research hypotheses are accepted where there is a positive correlation between the perceived usefulness and the online purchasing decision among the students. Furthermore, the results of this study indicated that most students like to shop online because of the various facilities available. The results of this study is in line with Fransiske and Hendratmoko (2015) which found that the availability of many transaction facilities made students prefer to shop online compared to physical shopping.

In addition to the usefulness of the communication technology, the students also felt that technology was able to facilitate the purchase of goods. The results demonstrated that the average university student knew that in addition to saving time, communication technology also help them in buying things that they wanted online. The results of this study is in line with a research by Norli Baharin (2013) who found that online shops made it easier for shoppers to buy limited edition or missing items in the market online. The information on items has also eased their shopping experience as they were able to make comparisons between the quality of goods from various brands (Pinto, 2013) leading them to make online purchase.

The perceived ease of use of the communication technology facilitates the completion of online purchase. Most tertiary institutions provide access to internet, allowing students to access anytime they want (Nik Adlin, 2009). Accessing the internet with unlimited time and space using wireless internet facilities around the campus makes it possible for students to shop online. This clearly concurs with the findings of this study, where there is a significant correlation between perceived ease of use of the technology and online purchase decision.

Apart from perceived ease of use, most of the students as the study revealed, were equipped with the skills to surf the Internet and were able to perform payment with PayPal, ipay88 and so on. However, higher ICT skill is not the main factor that people need in order to make online purchase. With the basic knowledge of electronic banking, social media and online payment systems, a student is able to shop online. This is contrary to Faradillah, Samsudin and Ali Salman (2015) that the information society requires a great deal of expertise in finding and understanding internet content to overcome the digital divide. Unlike ICT skills, ICT security is essential to provide a sense of security, especially when making online payment. As such, for the university students, security has always been the focus in order to avoid being scammed. Echoing the students' online security concerns, Ahmad Suhael (2017) claimed that online fraud cases have increased with a record 3,921 cases in 2016 alone involving various cases such as data theft and fraud schemes relating to online purchase and Internet banking. Hence, as this study found out, safety features influenced the students' desire to shop online. The results of this study were congruent with Arisah et al. (2016) where security factor was the most important factor in making online purchases. Similarly, the results of this study were also in line with the study of Dwipuspita, Mulyana and Elita (2012) that some Indonesians did not purchase online because of the various frauds.

In addition to the technology factors, this study also established that social influence have a significant relationship with the university students' online purchase decisions. This finding was supported by Susanti, Yunus and Chan (2015) that opinions or views provided by other users on a platform or comment room, can influence the decision to purchase a product online. Similarly, Tyra and Clara (2014) found that there was a significant positive relationship between social influence and online shopping behaviour. These findings were further supported by Arisah et al (2016), Graham, Rothlauf and Hinz (2013), Zhang, Hu and Zhao (2014) that goods and services sold online used various channels such as social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), websites and advertisements on individual blogs, to influence students as they can read the testimonial provided by other online shoppers to purchase same items online.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

From the results, there are theoretical implications for TAM. Among the constructs found in TAM are perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and behavioral attitudes. However, the researchers only used perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use for this study. Thus, in this study, three new variables were added, namely ICT skills, ICT security and social influence to measure their relationships with online purchase decision among university students and were found to have significant relationship with purchase decision. Hence this study has added a new knowledge in the field of factors having relationship with technology acceptance.

The skill element is actually not new in the world of technology because the skill element relates to individual use of information and communication technology in order to measure the level of skill of students using the existing technology. Meanwhile, the security element in the technology itself helps the process of using and accepting a particular communication technology by students making them shop online. Dubious security features are capable of making a person refuse to use a technology in getting the desired item. For the social influence element, which comes from the surrounding community or the immediate family members, facilitate the acceptance of a particular technology by students for online purchases.

Hence, the relevance of TAM for online purchase decision among university students requires the inclusion of the elements of ICT skills, ICT security and social influence. This might apply to other population as well, in cognizant of the fact that online users, especially those who shop online, need a secured platform for their transactions.

It is clear that the inclusion of technology in the education sector has made the students enhance their skills in using communication technology to facilitate their daily life. Therefore, the level of use of this communication technology is very important in order to ensure the level of communication technology skills among students can be enhanced, especially those who make information communication technology as the primary medium for online shopping. The online shopping sites have opened up the eyes of many people, especially students enabling them to utilise the existing technology and further enhance the level of technology utilisation skills. In essence, this communication technology as a primary medium for online shopping has been accepted and adopted among netizens, as they are aware of the benefits.

In conclusion, this study on technology utilisation among students for online purchase decision has shown a positive level of technology usage and supported the perception that the current information communication technology is very important, especially for the online trading sector. University students have accepted the new technologies of today and utilised them to facilitate their lives. This study has provided evidence that the ease of use of technology has enabled netizens to purchase online anything that they wanted at their fingertips. The findings have shown the importance of communication technology among university students. Therefore, the researchers hope that not only students but also the general public, parents, senior citizens and others will be able to utilise the best possible communication technologies, especially for online purchasing and transactions to facilitate their busy life.

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Ali Salman
is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Language Studies and Generic Development, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. His research interests include Social Media, Digital Inclusion, and New Media and Democracy. He is also the chief editor for INSANIAH and an editorial board member for Journal of Asian Pacific Communication (JAPC).

Mohammad Agus Yusoff
is a Professor of Political Science at the Centre for Research in History, Politics and International Affairs, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. He received his Masters and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom. His research interests are Federalism, Comparative Politics, Democratization, and Election.

Tan Poh Ling
is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Advertising, Xiamen University Malaysia. She received her doctorate at the Universiti Sains Malaysia on Tourism Communication with a focus on interpretation. Her research interests include heritage communication, persuasive communication and environmental communication.

Anis Sofiah Binti Abd Razak
is a teacher and warden at Yayasan Kasih Sayang, Negeri Sembilan. She received her Degree in Shariah Law, Fiqh and Fatwa from the Islamic Science University of Malaysia in 2015 and her Masters in Social Science (Communication) from the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (The National University of Malaysia) in 2017. Her research interests are communication technology and new media.

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Motives for adoption of Facebook among non-profit organisations in Libya: A qualitative approach

Mohamed Aabeid
Universiti Utara Malaysia

* Che Su Mustaffa
Universiti Utara Malaysia
chesu402@uum.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Social media networking tools such as Facebook are regarded as innovative communication tools that have played a significant role in organisational settings particularly in transforming business and company values. However, very limited attention has been given to the adoption of social media tools by non-profit organisations (NPOs) especially in Libya, where it is increasingly becoming difficult for NPOs to maintain strong connections with regular and potential donors as well as volunteers. In view of this, the need to explore how NPOs have adopted and used Facebook to overcome these challenges have become important. Therefore, in-depth interviews with managers in Tripoli were carried out. The interview data were analysed thematically and the findings showed that environmental factors and Facebook dynamism had motivated the adoption and use of Facebook to drive NPOs; in addition to trust and sense of belonging they provide. The findings of this study provided more understanding for NPOs, donors and companies serving the non-profit sector in concern of significant behaviour and trends that revolve around Facebook as part of NPO's fundraising and advocacy works. The study has significantly contributed a fresh angle on the application of social media tools by NPOs to build as well as maintain relationships with donors. Therefore, it is recommended that NPOs take advantage of the popularity and dynamism of Facebook among donors by paying more attention to the needs and concerns of donors in the area of trust and awareness.

Keywords: ***Facebook, non-profit organisation, social media, Libya, qualitative***

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the increasing modifications in technology knowhow, social media has become a foundation for higher and multistage communication (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). Social media is a group of Internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The use of social media according to Nah and Saxton (2013) is progressively popular in communicating with the public and enhancing public relations by non-profit organisations (NPOs). Social media provides organisations and public relations practitioners opportunities for creating, sharing, posting, documenting as well as relaying communication content on the Internet to public (El-Kasim & Idid, 2016).

Non-profit organisations are established for public or mutual benefit other than generating profit for owners or investors (Salamon 1999), and the profit must all be used to support the operation of the organisation (Anheier 2014). Consistently, NPOs have been successful in the realisation of numerous objective utilities which has supported in bringing up as well as sustaining civil society (Boris, 1999). Non-profit organisations give the justification and infrastructure for creating social networks which support strong communities (O'Connell, 1999). Thus, it could be concluded that technology, the internet and social media are the new tools of new media and they are to be incorporated into the marketing plans of NPOs (Milla, Santos & Ristic, 2017).

Non-profit organisations in Libya also aim to achieve their goal of enhancing the welfare of their community members by involvement in governance of democracy, affecting public policy and authorising the community members for effective representation. Before the uprising in 2011, Libya had few NPOs such as Gaddafi International Foundation Charity Association (GIFCA). This non-profit organisation helped people in Libya and in other nations in terms of shelter, food and medical services.

After the revolution, the GIFCA had closed down therefore providing an opportunity for international as well as home-grown NPOs to help Libyans affected by the war. Based on the database of the Culture and Civil Society Ministry, more than 2107 home-grown NPOs functioned in Libya in 2013 (Al Gergawi, 2015). Several of these NPOs used social media as a tool to connect, communicate and make the public aware about their organisation, increase trust, motivate others to join their organisation, or encourage audiences to contribute financial support. For example, in a Facebook page called iLibya, members and followers were invited to join their activities or donate funds (Arab Social Media Report, 2011).

In the trajectory of literature examined, it is evident that social media has become entrenched in the activities of people in Arabic countries including Libya. Most people use social media especially Facebook to access campaigns, political debates and other interactive activities. Facebook was also identified to be the most common social networking site in the Arab nations. Very importantly also, NPOs have recognised the importance of Facebook as a channel of reaching donors and volunteers for support and publicity of activities.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In general, the use of social media networks such as Facebook continues to grow in popularity since it is regarded as an innovative communication tool in transforming business and company values (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). In spite of this, very limited attention has been given to the acceptance of social media tools by NPOs (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). At present, volunteer organisations are being confronted by the tasks of recruiting and retaining volunteers where the challenges were not found in different organisations (Terasaki, 2017). Although social media use is growing amongst individuals - its adoption, use, as well as effectiveness for NPO activities is unknown. Just as the role of the media is imperative in understanding the political set-up of a country, so is social media in creating understanding and awareness about NPO activities (Ahmad & Othman, 2014). Similarly, this innovation has been broadly studied in the context of profit organisations but has been less studied in NPOs (Hull & Lio, 2006).

The result from a research by Hull and Lio (2006) found that NPOs are extremely risk averse and this may often be a disadvantage to them. Therefore NPOs to rethink methods to improve relationships with their donors through social media. Organisations are not only using their Facebook account to announce their activities and ask for donations but are also using social technologies to build networks and to raise balanced communication between them and their receivers (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009). Even more so, no known study of such has been documented on the situation in Libya.

In Libya, the roles of NPOs have unquestionably significant after the uprising of February 17, 2011 where on that day, it was reported that supporters of the Libyan opposition had taken to the streets and Green Square during the *Day of Revolt*. In the wake of the uprising, civil society organisations such as NPOs were able to proliferate in a newly found participatory climate and the emergence of civil society organisations has been inspiring (Al Gergawi, 2015). Even so, social media such as Facebook became a hurdle for NPOs as they have to learn about active participation on Facebook and comprehend methods of utilising social media to increase the number of Facebook members, considering the speedy expansion of social media phenomenon (Waters et al., 2009). At most, NPOs would only provide external links to news reports, pictures, and discourse boards. NPOs would also attempt to engage with concerned publics by merely sending them e-mails to get further data (Waters et al., 2009). For this reason, how NPOs in Libya use and embrace social media should be examined. This present research was carried out to fulfil the gap of how NPOs in Libya implement and use social media particularly Facebook to interact with their donors.

Social media networking tools such as Facebook, are regarded as innovative communication tools that have played a significant role in organisational settings, particularly in transforming business and company values. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) noted that online social media is a cost-effective way to reach diverse audiences in addition to retain a conversation with them, so as to improve an organisation’s capability to get to both new and existing members. Past studies revealed that individuals are more likely to engage in volunteering for or giving back to an organisation if that organisation is a part of their social network (Brady, Schlozman, & Verba, 1999; Wilson, 2000). Therefore, given its importance, Appleby (2016) reiterated that social media would motivate non-profit organisations to rethink methods to improve their relationship with donors.

Previous studies only provided clues about the extent and character that stakeholder-associated organisational communications that are facilitated by social media diffusion (Kent et al., 2003; Waters, 2007). In addition, there is limited research that have discussed the ways in which establishments utilise social media to interact with their stakeholders and the general population extensively (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

This study highlighted the effectiveness of social media as a medium of interaction between NPOs and donors. The main objectives of this research are to investigate the factors that motivate NPOs to adopt and use Facebook, to identify the challenge that NPOs face in using Facebook in their daily activities as well as to understand the perception of NPOs about the effectiveness of Facebook for organisational campaigns.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

Non-profit organisations are an essential part of the social, political, and economic landscape of a contemporary society. However, NPOs are faced with many issues related to funding revenues, high competition, heightened needs for responsibility, as well as spaces to access the latest technology (Young & Salamon, 2002). The World Wide Web, for example, provides opportunities to synergistically attain an array of people, including volunteers, donors and journalists (Kang & Norton, 2004). Greenberg and MacAulay (2009) mentioned in their study that the capability of social media remains mostly unused whereas online communities and social media offer a new approach of harnessing loyalty and passion.

Given the important roles of NPOs in the society and social media in the facilitation of dialogic relationship-building messages, it is important to understand the acceptance as well as use of social media by such establishments (Nah & Saxton, 2013). Social media provides opportunities for NPOs to increase their community presence, impact, effectiveness, and efficiency (Ellison, 2007). However, Nah and Saxton (2013) said there is no positive interaction between the ratio of fundraising and social media use.

Another impact of social media on organisations emanate from being honest and trustworthy. In an effort for establishments which operate for non-profit or profit to become credible, they become more transparent and open in their actions. Considerable information regarding their numerous acts, process of making decisions, source of decision and information are made accessible for the public, therefore organisations which utilise social media comparatively will be more successful in attracting more members and donors compared to organisations which neglect to (Harquail, 2011).

However, despite its enormous benefits, social media do have shortcomings. As mentioned by Hoffman et al. (1995), the primary barrier to the operation of social media as an avenue for public relation is the lack of access to the internet facilities. The accessibility problem is not merely speedy internet connection, but also the core necessity for hardware and software. Accessing internet cafes in certain nations are also rather costly (van Brakel & Chisenga, 2003). Rubeinstein and Griffiths (2001) mentioned that social media fails to function effectively when organisations restrict web feedbacks, pictures or videos which can hurt organisational reputation. Social media poses serious risk to the organisations' reputation since they are not able to fully control the flow of information on the manner in which the organisation is viewed specifically when it comes to online surroundings (Ihator, 2001; Reddington & Francis, 2011).

It is imperative to understand the way in NPOs accept and utilise social media because it is a great way for non-profit establishments to gain support and interest. Traditionally, non-profit establishments have not been very receptive in adopting the internet and are perceived to be about five years behind when compared with the profit sector (Macedo & Pinho, 2006). Although the internet affects almost all non-profit activities, NPOs in Libya are still not utilising the internet to raise awareness, creating an information resource, fund-raising, and moving people for particular motives and programmes of action.

METHODOLOGY

In the Arab region, Facebook is still gaining users, thus the researcher needs to further understand their adoption and usage. A qualitative research approach was proposed in this research to make suitable inferences from the vast amount of data collected.

Population and sampling

The researcher conducted the study in Tripoli, the capital and the largest city of Libya, which is home to 1.7 million of Libya's 6.4 million citizens. There are 700 non-profit organisations operating in Tripoli that are registered with the management of the Culture and Civil Society Ministry of Libya. Since the researcher intended to find how Libyan NPOs adopt and use Facebook to interact with donors, the most suitable respondents who can provide information are the managers who have already adopted Facebook in their non-profit organisations.

The NPOs were selected for this research by using purposive sampling methods. Purposive sampling was used to obtain facts from precise target groups who pass the criteria set by the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). For this research, the researcher selected participants from NPOs that have different missions or visions. For instance, The Fakher Libya for Charity which is responsible for giving food and clothing to the displaced people in Libya. Another example is the association of “Love it Build it” that give medical support to the aged and also women. Another NPO that played an important role in Libya is the Volunteer Libya Team that comprise of Libyan and Non-Libyan volunteers who assist in restoring and establishing Libya as a stable and democratic nation. This involves co-ordinating efforts to reconstruct the country. The organisation views that in a democratic system, the legal status of a citizen arrives with rights and responsibility. Therefore, a dynamic citizenship is to involve oneself in his society, caring for the underprivileged, voting, and serving as a rescuer when assigned. Another Libyan non-profit organisation is 1Libya. This organisation was launched at the wake of the revolution, March 2011, to help liberate the Libyan nation by supporting free media. 1Libya paid attention to the media, civic education, and the essential areas for the development of modern democratic state. The organisation conveys civic education and builds the capacity of media, since these are very important to the Libyan development. Therefore, media professionals are trained, greater participation of women in politics are supported, and useful debates concerning the Libyan society are facilitated. Support has been given to roles that could make democracy prosper in Libya such as political researchers, journalists, radio managers, and photojournalists. The varied functions and roles of NPOs here help the researcher to identify patterns despite NPO differences (Patton, 2005).

In view of the criteria set out for this study, 90 non-profit organisations that meet the preceding criteria, in addition to the establishment of a Facebook page for a minimum of two years (at least 2013 - 2015) were purposively selected. Next, one manager was selected from each of the 12 major districts in Tripoli, hence the total interviewees are comprised of 12 managers. However, in terms of deciding the number of suitable samples for the study, the researcher also took into consideration the issue of data saturation i.e. when no different or pertinent information emerges or no new information or themes are observed in the data.

Interview questions

Interview protocol was the main research instrument used to collect the data from the informants. The researcher adapted the protocol from the studies done by Scherer (2010) and Lassila (2010) due to their relevance, where the researcher developed and streamlined the instrument to be suit this present study. The initial questions raised tried to explore the level of involvement among managers were generalised to social media, but was later reframed to fit the study context.

The interview session comprised of two major sections. The orientations of the first section was used to get personal information and business information of the respondents. The second part of the interview intended to understand how NPOs in Libya adopt as well as use social media to interact with donors. The list of questions which guided the interview for managers consisted of 30 questions. In this research process, the researchers interviewed managers from the chosen NPOs with a strong knowledge on adopting and using social media for non-profit organisations.

Data analysis

Thematic data analysis technique was used to analyse interview data. The researchers followed guidelines by Creswell (2012) to carry out data analysis stages. According to Creswell (2012) it is used to facilitate the process of storing, sorting, coding, analysing and perpetration of representation of the data. The researchers started by creating new NVivo project, then created internal folder source for interview information, set classifications folder and nodes folder. After that the researchers started by coding the answers from the informants. Coding is the process of gathering and transferring text, phrase, visual, audio, or video on a specific theme at a node that represents the theme (Ahmad & Othman, 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of informants

Twelve (12) informants formed the total sample for this study. Out of the twelve informants from the non-profit organisation, one (1) of them adopted and started using Facebook from 2009, two (2) adopted it in 2010, four (4) adopted it in 2011 while five (5) have adopted it in 2012 (Table 1).

Table 1. Informant's Profiles

S/n	Informants	Age	Organisations	Position	Year of Establishment
1	Informant M1	26	The Fakher Libya for Charity	Executive Director	2011
2	Informant M2	27	Ihsan charitable Association	Director-General and Coordinator	2012
3	Informant M3	30	Association Of Road To The Heaven	Director	2012
4	Informant M4	26	Association of Trabulass Alkhair, Mercy And Blessings Of God	Director	2012
5	Informant M5	32	Association for Every Good Work Handout	Director	2012
6	Informant M6	29	H2O Organisation of awareness and good	Executive Director	2009
7	Informant M7	27	Libyan youth Association	Founder	2011
8	Informant M8	38	Association of Soul By Soul	Director of the Association.	2010
9	Informant M9	28	Association Gathered To Do The Good	General Director of the Association	2011
10	Informant M10	29	Association of Love It Build It	Chairman	2012
11	Informant M11	30	Libyan volunteer Association	Chairman	2010
12	Informant M12	30	Libyan Youth Association Center	Director	2011

Motive for adoption of Facebook

Answers to the questions were generated through an organised and systematic manner in a prolonged engagement with the all informants, and through the standardisation of the field notes and recording. The emerged answers are therefore processed and presented through NVivo10 in themes, subthemes and smaller subthemes. Subsequently, the following subthemes: environmental factors and Facebook dynamism emerged. Therefore, the following surfaced for environmental factors as sub-themes: popularity of Facebook, cluttering internet, and high information need. Also, in relation to Facebook dynamism, the following sub sub-themes emerged: mobilisation of grassroots supports, multimedia platform, diverse reach and ease of use all of which determined the motive and use as indicated in Figure 1.

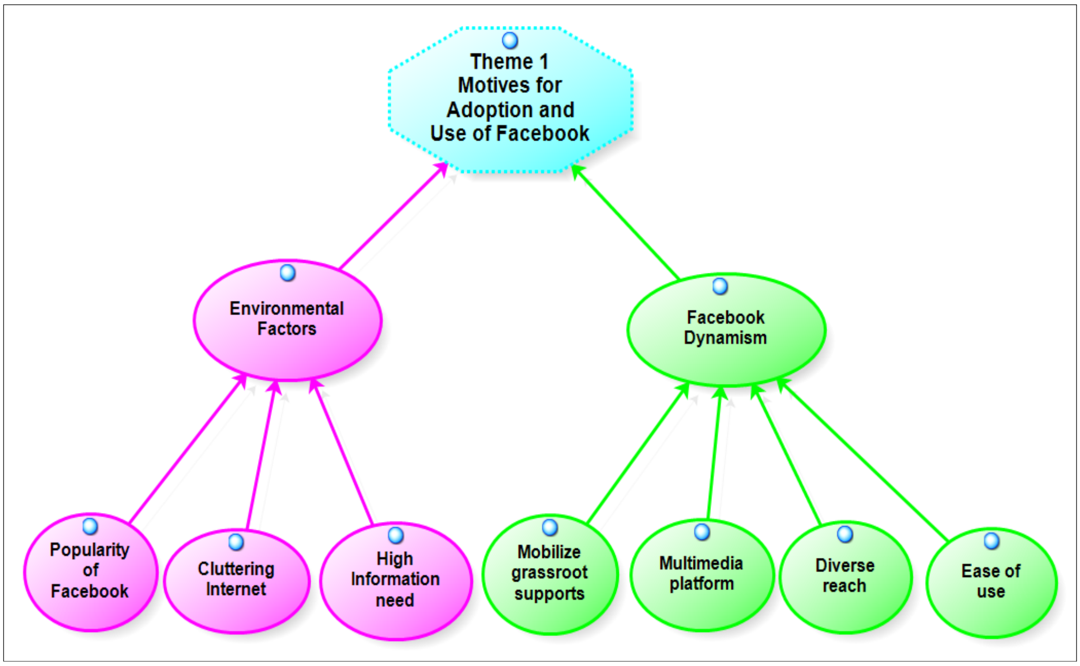

Figure 1. General Motives in the Adoption of Facebook

Environmental factor

One of the motives for the adoption and use of Facebook by non-profit organisations were the environmental factors that summed up the reasons; such the popularity of Facebook, cluttering of internet and high information need as disclosed by the informants of this study. In a study carried out by Bai and Yao (2015), the results posited that the prevalence of rank effect and the conformity effect and other factors happening in the environment at the individual level had affected Facebook and adoption of other sites.

Popularity of facebook

The popularity of Facebook emerged as one of the factors that influenced the NPOs' adoption and use of the social media for their interaction with donors and the public at large. In line with this, significant numbers of informants disclosed that the popularity of Facebook among adults and youths in Libya has been one of the motives to use Facebook to interact and lobby for their organisations. For instance, Informant M10 disclosed that, "*we did not look for any other source to get in touch with our contributors except Facebook, as it is the most common and useful social network around the world nowadays*". In relation to that, Informant M5 specifically stressed further on why the popularity of Facebook is a factor, "*Facebook is the* *most common and widely used in Libya since 2010 to the present, and that what motivated us to have it as the main source of supporting us".*

Cluttering internet sites

The analysis of the data from the informants has shown that the challenges faced by non-profit organisations in the past regarding cluttered internet sites are inaccessible blogs for the public and donors. This problem was linked to information overload on internet which then lead to disarray and cluttering. Confirming this, Contreras, Corcho and Gómez-Pérez (2009) revealed that one of the prevalent difficulties faced by users in the information society is information overload, which is heightened by the enormous size of the World Wide Web.

Therefore, most of the non-profit organisations adopted and use Facebook for their activities. Informant M2 for instance noted that, *"Facebook becomes the right channel of reaching the donors because other means such as YouTube and weblog are not easily accessible to people"*. Another manager, Informant M9 stressed that, *"In fact one of the reason for adoption of Facebook was because other channels have become difficult to use and complicated"*. The conventional channels such as radio, television, and newspaper have been found to be less attractive to younger Libyans as such the need to adopt or consider social media such as Facebook, was found to be more effective.

Corroborating this Informant M1 noted that, *"Because other means in the internet have become jammed, and unorganised"*. Also expressing his perception on the reason for the adoption and use of Facebook, Informant M9 emphasised that, *"On many occasions we find it difficult to contact our donors through letters, then later through e-mail due to traffic but when we realised the ease and simplicity of Facebook we adopted it"*. Both Informants M3 and M4 also alluded to simplicity of Facebook as the determinant of its adoption and use. These perceptions as voiced by the informants showed the importance of Facebook as the best alternative to other social media sites for non-profit organisations.

High information need

Scholars, Breeze (2011) and Rose-Ackerman (1987) have noted that considerable attention has been placed in regards to how many donors contribute, reasons to contribute, and the criteria of contribution. There has been little consideration of how donors decide on which charities to support, through which channel they usually get information and what extent information they need. These were identified the informants as high information need. For instance, Informant M11 disclosed that, *"Many people need information and we have to give them through Facebook because other social media are not easy for to use"*. Explaining further on this, Informant M8 said, "*You know that the generation we are dealing with needs frequent and detailed information on everything, and Facebook is giving the opportunity to meet these needs"*.

Facebook dynamism

The challenges faced by non-profit and other charity organisations is the ease of use, diverse reach and a multimedia communication platform that can be fulfilled by Facebook. As noted by Revill (2015), Facebook has become distinguished as a dynamic online promotion platform that differs from other social sites. The dynamism of Facebook has helped organisations and businesses to have a range of flexible options when it comes to reaching new and existing donors and customers.

Mobilisation of grassroots supports

Grassroots mobilisation for charity organisations is a way to create public support by building awareness and using it to complement activities. The more mobilisation is utilised, there would be a greater chance to make an impact on the society. Informants of this study have identified Facebook as the right channel to mobilise and persuade people to do things such as donate, volunteer, and join as members. Describing how Facebook fits into this, Delany (2012) and Sanbakken (2014) said one of the most effective ways to spread a campaign's message and mobilise online across to grassroots is to get someone else to join the campaign as well. Informant M7 for instance noted that:

> "*When we started using Facebook, we noticed the difference in the prevalence of news and the responses to our posts, which made us depend on it completely up to the present day, a lot of grassroots have been reached through Facebook"* (Inf. M7).

Another manager of the non-profit organisations, Informant M9 described the impact of the adoption and use of Facebook for mobilisation of grassroots:

> *"The main benefit derived from the use of the page is, when the number of Facebook users increases and the number of our page followers' increases, then the number of the donors will increase too. From here we conclude that the benefit is to facilitate communication between the sender and the receiver at any time" (Inf. M9).*

Still on the impact of Facebook as a mobiliser of the grassroots for non-profit organisations in Libya, Informant M12 expressed his view in this statement: *"With Facebook my organisation now gets supports and donation from across Libya compared to the past."*

Multimedia platform

As the name indicates, multimedia is the combination of multiple forms of media. This includes text, video, audio, graphics, etc. In this case, Facebook is one of the leading social media platforms, with more than one billion users, turning it into a common tool to use while trying to reach, as well as connect with, a massive number of people promptly. Therefore, it is being adopted and used for non-profit organisation work because Facebook allows share status updates, videos, text, photos, events, links and other multimedia content with the public, friends as well as followers.

In a similar perception, the informants attested to the impact of the multimedia platform of Facebook as a reason for its adoption and use among charity organisations. For instance, Informant M10 enumerated the following:

> *"All our possible and intended public can be reached quickly and easily through Facebook. Unlike before that it takes messages to get across, through Facebook, we post video, audio, text and pix. So great. Facebook has lots of properties, on our page we depend on uploading photos and videos that carry the work we have done through our campaigns"* (Inf. M10).

Also, Informant M2 stressed that the opportunity to reach the donors and the public Facebook's multimedia platform is one of the major reason for adopting it to interact with them. He noted that:

> *"We depend on posts, photographs and videos as a kind of authentication and building a trust and confidence among us and donor. The association is using all the features that are possible on Facebook from photos, publications and videos. We sometimes use only posts or sometimes posts including photos and other times posts with videos depending on the materials that we have about the event or the campaign we are running"* (Inf. M2).

Diverse audience reach

The ability of Facebook to provide opportunities for NPOs to reach diverse publics and donors has been one of the motives for adopting and using it for charity works. The reach of Facebook has been a phenomenon. Social media, especially Facebook connects people in a way few things can. Therefore, for charity organisations, nothing could be more important in reaching as broad an audience as possible. According to Informant M1 who narrated the essence of the diverse reach of Facebook for charity organisation, mentioned:

> *"We found that most of the people and shareholders in our association have accounts on Facebook, making the page spread where interaction is easy and we can have posts about any event the association planned to do or is doing. We have created our page on Facebook as it is one of the most important social media pages. We created the Facebook channel as a means to reaching our many donors and potential ones. The main benefit of our association through its interaction with its own page on Facebook is the ability to reach the largest number of people, using such social network is really useful by giving us the support easily to advertise about whatever we need".* (Inf. M1).

Similarly, Informant M6 reiterated that the reason for the adoption is due to the fact that, *"Facebook is a tool that provide the opportunity to reach a large and wide populace"*. Also, Informant M7 disclosed that they adopted and use it because, *"We use…because Facebook has helped us in reaching high and diverse groups of people"*. To Informant M9, charity organisations adopt and use it because of the following:

> *"Facebook has created a good relationship between the contributors and the people who were in need to us. The choice of Facebook by our organisation was due to its availability to reach wide and quick. The speed of displaying the association to reach a large number of community members whenever you are"* (Inf. M9).

Ease of use

Facebook is generally the easiest to use networking platform. Particularly, one can text, comment, like posts made by others by means of just a click of the mouse. Thus, this is the stronger reason for the attainment of universal popularity of the website. It is has been noted that the ease of use has led to higher perceived effectiveness and ultimately bigger intensity of use (Lane, & Coleman 2012). Similarly, Sibona and Choi (2012) said that the end-user fulfilment on Facebook through supposed ease-of-use and perceived usefulness are mostly the reason for its adoption and use.

In line with this, the majority of the Informants have also stated that Facebook ease of use is one of the reasons why they use and adopt Facebook for their charity work. Informant M12 noted that the adoption is due to the fact that, *"Facebook is simple and easy to use. Its features were not complicated, because it was founded to facilitate the process of contact and communication between people"*. In a similar tone, Informant M8 put it thus, "*Facebook has* *many benefits, and it is clear, simple, uncomplicated, easy to use, and easy to get common on a short time (fast news spread among people)".*

CONCLUSION

Based on this study's findings, it can be concluded that environmental factors along with Facebook dynamism play the predominant role in the adoption process. For instance, the adoption was not just about availability and popularity of Facebook but concretely, due to the organisations' need for diverse reach as well as ease of use and the multimedia platform which Facebook provides. In addition, the public and especially the donors can also engage directly with NPOs several platforms of Facebook where comment or share can be made on either video, audio, photo or text. All these provide the highest level of interaction because they require more efforts to directly respond to organisational messages. Moreover, given that both organisations and donors can easily access other commenters' messages and observe the conversation, they can participate in ongoing dialogues and engage as well as with potential donors.

As part of expanding knowledge on the impact of Facebook on NPOs, it is important for future study to examine what is posted on Facebook and the influence on support for organisations. From the angle of the methodology, future research should consider engaging other approaches particularly, such as case studies, content analysis and surveys in order to offer more comprehensive accounts of how NPOs build relationships towards successful charity work.

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Mohamed Aabeid

is currently a PhD candidate in Department of Communication, School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, University Utara Malaysia. He has research interest in new media and organisational management.

Che Su Mustaffa

is a professor of Communication at the Department of Communication, School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Her research interest is organisational communication, new media and organisational culture.

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